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Flash to HTML5 (really easy in flash, but clunky) export (wouldn’t be good to export a flash function)

Should be tiles in web Mercator

Design wgs web Mercator 🡪 map publisher to project (rasterize image, illustrator, add pt locations, linework on top)🡪geotif 🡪tile mill, host at 2-3 scales ($)🡪load into leaflet (sol 3) 🡪 leaflet tutorial for geojson file (add on click function call based on name of file in geojson, loads x)

D3 (look up)

Less elegant, but: create image super large, lay out w/out titles, add title in html/css interactively or box

Keywords:

Origin, Explanation, Animals, Family, Magical Items, Royalty, Fortune, Elderly, moon, moral, inventiveness, Jealousy, Treasure, Ghosts, Greed, Rewards, Cleverness, Trickster

Country, continent/region, and the folk tale

**Afghanistan (Asia/Middle East)**

**Treasure, Magic, Fortune, Elderly**

**The Silver on the Hearth**

<http://www.storiestogrowby.com/stories/silver.html>

There was once a poor farmer who found it a great struggle to get ahead in the world. Though he worked very hard and lived carefully, it was impossible for him to save money year after year. After an entire lifetime of labor he was no better off, it seemed, than he had been on the day he was born.  
                One morning he seized on the notion that if ever he was to own anything at all in this hard world, it would have to simply appear before him. He wished and wished that one morning he would wake up and discover riches aplenty heaped upon his own hearth. That way he would have no doubt that the good fortune was intended for him.  
                He thought of this as he went about his daily tasks in the fields.  
                It happened one day while he was working that some brambles in the field caught and tore his clothes. So that this wouldn't happen again, the man dug a little around the roots and pulled the brambles out of the ground. As he did so, he uncovered the top of a large earthen jar. In great excitement, he dug a little more and then removed the lid of the jar. He found that the jar was filled to the brim with silver coins. At first he was delighted, but after a few minutes of thought he said, "Oh, I wished for riches upon my own hearth, but instead I have found this money out here in the open fields. Therefore I shall not take it. For if it were intended for me it would surely have appeared on my own hearth, as I wished."  
                So the man left the treasure where he had found it and went home. When he arrived, he told his wife about his discovery. The woman was angry at her husband's foolishness in leaving the riches in the field. When her husband lay down to sleep, she went out to the house of a neighbor and told him all about it, saying, "My stupid husband found a hoard of money in the fields, but the blockhead refuses to bring it home. Go and get it for yourself, and share with me."  
                The neighbor was very pleased with the suggestion, and he went out to find the treasure where the woman had described it. There, where the bramble bush had been uprooted, indeed was an earthen jar. He took it from the ground and opened it. But when he lifted the lid he saw not silver coins, but a jarful of poisonous snakes.  
                Into the neighbor's mind rushed the thought, "Ah, that woman must be my enemy! She hoped I would put my hand in the jar to be bitten and poisoned!"  
                So he replaced the lid and carried the jar back home with him, just as he had found it. When night came he went to the house of the poor farmer, climbed on the roof, and emptied the jar of poisonous snakes down the chimney.  
                When dawn came, the poor farmer who had first discovered the jar got up to start the day. As the morning rays of the sun fell upon the hearth, his eyes opened wide. For the hearth was covered with silver coins. His heart swelled with gratitude. He said, "Oh! Finally I can accept these riches, knowing that they are surely intended for me as they appeared upon my own hearth, as I wished!"

**Albania (Europe)**

**Origin Tale, Animals**

**The Tale of the Eagle**

<http://www.forumishqiptar.com/threads/23815-Albanian-Folktales-The-Tale-of-the-Eagle>

A youth was hunting in the mountains. An eagle flying above him set down on top of a crag. The eagle was especially large and had in its beak a snake. After a while, the eagle flew away from the crag where it had its nest. The youth then climbed to the top of the crag where he saw, in the nest, an eaglet playing with the dead snake. But the snake wasn't really dead! Suddenly it stirred, revealed its fangs and was ready to pierce the eaglet with its deadly venom. Quickly, the youth took out his bow and arrow and killed the snake. Then he took the eaglet and started for his home. Suddenly the youth heard above him the loud whirring sound of the large eagle's wings.  
  
"Why do you kidnap my child?" cried out the eagle.  
  
"The child is mine because I saved it from the snake which you didn't kill, " answered the youth.  
  
"Give me back my child, and I will give you as a reward the sharpness of my eyes and the powerful strength of my wings. You well become invincible, and you well be called by my name!"  
  
Thus the youth handed over the eaglet. After the eaglet grew, it would always fly above the head of the youth, now a full-grown man, who, with his bow and arrows, killed many wild beasts of the forest, and who, with his sword, slew many enemies of the land. During all of these feats, the eagle faithfully watched over and guided him.  
  
Amazed by the valiant hunter's deeds, the people of the land elected him king and called him "Albanian" which is to say "Son of the Eagle." And his kingdom became known as Albania or Land of the Eagles.

**Algeria (Africa)**

**Origin tale, explanation, Moon**

**An Orphan and the Moon**

<http://www.algeria.com/folklore/>

Many years ago there was an orphan child wandering about upon the earth. He was very melancholy as he had no father and no mother. Nobody on the earth would talk to him, or pay him any attention; nobody cared why he was so sad. Despite his anguish, the boy was unable to weep as tears had not yet entered the world. In the night, the moon observed the distraught orphan boy walking about the earth and felt great compassion towards him. The moon left the heavens and came to lie upon the earth before the orphaned child. He addressed the child: "Weep, sad child! But you cannot let the tears drop to the earth, as it would make it unclean for people who get their food from it. Rather, let your tears fall onto me. I will then carry them back with me up into the sky." The orphan child began to weep, the first tears ever to fall, rolled down his cheeks and dropped onto the moon. The Moon gave the lonely child a blessing saying: "From now on, every person shall love you." When the child could weep no more, the moon returned to the heavens. Thereafter the orphan became happy and people would give him all that he needed and all that would make him rejoice. Every time you look at the moon's face, you will be able to see the stains left by the tears of the orphan child, the first tears ever shed.

**Andorra (Europe)**

**Origin tale, explanation**

**The Legend of the Creation of the Pyrenees**

Atlas had a daughter Pirene who was the most beautiful of the goddesses. When Hercules saw her he wanted her for his wife and with his power he was used to getting what he wanted. But Pirene loved her father and would never take one of his enemies for a husband. Hercules flew into a rage and cleaved with his axe what we know call the Straits of Gibralter, allowinging the seas of the Atlantic Ocean to flood Atlantis and creating the Mediteranean Sea.

Everybody perished in the city of Atlantis apart from Pirene who managed to escape. Other versions of the story say that a giant glass dome protected the city and it survives to this day under the sea ready to one day rise to the surface and reclaim it’s title as the most idyllic city on earth.

Pirene fled the ruins of Atlantis and went to the most beautiful mountains in the world where she was hidden by shepherds. Hercules never renounced his love for Pirene and began searching the universe for her. Pirene heard news of Hercules quest and decided to set the mountains alight and threw herself into the flames prefering to take her own life rather than fall into the arms of Helcules who she now hated.

Hercules arrived in Italy during his famous ‘labours’ and from there saw the huge plume of smoke caused by the fire. He hurried to find the cause of the smoke and arrived to find all of the forests burnt – trees reduced to burnt stumps. Searching among the charred remains he found Pirene dying. He tried to save her but he was too late and could do nothing to save her. The tears of Pirene as she died created the lakes of the Pyrenees that survive until this day.

With infinte care and love Hercules buried the body of Pirene creating with his own hands a giant mausoleum of giant rocks. When he had finished a long chain of mountains stood which he called the Pyrenees in memory of his love for her and as a symbol of her independence.

**Angola (Africa)**

**Animal, Moral, Determination**

**How Frog Went to Heaven**

<http://www.aaronshep.com/stories/044.html>

There was a young man named Kimana. He wanted to marry the Sky Maiden. He wrote a letter to her father, the Sun Chief.

Kimana went to Rabbit. “Will you take this letter?”

Rabbit said, “I cannot go to Heaven.”

Kimana went to Antelope. “Will you take this letter?”

Antelope said, “I cannot go to Heaven.”

Kimana went to Hawk. “Will you take this letter?”

Hawk said, “I can go halfway. But I cannot go to Heaven.”

Then Frog came to Kimana. “Why do you not take the letter yourself?”

Kimana said, “This I cannot do.”

Frog said, “Then I will take it for you.”

Kimana laughed. “Can a frog take a letter to Heaven?”

Frog said, “Whatever it is, I can do it. But only if I try.”

Now, Frog lived by a well. Every day, the girls who served the Sun Chief came to this well. They climbed down from Heaven on a web made by Spider. Then they filled their water jugs and went home.

Frog put the letter in his mouth and hid in the well. The girls from Heaven came for water, singing their song.

*Good day to you, my sister.   
Good day to you.*

They lowered their jugs into the well, and Frog jumped into one. The girls did not see.

Then the girls climbed back up the web of Spider. They went into the house of the Sun Chief and left the jugs in a room.

Frog was alone. He jumped out of the jug and spit the letter out on a bench. Then he hid in a corner.

The Sun Chief came for a drink of water. He saw the letter and opened it. He read, “I, Kimana, a man of earth, wish to marry the Sky Maiden, your daughter.”

The Sun Chief said, “How can this be?”

He went to the girls who fetched water. “Did you bring this letter?”

The girls said, “We did not.”

He went to his wife, the Moon Lady, and read it to her. “What should we do?”

The Moon Lady said, “Don’t ask me! Ask your daughter!”

He went to his daughter. The Sky Maiden said, “Let us see if he can bring a wedding gift.”

So the Sun Chief wrote a letter and set it on the bench. Then he went away.

Frog came out and put the letter in his mouth. Then he climbed into an empty jug.

The next day, the girls took the jugs and climbed down to earth, singing their song.

*Good day to you, my sister.   
Good day to you.*

They lowered their jugs into the well, and Frog jumped out. The girls did not see.

Then the girls went back to Heaven.

Frog took the letter to Kimana, and Kimana read it. “You may marry my daughter if you bring a purse of money.”

Kimana said, “This I cannot do.”

Frog said, “Then I will bring it for you.”

Kimana laughed. “You took a letter to Heaven. But can you bring a purse of money?”

Frog said, “Whatever it is, I can do it. But only if I try.”

Kimana gave Frog a purse of money. Frog took hold of it with his mouth and carried it to the well. He climbed in and waited.

The girls from Heaven came to the well.

*Good day to you, my sister.   
Good day to you.*

Frog got into one of the jugs. The girls returned to Heaven and left him in the room.

Frog set the money on the bench. Then he hid.

The Sun Chief came and found the purse. “How can this be?”

He went to the girls. “Did you bring this money?”

The girls said, “We did not.”

He went to his wife. The Moon Lady said, “Don’t ask me! Ask your daughter!”

He went to his daughter. The Sky Maiden said, “Let us see if he can come fetch me.”

So the Sun Chief wrote a letter and left it on the bench.

Frog put the letter in his mouth and climbed into an empty jug. The next day, the girls carried him to earth.

*Good day to you, my sister.   
Good day to you.*

He jumped back into the well, and the girls went back to Heaven.

Frog brought the letter to Kimana, and Kimana read it. “You may marry my daughter if you come and fetch her.”

Kimana said, “This I cannot do.”

Frog said, “Then I will fetch her for you.”

Kimana laughed. “You took a letter to Heaven. You brought a purse of money. But can you fetch a bride?”

Frog said, “Whatever it is, I can do it. But only if I try.”

Frog climbed back into the well. The girls came with their jugs.

*Good day to you, my sister.   
Good day to you.*

They carried him to Heaven.

Frog jumped out. He spit in all the jugs of water. *Ptui. Ptui. Ptui.* Then he hid in an empty jug.

The people of the house came and drank the water. They all got sick.

The Sun Chief called for the spirit doctor. The doctor told him, “You promised your daughter to a man of earth, but she has not gone. He has sent an evil spirit with a sickness. The evil spirit is in the shape of a frog.”

The Sun Chief went to his wife. The Moon Lady said, “Don’t ask me! Ask your daughter!”

He went to his daughter. The Sky Maiden said, “I will go.”

The next day, the Sky Maiden went with the girls down to the well.

*Good day to you, my sister.   
Good day to you.*

The girls filled their jugs, and Frog jumped out. Then the girls left the Sky Maiden and went home.

Frog jumped out of the well. “I will lead you to your husband.”

The Sky Maiden laughed. “Can a frog lead a woman?”

Frog said, “I took a letter to Heaven. I brought a purse of money. I fetched a bride. Whatever it was, I could do it. But only since I tried.”

The Sky Maiden said, “Then it is you I will marry.”

She took Frog back to Heaven and married him. They lived on and on.

And Kimana is still waiting for his bride.

**Antigua & Barbuda (North America)**

**Humor, Joke Tale, Trick**

**All Me Woman Friends Turn to Man**

<http://antiguastories.wordpress.com/joke-stories/althea-romeo-mark/>

Gladys and Ernest Hubbard lived on a small Caribbean island in a tiny village inhabited by farmers, fishermen and smugglers.

Ernest Hubbard had a reputation for being the village’s strongman. No one ever challenged him to a fight. He was hard-working and left home early to “drive” his cattle to pasture. At his land nearby, he inspected his cotton plants for weevils, tended his crops, which included cassava and pigeon peas. He was often away all day selling his produce.

His wife, Gladys, one of the most beautiful women in the village, was twenty years younger than Ernest. She had come from a family of twelve and had married him to escape the brood. She fixed him a hearty breakfast every morning. At midday, she brought him his lunch. Gladys prepared him various dishes including stew mutton and green bananas or cornmeal dumplings in a thick pot of peas soup, dukanah, and salt fish. After a big lunch, Ernest always drank water from a large jug of water Gladys brought to help him wash the food down. Gladys was a firm believer that “the way to a man’s heart was through his stomach” and that “a hungry man is an angry man.”

Gladys kept Ernest contented but she became bored and restless staying at home alone six days a week. Most Sundays, Ernest slept all day after church service.

After a hard day’s work, Ernest always stopped at the one of the local rum shops on his way home at night. There he would drink, play dominoes, and gossip. Rumours of strange men visiting his house in his absence buzzed on and off. At first, he put the rumours down to jealousy. But the rumours gnawed at him, so one day he decided to put an end to them. He chose the following Wednesday.

On this day, Gladys’s first suitor, Norbert, arrived at 9:00 a.m. She hugged him warmly and returned to a table where she was preparing a meal. He watched her slender fingers, covered with flour, roll and flatten dough to form dumplings. Norbert’s eyes then skirted her tall, dark limbs that glistened with coconut oil. She paused, washed her hands, and uncovered a plate of warm salt fish gravy and dumplings. He dug into the gravy while she prepared more dumplings and was wiping the salt fish gravy that rimmed his mouth when someone knocked on the door.

“Quick, hide under the bed, Norbert,” gasped Gladys. Norbert dived onto the floor, rolled under the bed like a combatant, and was safely out of sight by the time Gladys opened the door.

“Oh, hello, Leroy, I wasn’t expecting you today.” She pressed her hand to her chest to control its heaving. “Er….come in.”

“I was in the area and…….”

Keys rattled in the keyhole.

“Jesus, Leroy, hide in the barrel. I think is me husband.”

Leroy jumped nimbly leaped into the large wooden barrel standing next to the door and Gladys clamped the lid on.

The door burst open and in marched Ernest, snorting and puffing. He surveyed the room and his eyes soon lit upon the greasy plate of unfinished salt fish and dumplings. Grunting, he shook his head and glared at his wife.

“Ernest, what you doing back home,” stuttered Gladys.

“I forget something.”

“You forget something.”

“You deaf, Gladys?”

“No. Is just that you don’t usually come home mid-morning.”

“I is you husband. I can come home anytime I want. You eating lunch early?”

“I was feeling peckish and…….”

Another knock on the door interrupted their conversation. Gladys jerked.

“You not goin’ get the door, woman?”

Gladys ran to it and flung it open. “Oh, is you, Mr. Godwin. I wasn’t expecting you ‘til this afternoon. Ernest, this is Mr. Godwin. He come to take the barrel. It leaking.”

“You didn’t tell me that,” grumbled Ernest.

“I forget to tell you.”

“Mr. Godwin, there’s the barrel,” said Gladys, pointing near the door.

Mr. Godwin grabbed the barrel and tried to lift it. “What you got in here, stone?”

“He, he, he,” Gladys giggled. “I forget to take the wood out. Now hurry up. I ain’t got all day. I have to tend to me husband. Go on, go!”

There was no time to squabble so Mr. Godwin, struggling and straining, heaved the barrel onto his head and staggered out the door.

Not far from the Hubbard’s house, Mr. Godwin was still wobbling and stumbling along when a gravelly voice in the demijohn shouted, “Lord, God. That was a close call.”

“What the devil?” Mr. Godwin, terrified, dropped the barrel and fled, screaming.

“Jumbi, Jumbi in the barrel.” It rolled a short distance and crashed against a rock.

“A dead, a dead,” cried Leroy, as he climbed out of the splintered barrel and limped away groaning and checking his body for broken bones.

Back at the house, tears were streaming down Gladys’s face. “Ernest, I get some terrible news early this morning.”

“Gladys, is not the end of the world,” Ernest grunted.

“The world is really coming to an end, Ernest,” bawled Gladys. “All me woman friends turn to man. Come see for yourself. One hiding under the bed right now. She didn’t know where to turn to. Is a terrible thing, Ernest, a terrible thing!”

Ernest dashed to the bedroom and searched under the bed. Grabbing a pair of legs, he pulled Norbert out.

“Wha’ dis?” he yelled, raising his hands in the air. “Ah wha’ dis?”

Gladys, who had followed, shrieked, “You see what I tell you, Ernest. You see what I tell you. All me woman friends done turn to man.”

**Argentina (South America)**

**Explanation Tale, Origin, Animals**

**The Flamingo's Socks**

<http://tribes.tribe.net/b9b544af-89e5-4aa7-8dec-c917f83c3bd7/thread/5e354581-a276-441d-9dac-5d9189eb377b>  
  
The animals of the forest were arranging a ball and everybody was waiting for that moment, and all the animals had a new dress but the flamingos, which at that time were all white, didn't have anything to wear.   
  
They felt ugly and ridiculous and they didn't like any suit. Desperate, they went to the owl's house who was the most prestigious dressmaker of the forest. She designed for them a pair of striped, white and black trousers. These were the most marvellous suits that a flamingo had ever worn. Now they could go to the party. When the day came everybody was very happy, but the coral snakes were very worried about the flamingo's trousers, because they saw that the trousers were made of snake skin.   
  
The snakes were indignant and they bit the flamingos bodies and legs so they ran to the lake hot and itching.   
  
Since that day they don't go out of the lake because only the water can calm the pain caused by the bites, which left their legs red and their feathers pink like summer dusk.

**Armenia**

**Jealousy, Wicked Mother, Prince, Royalty**

**Nourie Hadig**

<http://www.gosanangelo.com/news/2013/jun/02/tell-me-a-story-602/>

Once upon a time, there lived a rich couple, and each month the woman asked the new moon, “Am I the most beautiful in the world, or are you?”

Each month the moon replied, “You are most beautiful.”

The woman gave birth to a baby girl, and they named her Nourie Hadig. She grew more beautiful with each passing year, and one night when she was 15, her mother asked the moon who was most beautiful. The moon replied, “Nourie Hadig is more beautiful than you or I.”

She fell instantly sick with jealousy. When Nourie Hadig noticed her mother’s fevered brow, she ran to her father. When he asked his wife what was wrong, she said, “Tell me, who is more important, your daughter or me?”

“I cannot answer such a question,” he said.

But she would not be calmed; she insisted her husband kill their daughter.

The man was sick with grief, but he felt he must somehow cure his wife of her illness. And so he told his daughter they must go into the forest to seek help. This they did, but at sunset the father tearfully looked at Nourie Hadig and said, “Wait here for my return.”

Nourie Hadig waited, but after many days when he did not appear, she began to search for him. She came to a house where she hoped she might find shelter. As she reached to knock, the door opened. She walked inside, and the door closed behind her. She turned to open it, but she could not.

Nourie Hadig discovered rooms full of silver and gold, silks and satins, rugs and candelabra, jewels and chandeliers, and at last a room where a handsome young man lay fast asleep. When she spoke, he did not answer or move.

And then she heard a disembodied voice that told her the prince was under a spell. “You must look after him for seven years,” the voice said, “and then the spell will be broken.”

And Nourie Hadig’s work began.

Three years passed, and Nourie Hadig tended to the sleeping prince.

One night her mother smiled up at the new moon, and for the first time since her daughter’s death, she asked, “Tell me, am I still the most beautiful in the world?”

The moon gleamed, as if winking, and said, “Nourie Hadig is most beautiful.”

And the woman understood her husband had not killed their daughter as she’d asked, and so she knew she must do it herself.

So the mother set off to find Nourie Hadig.

Each month the mother asked the moon, “Who is most beautiful?” and each month the moon answered, “Nourie Hadig.”

Another year passed.

One day in her loneliness Nourie Hadig cried out the window to a group of Gypsies, “Will someone help me tend to a sleeping prince?” She dropped a rope, and one young girl agreed to climb the rope and help.

Nourie and the Gypsy girl took care of the prince together, and three more years passed.

One summery day, the Gypsy girl sat beside the bed when the young man woke. “You have broken my spell, and I shall marry you and make you my princess!” he said, and naturally the girl agreed.

Nourie Hadig loved the prince, but she did not say a word. When the prince asked if she would like a gift for her service, she told him she would like the Stone of Patience.

“And your happiness,” she said.

In the city the prince bought a ring and a bridal gown, and he went to see a stonecutter to ask if he might have the Stone of Patience.

The stonecutter smiled. “Yes,” he said, “but you must know this: If the Stone of Patience sees that your troubles are too great to repair, it will swell and break wide open.”

He agreed to sell the stone to the prince.

Back home the prince gave Nourie Hadig the Stone of Patience. At once she began to tell her tale.

“My father left me,” Nourie Hadig said, and the stone swelled to twice its size. She went on to tell of the four years she took care of the prince all alone, and it swelled still more. She spoke of the three years she and the bride-to-be worked, and she asked the stone, “Tell me, am I more patient, or are you?”

With those words the Stone of Patience broke open, and the prince understood Nourie Hadig had saved him. He asked her to become his wife.

And she became Princess of Adana.

Soon after, when her mother asked the moon who was most beautiful, the moon answered, “Princess of Adana.”

Now she knew how to find her daughter, and so she had a beautiful ring made and filled it with poison. She sent a servant to deliver the ring with a note asking for forgiveness.

Overjoyed by this, Nourie Hadig slipped the ring onto her finger. At once she fell into a deep sleep from which no one could wake her.

Three years passed, and just as his wife had looked after him, the prince looked after Nourie Hadig.

One day a healer came, and as he tended to Nourie Hadig, he noticed the ring. Hoping no one would see, he slipped the ring from her finger, and she woke.

He knew he had discovered a secret. He returned the ring to her finger.

“I can cure your wife,” he told the prince, “if you’ll pay me in silver and gold.”

Naturally, the prince agreed.

The healer removed every necklace, bracelet and ring Nourie Hadig wore.

Last of all, he slipped off the mother’s ring from her finger, and Nourie Hadig awoke at once.

That night, when her mother asked the new moon who was most beautiful, the moon answered, “Nourie Hadig, Princess of Adana.”

And the mother, shocked at this news, died that night.

But Nourie Hadig and the prince lived happily ever after.

**Aruba (North America)**

**Treasure, Ghosts**

**Legend of Pirates**

<http://www.visitaruba.com/about-aruba/aruba-culture/legend-of-pirates/>

In the 16th century, the Caribbean was a nest of pirates, who stole gold from the Spanish ships as they were trying to return to Spain.

Tonchi was a fisherman in the waters by Pos Chikito and Balashi, as his father and his grandfather, who was a Caiquetio indian, had done.

Tonchi tells a story of pirates that he recalls his father telling but also had heard it from his grandfather when he was younger. Tonchi recounts of an early time when pirates came to Aruba to bury their gold that they had on-board their ship.

Strangely enough the pirates did not go to Eagle Beach or Palm Beach where there is much more sand and where it is easier to dig, but instead they headed to the Spaans Lagoen area.

The main reason for this was because they needed a location to bury the gold that could be easily marked and identified later. Ideally the location should allow a mark that has a triangular form; it can be a hill, great rocks or boulders and sometimes big trees. When the 3 points of the objects come together in a straight line that was the place where the gold was buried.

So the captain reached the shore in a smaller boat along with one of his assistants. Upon reaching the shore, the captain first searched for the perfect spot, then ordered his assistant to dig the ground deep and wide enough, after which the assistant would place the case or bag of gold inside the hole that had been dug out. Not a moment too soon after the assistant had placed the gold, the captain drew his sword, and beheaded his assistant, throwing his body in the hole along with the gold. The captain then filled up the hole with sand again. This way the captain ensured that only he knows where the gold is buried.

Once back on board he conjured up a story that his assistant escaped before they could bury the gold.

As per Tonchi's story, the captain killed the assistant also so that the treasure has a permanent guardian. Sometimes the guardian ghost would pay a visit at night to a nearby village and would tell a person who is asleep to accompany him to where the gold is. If the person is courageous enough to not run away and decides to follow the ghost, then the guardian of the gold would liberated from his duty.

**Australia**

**Wayambeh the Turtle**

**Origin Tale, Explanation Tale, Animals**

Oolah, the lizard, was out getting yams on a Mirrieh flat. She had three of her children with her. Suddenly she thought she heard some one moving behind the big Mirrieh bushes. She listened. All of a sudden out jumped Wayambeh from behind a bush and seized Oolah, telling her not to make a noise and he would not hurt her, but that he meant to take her off to his camp to be his wife. He would take her three children too and look after them. Resistance was useless, for Oolah had only her yam stick, while Wayambeh had his spears and boondees. Wayambeh took the woman and her children to his camp. His tribe when they saw him bring home a woman of the Oolah tribe, asked him if her tribe had given her to him. He said, "No, I have stolen her."

"Well," they said, "her tribe will soon be after her; you must protect yourself; we shall not fight for you. You had no right to steal her without telling us. We had a young woman of our own tribe for you, yet you go and steal an Oolah and bring her to the camp of the Wayambeh. On your own head be the consequences."

In a short time the Oolahs were seen coming across the plain which faced the camp of the Wayambeh. And they came not in friendship or to parley, for no women were with them, and they carried no boughs of peace in their bands, but were painted as for war, and were armed with fighting weapons.

When the Wayambeh saw the approach of the Oolah, their chief said: "Now, Wayambeh, you had better go out on to the plain and do your own fighting; we shall not help you."

Wayambeh chose the two biggest boreens that he had; one he slung on him, covering the front of his body, and one the back; then, seizing his weapons, he strode out to meet his enemies.

When he was well out on to the plain, though still some distance from the Oolah, he called out, "Come on."

The answer was a shower of spears and boomerangs. As they came whizzing through the air Wayambeh drew his arms inside the boreens, and ducked his head down between them, so escaped.

As the weapons fell harmless to the ground, glancing off his boreen, out again he stretched his arms and held up again his head, shouting, "Come on, try again, I'm ready."

The answer was another shower of weapons, which he met in the same way. At last the Oolahs closed in round him, forcing him to retreat towards the creek.

Shower after shower of weapons they slung at him, and were getting at such close quarters that his only chance was to dive into the creek. He turned towards the creek, tore the front boreen off him, flung down his weapons and plunged in.

The Oolah waited, spears poised in hand, ready to aim directly his head appeared above water, but they waited in vain. Wayambeh, the black fellow, they never saw again, but in the waterhole wherein he had dived they saw a strange creature, which bore on its back a fixed structure like a boreen, and which, when they went to try and catch it, drew in its head and limbs, so they said, "It is Wayambeh." And this was the beginning of Wayambeh, or turtle, in the creeks.

**Austria (Europe)**

**Trickster**

**Hahnenkikerle**

To the Golden Star hotel at Innsbruck there once came a very rich foreign princess. She was suffering from a terrible disorder that had baffled every doctor that had tried to cure her. Now the princess had heard of Dr. Theophrast, and had come to Innsbruck to consult him there. But he too said it was a malady that he had no control over, even though people said he was a wonder doctor. This was a terrible shock to the princess who had travelled so far in hopes of a cure.

One day when she was lying inconsolable in her bed, a tiny little man came into the room and offered his services. He also gave her a potion, and told her it would restore her to health.

But the little fellow added that on that day next year he should return, and if she had forgotten his name, which was Hahnenkikerle, she must promise to marry him and to live with him under the Hottinger Gorge.

The princess gladly accepted this proposition, and she awoke on the following morning as fresh and healthy as a May rose.

She remained in Innsbruck, where she gave feast after feast, and in this way the year soon passed by. All at once she remembered her promise to the little dwarf, whose name had escaped her, and every effort to recall it was in vain. "Oh, why didn't I write it down at once and read it over several times?" she lamented.

She went on and asked many people, but no one could tell her. She confided her anxiety to her friends, but they could neither help her nor give her any advice. Only a poor servant girl, who came to hear of it, decided to try and help the princess.

So she went into the Gorge, hoping to hear something certain there. She listened as she crept about all over, and at last she heard in the depth of the Klamm a joyous shouting, and down below she saw the dwarf jumping and singing, "Hurrah! the princess in the Golden Star hotel doesn't know that my name is Hahnenkikerle."

The girl hurried home as fast as she could, and told the princess all she had heard. Now the princess remembered the name, and when the day came and the dwarf appeared, she called out to him, "Hahnenkikerle!"

At hearing this the dwarf rushed away raging into the mountain.

The girl was rewarded by the princess; and when she married an honest burgher of Innsbruck, she received a princely dower.

**Azerbaijan (Asia)**

**Cleverness, Trickster**

**Jirtdan**

<http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/43_folder/43_articles/43_children.html>

Once upon a time, there was a little boy who lived in a village with his Grandmother. Now this little boy was so small that people used to call him "Jirtdan," which means "tiny." But it didn't matter much because he was very, very smart.   
  
Jirtdan loved his Grandmother very much, and she loved him, too. She used to bake him delicious cakes and tell him stories. And Jirtdan used to help her by bringing water from the spring or by going to the forest to find firewood.  
  
One day Grandmother invited all of Jirtdan's friends together and gave each of them some bread and butter and told them to go to the forest and bring back some firewood. "But take care of Jirtdan! He's younger and smaller than all of you. Make sure you watch out for him!" she cautioned.  
  
So the boys left, carrying their bread and butter. After a while, they reached the forest and started cutting wood. Everybody was working-well, everybody that is, except Jirtdan. "Jirtdan, why aren't you cutting wood?" the other boys asked.  
  
"My Grandmother gave you bread and butter so that you would cut wood for me, too," Jirtdan replied.  
  
So the boys cut wood for Jirtdan, too. When they finally finished, it was starting to get dark. The boys started gathering up their bundles of wood to head home. But Jirtdan didn't budge.   
  
"Jirtdan, why aren't you carrying your bundle of wood?" the boys asked.  
  
"My Grandmother gave you bread and butter so that you would carry my bundle of wood," Jirtdan replied.  
  
So the boys picked up Jirtdan's bundle, too. When they started to leave, they saw that Jirtdan just sat on the side of the path, with tears running down his face. "Why are you crying, Jirtdan? Why aren't you coming with us?" the boys asked.  
  
"My Grandmother gave you bread and butter so that you would carry me when I got tired," Jirtdan told them.  
  
So one of the boys lifted Jirtdan onto his back, and they all started on their journey homewards. But soon it grew dark. The boys walked and walked, but they couldn't find their way out of the black forest. They were lost. As they looked around, they heard a dog barking off in the distance. In the opposite direction, they saw a light. They wondered what they should do. Finally, they asked tiny Jirtdan, "Jirtdan, maybe you know. Which way should we go? Over there where the dog is barking or in the opposite direction where there is light?"  
  
Jirtdan thought a moment. "If we go where the dog is barking, maybe it will attack us. Let's go towards the light."  
  
And so they started walking towards the light. As they came closer, they realized the light was shining out from a house. (Now the boys didn't know that the house really belonged to a "div," a big, ugly, scary monster who loved to eat children). They knocked at the door, but nobody answered. Then they went in and decided it would be a good safe place to stay until morning.   
  
Suddenly, the children heard a huge noise, like a lion roaring. The boys were so frightened. They ran and tried to hide. The door opened, and a big, ugly div entered his house. He started sniffing around. "What's this smell in here? It smells like some human beings are here-some tasty little boys. I wonder where they can be?"  
  
The div looked behind the doors, under the tables and under the bed until he found all the boys. "Who are you and what are you doing in my house?" the div asked.  
  
And with a quiet, scared voice, one of the boys said, "We went to the forest to get some wood. But it got dark, and we got lost. That's when we saw the light in your house."  
  
The div looked at the boys. He could smell how tasty they would be. But he realized that he wouldn't be able to eat all of them at the same time, so he decided to get them to go to bed so that he could eat them one by one while they were sleeping.   
  
"Why don't you stay here?" the div suggested. "In the morning when there is light, you'll be able to find your way back home easily. It's impossible now. You would never find your way home in the dark. Stay here with me safely inside the house. I'll make a place for you to sleep in the other room."  
And so the boys agreed and went off to bed. But not Jirtdan. He realized what the div intended to do. He decided to stay awake in case the div tried to eat them. Finally, everybody was asleep, everybody, that is, except Jirtdan. The div waited quietly in the next room hoping that the children would soon fall asleep. A little later he crept quietly into the room. "Who is asleep? Who is awake?" he whispered.  
  
"Everybody is asleep, but Jirtdan is awake," Jirtdan replied.  
  
"Why is Jirtdan awake? What does Jirtdan want?"  
  
"Well, every night my Grandmother makes me scrambled eggs before I go to bed."  
  
So the div went into the kitchen and busied himself with making Jirtdan a plate of scrambled eggs. Then he brought it to Jirtdan and went back into the next room, waiting for the moment when Jirtdan would fall asleep.  
  
It was nearly morning when the div once again crept quietly into the room where the boys were sleeping. "Who is asleep? Who is awake?" he whispered for the second time.  
  
"Everybody is asleep, but Jirtdan is awake!" again came the reply.  
  
"Why is Jirtdan awake? What does Jirtdan want?" the div asked.  
  
"Well, every night before going to bed, my Grandmother brings me water from the river in a sieve," Jirtdan replied.  
  
The div was sure that this time Jirtdan would go to sleep if he just brought him some water from the river in a sieve. So he ran out the door down to the river.   
  
Immediately, Jirtdan wakened the boys. "Quick! Quick! Let's get out of here. The div wants to eat us. Let's get out of this house!"   
  
So the boys ran out as fast as they could. In the distance, they could see the div trying to fill the sieve with water - an impossible task because it was always leaking out. And so the boys quickly crossed the river without making a sound. Eventually, the div looked up and saw them on the opposite side of the river. He started running after them. "Hey boys, let me go with you. Tell me how you got across the river!"   
  
Jirtdan pointed to the big, heavy millstone which was lying close to the div. The mill stone was used for grinding wheat and had a big hole in the middle of it.  
  
Jirtdan called back to the div. "Do you see that big mill stone? Pick it up, and put it over your head. Then you can cross the river."  
  
The stupid div followed Jirtdan's advice and, of course, the heavy stone around the div's neck pulled him down to the bottom of the river.   
  
And that's the story of how tiny little Jirtdan outwitted the div and was able to return safely with his friends to his Grandmother.

**Bahamas, The (North America)**

**Animals, Jealousy**

**De Girl An’ De Fish**

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/534010?seq=1>

Dis day dis girl vwen’ down to de sea for salt vwatah. She ketch one little fish hout de conch shell. She name ‘im Choncho-wally. She put ‘im in de vwell. Ev’ry mohnen she use to put some ‘er breakfas’ in de bucket an’ carry to de fish; an’ some ‘er dinner, an’ some ‘er supper. She feed ‘im ‘till ‘e get a big fish.

Dis mohnin’, vw’en she vwen’ to cahy de breakfas’ for ‘im, she sing: “Conch-o, Conch-o-wally, Don’t you vwan’ to marry me, My deddy short-tail?”

‘E comes up an’ she feed ‘im. Den she let ‘im go down. Vw’en she vwen’ home, de boy say, “Pa, siste’ got somet’in’ inside de vwell.”

Den de nex’ day she come; bring vittles for ‘im. De man say to de boy, “you go behin’ de tree an’ listen to vw’at she goin’ sing.” De gal sing: “Conch-o, Conch-o-wally, Don’t you vwan’ to marry me, My deddy short-tail?”

Huh! De boy ketch it; ‘e gone; tell ‘e pa. De boy say, “Pa, sister say, “Conch-o, Conch-o-wally, Don’t you vwan’ to marry me, My deddy short-tail?” De man go; ‘e took he grange, ‘e sing, “Conch-o, Conch-o-wally, Don’t you vwan’ to marry me, My deddy short-tail?” De fish come hup; ‘e strike ‘im. ‘E carry ‘im home an’ dey had some fur dinner. De gal say, “I bet you dis nice fish!”

Den de gal took some in de bucket to cahy to de fish. Den vw’en de gal vwen’ to de vwell to call de fish, she sing, “Conch-o, Conch-o-wally, Don’t you vwan’ to marry me, My deddy short-tail?” She sing again, “Conch-o, Conch-o-wally, Don’t you vwan’ to marry me, My deddy short-tail?” She ain’ hear no fish an’ she ain’ see none. She sing agin, “Conch-o, Conch-o-wally, Don’t you vwan’ to marry me, My deddy short-tail?” She begin to cry now, “Conch-o, Conch-o-wally, Don’t you vwan’ to marry me, My deddy short-tail?” Den she vwen’ home to de house, behin’ de house, an’ she cry ‘erself to death.

**Bahrain (Asia)**

**Trickster, Animals**

**The Monkey and the Lion**

There was a lion in the forest.  One day this lion was hungry, and he met a young monkey on his way, so he thought he would eat this monkey instead of being hungry all the time.  so he said to the monkey, "I am hungry, and I haven't found anything to eat this day.  I know you are not enough for me, but I am going to eat you, young monkey."  The monkey was in a big problem, but found a way to run away from that lion.  He changed the subject.  He said, "Do you want to play together, what my father and your father played?  Because they were friends."  The lion said, "Oh, I didn't know that; that's interesting.  What is that?"  The monkey was lying.  Both the monkey and the lion went to a big area that had machines, because the monkey said, "I have to find machines to play."  And the monkey said, "I am going first, what you have to do is just hang me when I throw myself down, and be careful of me."  The lion said, "OK, be safe, friend."  Then the monkey went to the top, and said to the lion, "Are you ready?"  The lion said, "Sure, go ahead!"  The monkey knew the lion wouldn't let him fall down because the lion wanted to try it.  The monkey threw himself, and the lion hanged him, and then the lion went to the top, and he said again to the monkey, "Are you ready, friend?"  The monkey said "Sure, my goodness!"  But after the lion threw himself the monkey said, "Oh, wait, I am not ready!"  Then he ran away.  Then the lion hurt himself.  The monkey found a place and at the same time a newspaper, and he just made himself read it.  The lion came fast and asked the monkey, "Did you see any monkey come by this way?"  The monkey said, "Who?"  Who made a fool of you?"  And the lion said, "Oh, that was so fast, it's already in the newspaper."

**Bangladesh (Asia)**

**Morals, Cleverness**

**The Story of the Two Old Women**

<http://learningtogive.org/materials/folktales/TwoWomen.asp>

In Bangladesh almost every villager knows the folktale of the Tetan Buri (clever old woman) and the Boka Buri (the foolish old woman). Two old women chummed up together. One of them was very cunning and sharp while the other one was very foolish and credulous. They shared one common wrap (Kantha), one cow and a small piece of land.

The Tetan old woman suggested that the wrap will be used by her in the night and the Boka old woman would have it in the day. The other woman agreed. The result was that in the cold night the foolish old woman shivered while the clever one slept soundly with the wrap. Regarding the cow the clever one suggested that the front portion belonged to the foolish old woman and the hind part was hers. This was agreed to. The result was the foolish old woman had to feed the cow and give her water but the other one took all the milk. When there was paddy or sugarcane grown on the small piece of the land the arrangement was that the clever one would get the portion above the ground while the part below the soil would go to the goody goody old woman. This was also agreed to. The paddy or the maize went to the clever one while the goody one had the useless roots which she had to pull out and burn to make the land ready again.

The foolish old woman was practically starving and used to beg for a little food. One day she approached the barber of another village for some food. The barber (all barbers are very clever) asked why she was begging when she had a piece of land and a cow along with another old woman. Our goody goody old woman narrated the story. The barber smiled and told her to soak the wrap in water when handing it over to the other one in the night and not to give any fodder to the cow and rather [yell at] her in the front part. He further advised her to take out the roots when the paddy was young or the maize was not ready.

The advice had the result. The old woman shivered and shivered in the night. The cow used to kick her when she would try to milk her. The crops failed and she starved too.

She saw that there are people who were more cunning. The villagers decided that there should be the arrangement which was more just to the two women.

**Barbados (North America)**

**Trickster**

**The Metaphysical Prank**

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/stable/25613006?seq=3>

A very sick man went to a practicing metaphysician who operated in the city of Bridgetown. The practitioner explained to the man what “Pain” was all about. He told him that pain was a man’s ally and that it really only existed in the mind. He claimed that all that had to be done was to affirm and believe that the pain was gone and that gradually the pain would be relieved. With neophyte’s zeal, the sick man successfully made the affirmations.

However, when the practitioner asked for the fees for his service, the man who by now was fully recovered said: “what fees? All you have to do is to affirm and believe that you receive the fees and you have them.”

**Belarus (Europe)**

**Cleverness, Animals**

**Wit Wins, not Strength**

A man went to the forest to make firewood. Having cut much wood, he sat down on a stump to rest a little.

A bear came up to him:

"Hey, Man! Let's wrestle!"

The man glanced at the bear: so huge one! And he thought, "It is impossible to wrestle with him. He will squeeze me between his paws - and the end".

"Oh", the man said, "Why should I wrestle with you! First let's see whether you have any strength".

"And how can we see that?" the bear asked.

The man took his axe, made a cleft through the top of the stump, thrust a wedge into the cleft and said:

"If you split this stump in half with your paw, it will be a sign of your strength. Then we shall wrestle with each other".

And the bear quickly stuck his paw into the cleft. At this moment the man banged the stump with the butt of his axe and the wedge sprang out.

So the stump squeezed the bear's paw like pincers.

The bear roared, danced on his three paws, but couldn't free himself from the cleft.

"Well then", the man said, "will you wrestle with me now?"

"No!" the bear roared, "I won't!"

"Well," the man said, "strength is good, but wit is better".

He thrust the wedge back into the cleft, the bear pulled out his paw and ran away. Ever since then he has been afraid of meeting a man.

**Belgium (Europe)**

**Trickster, Cleverness**

**How Reynard Reminded the King of his Virtues**

<http://oaks.nvg.org/rey4.html#refowo>

Reynard saw that his tale of the three wonderful jewels had awakened interest in the minds of the king and the queen and was very glad, but he was far too cunning to show his pleasure. He kept still a stern, grave face, and after a little silence began to speak again. "Do you still doubt my faith, king?" he said. "Who among all your friends is there who would bring you such precious gifts? My wife wept when she saw me put the jewels in the bag to send to Your Majesty, for, woman-like, she treasured them exceedingly and especially the mirror. Well do I know who has poisoned your heart against me – it is that treacherous thief, Isegrim the Wolf, who has always hated me and would work my ruin if he could!"

Isegrim glared at Reynard and showed his teeth in a wicked snarl. If looks could kill, Reynard would have died that day. As it was, however, he took no notice of the wolf's scowls, and went on speaking.

"There was a time, Your Majesty, and not so very long ago, when you knew well how to judge between the wolf and me. Do you remember that day when the wolf and I were in the forest together? We had caught a pig, and were about to make our dinner from it when Your Majesty and Mylady Queen came out of a grove and prayed us to give you a part. You had been out hunting, and had caught nothing, and you were very hungry.

"How did I answer you? 'Yes, lord,' I said, 'with a good will.' But the wolf growled out sulkily like the ill-mannered cur that he is, and took a half of the pig for himself and left only a quarter each for you and the queen. Do you remember? And he gave me only the skinny part of the pig's tail for my dinner. And I was very hungry, lord. Bad luck to him for being such a greedy knave!.

"And what was half a pig between you and the queen? You remember how you ate it up quickly and asked for more, and when he neither gave nor offered you any you lifted up your right foot and kicked him till he howled for mercy. Then you said to him, "Make haste and bring us some more food, and we will see that the next meal is shared better.".

"I went with him, and it was not long before we killed a fat calf, and brought it back to you. Then you praised me, and said I was swift in hunting, and bade me deal out the meat. So I dealt it out, saying, 'One half the meat shall be for the king and the other half for the queen. Isegrim shall have the head and I will have the feet.".

"Then you said to me, 'Well done, Reynard! Who taught you to share so well?'

"And I answered, 'I learnt it from seeing the sores of Isegrim where you kicked him, my lord. I think his groans at night come from being knocked by Your Majesty.'

"Next you were well pleased and took me into favour, but you sent Isegrim about his business and would have nothing more to do with him. And you were wise in that. This was not the only time that I proved my worth to you in days gone by. I could recall many more things to your mind if it would not take too long. Now, alas, you have forsaken me, who was always your friend, and believe the lies my enemies tell of me."

Here Reynard broke down and sobbed, while large tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Come, Reynard," said the king kindly. "Do not give way. I am far from believing everything I hear, you know. As a matter of fact, now I come to think of it, all that I know of Cuwaert's death is the fact that Bellyn brought his head here in a bag. There is no proof that you had anything to do with the killing of him.

**Belize (Central America)**

**Monsters, Tricks**

**The Scary Sisimito**

<http://belize-travel-blog.chaacreek.com/2013/04/belizean-folklore-the-legends-of-belize/>

Legend has it that the hairy male Sisimitos and female Sisimitas lived deep in the caves of Belize. Their short, hirsute figures made them appear closer to apes than modern men. They ate fruits and leaves just like apes too, although they preferred snacking on human flesh.

It’s said that their heels were at the front of their feet and the toes at their back, a clever tactic that made their footprints appear as if they were heading in the opposite direction. Unsuspecting humans might feel the creatures were traveling away from them, only to discover they were dangerously close by.

A man would usually die within a month of looking a Sisimito in the eye. However women were much luckier, as a Sisimito’s gaze would prolong her life, if only she could escape. Sisimitos were known to abduct and rape women, while Sisimitas would kill and molest men.

The Sisimito and Sisimita weren’t without weakness though. They were petrified of water and dogs. Smart Belizeans knew they could escape an attack by walking near a river or with a canine companion.

**Benin (Africa)**

**Jealousy, Magic**

**The Elephant Tusk**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| In the 16th century the oba of Benin died without any heirs, and the once-powerful kingdom of Benin was plunged into a century of chaos. A series of kings claimed the right to rule but failed to hold the kingdom together. Rebel chiefs fought to gain control of the weak kingship. Then a wise oba restored order to the kingdom, but not without making enemies.   |  | | --- | |  | |  |   Iyase n'Ode (ee-YAH-say en Oh-day), a particularly ambitious town chief and one of the oba's two military commanders, rebelled against the oba. The evil chief continued to make trouble in the kingdom by siding with the jealous rival brother of the next ruler, Oba Akenzua (ah-ken-ZOO-ah) I. |
| Iyase n'Ode was extremely powerful because he had the ability to turn himself into an elephant. It took the strength and wisdom of another military commander, the Ezomo Ehenua (ee-ZOH-moh ee-he-NEW-ah), to finally defeat Iyase n'Ode and save the kingdom. In honor of this victory, Oba Akenzua I made the title of ezomo, or palace chief, hereditary. Today, Benin ezomos proudly trace their heritage to the historical hero Ezomo Ehenua. |

**Bhutan (Asia)**

**Foolishness, Animals, Humorous**

**The Monkeys and the Moon in the Well**

<http://bhutanjournals.com/literature/bhutanese-folktale/the-monkeys-and-the-moon-in-the-well/>

Long time ago, there lived a band of monkeys in a forest, and in the forest was a well. One night, the leader of the band of monkeys peered into the well, and seeing the reflection of the moon in the water, said:

“Look! The moon has fallen into the well; we ought to get it out or our world will be without a moon.”

The other monkeys looked into the well and saw that it was indeed so. “Yes,” they agreed. “We should certainly get the moon out of the well.”

So the monkeys formed a chain, each holding onto the tail of the one before, while the monkey at the top of the chain held onto a branch to support them.

The branch began to bend under the weight of the monkeys as they lowered themselves into the well, and soon began to crack. The water was disturbed and the reflection of the moon disappeared, the branch broke, and the monkeys tumbled headlong into the well.

**Bolivia (South America)**

**Origin Tale, Explanation**

**The Legend of the Kantuta**

<http://www.boliviabella.com/legend-of-the-kantuta.html>

It is said that long ago lived two Incan kings, Illimani and Illampu. Both were wealthy and each owned vast quantities of land in the Kollasuyo (now the Altiplano, or Bolivian highlands in Western Bolivia). Each also had one son.

Jealous of each other’s wealth, one of the kings mounted an attack against the other and during combat, each was mortally wounded. Although both of their sons had been against the war to begin with, upon their death beds each made their son promise to avenge their death by warring against each other.

Bound by their promises to their fathers, a second battle ensued and this time, as history always repeats itself, the sons each mortally wounded the other. However, unlike their fathers, before dying the princes forgave one another and made their servants promise to bury them side by side on the battlefield.

Pachamama (known as Mother Earth or Mother Nature, and sometimes referred to as the Goddess of Fertility) appeared to the princes before they died. She told them they should not be punished for their fathers’ wrongdoing. So she caused the stars of their fathers to fall from the sky. Upon crashing to the earth they formed the snow-covered mountains you can still see on the Altiplano today, which have been named Illimani and Illampu, and are the two highest mountains in the region.

It is said the rivers that form when their snowcaps melt are actually their tears of regret and these fertilize the valleys where the Kantuta now grows. The Kantuta is considered a symbol of unity because its two primary colors (red and yellow) were the colors used by the king’s sons. Green is the color of hope.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Cleverness, Family**

**The Two Brothers**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/sfs/sfs61.htm>

THERE was a man who had a wife but no sons, a female hound but no puppies, and a mare but no foal. 'What in the world shall I do?' said he to himself. 'Come, let me go away from home to seek my fortune in the world, as I haven't any at home.' As he thought, so he did, and went out by himself into the white world as a bee from flower to flower. One day, when it was about dinner-time, he came to a spring, took down his knapsack, took out his provisions for the journey, and began to eat his dinner. Just then a traveller appeared in front of him, and sat down beside the spring to rest; he invited him to sit down by him that they might eat together. When they had inquired after each other's health and shaken hands, then the second corner asked the first on what business he was travelling about the world. He said to him: 'I have no luck at home, therefore I am going from home; my wife has no children, my hound has no puppies, and my mare has never had a foal; I am going about the white world as a bee from flower to flower.' When they had had a good dinner, and got up to travel further, then the one who had arrived last thanked the first for his dinner, and offered him an apple, saying: 'Here is this apple for you '--if I am not mistaken it was a Frederic pippin--'and return home at once; peel the apple and give the peel to your hound and mare; cut the apple in two, give half to your wife to eat, and eat the other half yourself. What has hitherto been unproductive will hence-forth be productive. And as for the two pips which you will find in the apple, plant them on the top of your house.' The man thanked him for the apple; they rose up and parted, the one going onwards and the other back to his house. He peeled the apple and did everything as the other had instructed him. As time went on his wife became

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the mother of two sons, his hound of two puppies, and his mare of two foals, and, moreover, out of the house grew two apple-trees. While the two brothers were growing up, the young horses grew up, and the hounds became fit for hunting. After a short time the father and mother died, and the two sons, being now left alone like a tree cut down on a hill, agreed to go out into the world to seek their fortune. Even so they did: each brother took a horse and a hound, they cut down the two apple-trees, and made themselves a spear apiece, and went out into the wide world. I can't tell you for certain how many days they travelled together; this I do know, that at the first parting of the road they separated. Here they saw it written up: 'If you go by the upper road you will not see the world for five years; if you go by the lower road, you will not see the world for three years.' Here they parted, one going by the upper and the other by the lower road. The one that went by the lower road, after three years of travelling through another world, came to a lake, beside which there was written on a post: 'If you go in, you will repent it; if you don't go in, you will repent it.' If it is so,' thought he to himself, 'let me take whatever God gives,' and swam across the lake. And lo! a wonder! he, his horse, and his hound were all gilded with gold. After this he speedily arrived at a very large and spacious city. He went up to the emperor's palace and inquired for an inn where he might pass the night. They told him, up there, yon large tower, that was an inn. In front of this tower he dismounted; servants came out and welcomed him, and conducted him into the presence of their master in the courtyard. But it was not an innkeeper, but the king of the province himself. The king welcomed and entertained him handsomely. The next day he began to prepare to set forth on his journey. The evening before, the king's only daughter, when she saw him go in front of her apartments,

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had observed him well, and fixed her eyes upon him. This she did because such a golden traveller had never before arrived, and consequently she was unable to close her eyes the whole night. Her heart thumped, as it were; and it was fortunate that the summer night was brief, for if it had been a winter one, she could hardly have waited for the dawn. It all seemed to her and whirled in her brain as if the king was calling her to receive a ring and an apple; the poor thing would fly to the door, but it was shut and there was nobody at hand. Although the night was a short one, it seemed to her that three had passed one after another. When she observed in the morning that the traveller was getting ready to go, she flew to her father, implored him not to let that traveller quit his court, but to detain him and to give her to him in marriage. The king was good-natured, and could easily be won over by entreaties; what his daughter begged for, she also obtained. The traveller was detained and offered marriage with the king's daughter. The traveller did not hesitate long, kissed the king's hand, presented a ring to the maiden, and she a handkerchief to him, and thus they were betrothed. Methinks they did not wait for publication of banns. Erelong they were wedded; the wedding feast and festival were very prolonged, but came to an end in due course. One morning after all this the bridegroom was looking in somewhat melancholy fashion down on the country through a window in the tower. His young wife asked him what ailed him? He told her that he was longing for a hunt, and she told him to take three servants and go while the dew was still on the grass. Her husband would not take a single servant, but mounting his gilded horse and calling his gilded hound, went down into the country to hunt. The hound soon found scent, and put up a stag with gilded horns. The stag began to run straight for a tower, the hound after him, and the hunter after the

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hound, and he overtook the stag in the gate of the courtyard, and was going to cut off its head. He had drawn his sword, when a damsel cried through the window: 'Don't kill my stag, but come upstairs: let us play at draughts for a wager. If you win, take the stag; if I win, you shall give me the hound.' He was as ready for this as an old woman for a scolding match, went up into the tower, and on to the balcony, staked the hound against the stag, and they began to play. The hunter was on the point of beating her, when some damsels began to sing: 'A king, a king, I've gained a king!' He looked round, she altered the position of the draughtsmen, beat him and took the hound. Again they began to play a second time, she staking the hound and he his horse. She cheated him the second time also. The third time they began to play, she wagered the horse, and he himself. When the game was nearly over, and he was already on the point of beating her, the damsels began to sing this time too, just as they had done the first and second times. He looked round, she cheated and beat him, took a cord, bound him, and put him in a dungeon.

The brother, who went by the upper road, came to the lake, forded it, and came out all golden--himself; his horse, and his hound. He went for a night's lodging to the king's tower; the servants came out and welcomed him. His father-in-law asked him whether he was tired, and whether he had had any success in hunting; but the king's daughter paid special attention to him, frequently kissing and embracing him. He couldn't wonder enough how it was that everybody recognised him; finally, he felt satisfied that it was his brother, who was very like him, that had been there and got married. The king's daughter could not wonder enough, and it was very distressing to her, that her newly-married husband was so soon tired of her, for the more affectionate she was to him, the more did he repulse

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her. When the morrow came, he got ready to go out to look for his brother. The king, his daughter, and all the courtiers, begged him to take a rest. 'Why,' said they to him, you only returned yesterday from hunting, and do you want to go again so soon?' All was in vain; he refused to take the thirty servants whom they offered him, but went down into the country by himself. When he was in the midst of the country, his hound put up a stag, and he after them on his horse, and drove it up to a tower; he raised his sword to kill the stag, but a damsel cried through a window: 'Don't meddle with my stag, but come upstairs that we may have a game at draughts, then let the one that wins take off the stakes, either you my hound, or I yours.' When he went into the basement, in it was a hound and a horse--the hounds and horses recognised each other--and he felt sure that his brother had fallen into prison there. They began the game at draughts, and when the damsel saw that he was going to beat her, some damsels began to sing behind them: 'A king! a king! I've gained a king!' He took no notice, but kept his eye on the draughtsmen; then the damsel, like a she-devil, began to make eyes and wink at the young man. He gave her a flip with his coat behind the ears: 'Play now!' and thus beat her. The second game they both staked a horse. She couldn't cheat him; he took both the hound and the horse from her. The third and last time they played, he staking himself and she herself; and after giving her a slap in her face for her winking and making of eyes, he won the third game. He took possession of her, brought his brother out of the dungeon, and they went to the town.

Now the brother, who had been in prison, began to think within himself: 'He was yesterday with my wife, and who knows whether she does not prefer him to me?' He drew his sword to kill him, but the draught-player defended him.

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[paragraph continues]He darted before his brother into the courtyard, and as he stepped on to the passage from the tower, his wife threw her arms round his neck and began to scold him affectionately for having driven her from him overnight, and conversed so coldly with her. Then he repented of having so foolishly suspected his brother, who had, moreover, released him from prison, and of having wanted to kill him; but his brother was a considerate person and forgave him. They kissed each other and were reconciled. He retained his wife and her kingdom with her, and his brother took the draught-player and her kingdom with her. And thus they attained to greater fortune than they could ever have even hoped for.

**Botswana (Africa)**

**Treasures**

**Selekana and the River God**

<http://www.learningtogive.org/resources/folktales/Selekana.asp>

Selekana was a good-natured girl, always ready help others. That is why people loved her so and some people to whom she had been kind had given her little gifts like a necklace or a bracelet made from multi-coloured beadwork as the Bantu peoples can make them so beautifully. Of course her agemates in the village envied her those ornaments, not realizing or not wanting to realize that she had earned them. Now in Africa girls have to go clown to the river every day to fetch water, usually before sunset, not after, otherwise the river spirits might get them, or so some people say.

Although the waterpots are heavy (some may weigh as much as forty pounds when filled) the girls usually do this chore cheerfully for it gives them a chance to gossip and show off any new article of dress they have got, or new armrings and earrings.

One afternoon Selekana was on her way to the river, when old mother Seleka asked her to help. She was a cripple and Selekana often assisted her with the work in the house. The old woman gave her a small bracelet made of an elephant's tail hair, saying: "There, take this, it is of no more use to me now as I am old, you may wear it. Thank you for helping me. Now hurry and get your water before it is dark.”Happy and grateful, Selekana ran with her pot down to the riverside. There she found all the girls of the village waiting for her with smiles on their faces. She noticed that none of them wore any ornaments.

The leading girl said: "Selekana, you are late, we have just finished our ceremony, we decided to propitiate the river god with the ritual of the offerings which we had not performed for a long time. So we all sacrificed our ornaments and threw them in the river. I am sure you would like to do the same, otherwise the river god might come out and catch you and drag you down to your death one day after dark when you are late again.” Selekana knew that the ceremony of the offerings to the river god was performed every year, but she had never heard that the girls organized it for themselves; on the contrary, it was something that the village chief usually announced so that the whole village took part in it, and the offerings were normally animals. Anyway, she was quite willing to contribute to the sacrifice in order to secure the goodwill of the river god for another year. So, in good faith, she took off her long necklace, her oblong breast ornament, her armrings and bracelets and threw them into the river one by one, calling on the river god each time to please accept them as a token of her gratitude for the water. When all her ornaments had disappeared into the water, Selekana, absorbed in her prayers, suddenly heard loud laughter behind her, and there were all the girls with their ornaments on, which they had quickly taken from their hiding places. It was all a plot: the girls had conspired to make Selekana throw her ornaments away so she would have none left to make them jealous with!What people will not do to satisfy their angry envy! Wise men say that jealousy is the worst of all wicked feelings and that is true, not only in Africa. However, if the girls could have foreseen what consequences their actions would have, they would never have done this!

Selekana burst into tears when she realized that she had foolishly parted with all her precious beadwork for nothing, and for good, as nobody would ever dare fish them up for her from the river bottom. The girls laughed like jackals: "Hee, hee, that silly girl believed that we would throw all our jewelry into the river just like that, and that is what she did! What did you learn since you were a baby, idiot!" etc. etc. When they were tired of laughing, the girls put their water jars on their heads and walked back to the village, leaving poor Selekana alone with her grief.

"River, river, give me back all the jewels I gave you for nothing!" She cried again and again. Suddenly she heard a voice from downstream: "Come here, child, follow me!" Selekana walked along the river until she came to a bend where the current had formed a wide and deep pool for which the people always warned their children: "Do not go near the place where the water eddies round, for you will drown there!" Selekana was frightened and called again: "River, please give me my beads back, I was deceived by my agemates!" She repeated her plea three times, and again she heard the voice, much nearer now, coming right from the centre of the pool: "Come down, child, and join me, I will give you your jewels!" Selekana walked into the river, desperate to get her beads back, lest she be forever ridiculed in the village, but as soon as the water rose over her knees, the river pulled her down and she sank into the deep pool.

After a long time, her feet touched bottom at last, and in front of her she saw a light. She walked towards it but in the water we can only walk slowly. She finally stood in the doorway of an underground cave where she could see a thousand precious stones flashing and sparkling so that the whole cave was brightly illuminated by their light. When Selekana's eyes had adjusted to the light she saw a woman coming towards her walking on only one leg—or was it a fishtail? The woman had only one hand with which she took Selekana firmly by the elbow. She guided her to another room where she had prepared a meal for her. "Eat first, my child, I will reward you for your offerings," spoke the River-woman.

The food was delicious, and when Selekana had finished, the River-woman said: "Now you must clean everything in this room, all the pots and pans, sweep the floor and when it is all done I will come back." She left and Selekana quickly washed all the pots and dishes, tidied the floor and as soon as she was ready, the River-woman came in again and said: "Come with me, I will give you your jewels now.”

She took the girl back to the jewelroom and gave her a choice of precious stones. Confused and delighted, Selekana pointed at some of the most brightly coloured stones, and the River-woman just plucked them from the wall. There were breast ornaments and necklaces, bracelets and earrings in all the shiniest colours of the rainbow. In addition, the River-woman gave her clothes of the finest calf-leather and jackal-fur. Suddenly they heard a loud splashing as if a rainstorm were approaching. "Quick, child, there is Kwena, the River-king, he will eat you if he finds you here," said the woman, and pushed Selekana out of the door and up towards the surface. While she rose up, Selekana saw a glimpse of the River-king: it was an enormous crocodile! But soon lucky Selekana was already with her head above the surface of the water, and quickly she swam towards the shore. It was a miracle that the river let her go and did not drag her down!

When Selekana walked along the familiar path to the village, she met her sister who looked at her with amazement, and when at last she recognized her, she exclaimed: "Why, it is Selekana! Where have you been? People say you are dead, drowned in the river! But you look like a princess, so beautiful and what fine clothes you have on, and look at your jewelry, you are rich, where did you get all this wealth?" Selekana told her story, and soon the whole village talked of nothing else, they all came to visit Selekana and admire her new treasures. Now, the leader of the girls thought that she ought to be the one who had a right to own such riches, therefore she went to the river and plunged into the deep pool. She was received by the River-woman in the brightly lit jewel-room and given a big meal. But when it came to washing the dishes, the haughty girl said: "Do you think I have nothing better to do? I am here to collect the same jewels that you gave Selekana. After all, I deserve them better than she, for I am the leader of the girls." The River-woman left and came back later, but when the girl still had not done any work, she left again. After some time, a loud splashing was heard like a rainstorm approaching. You can guess who was there, and you know that that big girl could not escape the big crocodile. She was never seen again in the village, and Selekana became the leader of the girls.

**Brazil (South America)**

**Explanation Tale, Animals**

**Why the Tiger and the Stag Fear Each Other**

Once upon a time there was a large handsome stag with great branching horns. One day he said to himself, "I am tired of having no home of my own, and of just living anywhere. I shall build me a house." He searched on every hill, in every valley, by every stream, and under all the trees for a suitable place. At last he found one that was just right. It was not too high, nor too low, not too near a stream and not too far away from one, not under too thick trees and not away from the trees out under the hot sun. "I am going to build my house here," he said, and he began to clear a place for it at once. He worked all day and did not go away until night.

Now in that same country there lived a large handsome tiger, with sharp, sharp teeth and bright, cruel eyes. One day the tiger said to himself, "I am tired of having no home of my own,—of just living around anywhere! I shall build me a house." Accordingly the tiger searched for a place to build his house. He searched on every hill, in every valley, by every stream, and under all the trees. At last he found a place which was just right. It was not too high nor too low, not too near a stream and not too far away from one, not under too thick trees and yet not away from the trees out in the hot sun. The tiger said to himself, "I am going to build my house here. The place is all ready for me for there isn't very much underbrush here." He began at once and finished clearing the place. Then it became daylight and he went away.

At daylight the stag came back to do more work on his new house. "H'm," he said when he looked at the clearing. "Somebody is helping me. The place is cleared and ready for me to build the foundation."

He began to work at once and worked all day. At night when the foundation was laid, he went away.

At night the tiger came to work at his new house. "H'm," he said when he looked at it. "Somebody is helping me. The foundations of my house are all laid." He began to work at once and built the sides of the house. He worked all night and went away at daybreak, leaving the house with the sides completed. There was a big door and a funny little window in the side.

At daybreak the stag came back to work on his house. When he saw it he rubbed his eyes for he thought that he must be dreaming. The sides of the house were completed with a big door and a funny little window. "Somebody must surely be helping me," he said to himself as he began to work to put on the roof. He worked hard all day and when the sun went down, there was a roof of dried grass on the house. "I can sleep in my own house to-night," he said. He made his bed in the corner and soon was sound asleep.

At night the tiger came back to work on his new house. When he saw it he rubbed his eyes for he thought that he must be dreaming. There was a roof of dried grass on the house.

"Somebody must surely be helping me," he said to himself as he entered the door. The first thing he saw when he entered the door was the stag sound asleep in his bed in the corner. "Who are you and what are you doing in my house?" he said in his deepest voice.

The stag woke up with a start. "Who are you and what are you doing in my house?" said the stag in his deepest voice.

"It is not your house. It is mine. I built it myself," said the tiger.

"It is my house," said the stag. "I built it myself."

"I made the clearing for the house," said the tiger, "I built the sides and made the door and window."

"I started the clearing," said the stag. "I laid the foundations and put on the roof of dried grass."

The stag and the tiger quarrelled all night about whose house it was. At daybreak they decided that they would live together there.

The next night the tiger said to the stag, "I'm going hunting. Get the water and have the wood ready for the fire. I shall be almost famished when I return."

The stag got the wood and water ready. After a while the tiger came back. He brought home for dinner a great handsome stag. The stag had no appetite at all and he didn't sleep a wink that night.

The next day the stag said that he was going hunting. He told the tiger to have the wood and water ready when he got back. The tiger got the wood and water ready. By and by the stag came back bringing with him the body of a great tiger.

"I am nearly famished," said the stag. "Let's have dinner right away." The tiger hadn't any appetite at all and he could not eat a mouthful.

That night neither the tiger nor the stag could sleep a wink. The tiger was afraid the stag would kill him if he shut his eyes for a minute, and the stag was afraid the tiger would kill him if he slept or even pretended to be asleep. Accordingly he kept wide awake too.

Toward morning the stag got very cramped from keeping in one position so long. He moved his head slightly. In doing this his horns struck against the roof of the house. It made a terrible noise. The tiger thought that the stag was about to spring upon him and kill him. He made a leap for the door and ran out of it as fast as he could. He ran and ran until he was far, far away from the house with the roof of dried grass.

The stag thought that the tiger was about to spring upon him and kill him. He, too, made a leap for the door and ran and ran until he was far, far away from the house with the roof of dried grass. The tiger and the stag are still running away from each other until this very day.

The house with the roof of dried grass waited and waited there in the place which was neither too high nor too low, too near the river nor too far away, not under too thick trees nor out in the hot sun. It waited and waited until it go so tired it fell down in a heap.

**Brunei (Asia)**

**Origins**

**Two Brunei Bay Legends**

<http://www.bruneiresources.com/goldenlegacy/tgl_brunei_bay_legends.html>

Awang Alak Betatar was the first ruler of the new Brunei Sultanate and as a vassal state, Brunei pays an annual tribute to the King of Majapahit. The tribute was made up of 40 ships laden with camphor to be paid to the Majapahit Empire from Brunei. Brunei’s camphor was considered to be among the best in the region then. Though some legends talk about a much smaller amount of 40 kati (roughly equal to about 24 kilograms).

During that time, a rooster owned by Awang Senuai, a nephew of Awang Alak Betatar was known for its ability to win all the cockfights that it competed against. A cockfight is of course a fight between two specially trained and conditioned roosters with spectators betting on the outcome of the fight. Most fights end up with the death of one or both roosters.

This came to the attention of Raden Angsuka Dewa who also owned another rooster named Asmara which is said to be equal to Mutiara. Asmara was well taken care of by his owner – eating from a golden plate that was hung high and given a special coop. Asmara was said to be strong, smart and possessed a special power. When he crowed upon entering Brunei, the local cocks were so terrified that they did not crow for several days.

The King of Majapahit dictated that should he lose he will give the 40 ships laden with goods to Brunei; but should he win, he will gain more territories of Brunei which it owns and controls then. Another version talked about should Brunei lose, it will continue to be a vassal state of Majapahit.

Both Asmara and Mutiara were both meticulously trained for the cockfight in front of the Sultan’s Palace.

On the day of the fight, many people came to watch it. The fight commenced with the roosters pouncing, pecking, attacking and kicking each other cheered on by the excited spectators. Suddenly Asmara flew out of the ring followed by Mutiara. Asmara had been stabbed during the fight and was seriously injured. Asmara fled out of sight and succumbing to his wound, fell down into the sea turning into a rock becoming an island (Pulau Pilong-Pilongan). Mutiara who tried to give chase, fell into the river cursed by the King of Majapahit. He too turned into a rock and became an island (Lumut Lunting).

It has been said among the elders in Kampong Ayer dwellers that Lumut Lunting will never be under water no matter how high the water level rises. If it does, then that signals a bad omen such as the death of a king or the occurrence of an untoward incident.

**Bulgaria (Europe)**

**Animals**

**The Language of Animals**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/sfs/sfs52.htm>

A CERTAIN man had a shepherd, who served him faithfully and honestly for many years. This shepherd, when he was once upon a time following the sheep, heard a whistling on the hill, and, not knowing what it was, went off to see. When he got to the place, there was a conflagration, and in the middle of it a serpent was squeaking. When he saw this, he waited to see how the serpent would act, for all around it was burning, and the fire had almost come close to it. When the serpent saw him, it screamed: 'Dear shepherd, do a good action: take me out of this fire.' The shepherd took pity on its words, and reached it his crook, and it crawled out upon it. When it had crawled out, it coiled itself round his neck. When the shepherd saw this, he was frightened, and said: 'Indeed you are a wretch! Is that the way you are going to thank me for rescuing you? So runs the proverb: "Do good, and find evil."' The serpent answered him: 'Don't fear: I shall do you no harm; only carry me to my father; my father is the emperor of the serpents.' The shepherd begged pardon, and excused himself: 'I can't carry you to your father, because I have no one to leave in charge of my sheep.' The serpent said to him: 'Don't fear for your sheep; nothing will happen to them; only carry me to my father, and go quickly.' Then there was no help for it, so he started with it over the hill. When he came to a door, which was formed of nothing but serpents intertwined, and went up to it, the serpent which was coiled round his neck gave a whistle, and the serpents, which had twined themselves into the form of a door, immediately untwined, and made way for them to enter. As the shepherd and the serpent entered the palace, the serpent called to the shepherd: 'Stop! let me tell you something: when you come into my father's palace, he will promise you what you desire, silver and gold; but don't you accept anything, only ask him to give you such a tongue that you will be able to understand all animals. He will not give you this readily, but at last grant it you he will.' The shepherd went with it into its father's palace, and its father, on seeing it, shed tears, and asked it: 'Hey, my son, where have you been till now?' It replied, and told him everything in order: what had taken place, and how it had taken place, and how the shepherd had rescued it. Then the emperor of the serpents turned to the shepherd, and said to him: 'Come, my son, what do you wish me to give you in recompense for rescuing my child?' The shepherd replied to him: 'Nothing else, only give me such a tongue that I can understand all animals.' The emperor of the serpents said to him: That is not a proper gift for you, my son, because, if I give you anything of the kind, you will betray yourself in somebody's presence by boasting of it, and then you will die immediately; ask something else.' The shepherd replied to him: 'I wish for nothing else. If you will give it me, give it; if not, farewell!' He turned to go; but the emperor of the serpents cried out: 'Stay! Return! If you ask this, come, that I may give it you. Open your mouth.' The shepherd opened his mouth, and the emperor of the serpents spat into it, and told him to spit also into his mouth. And thus they spat thrice into each other's mouths. When this was done, the emperor of the serpents said to the shepherd: 'Now you have the tongue which you desired; go, and farewell! But it is not permitted you to tell anybody, because, if you do, you will die. I am telling you the truth.' The shepherd then departed. As he went over the hill, he understood the conversation of the birds, and, so to speak, of everything in the world. When he came to his sheep, he found them correct in number, and sat down to rest. But scarcely had he lain down, when two crows flew up, perched on a tree hard by him, and began to converse in their language: 'If that shepherd knew that just where that black lamb lies a vault full of silver and gold is buried in the ground, he would take its contents.' When he heard this, he went and told his master, and he brought a cart, and they broke open the door of the vault, and took out its valuable contents. His master was a righteous man, and said to him: 'Well, my son, this is all yours; the Lord has given it you. Go, provide a house, get married, and live comfortably.' The shepherd took the property, went away, provided a house, got married, and lived very comfortably. This shepherd, after a little time, became so rich and prosperous that there was nobody richer than he in his own or the neighbouring villages. He had shepherds, cowherds, swineherds, grooms, and everything on a handsome scale. Once upon a time this shepherd ordered his wife on New Year's Eve to provide wine, brandy, and everything requisite, and to go the next morning to his cattle, to take the provisions to the herdsmen, that they, too, might enjoy themselves. His wife obeyed him, and did as her husband ordered her.

The next day they got up, got ready, and went. When they arrived where the cattle were, the master said to his shepherds: 'Lads, assemble together, and sit down to eat and drink your fill, and I will watch the cattle to-night.' This was done; they assembled together, and he went out to sleep by the cattle. In the course of the night, after some time, the wolves began to howl and speak in their language, and the dogs to bark and speak in theirs. The wolves said: 'Can we capture any young cattle?' The dogs answered in their language: 'Come in, that we, too, may eat our fill of flesh.' But among the dogs there was one old dog, who had only two teeth left. This dog spoke and answered the wolves: 'In faith, as long as these two teeth of mine last, you shan't come near to do harm to my master.' In the morning, when it dawned, the master called the herdsmen, and told them to kill all the dogs except that old one. His servants began to implore him: 'Don't, master! Why? It's a sin.' But he said to them 'Do just as I ordered you, and not otherwise.'

Then he and his wife mounted their horses and went off. His wife rode a mare, and he a horse. As they went, the master's horse outstripped the wife's mare, and began to say to her in their language: 'Go quicker; why do you hang back?' The mare's reply in defence of her lagging pace was so amusing that the man laughed out loud, turned his head, and looked behind him with a smile. His wife observed him smiling, whipped her mare to catch him up, and then asked him to tell her why he smiled. He said to her: 'Well, suppose I did? Something came into my head.' This answer did not satisfy her, but she began to worry him to tell her why he smiled. He said this and that to her to get out of it, but the more he said to get out of it, the more did she worry him. At length he said to her that, if he told her, he would die immediately. But she had no dread of her husband's dying, and went on worrying him: 'There is no alternative, but tell me you must.' When they got home, they dismounted from their horses, and as soon as they had done so, her husband ordered a grave to be dug for him. It was dug, and he lay down in it, and said to his wife: 'Did you not press me to tell you why I smiled? Come now, that I may tell you; but I shall die immediately.' On saying this, he gave one more look round him, and observed that the old dog had come from the cattle. Seeing this, he told his wife to give him a piece of bread. She gave it him, but the dog would not even look at it, but shed tears and wept; but the cock, seeing it, ran up and began to peck it. The dog was angry, and said: 'As if you'd die hungry! Don't you see that our master is going

to die?' 'What a fool he is! Let him die! Whose fault is it? I have a hundred wives. When I find a grain of millet, I call them all to me, and finally eat it myself. If one of them gets cross at this, I give her one or two pecks, and she lowers her tail; but this man isn't equal to keeping one in order.' When the man heard the cock say this, he jumped up at once out of the grave, seized a stick, chased his wife over hill and dale, and at last settled her completely, so that it never entered her head any more to ask him why he smiled.

**Burkina Faso (Africa)**

**Origin**

**How Wisdom Became the Property of the Human Race**

<http://www.heritage-history.com/index.php?c=read&author=barker&book=folktales&story=wisdom>

There once lived, in Fanti-land, a man named Father Anansi. He possessed all the wisdom in the world. People came to him daily for advice and help.

One day the men of the country were unfortunate enough to offend Father Anansi, who immediately resolved to punish them. After much thought he decided that the severest penalty he could inflict would be to hide all his wisdom from them. He set to work at once to gather again all that he had already given. When he had succeeded, as he thought, in collecting it, he placed all in one great pot. This he carefully sealed, and determined to put it in a spot where no human being could reach it.

Now, Father Anansi had a son, whose name was Kweku Tsin. This boy began to suspect his father of some secret design, so he made up his mind to watch carefully. Next day he saw his father quietly slip out of the house, with his precious pot hung round his neck. Kweku Tsin followed. Father Anansi went through the forest till he had left the village far behind. Then, selecting the highest and most inaccessible-looking tree, he began to climb. The heavy pot, hanging in front of him, made his ascent almost impossible. Again and again he tried to reach the top of the tree, where he intended to hang the pot. There, he thought, Wisdom would indeed be beyond the reach of every one but himself. He was unable, however, to carry out his desire. At each trial the pot swung in his way.

For some time Kweku Tsin watched his father's vain attempts. At last, unable to contain himself any longer, he cried out: "Father, why do you not hang the pot on your back? Then you could easily climb the tree."

Father Anansi turned and said: "I thought I had all the world's wisdom in this pot. But I find you possess more than I do. All my wisdom was insufficient to show me what to do, yet you have been able to tell me." In his anger he threw the pot down. It struck on a great rock and broke. The wisdom contained in it escaped and spread throughout the world.

**Burma (Asia)**

**Magic**

**The Four Puppets**

<http://www.aaronshep.com/stories/043.html>

Once there was a puppet maker who had a son named Aung. The father always hoped his son would grow up to be a puppet maker like himself. But to Aung, such a life was far from exciting.

“Father,” said Aung one day, “I’ve decided to leave home and seek my fortune.”

The puppet maker looked up sadly from his work. “I wish you would stay, my son. The life of a puppet maker is an honorable one. But if you must go, let me give you companions for your journey.”

He showed his son four wooden puppets he had carved, painted, and costumed. “Each puppet,” he said, “has its own virtue and value.”

The first puppet was the king of the gods. The puppet maker said, “The god’s virtue is wisdom.”

The second puppet was a green-faced ogre. “The ogre’s virtue is strength.”

The third was a mystic sorcerer. “The sorcerer’s virtue is knowledge.”

The fourth was a holy hermit. “The hermit’s virtue is goodness.”

He told his son, “Each of these virtues can help you on your way. But remember, strength and knowledge must always serve wisdom and goodness.”

Aung started off the next day. On his shoulder he carried a bamboo pole, with food and clothing tied at one end, and the puppets hanging by their strings from the other.

When night came, Aung found himself deep in the jungle. He stopped beneath a banyan tree.

“This looks like a good place to sleep,” he said to himself. “But I wonder if it’s safe.”

Then Aung had a funny idea. “I think I’ll ask one of the puppets!” He turned with a smile to the king of the gods. “Tell me, is it safe here?”

To his amazement, the puppet came alive. It got down from the pole and grew to life size.

“Aung,” said the god, “open your eyes and look around you. That is the first step to wisdom. If you fail to see what is right before you, how easy it will be for others to misguide you!”

And the next moment, the puppet was hanging again from the pole.

When Aung had gotten over his shock, he looked carefully all around the tree. There in the soft earth were the tracks of a tiger! That night he slept not on the ground but in the branches above. And he was glad he did, for in the middle of the night, he saw a tiger come prowling below him.

The next day took Aung into the mountains, and at sunset he left the road and camped a little way up the mountainside. When he awoke the next morning, he saw a caravan coming along the road below. A dozen bullock carts were piled high with costly goods.

“That caravan must belong to some rich merchant,” Aung told himself. “I wish I had wealth like that.”

Then he had a thought. He turned to the green-faced ogre. “Tell me, how can I gain such riches?”

Aung watched in wonder as the puppet left the pole and grew to life size. “If you have strength,” boomed the ogre, “you can take whatever you like. Watch this!” He stamped his foot and the earth shook.

“Wait!” said Aung. But it was too late. Just below them, dirt and rocks broke loose in a landslide. It rushed down the mountain and blocked the road. The terrified drivers jumped from their carts and ran off.

“You see?” said the ogre.

“Is it really that easy?” said Aung, in a daze.

He hurried down to the carts and rushed from one to another, gaping at the heaps of rich fabrics and piles of precious metals. “And all of it’s mine!” he cried.

Just then, Aung heard a sob. Lying huddled in one of the carts was a lovely young woman his own age. She cried and shivered in fear.

“I won’t hurt you,” said Aung gently. “Who are you?”

“My name is Mala,” she said in a small voice. “My father is the owner of this caravan. We were on our way to meet him.”

All at once, Aung knew he was in love. He wanted to keep Mala with him forever. “Don’t worry,” he said. “I’ll take you with me and care for you.”

Mala sat up angrily. “Go ahead! Take me, like you’re taking everything else! But you’re just a thief, and I’ll never, ever speak to you!”

Aung was shocked. Was he really just a thief? He didn’t know what to say.

The ogre came up beside him then. “Don’t listen to her. She’ll change her mind—and anyway, the important thing is you got what you wanted. Now, let’s go.”

The ogre cleared the road, then helped Aung lead the caravan. That afternoon, they came out of the mountains, not far from the capital city.

Aung asked the ogre, “What should I do, now that I have all these riches?”

“Don’t ask me!” said the ogre. “Ask the sorcerer!”

Aung turned to the mystic sorcerer. “Can you tell me?”

The puppet came to life and floated before him, as Mala looked on with wide eyes. “If you want your wealth to grow,” said the sorcerer, “you must learn the secrets of nature.”

He tapped Aung with his red wand, and together they rose high in the air. Looking down, Aung saw everything in a new way. He could tell what land was best for farming, and which mountains held gold and silver.

“This is wonderful!” said Aung. “Just think how I can help people with what I know!”

“Certainly you could,” said the sorcerer. “But knowledge is power. Why not keep it all for yourself instead? Isn’t that what other people do?”

“I suppose so,” said Aung.

So they came to the capital city. Aung became a merchant, and with the help of the ogre and the sorcerer, he grew many times richer than at first. He bought a palace for himself and Mala, and kept the puppets in a special room of their own.

But Aung was not happy, for Mala still would not speak to him.

One day, he placed before her a headdress fit for a queen. The heavy gold was set with dozens of large rubies, sapphires, and emeralds. The magnificent piece had cost Aung a third of his wealth.

Mala took one look and pushed it away.

Aung was heartbroken. He said, “Don’t you know I love you?” But she only glared at him and said not a word.

The next morning, Aung went to the puppets’ room and spoke to the ogre and the sorcerer. “Mala’s father must now be very poor, while I have more than I need. I’ll help Mala find him so I can pay him for what I took. Maybe then she’ll speak to me, and even learn to love me.”

“A terrible idea!” said the ogre. “You should never give up what is yours. You’re just being weak!”

“Besides,” the sorcerer told him, “you’re too late. Mala ran away last night.”

“What?” cried Aung. He rushed through the palace, but Mala was nowhere to be found.

Aung returned to the puppets’ room in despair. “What good is all my wealth if I’ve lost what I care for most?”

For once, the ogre and the sorcerer were silent and still.

Then Aung remembered there was one puppet he had never called on. He turned to the holy hermit. “Tell me, why has everything gone wrong?”

The puppet came to life. “Aung, you imagined that wealth brings happiness. But true happiness comes only from goodness. What is important is not what you have but what you do with it.”

The king of the gods then came to life and stood beside the hermit. “You forgot what your father told you, Aung. Strength and knowledge are useful, but they must always serve wisdom and goodness.”

“I won’t forget again,” said Aung.

From that day on, Aung used his wealth and his talents to do good. He built a splendid holy pagoda, and offered food and shelter to those who visited the shrine.

One day among the visitors, Aung saw a young woman he knew well. An older man stood beside her, both of them wearing humble clothes.

“Mala!” cried Aung. He rushed over to the startled young woman and knelt before her puzzled father.

“Sir, I have done you great wrong. I beg your forgiveness. All I have is yours, and I give it up gladly. I will be content to return to my village and make puppets.”

“Father,” said Mala softly, “this is Aung. But he has changed!”

“So it would seem!” said her father. “And if so, it would be a shame to let go of a young man of such talent. Perhaps he would like to work for me, and live with us in the palace.”

So Aung became the merchant’s assistant, and before long his partner, and when Mala’s heart was won, his son-in-law.

As for the puppets, Aung still called on them as needed. But though he was helped often by strength and knowledge, he was guided always by wisdom and goodness.

**Burundi**

**Royalty**

**Maconco**

<http://www.staidenshomeschool.com/africa/countries/burundi/maconcofolktale.html>There was a man whose name is Maconco, he married a king's daughter. One year after   
marriage he told his wife to go to her father and tell him this, Maconco needs your lovely cow   
and if you don't give it to him, he is going to kill himself and when the wife told her father   
about that he said it's impossible. Only what I can do is to let him choose another not my   
lovely cow. Then his daughter started crying, then the king got emotion then gave her the   
cow. when Maconco saw the cow, he was happy, but after that he needed the king's dog,   
if not, he was going to kill himself. His wife went back to her father and said, this time   
Maconco wants your dog; if not, the same condition as last time. The King didn't agree to   
give his dog. Then his daughter went back and lied to Maconco that her father told her he   
will give you the dog after two days. Then the wife went after two days and stole the dog   
from her father. When the king learned that his dog has been stolen by his daughter,he sent   
his army to get his dog from Maconco's house, then they ended by killing Maconco.

**Cambodia (Asia)**

**Animals**

**The Rabbit and the Palm Fruit**

<http://khmeridentification-edu.blogspot.com/2011/10/collection-of-cambodian-folk-tales.html>

There was a rabbit who lived under a palm tree near a hillock. One day he was sound asleep, when a ripe palm fruit fell down on the ground near by. He heard the cracking sound of the dried palm leaves.

At this sound, he was frightened, and said to himself "It is and earthquake!", and then he jumped up and began running without looking behind. When the Oxen saw him in high speed, they said to him, "Rabbit! why are you running so fast? What is the matter?"

The Rabbit shouted in haste "Brother oxen! It's an earthquake! Do not stay here! Run!" The Oxen heard what the Rabbit had said and they were frightened too, and they began to run, and soon after they met the Pigs and Deer. They too ran after the Oxen and the Rabbit. When the Elephants saw them running, they too, asked "Why are you running, Oxen" What is the matter?" The Oxen told them "Do not stay here! The earthquake is coming!" Hearing this story, the Elephants jointed them. When they all reached the Lion's den, the clever Lion, seeing all the panic-stricken animals, asked the Elephants.

"Why are you running? What is the matter?"

The Elephants replied, "We do not know exactly why. We saw the Oxen running, so we ran after them, we heard something about an earthquake"

The Lion asked the Oxen "Why are you running? What is the matter? Oxen?" The Oxen said "We do not know either. We saw the Rabbit running, so we ran after him"

The Lion asked the Deer and the Pigs, but they answered like wise. So finally he questioned the Rabbit. The Rabbits answered "I am none too sure, myself. While I was sound asleep under a palm tree, the earth breaking up pierced my ears, so I was afraid and began to run"

The clever Lion then led all the panicky animals to the palm tree, and showed them the cracked palm fruit lying on the ground. The embarrassed animals gave the Rabbit a sound rebuke and went back to their own places.

**Cameroon (Africa)**

**Trickster**

**The Story of Ndondondume**

<http://www.bakweri.com/2011/11/the_story_of_nd.html#more>

*There was a very pretty girl, Molonga. Her skin was like burnished ebony, her eyes, long neck, and walk reminded everyone of a graceful antelope. The news of her stunning beauty was spread far and wide by the birds. Suitors came from all the Mokpe villages from Mwangai to Mokunda, from Wonadikombo to Wonakanda. She had one defect, she was proud. She refused to marry any of the men who wanted her hand in marriage. No one was good enough for her.* 

The story soon reached the sea. Ndondondume, the sea monster, was ugly, had tentacles, and a very rough skin. He decided to woo Molonga and eat her for his dinner. He borrowed the smooth, beautiful skin of a fish called "mwau." He also borrowed some beautiful feathers from birds.

One day, out of the blue, he landed in the center of the village, he dazzled everyone with his appearance, and his tales of wealth and beauty in his "home." The village maiden fell for him. After the wedding, he did not consumate the marriage. He would quickly undress in the dark, hop in bed and say he was not feeling well. He did not want to be touched. Everytime his wife asked him why he was so secretive, and didn't want the light on in the bedroom, he had one excuse or another. The fact is that he was planning to swallow the girl after he had finished digesting his last prey.

After a few days, Mwau, whose skin had been borrowed by Ndondondume, sent some birds to ask Ndondondume to return his skin. Ndondondume ignored them. They shouted:

ndondondume o'sza wea  
Mwau ah mo'mongbe 'ekowo yeni  
*(Ndondondume, don't you hear, Mwau says you should return his skin).*

When the girl heard this demand over and over from the birds sitting on the tree near her house, she sensed trouble. On the night Ndondondume had planned to swallow her, she quickly lit an "etulukangi" (bush lamp) and rushed into the room. She saw that Ndondondume was a huge, ugly monster with many tentacles. She ran out of the house singing:

*Koti, koti, na mo whangi'eh aye'e"  
Ndondondum'a Mbenga maliwa' eh aye'e*  
*(I completely disown him, Ndondondume, monster of the sea*).

*Na mekpeva!!!*  
*(There were claps of thunder as Ndondondume escaped back into the*sea).

The village came out and chased Ndondondume back to the sea.

**Canada (North America)**

**Animal Tale, Explanation Tale (Porqui tale)**

**Rabbit and the Moon Man**

<http://www.worldoftales.com/Native_American_folktales/Native_American_Folktale_67.html>

Once, long ago, Rabbit lived with his old grandmother deep in the Canadian forest, far from all other people. He was a great hunter, and all around, far and near, he laid snares and set traps to catch game for food. It was winter, and he caught many little animals and birds. He brought them home daily to feed himself and his old grandmother, and he was well pleased with his success. But after some weeks had passed he was unable to catch any game. He always found his traps and snares empty, although many tracks were always around them, and there were many signs that animals were prowling about. He knew then that he was being robbed nightly, and that a thief was pilfering his traps. It was very cold and the snow lay deep in the forest, and Rabbit and his old grandmother were in dire need of food. Every morning Rabbit rose very early and hurried off to his traps, but always he found them empty, for the thief had been ahead of him. He was greatly puzzled, for he could not think who the thief was.

At last one morning, after a new fall of snow, he found the mark of a long foot near his traps, and he knew it was the foot of the game-robber. It was the longest foot-print he had ever seen, long and narrow and very light, like a moonbeam. And Rabbit said, "Now I shall rise earlier in the morning, and I shall go to my traps ahead of the thief and take my game, so that they will all be empty when he comes." Each morning he rose earlier to catch the thief, but the man of the long foot was always there before him, and his game was always gone. No matter how early Rabbit got up, the thief was always ahead of him and his traps were always empty.

So Rabbit said to his old grandmother, "The man of the long foot, who robs my traps, is always up ahead of me, no matter how early I rise. I will make a snare from a bow-string, and I will watch all this night, and I will surely catch him." He made a trap from a stout bow-string and set it beside his snares, and took the end of the bow-string some distance away to a clump of trees, behind which he hid. He hoped that the thief would step into the trap; then he would pull the bow-string and tie him fast to a tree. He sat very quiet, waiting for the man of the long foot to appear. It was moonlight when he set out, but soon it grew very dark in the forest. The Moon suddenly disappeared. But the stars were all shining on the white snow and there were no clouds in the sky, and Rabbit wondered what had happened to the Moon. He waited very still and a little frightened in the starlight.

Soon he heard some one coming, sneaking stealthily through the trees. Then he saw a white light which dazzled his eyes. The light went towards the snares, until it stopped just at the trap Rabbit had set. Then Rabbit pulled the bow-string, closed the trap as he had hoped, and tied the string fast to a tree. He heard sounds of a struggle, and he saw the white light move from side to side, but he knew that he had his prisoner fast and that the man of the long foot was caught at last. He was much afraid of the white light, and he ran home as fast as he could and told his old grandmother that he had caught the game-robber in the trap, and that he did not know who he was, for he was too frightened to look. And his grandmother said, "You must go back and see who it is, and tell him he must stop robbing your snares." But Rabbit said, "I do not want to go until daylight, for the Moon has gone down and the forest is very dark." But his grandmother said, "You must go." So poor Rabbit, although he was very frightened by what he had seen, set out again for his traps.

When he drew near to his snares he saw that the white light was still shining. It was so bright that his eyes were dazzled and he had to stop far from it. Then he approached nearer, but his eyes soon became very sore. There was a stream flowing beside him, and he bathed his eyes in the cold water, but it brought him no relief, and his eyes felt hot and red, and tears fell from them because of the dazzling light. Then he took great handfuls of snow and threw snowballs at the light, hoping thereby to put it out. But when the snowballs came near to the light they melted and fell down like rain. Then, with his eyes still smarting, Rabbit in his rage scooped up great handfuls of soft black mud from the bottom of the stream, and forming it into balls, he threw them with all his force at the white light. He heard them strike something with a dull thud, and he heard loud yells from the prisoner—the man of the long foot—behind the shining light. Then a voice came from the light, saying, "Why did you snare me? Come and untie me at once. I am the Man in the Moon. It is near to the morning, and before dawn I must be on my way home. You have already spotted my face with mud, and if you do not loose me at once I shall kill all your tribe."

Poor Rabbit was more frightened than before, and he ran home and told his old grandmother what had happened. And his grandmother was also very frightened, for she thought that no good could come of it. And she told Rabbit to go back at once and untie the Man in the Moon, for the night was almost spent, and the dawn would soon be breaking. So poor Rabbit, trembling in his fear, went back to his traps. From a great distance he cried, "I will untie you if you will never again rob my snares, and if you will never come back to earth." And the prisoner in the trap promised, and said, "I swear it by my white light." Then Rabbit approached very carefully. He had to shut his eyes and grope his way because of the bright light, and his lip quivered because of the great heat. At last he rushed in and cut the bow-string snare with his teeth, and the Man in the Moon hurried on his way, for he could already see the dawn in the East. But Rabbit was almost blinded while he was about it, and his shoulders were badly scorched. And ever since that time Rabbit blinks and his eyelids are pink, and water runs from his eyes when he looks at a bright light; and his lip always quivers; and his shoulders are yellow, even when he wears his white winter coat, because of the great light and heat on the winter night long ago when he loosed the Man in the Moon from the snare. And since that night the Man in the Moon has never come back to earth. He stays at his task in the sky, lighting the forest by night; but he still bears on his face the marks of the black mud which Rabbit threw at him. And sometimes for several nights he goes away to a quiet place, where he tries to wash off the mud; and then the land is dark. But he never succeeds in cleaning himself, and when he comes back to his work the marks of Rabbit's mud-balls are still upon his shining face.

**Cape Verde (Africa)**

**Trickster**

**Bartering Mothers and the Buried Tail**

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/534343?seq=2>

Once there wa a great famine in the land. Lob asks Pedr, “Pedr, shall we sell our mothers for corn?” “Yes Sehnor;” and Pedr goes on to say, “Your mother is stronger than mine. Tie her with a rope. I’ll tie mine with ravellings.” Pedr says to his mother, “O mother! We have made a plan to go to town to sell our mothers for corn. When we go a certain distance towards town, do you pull away and escape, go home.” After Pedr’s mother ran away and escaped, Pedr says to Lob, “the corn we get for your mother let us first use, then we will get my mother, we will sell her.” They went on to a place where there were people. There they sold Lob’s mother for four sacks of corn. Lob gets burros, he loads the corn on their backs. He tells Pedr to go ahead with the burros. Pedr goes with the burros to the mud on the side of the river. He cuts off the tails of the burros. He buries them in the mud, he leaves their tips out. Then he turns back. He calls to Lob that the burros are stuck in the river. Lob takes off his coat. “We’ll pull them out,” he says. He takes hold of a tail. Pedr takes hold too, he makes out he is helping. But as Lob pulled up, his nephew pulled down. After a little Pedr let go the tail, and Lob fell into the river. He was drowned.

**Central African Republic (Africa)**

**Animals**

**How the Zebra Got his Stripes**

<http://www.colours-of-the-rainbow.com/african-legends.html>

This is one of the African legends that originates with the Bushmen.

There once was an arrogant Babboon, a self-appointed "Lord of the Water". He guarded one of the only sources of water that remained during times of drought, a small pool, and forbid any of the other animals from drinking there.

Legend has it that one day a Zebra and his son arrived at the pool. The weather had been very dry and hot, and there was little water to be found anywhere. They went to have a drink when suddenly a voice boomed "Go Away!, I am the Lord of the Water, and this is my pool"!The Zebras looked up, startled, and saw the angry Babboon sitting by his fire.

"Water belongs to everyone, not just to you monkeyface", shouted the young Zebra."Then you must fight me for it if you want to drink" challenged the babboon, and attacked the young Zebra. The two fought savagely for what seemed an eternity until with a furious kick, the Zebra sent the Babboon flying through the air until he landed amongst the rocks. Till this day, the Babboon has a patch on his bottom where he landed.

African legends tell us that the tired Zebra staggered, and fell through the Babboons fire, scorching his white coat and leaving him with black stripes across it. The terrified Zebras dashed away back to the plains where they forever remained.

The arrogant Babboon and his family still live among the rocks and spend their days challenging intruders, holding their tails aloft to ease the pain of the pare patch of skin where they landed. So goes the legend of how the Zebra got his stripes.

**Chad (Africa)**

**Animals**

**The Story of the Jackal and the Dog**

 The jackal, the dog and their children, according to our ancestors, lived and ate together in the bush.  One year, long ago, the weather was rather cold, and as they could not bear the cold, they and their children were about to die. The jackal asked the dog: "How will we ever find fire to heat ourselves?"  
     The dog said: "Mondo, Mondo, look over there!  This Man is lighting a fire!  I will immediately go to fetch a piece of burning wood so that we can heat ourselves." The dog went to talk to the Man who was heating himself. The Man asked him, "Where do you come from?" The dog answered, "We will die from the cold, which is why I came to seek fire to heat ourselves." The Man answered him, "Heat yourself well before you take some of the fire with you, then you can be on your way."  
     Then the dog, with her mouth raised up, put herself nearer the fire to heat herself.  She heated herself until she burned her fur, but her nose remained moist. During this time, the Man's Wife came to prepare a meal for them. They ate well, and the dog even ate the bones. Thus it forgot to take some fire with her.  Meanwhile, the jackal suffered from the cold with her children.  And to this day, she continues to call the dog to bring fire so that they can be warmed by its heat.  
     Then the dog said, "I will go into the bush, where my nose leads me, only if it first becomes dry." Thus she gave up on the jackal with her children.  As for the dog, she followed the Man to return to his house. This is why, even today, the nose of the dog always remains wet.  When you notice that the nose of the dog becomes dry, you will know for certain that she just died, and so you should throw it in bush. To this day, whenever you hear the jackal crying out, it is that she is calling the dog. The dog in turn will bark, to affirm that it will go into the bush when its nose becomes dry.

**Chile (South America)**

**Ghost**

**El Caleuche**

<http://www.caleuche.com/English/caleuche_legend.php>

It was not a town, it could not be one, it was only few houses huddled together at the edge of the sea, as if they wanted to protect themselves from the stormy climate, the constant rain, from the natural disasters that could come upon them from the land or from the sea.   
For the men who lived there, the Big Island, Chiloé, was an almost unknown continent; even the smaller islands of Queilén and Chonchi remained far away, and were only seen when they had to sail to them from time to time to sell the products of their fishing; Castro seemed like a remote city; the hope of the young was to go there and stay there or to leave for other more distant places, but all of this seemed like a dream, like a chimerical illusion.   
There were crops in the fields beyond the houses, mostly potatoes, oats and vegetables. Some cattle and plenty of sheep were seen in rustic corrals, but mainly people's activities, the rhythm of their lives, were determined by the sea.   
The women spun their own wool and wove blankets and ponchos, throws and mats. From time to time the pieces that were not needed by the people of the town were sold in Chonchi or to the boats that passed by to buy fish. This was easy, for they were exquisite weavings beautifully crafted.   
But this was a job for their free time. On the other hand, almost every day, especially when the tide was low, the women went out with their children to gather shellfish on the coast.   
Carrying round wicker baskets, both women and children walked along the beaches and the rocky tide pools looking for mussels, clams, sea urchins and also crabs. Unfortunately there were no oysters like in other parts of the island. With their baskets full they returned hours later walking slowly toward their homes.   
In the great room of Don Pedro's house almost all the men of the village were gathered. There were men of all ages, two very young and one very old, conversing slowly and from time to time drinking a glass of *chicha* or fermented apple cider. Although the sea was not particularly nearby, it could be heard, like background music, the constant and rhythmic sound of breaking waves.   
The subject of their talk was their next task. They would be going out to fish at nightfall and it would a long and risky job; they were planning to go far, perhaps to the island of Chulin, in search of yellow jack, sea bass, and corbina. Not all of them would be going fishing, others would go out along the coast looking for shellfish. The important thing was to have a large enough stock when, in two or three days, as expected, the boat from the north would pass by looking for their products.   
They wanted to go out because the fishing would be good. During the previous night they were sure they had seen the beautiful *Pincoya*, who, arising from the waters in her marvelous gown of algae, had danced frantically on the beach looking out toward the sea. The following morning they had found shellfish that she had left behind on the sand. All of this was a good omen indicating that there would be an abundant catch, and the men were happy.   
Not everyone would go because, as always, Don Segundo, the old man, would stay on land. He would go out to gather firewood. He liked going into the forest to cut trees, for he had no fear of the terrible little *trauco*, the little unfriendly being who always went armed like a *toqui* (an Araucanian or indigenous Chilean warrior chief), had enormous strength and could break a man from a distance just by looking at him. In any case he wouldn't come near the plants that would attract the *trauco*. He preferred to go himself, because if a woman or child went something might happen; because they were irresistible to the *trauco*.   
Not only that, he would tenaciously and patiently clean up or fix the damaged boats or destroyed nets, he would help the women with their work in the fields or care for the animals, but never would he go out to sea.   
One of the young people asked him: "Don Segundo, why won't you go out to sea? You know more than anyone about the changes of weather, the rhythm of the tides, the changes of the wind and still you always stay on land and never go out onto the sea." There was a silence, everyone looked at the young man, surprised at his insolence, and the youth, ashamed at his boldness, shook his head silently without explaining why he had dared to ask.   
Don Segundo, however, seemed lost in a dream and answered almost automatically: "Because I have seen *El Caleuche*."   
Having said this he seemed to come out of his dream and, before the questioning looks of everyone, he exclaimed: "Some day I'll tell you".

Months later they were all together in the same room. It was night, and no one had been able to go out fishing; It was raining ferociously, as if all the water in the world fell on that house. The hurricane-like wind seemed to want to tear the shingles from the roof and the walls, and the sea was not a distant and harmonious noise but a deafening and menacing howl.   
The burning stove gave heat to the men, but it didn't help them forget the sound of the rain and the whistling of the storm, nor did it dissipate that magical sensation that on that night all manner of supernatural beings would be loosed.   
In the distance there was the prolonged sound of the bleating of a herd of goats and an uproar on the coast like a cliff tumbling into the sea, and someone exclaimed: "It must be a *Camahueto* reaching the sea." Everyone thought immediately about the great monster like a calf, with only one horn in the middle of its forehead, from which scrapings are taken to make a potion that gives one exceptional strength. The *Camahueto* grows in the lakes and swamps and, after many years of growing to adulthood, one night heads for the sea with irrepressible drive.   
It was not a calm night, the pulsating light of the burner projected constantly changing shadows and the men remained silent.   
Don Segundo spoke up unexpectedly and said: "Now I will tell you ..." His story, kept to himself for so many years, became a magical reality to those who listened curiously and fearfully.   
A long time ago he had gone out sailing from Ancud with the intention of going to Quellón. This voyage would not be in a small craft, but in a large boat with a deep draft and therefore easy to pilot, with two sails that made it possible to take maximum advantage of the favorable wind. It was a good seafaring ship and had successfully weathered many storms.   
She was crewed by five men besides Don Segundo, and the captain was a stout Chilote, a man from the island of Chiloé, short and muscular, who knew all of the islands and channels in the archipelago, and of whom it was said that he had sailed to the southern straits and had crossed the Indian Pass and the Messier Channel.   
On the second night of the voyage the fury of the sea was unleashed. "Worse than this one now," said Don Segundo. It was a dark night in which you could not tell the sky from the sea and in which the hurricane wind raised the sea and in which the terrified sailors were using the oars to try to steer the boat and assail the furious waves.   
The sea, which is the sustenance and source of adventure for the Chilote, which makes up part of his life and is his friend, had been transformed into an alien and hostile being who knew no pity and who wanted to destroy those who dared to cut a path through her.   
They had lost all sense of space and time and, soaked and exhausted, they were entrusting their souls to God, sure of death.   
At that moment, however, the storm seemed to abate and they made out a distant light that advanced toward them over the waves. As it got closer to them the light was transformed into a ship, a great and beautiful sailing ship, curiously illuminated, from which came chants and voices. The ship gave off a strange light for that hour of the night, such that the hull and the dark sails were outlined. If it were not for its canvas, if it were not for the chants, it might be said to be a giant sea monster.   
Upon seeing it approaching them the sailors shouted jubilantly, since, despite its unreal appearance, it seemed to be a tangible refuge in face of the certain and constant menace of the sea.   
The captain didn't join them in their happiness. They saw him cross himself and with a deadly pallor exclaim: "It is not salvation, it is the Ghost Ship, *El Caleuche*! Tonight our bones, like all who have seen it, will be at the bottom of the sea."   
*El Caleuche* was already almost on top of the boat when it suddenly disappeared. The light was gone and the dense shadow returned in which the line between the sky and the sea was lost.   
At the same time the storm returned, with perhaps more force, and the weariness of the men prevented them from steering the boat in the enraged sea, until a giant wave capsized it. Something must have hit Don Segundo, because his last memory was the huge black wave in the dark of the night.   
He awoke tossed onto the beach where kindly and unfamiliar people were trying to revive him. He said that he had been shipwrecked and recounted every detail of the voyage and the storm, except the circumstances of the shipwreck and the vision of *El Caleuche*. Of his shipmates he knew no more, and this was the first time that the whole story had passed his lips.   
"That is why I never go out on the sea. *El Caleuche* will not forgive having lost its prey, that a living man exists who has seen it. If I go out into the sea, I will again see the vision of that beautiful and dark illuminated sailing ship from which will come happy voices, but will cause my death."   
Everyone remained silent and it seemed that between the noise of the rain and the wind, the bellow of the waves was more sharply heard.   
Despite the belief of Don Segundo that the vision of *El Caleuche* means a certain death, there are people on the Great Island who affirm that they have seen or known someone who has seen the Ghost Ship. Perhaps seeing it from the coast and not while sailing.   
In any case, those who sail the islands of the archipelago during the night, do it with deep fear of catching sight of a beautiful dark illuminated ship. It can appear at any moment, since it sails on the surface or beneath the water; from it arise music and songs. Then death will be very near and shipwreck will be unavoidable.   
Those who don't perish will go on to become part of the crew of the Ghost Ship, ***El Caleuche***.

**China (Asia)**

**Magicians, Gods**

**Laotsze**

Laotsze is really older than heaven and earth put together. He is the Yellow Lord or Ancient, who created this world together with the other four. At various times he has appeared on earth, under various names. His most celebrated incarnation, however, is that of Laotsze, “The Old Child,” which name he was given because he made his appearance on earth with white hair.

He acquired all sorts of magic powers by means of which he extended his life-span. Once he hired a servant to do his bidding. He agreed to give him a hundred pieces of copper daily; yet he did not pay him, and finally he owed him seven million, two hundred thousand pieces of copper. Then he mounted a black steer and rode to the West. He wanted to take his servant along. But when they reached the Han-Gu pass, the servant refused to go further, and insisted on being paid. Yet Laotsze gave him nothing.

When they came to the house of the guardian of the pass, red clouds appeared in the sky. The guardian understood this sign and knew that a holy man was drawing near. So he went out to meet him and took him into his house. He questioned him with regard to hidden knowledge, but Laotsze only stuck out his tongue at him and would not say a word. Nevertheless, the guardian of the pass treated him with the greatest respect in his home. Laotsze’s servant told the servant of the guardian that his master owed him a great deal of money, and begged the latter to put in a good word for him. When the guardian’s servant heard how large a sum it was, he was tempted to win so wealthy a man for a son-in-law, and he married him to his daughter. Finally the guardian heard of the matter and came to Laotsze together with the servant. Then Laotsze said to his servant: “You rascally servant. You really should have been dead long ago. I hired you, and since I was poor and could give you no money, I gave you a life-giving talisman to eat. That is how you still happen to be alive. I said to you: ‘If you will follow me into the West, the land of Blessed Repose, I will pay you your wages in yellow gold. But you did not wish to do this.’” And with that he patted his servant’s neck. Thereupon the latter opened his mouth, and spat out the life-giving talisman. The magic signs written on it with cinnabar, quite fresh and well-preserved, might still be seen. But the servant suddenly collapsed and turned into a heap of dry bones. Then the guardian of the pass cast himself to earth and pleaded for him. He promised to pay the servant for Laotsze and begged the latter to restore him to life. So Laotsze placed the talisman among the bones and at once the servant came to life again. The guardian of the pass paid him his wages and dismissed him. Then he adored Laotsze as his master, and the latter taught him the art of eternal life, and left him his teachings, in five thousand words, which the guardian wrote down. The book which thus came into being is the Tao Teh King, “The Book of the Way and Life.” Laotsze then disappeared from the eyes of men. The guardian of the pass however, followed his teachings, and was given a place among the immortals.

Note: The Taoists like to assert that Laotsze’s journey to the West was undertaken before the birth of Buddha, who, according to many, is only a reincarnation of Laotsze. The guardian of the Han-Gu pass is mentioned by the name of Guan Yin Hi, in the Lia Dsi and the Dschuang Dsi.

**Colombia (South America)**

**Origins**

**Legend of the Origin of the Amazon River**

<http://ilexec618.wikispaces.com/The+Amazon+region>

Many years ago lived in the Amazon jungle two passionate lovers who dreamed of getting married, she was called moon and was clothed in silver, and he was called sun and was clothed in gold, moon was the mistress of the night and sun was the owner of the day.  
But they had a problem; if they marry, the world would end completely, because ardent love of the sun would end up burning the planet and the sad tears of the moon would end by flood the world.  
How could they marry despite his love? Does the moon would end the fire?, Does the sun evaporate the water?, For this reason the lovers decided to separate and never marry.  
When the sun and moon were separated, the moon cried for a day and night, the tears trickled through the mountains until they reached the sea, but the angry ocean did not want to accept much water. The moon could not mix their tears with the sea and that's when something strange happened. The water produced by the tears of the moon dug an immense valley, then born river, were the tears of the moon that gave life to the Amazon River.  
  
By: Marisol Mejía L.

**Comoros (Africa)**

**Animals**

**The Animal Diviner**

<http://books.google.com/books?id=8ixeJOZQSt0C&pg=PT45&lpg=PT45&dq=comoros++folktales&source=bl&ots=K6OLGsKJAN&sig=l6_JDt5c1ed-z9atON1NsJR1qiI&hl=en&sa=X&ei=g3iuUsnRGqiayAGIqICQBQ&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=comoros%20%20folktales&f=false>

The son of a chameleon, they say, went to a shop to get some provisions, and came out loaded with various foodstuffs. Along came the elephant, king of the animals, who looks down on little creatures from his great height. He went by haughtily, proud of his title, caring for nothing. That happens with the human species too. The chameleon boy had hardly gone a few steps before he felt a sharp pain in one of his back legs, which soon was almost paralyzed. The elephant had partly crushed it and went gaily on his way. The unhappy victim dragged himself along as best he could, not without a lot of difficulty and pain. He reached the dwelling of his father, who questioned him, and he had to tell the story of his accident. The chameleon father took care of his son as best he could. Boiling with anger, he thought about his terrible vengeance, even if it were only a humiliation for the elephant. When the other animals leaned of his plan, they were fearful for the chameleon, especially as he was aiming at his king. They tried to quiet him. All their pleas only exasperated the victim’s father all the more.

Some time later, there was a great flutter in the animal world. They learned that their diviner the frog had consulted with heaven and his wooden divining board, and had found something worrisome he wanted to tell to them. All the animals, including the frog, gathered in the public square. Only they had to wait for the elephant, the king. To while away the waiting time, the members of the assembly told each other jokes and stories. The chameleon was more eager than ever to gratify his spite. He promised his neighbors an event that would cause a stir. Finally the king arrived, with his retinue. He was received with all possible honors by his subjects, who all bowed and scraped. Only the chameleon abstained, with a haughty air. Everybody noticed this, including the king, but the matter remained there.

After the usual exchanges of Salaam aleikum and Malek msalaam, the king took his place and opened the meeting. The burali arose. To give more weight to his communication, he drew back for an instant. Then he expressed himself as follows. “Friends, in my calling as mwalimu, charged by the Creator to oversee your fortunes, I have seen in a dream, after cabalistic consultations I employed, a divine message to communicate to you. Soon there will appear on our earth an animal of a special shape, with this peculiarity: its two rear feet will be vertical and its two forepaws will be suspended from its shoulders. This animal seems to be formidable, not because of strength, but because of his intelligence and mind. He will be capable, and may be tempted, to torment us or even kill us. In my opinion it would be wise for us to find a place to hide. You have only to follow my example: I have found a sure refuge, the water. I will not spend more time than necessary on land, just enough to relax.”

All of them, from the king to the humblest, hearing this divine message, trembled with fear. Only the lion showed no sign of fear. He even fluffed out his mane and took on a challenging air, as if the extraordinary animal were already in front of him. He declared himself the strongest animal on earth and said it would be cowardice for him to look for a shelter to hide in.

The extraordinary animal arrived. It was man. He found the lion, who seemed to stand in his way. A dire exchange occurred between these two terrible adversaries, each of whom claimed to possess the dominating force. There was a challenge to battle.

Man is only strong, as I said, through his intelligence and presence of mind.

He gave proof of that. Seeing that the naïve animal trusted in its strength, he asked for abrief moment to go home and change his clothes. “But so that you don’t go back on your word, and so you don’t take flight, it’s necessary that I fasten you.” The lion found this a logical proposition and readily agreed. The man tied up its four paws with solid cords. After that, the extraordinary animal administered strong blows to the lions mouth, skull, and paws. The lion did not die, but was much weakened. Then the man unloosed him. He removed his fangs and cut his claws and then set him free.

It’s since that time that man has been indisputably the strongest animal on earth.

**Congo, Democratic Republic of then (Africa)**

**Trickster**

**Pippi Danga**

<http://melvinburgess.wordpress.com/2011/06/14/pippi-danga/>

Once, a mother lived on her own with her child, called Pippi Danga. Pippi was very curious little girl who tried to be good but found it very, very hard. One other thing you should know about her – she had the most beautiful voice.

One day, the mother had to go out to fields and leave Pippi at home on her own all day.

“Now, Pippi, you must NOT leave the house while I’m gone,” she told her. “It’s very important. The world is full of danger for young girl on her own. Now, do you promise, Pippi?”

Pippi promised her mother she would not go out all day, but would wait for her at home like a good girl.

Pippi really did want to be a good girl, but while she was waiting, a friend came calling. This friend wanted Pippi to go swimming in the river with her.  Now, it was a hot day, and the little house was very stuffy. Still, Pippi didn’t want to disobey her mother.

“I can’t go out,”she said. “I promised my mother.

But her friend scoffed at her. “Don’t be such a baby.  Your mother will never know. What harm can come to us by the river?”  
But still Pippi refused to go.  Then her friend got angry and started to throw stones onto the roof of the house. And that was enough.  Pippi decided that the house might get damaged, so she rally ought to go out swimming for the sake of the house.  So she left after all, despite everything her mother had said, and went to the river to swim.

So the two girls went to the river, took off their clothes, which they hid under a bush, and went off swimming. But that friend Pippi had couldn’t have been very good friend, because while Pippi was swimming about and playing on a log, that friend sneaked off and stole Pippi’s clothes.  By the time Pippi noticed that her friend was gone, both her and the clothes were faraway. Poor Pippi was a mile from home with nothing to wear!  What a mess.

Of course, she was not going to go home with nothing on, so instead, she picked some big leaves that were growing nearby, and tried to cover herself up with those. She hadn’t gone very far when a man came along, carrying a drum under his arm.  
“What’s this?” he said. “A girl walking about covered in leaves like a vegetable garden? What’s happening here?”  
So Pippi told him, like this;

I’m Pippi Danga, I’m Pippi Danga,  
Oh, Pippi, poor Pippi, bad Pippi Danga.  
My mummy told me  
stay home alone all day  
But my friend took me out  
and stole my clothes away!  
I’m Pippi, poor Pippi, bare Pippi Danga  
Poor Pippi Danga, walking home alone

The man’s eyebrows shot up his head when he heard her sing. He liked that noise.  
“Poor Pippi Danga,” he said. “But I have a plan. Why don’t you hide in my drum? No one will see you then, and I can carry you home to your mummy, and no one will know how silly you’ve been, or see you walking around looking like a bag of salad.’

Pippi thought was a good idea, poor thing. She crept into the drum – but as soon as she had done so, the man quickly put a skin on it and nailed it firmly down. Now he had her – trapped in the drum!  
Off he went as fast as he could before any found out what a wicked thing he had done. When he got  to the next village, he went straight to the middle of the village where everyone gathered, and started to boast about how he owned a magic singing drum. Of course, everyone was curious about that, so they gathered around. When there was a big enough crowd, the man lifted up his hands and began beat the drum. And inside, poor Pippi began to sing …

I’m Pippi Danga, Oh Pippi Danga,  
Oh, Pippi, poor Pippi, sorry Pippi Danga.  
My mummy told me  
stay home alone all day  
But my friend took me out  
and stole my clothes away.  
Oh, Pippi, poor Pippi, bare Pippi Danga  
Poor Pippi Danga, singing in a drum.

Everyone was amazed at the wonderful singing drum, and never guessed there was really a little girl trapped inside it. They gave that wicked man plenty of money for his trick.  Off he went on his way, whistling a tune to himself, happy as the day is long and not caring one little jot about poor Pippi, trapped in that drum.

From then on, that man had no worries in his life. Whenever he wanted food or money, all he did was just play the drum and make poor Pippi sing out. People came from far and wide to hear the wonderful drum, and they were all wiling to pay good money for the pleasure of listening to it.  What a life he lived, wandering from village to village playing his drum.

But one day it so happened, he came back without realising to the village where Pippi herself came from. He played his drum there, just as before, and just as before everyone came running round and gave him money for the pleasure of hearing his wonderful singing  drum. But among that crowd was Pippi;s mother. When she heard that drum sing out she thought to herself …  
“I know that voice! That’s no drum singing, and that man is no musician either.’

That night she crept out and went to the place where the man was staying. She found where he kept his drum – he had drunk too much palm wine and he was fast asleep and didn’t hear a thing. With a blunt little knife she levered out the nails holding that skin down one by one .. and sure enough, out crept her sorry little daughter, Pippi Danga.

Mother and daughter kissed each other and hugged. Then the mother sent her daughter back home while she dealt with the drum.  She had a bundle with her, and in that bundle, she had a little rooster. Now she tucked that rooster inside the drum. Then she nailed it up tightly and crept away.

The next morning, the man awoke and first thing he wanted his breakfast.  So he did what he always did when he was hungry. He took his drum out into the centre of the village and shouted out as loud as he could …  
“Everybody listen to me!  I am going to play my wonderful magic singing drum – the only one in the world.  Wait till you hear what a beautiful voice i t has and how cleverly it sings!  Come quickly, or you shall miss my marvellous performance.”  
Everyone came out to listen. The man lifted up his hands and beat the drum …  
“Cock a doodle-dooo!  Cickeerikeeeeee!” crowed the rooster inside  
“What’s this? What’s that dreadful noise? That’s no singing!” everyone cried. The man tried to explain, but the louder he tried, the louder the rooster crowed.  In the end everyone was so fed up with them, they chased him out the village, and he was never seen again.

I’m Pippi Danga, oh, Pippi Danga,  
Oh, Pippi, lucky Pippi, good Pippi Danga.  
A bad man took me  
And hid me in his drum  
But then my mummy found me and took me home again.  
I’m Pippi, poor Pippi, glad Pippi Danga  
Good Pippi Danga, happy back at home

**Congo, Republic of the (Africa)**

**Animals**

**The Three Dogs**

<http://melvinburgess.wordpress.com/2011/11/04/three-dogs/>

A man a woman owned three dogs. One of these dogs was black – as strong as a wolf. Another one was white, a fierce, brave, loyal dog. They were obedient and loyal. But the last one was a weak dog, a dog the colour of mud, who never did anything good. He was lazy, disobedient and impossible to train. So they called their dogs black dog, white dog and weak dog.

Soon after the man and woman got married, the woman fell pregnant. As soon as her belly started swelling, like many other pregnant women before and since, she developed a sudden passion for safu fruits. She would hardly eat anything else – all she wanted was safu fruits, safu fruits – as many as she could get.

Her husband wanted to do everything for his wife, so he went into the woods looking for safu trees. Pretty soon, as the weeks went by and the craving continued, he’d picked all the fruits near his village, and was having to go further and further afield to satisfy his wife’s craving. One day, in a part of the forest he had never been in before, he found a wood full of safu trees, all full of fruit. He picked all he could carry and went home with a big bag of fruit. But his wife was so greedy for the fruits, that she ate the lot within two days.

“Let’s go back to that woods together,” she said. “We can carry enough between us to last us for ages.”

Her husband agreed, and they went back to find the fruits.

Now, what that couple did not know was that these trees belonged to a witch. In all innocence they went there, climbed up the trees and started to pick.  There was one tree with the biggest, ripest, fattest safu fruits they had ever seen, and the wife climbed straight up that one and began to pick the best fruits she could reach.

It was at that moment that a witch child came along. This was the son of the most important witch, the chief of all the witches in the area. The husband and wife did not know that anyone else owned that tree, but even so, they were surprised to see someone from another village, so they kept very still.

The boy stopped beneath the tree with the wife in it.

“I feel someone is hiding in our tree,” he said out loud. Then he sniffed the air. “I can *smell*someone hiding in our tree!” he said. “And I’m sure it’s a pregnant woman.”

He looked up – and there she was.

“I want you to come down from our tree,” said the boy. “Don’t be afraid. Don’t run away. You are welcome to eat this lovely safu fruit. I want to introduce you to my father. He’s always happy to see visitors to our part of the forest.”

The husband and wife knew that they should ignore the boy and go home, but somehow, they didn’t seem able to do what they wanted. They climbed down from the trees and followed him through the woods to the village of the witches. The boy led them straight to the house of his father, the most senior witch. This man, whose importance was shown by his incredibly long nose, was, as the child had said, delighted to see the visitors.

“Well done, my son,” he said. “Thank you for bringing such delicious meat to me. Oh, I’m going to enjoy eating these two!”

The couple tried to run away, but it was already too late. They were held in a nearby house while the chief witch sent out a message to all the other witches in the area. “On this Saturday,” he told them, “We are going to have some good things to eat!”

Saturday came. The senior witch called all the witches together for the feast. One of them, a huge, hungry witch, rolled out a huge cauldron from his house and filled with water. This was the witch cook. The witches built a fire and boiled the water. Then, the cook grabbed hold of the husband and prepared to throw him in.

The man had one last chance to save himself, his wife, and his unborn child. He shouted at the top of his lungs ….

“My black dog, my white dog, my weak dog – help me, please help me!”

Far away in the home village, the dogs heard his cry. They were tied up and locked in the house, but they pulled so hard that all three of them, even the weak dog, broke their leaches. But they were still trapped inside.

The man called out again. “My black dog, my white dog, my weak dog – help me! Come running quickly to me!”

“Shut him up – he makes too much noise,” said the senior witch crossly.

But the dogs had heard. The black dog broke jumped up and shook the door. The white dog jumped up and shook the door. They jumped up and banged against the door over and over, until at last until the door burst open …

And those three dogs came running, running, running through the woods!

The man heard them barking and he laughed.

“Why do you laugh?” asked the chief witch.

“Call this laughing?” said the man. “I’m not laughing. I’m just feeling sad that this is my last day on earth.” And he grinned at them

The witches looked at him as if he was mad. The chief witch jumped to his feet. “Enough!” he shouted. “Fling him in the pot. Let the feast begin!”

The witch cook grabbed hold of the man and dragged him to the pot of water, which was bubbling away. But just at that moment, the three dogs came bursting into the village. The witch cook wasted no time – he lifted up the man above his head and prepared to throw him in. The strong dogs, the black dog and the white dog, were held up by the crowd of witches who jumped to try and stop them. But the little weak dog, the dog the colour of mud, the dog who did nothing good, leaped forward and sank his stubby blunt teeth right into the cooks big toe.

“Agh!” yelled the cook. He dropped the man, who rolled across the ground out of the way. Then the three dogs really began their work.

The strong black dog grabbed hold of the chief witch by his ridiculous nose and began to drag him around the village. The strong white dog seized hold of the big witch chef and shook him until he died. And the little weak dog, the dog the colour of mud who did nothing good, chased and harried the witches round and round the village, snapping at their heels and barking at them when they hid, so that the other two, the strong black and the strong white dog, could come and finish them off.

When it was all over, the man and his wife walked around to have a look. All the witches were dead. There was  only one they couldn’t see, and that was the witch child that had trapped them in the first place. The husband, the wife and the three dogs went to hunt for him – and guess who found him. It was the weak dog, the dog the colour of mud who never did anything good who found him, hiding under his bed.

That was the end of him, and the end of the village witches, too. From that day, all the pregnant women in the village had all the safu fruit they wanted.

**Costa Rica (Central America)**

**Ghost**

**La Carreta sin Bueyes**

<http://www.sanjosecostarica.org/english/legends/legends.php?id_legend=5>

A while back in the former San Jose before automobiles, where ox carts filled the streets and people were simple and superstitious; lived a witch that was in love with the most gallant man in the small village.

The man with his great attachment to and belief in the Christian faith wanted nothing to do with her, but the witch using deceptive methods, was able to make him fall in love with her and thus lived with him for much time, converting him to be much the same as her.

Notably, no one approved of this union, much less the village priest whom in his sermons denounced the fact, and in the years that followed, the man no much older was stricken by an incurable illness and requested of the witch that if he should die, that they would give him the official final right in the local temple.

Upon petitioning the priest, the final request of the witche´s beloved, the priest denied the request due to the sins during his lifetime.

The witch decided that one way or another she was going to get her husban to that temple, so she put her deceased lovers body in a box and loaded him into the oxcart, she grabbed her broom and machete and proceeded to take him to the temple.

The Oxen moved with great speed, but upon arriving to the entrance of the temple, the priest told them "to stop in the name of the lord", the animals obeyed, but the witch did not as she went on to blasphemy against all that is sacred.

The priest forgave the oxen since they complied with his orders, and the witch, the ox cart and the deceased beloved, now walk the earth, and some nights if one listens closely, the sounds of the ox cart’s wheels can be heard passing through the roads of the villages being dragged by furious she devil bare hands.

**Cote d’Ivore**

**Magic**

**Why Guere men always follow their mother’s advice**

<http://www.theafricanmag.com/folktale-why-guere-men-always-follow-their-mothers-advice/>

Once upon a time, in the land of the Guere – an ethnic group in Cote d’Ivoire – there lived a famous hunter named Oulai. Oulai was highly respected across the land, and even feared by fellow hunters due to his impressive records as an elephant-hunter. Of course, elephant-hunting in those days was no easy affair. Hunters used arrows because firearms did not exist. There were numerous rumors about Oulai’s magic secrets, but he never discussed his presumed magic power with anyone.

Oulai, who was more than forty years old, was single and lived with his mother. It appeared he was waiting for Mrs. Right. One afternoon, as he was taking a nap on the porch of his mother’s house, he felt a human presence around him and opened his eyes. He then saw a gorgeous woman who literally took his breath away. He rose from his chair, walked toward her and they met. It was not too long before they married. The woman’s name was Zebahi. Oulai’s mother had a large house, and there was plenty of room for the newlyweds, so they had no reason to build their own home.

It was late one evening, long after dinner. The last sparks of the fire that the Oulais had built were slowly vanishing. The sky was blue, filled with a million stars. The night was really peaceful, only disturbed by drumbeats coming from a faraway village and the songs of birds flying overhead. As the Oulais were enjoying this beautiful night, Zebahi asked her husband how he was able to hunt elephants virtually all his life without ever being hurt or killed the huge pachyderms. The veteran hunter smiled, shook his head gently but did not say anything.

Guere hunters never give out their secrets to anyone. But how could Oulai disappoint Zebahi, his newlywed, especially in that romantic setting? “Darling, what you are going to hear is a long-kept family secret. You must never tell anyone,” Oulai said in a low voice. “I have inherited from my father, who inherited from his father, a magic power. After I Iash my first arrow in the side of an elephant and the animal attempts to charge, I turn into an ant and thus become invisible. Then I become a human again and send another arrow in the elephant’s side and immediately turn into a mouse. I turn back into a human being again and send another arrow into the elephant’s side and immediately turn into an ant-house. If the elephant is still alive, I then turn into…” “Cut it off!” shouted Oulai’s mother who had been listening all along. “You never tell a woman all your secrets!” she said. Oulai kept quiet and he and his wife went to sleep.

Zebahi, the gorgeaous woman who came out of nowhere to “conquer” Oulai’s heart, was, in fact, an elephant turned into human. She was sent by her peers to learn Oulai’s secret so they could save their own lives.

The following day, Oulai went hunting. After launching an arrow in the side of an elephant and turning into an ant, he was pursued by the entire herd of elephants who attempted to crush him with their huge paws. He immediately turned into a mouse but was still chased by the elephants. It was no different when he turned into an ant-house. As the elephants kept on attempting to charge him, he finally turned into a needle, the part of the secret he did not tell Zebahi upon his mother’s advice. At that stage, the elephants could no longer see him. He caught his breath for a while, then quickly changed into a human and launched the last arrow in the side of the elephant, thus saving his own life.

Had Oulai not listened to his mother that night, he would not have survived. Since that time, Guere men always follow their mother’s advice

**Croatia (Europe)**

**Trickster, Animals**

**The She-Wolf**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/sfs/sfs72.htm>

THERE was an enchanted mill, so that no one could stay there, because a she-wolf always haunted it. A soldier went once into the mill to sleep. He made a fire in the parlour, went up into the garret above, bored a hole with an auger in the floor, and peeped down into the parlour. A she-wolf came in and looked about the mill to see whether she could find anything to eat. She found nothing, and then went to the fire, and said: 'Skin down! skin down! skin down!' She raised herself upon her hind-legs, and her skin fell down. She took the skin, and hung it on a peg, and out of the wolf came a damsel. The damsel went to the fire, and fell asleep there. He came down from the garret, took the skin, nailed it fast to the mill-wheel, then came into the mill, shouted over her, and said: 'Good-morning, damsel! how do you do?' She began to scream: 'Skin on me! skin on me! skin on me!' But the skin could not come down, for it was fast nailed. The pair married, and had two children. As soon as the elder son got to know that his mother was a wolf, he said to her: 'Mamma! mamma! I have heard that you are a wolf.' His mother replied: 'What nonsense you are talking! How can you say that I am a wolf?' The father of the two children went one day into the field to plough, and his son said: 'Papa, let me, too, go with you.' His father said: 'Come.' When they had come to the field, the son asked his father: 'Papa, is it true that our mother is a wolf?' His father said: 'It is.' The son inquired: 'And where is her skin?' His father said: 'There it is, on the mill-wheel.' No sooner had the son got home, than he said at once to his mother: 'Mamma! mamma! you are a wolf! I know where your skin is.' His mother asked him: 'Where is my skin?' He said: 'There, on

the mill-wheel.' His mother said to him: 'Thank you, sonny, for rescuing me.' Then she went away, and was never heard of more.

**Cuba (North America)**

**Animals**

**Welcome Back My Purple Frogs**

<http://inspire-me-again.com/2012/07/15/museum-insel-hombroich-folk-tale-1/>

A frog called Antonio desperately wanted to leave his village, for many years he felt trapped and misunderstood by his fellows frogs. Finally he decided to leave everything behind. Antonio was ready to see the world and to get rid of his blurred and bored existence, but first he wanted to find a partner. Someone that together with him would share a new life and the uncertain trip that was ahead. After months of looking everywhere he found Juana a very brave and determined frog that as well as Antonio was looking forward to a completely new life experience.

Jumping and singing Antonio and Juana left the village that saw them born and while being accompanied with blue skies and gentle sun rays, in perfect harmony they dreamt of bigger villages where frogs could sing louder, villages where frogs were not only allowed to be green and brown but also blue and purple.

After weeks of a non-ending road and during a very quiet and fresh morning they finally noticed something in the horizon. In the distance, through the dense fog they perceived a shockingly big thing. What they managed to see was massive and promising. Jumping faster and almost flying of joy they loudly started singing  –*Yes, we found it, of course, of course, of course!!!*

The closer they were to the thing the bigger it got, unfortunately wasn’t a town or a city was just a huge fallen tree that massively blocked the road. Antonio trying hard climbed desperately the tree but was too big, it was just impossible to cross -My love, this is the end of our trip, Antonio explained to Juana and she immediately replied –I am not going back! We can stay and have our family here, if we can’t make it our children could, I am sure with the time this tree will vanish then our children could see what we didn’t manage to.

Years later there was no tree blocking the road but the two young brother frogs remembered very well what their wise parents always said –*You have to follow the road, you have to get to see what we haven’t. There are bigger cities ahead, there are bigger dreams waiting for you.*

The departure day arrived; the two brothers were by then strong enough to continue a trip that their parents started years ago and when they are about to start jumping forward the oldest brother Ramon asked the little Juan -What should we do brother? Juan replied –Lets go back to our parent’s village.

**Curacao (South America)**

**Origin**

**Ananse and How he Reached Curacao**

<http://www.storystar.com/php/read_story.php?story_id=3146>

Have you ever wondered how Ananse the Spider, Kompa Nanzi, got to the island of Curacao? This is the real story and only the very old people know about it. They know about the story because it has been transmitted from Father to Son and family to family by word of mouth for generations. The transmission started even before written records were kept. This is called the oral tradition.   
  
Once upon a time a long time ago Kompa Nanzi was not his name. In the native villages of West Africa Kompa Nanzi was known as Kweku Ananse. Kweku his first name means he was born on a Saturday according to the story passed down to us from our ancestors.   
  
Many many years ago according to our ancestors the people lived very happily and loved themselves and their life. They tilled the soil, grew food, and raised chickens, goats and cattle. They also fished for food in the lakes, the rivers, and the sea. The land was fertile and produced enough food for them and also to sell to other villages. They were a very happy people. Then one day, as the story goes, out of the ocean came some strange ships. The ships were bigger than their small canoes. They had never seen such big ships before. The strangest thing however were the men dressed in strange clothes who came out of the ships. These men had white skins, blue eyes, and red hair. They were nice and friendly at first. Then one day they began to force some of our ancestors to get on the ships. Those who were forced on the ships were never seen again. The ancestors say that Ananse the spider was watching all of this from the corners of the huts and Ananse followed the villagers as they were transported across the sea to strange lands.   
  
On the ships Ananse the spider noticed that the people did not have enough food and water. Ananse, it is said, always found food and water on the ship and made sure that the people had food and water. This was natural for Ananse the Spider. He had always been very resourceful. After several weeks the ship arrived and when the villagers looked at the new land it looked like their village in West Africa. It was warm and they could see the same coconut, mango, orange trees, and other familiar plants. They also were surprised to see that there were other people from other villages in West Africa. Many of them spoke languages that were different from their language. Although they missed their villages and West Africa, after a while they decided that they had no other choice but to make a new life for themselves and to adjust to the new land.   
  
They built homes with the help of Ananse. They survived and made a life for themselves. As the years passed they forgot their languages, but they did not forget their customs and their culture. The elders among them made sure about that. They always told their children about Kweku Ananse. However, they soon began to refer to him as Kompa Nanzi, the survivor and the one who kept them alive. And as the story goes they made a home for themselves, and as far as Ananse he has always been a survivor. He not only survived but he married Yaa Asantewa and had many children. In fact the old folks say that Ananse today still produces many children just in case some get lost or are taken away. Just look in the corners of your homes, barns, and store rooms and you will see Kompa Nanzi and his many children. Some went to settle on the Island of Cuba and Brazil and the island of Jamaica where even today their story is told with different names.

**Cyprus (Europe)**

**Animals**

**Koutsoukoutou**

<http://www.eumof.unic.ac.cy/cyprus.html>

Once upon a time, there was a little beetle called Koutsoukoutou, who decided to get married. But her body was black and she was very sad about that. Because of her colour she couldn’t find a husband. Koutsoukoutou was very smart though. So, she went to the nearest flourmill and without being noticed by anyone, she got into the bags of flour. After rolling and swimming in the white flour, she became white. Then, full of joy and life, she went on a journey to make her dreams come true.

She was walking for a long time, when she met a man who had ten camels. They were currying wheat. When he saw Koutsoukoutou , he asked her:

* Where are you going?
* I am looking for a husband, she told him.
* Would you like to marry me?
* Of course not, I love my life!
* Why are you saying this? He asked. With me, will have the life of a princess.
* What if you get angry with me? Won’t you hit me with your wooden cane?
* Yes, but I will do this only if I get very angry.

As soon as she heard this, little Koutsoukoutou left to continue her journey. Suddenly, she came across a ploughman, who was guiding two oxen ploughing his field. The ploughman asked:

* Where are you going?
* I am looking for a husband, she answered.
* Would you like to marry me?
* How will you hit me when you will get mad? She asked him.
* With my whip, he answered.

As soon as she heard this, little Koutsoukoutou left to continue her journey. While walking, she sung a song:

The man I will marry,

He will go on trips with me.

He will love me, he will kiss me,

And he will never hit me.

I don’t want a strong man.

I don’t want a tall man.

I don’t want to be afraid of my man.

I want a short man.

I want a thin man.

Along with my man, we will be having fun.

Then, little Koutsoukoutou came across a small, grey mouse. When he saw Koutsoukoutou he asked her:

* Where are you going?
* I am looking for a husband, she answered.
* Would you like to marry me?

She was very excited with that! Then she asked him:

* How will you hit me if you get mad?
* With my tail, he told her.

Koutsoukoutou gladly took the mouse for her husband.

On their wedding day, all animals, birds, and insects were gathered. They were having lots of fun, when suddenly they ran out of water. The bride decided to go and bring some water herself, because she didn’t want the celebrations to stop. On her way to the spring, though, she got tired and lied down to get some rest. She fell asleep. Everyone at the wedding party was worried, the groom most of all. He looked for her everywhere, only to find her sleeping in peace. He got angry, and started hitting her with his tail!

Koutsoukoutou woke up but was only tickled by the mouse’s tail. She was laughing so hard that the mouse started laughing too. He was not angry any more. They hugged each other, filled their pitchers with fresh water and returned to the party. And they laughed happily ever after.

**Czech Republic (Europe)**

**Magic**

**The Twelve Months**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/kog/kog04.htm>

ONCE upon a time there lived a mother who had two daughters. One was her own child, the other her stepdaughter. She was very fond of her own daughter, but she would not so much as look at her step-daughter. The only reason was that Maruša, the stepdaughter, was prettier than her own daughter, Holena. The gentle-hearted Maruša did not know how beautiful she was, and so she could never make out why her mother was so cross with her whenever she looked at her. She had to do all the housework, tidying up the cottage, cooking, washing, and sewing, and then she had to take the hay to the cow and look after her. She did all this work alone, while Holena spent the time adorning herself and lazing about. But Maruša liked work, for she was a patient girl, and when her mother scolded and rated her, she bore it like a lamb. It was no good, however, for they grew crueller and crueller every day, only because Maruša was growing prettier and Holena uglier every day.

At last the mother thought: "Why should I keep a pretty stepdaughter in my house? When the lads come courting here, they will fall in love with Maruša and they won't look at Holena."

From that moment the stepmother and her daughter were constantly scheming how to get rid of poor Maruša. They starved her and they beat her. But she bore it all, and in spite of all she kept on growing prettier every day. They invented torments that the cruellest of men would never have thought of. One day--it was in the middle of January--Holena felt a longing for the scent of violets. "Go, Maruša, and get me some violets from the forest; I want to wear them at my waist and to smell them," she said to her sister.

"Great heavens! sister. What a strange notion! Who ever heard of violets growing under the snow?" said poor Maruša.

"You wretched tatterdemalion! how dare you argue when I tell you to do something? Off you go at once, and if you don't bring me violets from the forest I'll kill you!" said Holena threateningly.

The stepmother caught hold of Maruša, turned her out of the door, and slammed it to after her. She went into the forest weeping bitterly. The snow lay deep, and there wasn't a human footprint to be seen. Maruša wandered about for a long time, tortured by hunger and trembling with cold. She begged God to take her from the world.

At last she saw a light in the distance. She went towards the glow, and came at last to the top of a mountain. A big fire was burning there, and round the fire were twelve stones with twelve men sitting on them. Three of them had snow-white beards, three were not so old, and three were still younger. The three youngest were the handsomest of them all. They were not speaking, but all sitting silent. These twelve men were the twelve months. Great January sat highest of all; his hair and beard were as white as snow, and in his hand he held a club.

Maruša was frightened. She stood still for a time in terror, but, growing bolder, she went up to them and said: "Please, kind sirs, let me warm my hands at your fire. I am trembling with the cold."

Great January nodded, and asked her: "Why have you come here, my dear little girl? What are you looking for?"

"I am looking for violets," answered Maruša.

"This is no time to be looking for violets, for everything is covered with snow," answered Great January.

"Yes, I know; but my sister Holena and my stepmother said that I must bring them some violets from the forest. If I don't bring them, they'll kill me. Tell me, fathers, please tell me where I can find them."

Great January stood up and went to one of the younger months--it was March--and, giving him the club, he said: "Brother, take the high seat."

March took the high seat upon the stone and waved the club over the fire. The fire blazed up, the snow began to melt, the trees began to bud, and the ground under the young beech-trees was at once covered with grass and the crimson daisy buds began to peep through the grass. It was springtime. Under the bushes the violets were blooming among their little leaves, and before Maruša had time to think, so many of them had sprung up that they looked like a blue cloth spread out on the ground.

"Pick them quickly, Maruša!" commanded March.

Maruša picked them joyfully till she had a big bunch. Then she thanked the months with all her heart and scampered merrily home.

Holena and the stepmother wondered when they saw Maruša bringing the violets. They opened the door to her, and the scent of violets filled all the cottage.

"Where did you get them?" asked Holena sulkily.

"They are growing under the bushes in a forest on the high mountains."

Holena put them in her waistband. She let her mother smell them, but she did not say to her sister: "Smell them."

Another day she was lolling near the stove, and now she longed for some strawberries. So she called to her sister and said: "Go, Maruša, and get me some strawberries from the forest."

"Alas! dear sister, where could I find any strawberries? Who ever heard of strawberries growing under the snow?" said Maruša.

"You wretched little tatterdemalion, how dare you argue when I tell you to do a thing? Go at once and get me the strawberries, or I'll kill you!"

The stepmother caught hold of Maruša and pushed her out of the door and shut it after her. Maruša went to the forest weeping bitterly. The snow was lying deep, and there wasn't a human footprint to be seen anywhere. She wandered about for a long time, tortured by hunger and trembling with cold. At last she saw the light she had seen the other day. Overjoyed, she went towards it. She came to the great fire with the twelve months sitting round it.

"Please, kind sirs, let me warm my hands at the fire. I am trembling with cold."

Great January nodded, and asked her: "Why have you come again, and what are you looking for here?"

"I am looking for strawberries."

"But it is winter now, and strawberries don't grow on the snow," said January.

"Yes, I know," said Maruša sadly; "but my sister Holena and my stepmother bade me bring them some strawberries, and if I don't bring them, they will kill me. Tell me, fathers, tell me, please, where I can find them."

Great January arose. He went over to the month sitting opposite to him--it was June--and handed the club to him, saying: "Brother, take the high seat."

June took the high seat upon the stone and swung the club over the fire. The fire shot up, and its heat melted the snow in a moment. The ground was all green, the trees were covered with leaves, the birds began to sing, and the forest was filled with all kinds of flowers. It was summer. The ground under the bushes was covered with white starlets, the starry blossoms were turning into strawberries every minute. They ripened at once, and before Maruša had time to think, there were so many of them that it looked as though blood had been sprinkled on the ground.

"Pick them at once, Maruša!" commanded

June. Maruša picked them joyfully till she had filled her apron full. Then she thanked the months with all her heart and scampered merrily home. Holena and the stepmother wondered when they saw Maruša bringing the strawberries. Her apron was full of them. They ran to open the door for her, and the scent of the strawberries filled the whole cottage.

"Where did you pick them?" asked Holena sulkily.

"There are plenty of them growing under the young beech-trees in the forest on the high mountains."

Holena took the strawberries, and went on eating them till she could eat no more. So did the stepmother too, but they didn't say to Maruša: "Here is one for you."

When Holena had enjoyed the strawberries, she grew greedy for other dainties, and so on the third day she longed for some red apples.

"Maruša, go into the forest and get me some red apples," she said to her sister.

"Alas! sister dear, how am I to get apples for you in winter?" protested Maruša.

"You wretched little tatterdemalion, how dare you argue when I tell you to do a thing? Go to the forest at once, and if you don't bring me the apples I will kill you!" threatened Holena.

The stepmother caught hold of Maruša and pushed her out of the door and shut it after her. Maruša went to the forest weeping bitterly. The snow was lying deep; there wasn't a human footprint to be seen anywhere. But she didn't wander about this time. She ran straight to the top of the mountain where the big fire was burning. The twelve months were sitting round the fire; yes, there they certainly were, and Great January was sitting on the high seat.

"Please, kind sirs, let me warm my hands at the fire. I am trembling with cold."

Great January nodded, and asked her: "Why have you come here, and what are you looking for?"

"I am looking for red apples."

"It is winter now, and red apples don't grow in winter," answered January.

"Yes, I know," said Maruša sadly; "but my sister and my stepmother, too, bade me bring them some red apples from the forest. If I don't bring them, they will kill me. Tell me, father, tell me, please, where I could find them."

Great January rose up. He went over to one of the older months--it was September. He handed the club to him and said: "Brother, take the high seat."

Month September took the high seat upon the stone and swung the club over the fire. The fire began to burn with a red flame, the snow began to melt. But the trees were not covered with leaves; the leaves were wavering down one after the other, and the cold wind was driving them to and fro over the yellowing ground. This time Maruša did not see so many flowers. Only red pinks were blooming on the hillside, and meadow saffrons were flowering in the valley. High fern and thick ivy were growing under the young beech-trees. But Maruša was only looking for red apples, and at last she saw an apple-tree with red apples hanging high among its branches.

"Shake the tree at once, Maruša!" commanded the month.

Right gladly Maruša shook the tree, and one apple fell down. She shook it a second time, and another apple fell down.

"Now, Maruša, run home quickly!" shouted the month.

Maruša obeyed at once. She picked up the apples, thanked the months with all her heart, and ran merrily home.

Holena and the stepmother wondered when they saw Maruša bringing the apples. They ran to open the door for her, and she gave them two apples.

"Where did you get them?" asked Holena. "There are plenty of them in the forest on the high mountain."

"And why didn't you bring more? Or did you eat them on the way home?" said Holena harshly.

"Alas! sister dear, I didn't eat a single one. But when I had shaken the tree once, one apple fell down, and when I shook it a second time, another apple fell down, and they wouldn't let me shake it again. They shouted to me to go straight home," protested Maruša.

Holena began to curse her: "May you be struck to death by lightning!" and she was going to beat her.

Maruša began to cry bitterly, and she prayed to God to take her to Himself, or she would be killed by her wicked sister and her stepmother. She ran away into the kitchen.

Greedy Holena stopped cursing and began to eat the apple. It tasted so delicious that she told her mother she had never tasted anything so nice in all her life. The step-mother liked it too. When they had finished, they wanted some more.

"Mother, give me my fur coat. I'll go to the forest myself. That ragged little wretch would eat them all up again on her way home. I'll find the place all right, and I'll shake them all down, however they shout at me."

Her mother tried to dissuade her, but it was no good. She took her fur coat, wrapped a cloth round her head, and off she went to the forest. Her mother stood on the threshold, watching to see how Holena would manage to walk in the wintry weather.

The snow lay deep, and there wasn't a human footprint to be seen anywhere. Holena wandered about for a long time, but the desire of the sweet apple kept driving her on. At last she saw a light in the distance. She went towards it, and climbed to the top of the mountain where the big fire was burning, and round the fire on twelve stones the twelve months were sitting. She was terrified at first, but she soon recovered. She stepped up to the fire and stretched out her hands to warm them, but she didn't say as much as "By your leave" to the twelve months; no, she didn't say a single word to them.

"Why have you come here, and what are you looking for?" asked Great January crossly.

"Why do you want to know, you old fool? It's no business of yours," replied Holena angrily, and she turned away from the fire and went into the forest.

Great January frowned and swung the club over his head. The sky grew dark in a moment, the fire burned low, the snow began to fall as thick as if the feathers had been shaken out of a down quilt, and an icy wind began to blow through the forest. Holena couldn't see one step in front of her; she lost her way altogether, and several times she fell into snowdrifts. Then her limbs grew weak and began slowly to stiffen. The snow kept on falling and the icy wind blew more icily than ever. Holena began to curse Maruša and the Lord God. Her limbs began to freeze, despite her fur coat.

Her mother was waiting for Holena; she kept on looking out for her, first at the window, then outside the door, but all in vain.

"Does she like the apples so much that she can't leave them, or what is the matter? I must see for myself where she is," decided the stepmother at last. So she put on her fur coat, she wrapped a shawl round her head, and went out to look for Holena. The snow was lying deep; there wasn't a human footprint to be seen; the snow fell fast, and the icy wind was blowing through the forest.

Maruša had cooked the dinner, she had seen to the cow, and yet Holena and her mother did not come back. "Where are they staying so long?" thought Maruša, as she sat down to work at the distaff. The spindle was full already and it was quite dark in the room, and yet Holena and the stepmother had not come back.

"Alas, Lord! what has come to them?" cried Maruša, peering anxiously through the window. The sky was bright and the earth was all glittering, but there wasn't a human soul to be seen. . . . Sadly she shut the

window; she crossed herself, and prayed for her sister and her mother. . . . In the morning she waited with breakfast, she waited with dinner; but however much she waited, it was no good. Neither her mother nor her sister ever came back. Both of them were frozen to death in the forest.

So good Maruša inherited the cottage, a piece of ploughland and the cow. She married a kind husband, and they both lived happily ever after.

**Denmark (Europe)**

**Magic**

**The Little Mermaid**

<http://hca.gilead.org.il/li_merma.html>

FAR out in the ocean, where the water is as blue as the prettiest cornflower, and as clear as crystal, it is very, very deep; so deep, indeed, that no cable could fathom it: many church steeples, piled one upon another, would not reach from the ground beneath to the surface of the water above. There dwell the Sea King and his subjects. We must not imagine that there is nothing at the bottom of the sea but bare yellow sand. No, indeed; the most singular flowers and plants grow there; the leaves and stems of which are so pliant, that the slightest agitation of the water causes them to stir as if they had life. Fishes, both large and small, glide between the branches, as birds fly among the trees here upon land. In the deepest spot of all, stands the castle of the Sea King. Its walls are built of coral, and the long, gothic windows are of the clearest amber. The roof is formed of shells, that open and close as the water flows over them. Their appearance is very beautiful, for in each lies a glittering pearl, which would be fit for the diadem of a queen.

The Sea King had been a widower for many years, and his aged mother kept house for him. She was a very wise woman, and exceedingly proud of her high birth; on that account she wore twelve oysters on her tail; while others, also of high rank, were only allowed to wear six. She was, however, deserving of very great praise, especially for her care of the little sea-princesses, her grand-daughters. They were six beautiful children; but the youngest was the prettiest of them all; her skin was as clear and delicate as a rose-leaf, and her eyes as blue as the deepest sea; but, like all the others, she had no feet, and her body ended in a fish’s tail. All day long they played in the great halls of the castle, or among the living flowers that grew out of the walls. The large amber windows were open, and the fish swam in, just as the swallows fly into our houses when we open the windows, excepting that the fishes swam up to the princesses, ate out of their hands, and allowed themselves to be stroked. Outside the castle there was a beautiful garden, in which grew bright red and dark blue flowers, and blossoms like flames of fire; the fruit glittered like gold, and the leaves and stems waved to and fro continually. The earth itself was the finest sand, but blue as the flame of burning sulphur. Over everything lay a peculiar blue radiance, as if it were surrounded by the air from above, through which the blue sky shone, instead of the dark depths of the sea. In calm weather the sun could be seen, looking like a purple flower, with the light streaming from the calyx. Each of the young princesses had a little plot of ground in the garden, where she might dig and plant as she pleased. One arranged her flower-bed into the form of a whale; another thought it better to make hers like the figure of a little mermaid; but that of the youngest was round like the sun, and contained flowers as red as his rays at sunset. She was a strange child, quiet and thoughtful; and while her sisters would be delighted with the wonderful things which they obtained from the wrecks of vessels, she cared for nothing but her pretty red flowers, like the sun, excepting a beautiful marble statue. It was the representation of a handsome boy, carved out of pure white stone, which had fallen to the bottom of the sea from a wreck. She planted by the statue a rose-colored weeping willow. It grew splendidly, and very soon hung its fresh branches over the statue, almost down to the blue sands. The shadow had a violet tint, and waved to and fro like the branches; it seemed as if the crown of the tree and the root were at play, and trying to kiss each other. Nothing gave her so much pleasure as to hear about the world above the sea. She made her old grandmother tell her all she knew of the ships and of the towns, the people and the animals. To her it seemed most wonderful and beautiful to hear that the flowers of the land should have fragrance, and not those below the sea; that the trees of the forest should be green; and that the fishes among the trees could sing so sweetly, that it was quite a pleasure to hear them. Her grandmother called the little birds fishes, or she would not have understood her; for she had never seen birds.

“When you have reached your fifteenth year,” said the grand-mother, “you will have permission to rise up out of the sea, to sit on the rocks in the moonlight, while the great ships are sailing by; and then you will see both forests and towns.”

In the following year, one of the sisters would be fifteen: but as each was a year younger than the other, the youngest would have to wait five years before her turn came to rise up from the bottom of the ocean, and see the earth as we do. However, each promised to tell the others what she saw on her first visit, and what she thought the most beautiful; for their grandmother could not tell them enough; there were so many things on which they wanted information. None of them longed so much for her turn to come as the youngest, she who had the longest time to wait, and who was so quiet and thoughtful. Many nights she stood by the open window, looking up through the dark blue water, and watching the fish as they splashed about with their fins and tails. She could see the moon and stars shining faintly; but through the water they looked larger than they do to our eyes. When something like a black cloud passed between her and them, she knew that it was either a whale swimming over her head, or a ship full of human beings, who never imagined that a pretty little mermaid was standing beneath them, holding out her white hands towards the keel of their ship.

As soon as the eldest was fifteen, she was allowed to rise to the surface of the ocean. When she came back, she had hundreds of things to talk about; but the most beautiful, she said, was to lie in the moonlight, on a sandbank, in the quiet sea, near the coast, and to gaze on a large town nearby, where the lights were twinkling like hundreds of stars; to listen to the sounds of the music, the noise of carriages, and the voices of human beings, and then to hear the merry bells peal out from the church steeples; and because she could not go near to all those wonderful things, she longed for them more than ever. Oh, did not the youngest sister listen eagerly to all these descriptions? and afterwards, when she stood at the open window looking up through the dark blue water, she thought of the great city, with all its bustle and noise, and even fancied she could hear the sound of the church bells, down in the depths of the sea.

In another year the second sister received permission to rise to the surface of the water, and to swim about where she pleased. She rose just as the sun was setting, and this, she said, was the most beautiful sight of all. The whole sky looked like gold, while violet and rose-colored clouds, which she could not describe, floated over her; and, still more rapidly than the clouds, flew a large flock of wild swans towards the setting sun, looking like a long white veil across the sea. She also swam towards the sun; but it sunk into the waves, and the rosy tints faded from the clouds and from the sea.

The third sister’s turn followed; she was the boldest of them all, and she swam up a broad river that emptied itself into the sea. On the banks she saw green hills covered with beautiful vines; palaces and castles peeped out from amid the proud trees of the forest; she heard the birds singing, and the rays of the sun were so powerful that she was obliged often to dive down under the water to cool her burning face. In a narrow creek she found a whole troop of little human children, quite naked, and sporting about in the water; she wanted to play with them, but they fled in a great fright; and then a little black animal came to the water; it was a dog, but she did not know that, for she had never before seen one. This animal barked at her so terribly that she became frightened, and rushed back to the open sea. But she said she should never forget the beautiful forest, the green hills, and the pretty little children who could swim in the water, although they had not fish’s tails.

The fourth sister was more timid; she remained in the midst of the sea, but she said it was quite as beautiful there as nearer the land. She could see for so many miles around her, and the sky above looked like a bell of glass. She had seen the ships, but at such a great distance that they looked like sea-gulls. The dolphins sported in the waves, and the great whales spouted water from their nostrils till it seemed as if a hundred fountains were playing in every direction.

The fifth sister’s birthday occurred in the winter; so when her turn came, she saw what the others had not seen the first time they went up. The sea looked quite green, and large icebergs were floating about, each like a pearl, she said, but larger and loftier than the churches built by men. They were of the most singular shapes, and glittered like diamonds. She had seated herself upon one of the largest, and let the wind play with her long hair, and she remarked that all the ships sailed by rapidly, and steered as far away as they could from the iceberg, as if they were afraid of it. Towards evening, as the sun went down, dark clouds covered the sky, the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed, and the red light glowed on the icebergs as they rocked and tossed on the heaving sea. On all the ships the sails were reefed with fear and trembling, while she sat calmly on the floating iceberg, watching the blue lightning, as it darted its forked flashes into the sea.

When first the sisters had permission to rise to the surface, they were each delighted with the new and beautiful sights they saw; but now, as grown-up girls, they could go when they pleased, and they had become indifferent about it. They wished themselves back again in the water, and after a month had passed they said it was much more beautiful down below, and pleasanter to be at home. Yet often, in the evening hours, the five sisters would twine their arms round each other, and rise to the surface, in a row. They had more beautiful voices than any human being could have; and before the approach of a storm, and when they expected a ship would be lost, they swam before the vessel, and sang sweetly of the delights to be found in the depths of the sea, and begging the sailors not to fear if they sank to the bottom. But the sailors could not understand the song, they took it for the howling of the storm. And these things were never to be beautiful for them; for if the ship sank, the men were drowned, and their dead bodies alone reached the palace of the Sea King.

When the sisters rose, arm-in-arm, through the water in this way, their youngest sister would stand quite alone, looking after them, ready to cry, only that the mermaids have no tears, and therefore they suffer more. “Oh, were I but fifteen years old,” said she: “I know that I shall love the world up there, and all the people who live in it.”

At last she reached her fifteenth year. “Well, now, you are grown up,” said the old dowager, her grandmother; “so you must let me adorn you like your other sisters;” and she placed a wreath of white lilies in her hair, and every flower leaf was half a pearl. Then the old lady ordered eight great oysters to attach themselves to the tail of the princess to show her high rank.

“But they hurt me so,” said the little mermaid.

“Pride must suffer pain,” replied the old lady. Oh, how gladly she would have shaken off all this grandeur, and laid aside the heavy wreath! The red flowers in her own garden would have suited her much better, but she could not help herself: so she said, “Farewell,” and rose as lightly as a bubble to the surface of the water. The sun had just set as she raised her head above the waves; but the clouds were tinted with crimson and gold, and through the glimmering twilight beamed the evening star in all its beauty. The sea was calm, and the air mild and fresh. A large ship, with three masts, lay becalmed on the water, with only one sail set; for not a breeze stiffed, and the sailors sat idle on deck or amongst the rigging. There was music and song on board; and, as darkness came on, a hundred colored lanterns were lighted, as if the flags of all nations waved in the air. The little mermaid swam close to the cabin windows; and now and then, as the waves lifted her up, she could look in through clear glass window-panes, and see a number of well-dressed people within. Among them was a young prince, the most beautiful of all, with large black eyes; he was sixteen years of age, and his birthday was being kept with much rejoicing. The sailors were dancing on deck, but when the prince came out of the cabin, more than a hundred rockets rose in the air, making it as bright as day. The little mermaid was so startled that she dived under water; and when she again stretched out her head, it appeared as if all the stars of heaven were falling around her, she had never seen such fireworks before. Great suns spurted fire about, splendid fireflies flew into the blue air, and everything was reflected in the clear, calm sea beneath. The ship itself was so brightly illuminated that all the people, and even the smallest rope, could be distinctly and plainly seen. And how handsome the young prince looked, as he pressed the hands of all present and smiled at them, while the music resounded through the clear night air.

It was very late; yet the little mermaid could not take her eyes from the ship, or from the beautiful prince. The colored lanterns had been extinguished, no more rockets rose in the air, and the cannon had ceased firing; but the sea became restless, and a moaning, grumbling sound could be heard beneath the waves: still the little mermaid remained by the cabin window, rocking up and down on the water, which enabled her to look in. After a while, the sails were quickly unfurled, and the noble ship continued her passage; but soon the waves rose higher, heavy clouds darkened the sky, and lightning appeared in the distance. A dreadful storm was approaching; once more the sails were reefed, and the great ship pursued her flying course over the raging sea. The waves rose mountains high, as if they would have overtopped the mast; but the ship dived like a swan between them, and then rose again on their lofty, foaming crests. To the little mermaid this appeared pleasant sport; not so to the sailors. At length the ship groaned and creaked; the thick planks gave way under the lashing of the sea as it broke over the deck; the mainmast snapped asunder like a reed; the ship lay over on her side; and the water rushed in. The little mermaid now perceived that the crew were in danger; even she herself was obliged to be careful to avoid the beams and planks of the wreck which lay scattered on the water. At one moment it was so pitch dark that she could not see a single object, but a flash of lightning revealed the whole scene; she could see every one who had been on board excepting the prince; when the ship parted, she had seen him sink into the deep waves, and she was glad, for she thought he would now be with her; and then she remembered that human beings could not live in the water, so that when he got down to her father’s palace he would be quite dead. But he must not die. So she swam about among the beams and planks which strewed the surface of the sea, forgetting that they could crush her to pieces. Then she dived deeply under the dark waters, rising and falling with the waves, till at length she managed to reach the young prince, who was fast losing the power of swimming in that stormy sea. His limbs were failing him, his beautiful eyes were closed, and he would have died had not the little mermaid come to his assistance. She held his head above the water, and let the waves drift them where they would.

In the morning the storm had ceased; but of the ship not a single fragment could be seen. The sun rose up red and glowing from the water, and its beams brought back the hue of health to the prince’s cheeks; but his eyes remained closed. The mermaid kissed his high, smooth forehead, and stroked back his wet hair; he seemed to her like the marble statue in her little garden, and she kissed him again, and wished that he might live. Presently they came in sight of land; she saw lofty blue mountains, on which the white snow rested as if a flock of swans were lying upon them. Near the coast were beautiful green forests, and close by stood a large building, whether a church or a convent she could not tell. Orange and citron trees grew in the garden, and before the door stood lofty palms. The sea here formed a little bay, in which the water was quite still, but very deep; so she swam with the handsome prince to the beach, which was covered with fine, white sand, and there she laid him in the warm sunshine, taking care to raise his head higher than his body. Then bells sounded in the large white building, and a number of young girls came into the garden. The little mermaid swam out farther from the shore and placed herself between some high rocks that rose out of the water; then she covered her head and neck with the foam of the sea so that her little face might not be seen, and watched to see what would become of the poor prince. She did not wait long before she saw a young girl approach the spot where he lay. She seemed frightened at first, but only for a moment; then she fetched a number of people, and the mermaid saw that the prince came to life again, and smiled upon those who stood round him. But to her he sent no smile; he knew not that she had saved him. This made her very unhappy, and when he was led away into the great building, she dived down sorrowfully into the water, and returned to her father’s castle. She had always been silent and thoughtful, and now she was more so than ever. Her sisters asked her what she had seen during her first visit to the surface of the water; but she would tell them nothing. Many an evening and morning did she rise to the place where she had left the prince. She saw the fruits in the garden ripen till they were gathered, the snow on the tops of the mountains melt away; but she never saw the prince, and therefore she returned home, always more sorrowful than before. It was her only comfort to sit in her own little garden, and fling her arm round the beautiful marble statue which was like the prince; but she gave up tending her flowers, and they grew in wild confusion over the paths, twining their long leaves and stems round the branches of the trees, so that the whole place became dark and gloomy. At length she could bear it no longer, and told one of her sisters all about it. Then the others heard the secret, and very soon it became known to two mermaids whose intimate friend happened to know who the prince was. She had also seen the festival on board ship, and she told them where the prince came from, and where his palace stood.

“Come, little sister,” said the other princesses; then they entwined their arms and rose up in a long row to the surface of the water, close by the spot where they knew the prince’s palace stood. It was built of bright yellow shining stone, with long flights of marble steps, one of which reached quite down to the sea. Splendid gilded cupolas rose over the roof, and between the pillars that surrounded the whole building stood life-like statues of marble. Through the clear crystal of the lofty windows could be seen noble rooms, with costly silk curtains and hangings of tapestry; while the walls were covered with beautiful paintings which were a pleasure to look at. In the centre of the largest saloon a fountain threw its sparkling jets high up into the glass cupola of the ceiling, through which the sun shone down upon the water and upon the beautiful plants growing round the basin of the fountain. Now that she knew where he lived, she spent many an evening and many a night on the water near the palace. She would swim much nearer the shore than any of the others ventured to do; indeed once she went quite up the narrow channel under the marble balcony, which threw a broad shadow on the water. Here she would sit and watch the young prince, who thought himself quite alone in the bright moonlight. She saw him many times of an evening sailing in a pleasant boat, with music playing and flags waving. She peeped out from among the green rushes, and if the wind caught her long silvery-white veil, those who saw it believed it to be a swan, spreading out its wings. On many a night, too, when the fishermen, with their torches, were out at sea, she heard them relate so many good things about the doings of the young prince, that she was glad she had saved his life when he had been tossed about half-dead on the waves. And she remembered that his head had rested on her bosom, and how heartily she had kissed him; but he knew nothing of all this, and could not even dream of her. She grew more and more fond of human beings, and wished more and more to be able to wander about with those whose world seemed to be so much larger than her own. They could fly over the sea in ships, and mount the high hills which were far above the clouds; and the lands they possessed, their woods and their fields, stretched far away beyond the reach of her sight. There was so much that she wished to know, and her sisters were unable to answer all her questions. Then she applied to her old grandmother, who knew all about the upper world, which she very rightly called the lands above the sea.

“If human beings are not drowned,” asked the little mermaid, “can they live forever? do they never die as we do here in the sea?”

“Yes,” replied the old lady, “they must also die, and their term of life is even shorter than ours. We sometimes live to three hundred years, but when we cease to exist here we only become the foam on the surface of the water, and we have not even a grave down here of those we love. We have not immortal souls, we shall never live again; but, like the green sea-weed, when once it has been cut off, we can never flourish more. Human beings, on the contrary, have a soul which lives forever, lives after the body has been turned to dust. It rises up through the clear, pure air beyond the glittering stars. As we rise out of the water, and behold all the land of the earth, so do they rise to unknown and glorious regions which we shall never see.”

“Why have not we an immortal soul?” asked the little mermaid mournfully; “I would give gladly all the hundreds of years that I have to live, to be a human being only for one day, and to have the hope of knowing the happiness of that glorious world above the stars.”

“You must not think of that,” said the old woman; “we feel ourselves to be much happier and much better off than human beings.”

“So I shall die,” said the little mermaid, “and as the foam of the sea I shall be driven about never again to hear the music of the waves, or to see the pretty flowers nor the red sun. Is there anything I can do to win an immortal soul?”

“No,” said the old woman, “unless a man were to love you so much that you were more to him than his father or mother; and if all his thoughts and all his love were fixed upon you, and the priest placed his right hand in yours, and he promised to be true to you here and hereafter, then his soul would glide into your body and you would obtain a share in the future happiness of mankind. He would give a soul to you and retain his own as well; but this can never happen. Your fish’s tail, which amongst us is considered so beautiful, is thought on earth to be quite ugly; they do not know any better, and they think it necessary to have two stout props, which they call legs, in order to be handsome.”

Then the little mermaid sighed, and looked sorrowfully at her fish’s tail. “Let us be happy,” said the old lady, “and dart and spring about during the three hundred years that we have to live, which is really quite long enough; after that we can rest ourselves all the better. This evening we are going to have a court ball.”

It is one of those splendid sights which we can never see on earth. The walls and the ceiling of the large ball-room were of thick, but transparent crystal. May hundreds of colossal shells, some of a deep red, others of a grass green, stood on each side in rows, with blue fire in them, which lighted up the whole saloon, and shone through the walls, so that the sea was also illuminated. Innumerable fishes, great and small, swam past the crystal walls; on some of them the scales glowed with a purple brilliancy, and on others they shone like silver and gold. Through the halls flowed a broad stream, and in it danced the mermen and the mermaids to the music of their own sweet singing. No one on earth has such a lovely voice as theirs. The little mermaid sang more sweetly than them all. The whole court applauded her with hands and tails; and for a moment her heart felt quite gay, for she knew she had the loveliest voice of any on earth or in the sea. But she soon thought again of the world above her, for she could not forget the charming prince, nor her sorrow that she had not an immortal soul like his; therefore she crept away silently out of her father’s palace, and while everything within was gladness and song, she sat in her own little garden sorrowful and alone. Then she heard the bugle sounding through the water, and thought—“He is certainly sailing above, he on whom my wishes depend, and in whose hands I should like to place the happiness of my life. I will venture all for him, and to win an immortal soul, while my sisters are dancing in my father’s palace, I will go to the sea witch, of whom I have always been so much afraid, but she can give me counsel and help.”

And then the little mermaid went out from her garden, and took the road to the foaming whirlpools, behind which the sorceress lived. She had never been that way before: neither flowers nor grass grew there; nothing but bare, gray, sandy ground stretched out to the whirlpool, where the water, like foaming mill-wheels, whirled round everything that it seized, and cast it into the fathomless deep. Through the midst of these crushing whirlpools the little mermaid was obliged to pass, to reach the dominions of the sea witch; and also for a long distance the only road lay right across a quantity of warm, bubbling mire, called by the witch her turfmoor. Beyond this stood her house, in the centre of a strange forest, in which all the trees and flowers were polypi, half animals and half plants; they looked like serpents with a hundred heads growing out of the ground. The branches were long slimy arms, with fingers like flexible worms, moving limb after limb from the root to the top. All that could be reached in the sea they seized upon, and held fast, so that it never escaped from their clutches. The little mermaid was so alarmed at what she saw, that she stood still, and her heart beat with fear, and she was very nearly turning back; but she thought of the prince, and of the human soul for which she longed, and her courage returned. She fastened her long flowing hair round her head, so that the polypi might not seize hold of it. She laid her hands together across her bosom, and then she darted forward as a fish shoots through the water, between the supple arms and fingers of the ugly polypi, which were stretched out on each side of her. She saw that each held in its grasp something it had seized with its numerous little arms, as if they were iron bands. The white skeletons of human beings who had perished at sea, and had sunk down into the deep waters, skeletons of land animals, oars, rudders, and chests of ships were lying tightly grasped by their clinging arms; even a little mermaid, whom they had caught and strangled; and this seemed the most shocking of all to the little princess.

She now came to a space of marshy ground in the wood, where large, fat water-snakes were rolling in the mire, and showing their ugly, drab-colored bodies. In the midst of this spot stood a house, built with the bones of shipwrecked human beings. There sat the sea witch, allowing a toad to eat from her mouth, just as people sometimes feed a canary with a piece of sugar. She called the ugly water-snakes her little chickens, and allowed them to crawl all over her bosom.

“I know what you want,” said the sea witch; “it is very stupid of you, but you shall have your way, and it will bring you to sorrow, my pretty princess. You want to get rid of your fish’s tail, and to have two supports instead of it, like human beings on earth, so that the young prince may fall in love with you, and that you may have an immortal soul.” And then the witch laughed so loud and disgustingly, that the toad and the snakes fell to the ground, and lay there wriggling about. “You are but just in time,” said the witch; “for after sunrise to-morrow I should not be able to help you till the end of another year. I will prepare a draught for you, with which you must swim to land tomorrow before sunrise, and sit down on the shore and drink it. Your tail will then disappear, and shrink up into what mankind calls legs, and you will feel great pain, as if a sword were passing through you. But all who see you will say that you are the prettiest little human being they ever saw. You will still have the same floating gracefulness of movement, and no dancer will ever tread so lightly; but at every step you take it will feel as if you were treading upon sharp knives, and that the blood must flow. If you will bear all this, I will help you.”

“Yes, I will,” said the little princess in a trembling voice, as she thought of the prince and the immortal soul.

“But think again,” said the witch; “for when once your shape has become like a human being, you can no more be a mermaid. You will never return through the water to your sisters, or to your father’s palace again; and if you do not win the love of the prince, so that he is willing to forget his father and mother for your sake, and to love you with his whole soul, and allow the priest to join your hands that you may be man and wife, then you will never have an immortal soul. The first morning after he marries another your heart will break, and you will become foam on the crest of the waves.”

“I will do it,” said the little mermaid, and she became pale as death.

“But I must be paid also,” said the witch, “and it is not a trifle that I ask. You have the sweetest voice of any who dwell here in the depths of the sea, and you believe that you will be able to charm the prince with it also, but this voice you must give to me; the best thing you possess will I have for the price of my draught. My own blood must be mixed with it, that it may be as sharp as a two-edged sword.”

“But if you take away my voice,” said the little mermaid, “what is left for me?”

“Your beautiful form, your graceful walk, and your expressive eyes; surely with these you can enchain a man’s heart. Well, have you lost your courage? Put out your little tongue that I may cut it off as my payment; then you shall have the powerful draught.”

“It shall be,” said the little mermaid.

Then the witch placed her cauldron on the fire, to prepare the magic draught.

“Cleanliness is a good thing,” said she, scouring the vessel with snakes, which she had tied together in a large knot; then she pricked herself in the breast, and let the black blood drop into it. The steam that rose formed itself into such horrible shapes that no one could look at them without fear. Every moment the witch threw something else into the vessel, and when it began to boil, the sound was like the weeping of a crocodile. When at last the magic draught was ready, it looked like the clearest water. “There it is for you,” said the witch. Then she cut off the mermaid’s tongue, so that she became dumb, and would never again speak or sing. “If the polypi should seize hold of you as you return through the wood,” said the witch, “throw over them a few drops of the potion, and their fingers will be torn into a thousand pieces.” But the little mermaid had no occasion to do this, for the polypi sprang back in terror when they caught sight of the glittering draught, which shone in her hand like a twinkling star.

So she passed quickly through the wood and the marsh, and between the rushing whirlpools. She saw that in her father’s palace the torches in the ballroom were extinguished, and all within asleep; but she did not venture to go in to them, for now she was dumb and going to leave them forever, she felt as if her heart would break. She stole into the garden, took a flower from the flower-beds of each of her sisters, kissed her hand a thousand times towards the palace, and then rose up through the dark blue waters. The sun had not risen when she came in sight of the prince’s palace, and approached the beautiful marble steps, but the moon shone clear and bright. Then the little mermaid drank the magic draught, and it seemed as if a two-edged sword went through her delicate body: she fell into a swoon, and lay like one dead. When the sun arose and shone over the sea, she recovered, and felt a sharp pain; but just before her stood the handsome young prince. He fixed his coal-black eyes upon her so earnestly that she cast down her own, and then became aware that her fish’s tail was gone, and that she had as pretty a pair of white legs and tiny feet as any little maiden could have; but she had no clothes, so she wrapped herself in her long, thick hair. The prince asked her who she was, and where she came from, and she looked at him mildly and sorrowfully with her deep blue eyes; but she could not speak. Every step she took was as the witch had said it would be, she felt as if treading upon the points of needles or sharp knives; but she bore it willingly, and stepped as lightly by the prince’s side as a soap-bubble, so that he and all who saw her wondered at her graceful-swaying movements. She was very soon arrayed in costly robes of silk and muslin, and was the most beautiful creature in the palace; but she was dumb, and could neither speak nor sing.

Beautiful female slaves, dressed in silk and gold, stepped forward and sang before the prince and his royal parents: one sang better than all the others, and the prince clapped his hands and smiled at her. This was great sorrow to the little mermaid; she knew how much more sweetly she herself could sing once, and she thought, “Oh if he could only know that! I have given away my voice forever, to be with him.”

The slaves next performed some pretty fairy-like dances, to the sound of beautiful music. Then the little mermaid raised her lovely white arms, stood on the tips of her toes, and glided over the floor, and danced as no one yet had been able to dance. At each moment her beauty became more revealed, and her expressive eyes appealed more directly to the heart than the songs of the slaves. Every one was enchanted, especially the prince, who called her his little foundling; and she danced again quite readily, to please him, though each time her foot touched the floor it seemed as if she trod on sharp knives.

The prince said she should remain with him always, and she received permission to sleep at his door, on a velvet cushion. He had a page’s dress made for her, that she might accompany him on horseback. They rode together through the sweet-scented woods, where the green boughs touched their shoulders, and the little birds sang among the fresh leaves. She climbed with the prince to the tops of high mountains; and although her tender feet bled so that even her steps were marked, she only laughed, and followed him till they could see the clouds beneath them looking like a flock of birds travelling to distant lands. While at the prince’s palace, and when all the household were asleep, she would go and sit on the broad marble steps; for it eased her burning feet to bathe them in the cold sea-water; and then she thought of all those below in the deep.

Once during the night her sisters came up arm-in-arm, singing sorrowfully, as they floated on the water. She beckoned to them, and then they recognized her, and told her how she had grieved them. After that, they came to the same place every night; and once she saw in the distance her old grandmother, who had not been to the surface of the sea for many years, and the old Sea King, her father, with his crown on his head. They stretched out their hands towards her, but they did not venture so near the land as her sisters did.

As the days passed, she loved the prince more fondly, and he loved her as he would love a little child, but it never came into his head to make her his wife; yet, unless he married her, she could not receive an immortal soul; and, on the morning after his marriage with another, she would dissolve into the foam of the sea.

“Do you not love me the best of them all?” the eyes of the little mermaid seemed to say, when he took her in his arms, and kissed her fair forehead.

“Yes, you are dear to me,” said the prince; “for you have the best heart, and you are the most devoted to me; you are like a young maiden whom I once saw, but whom I shall never meet again. I was in a ship that was wrecked, and the waves cast me ashore near a holy temple, where several young maidens performed the service. The youngest of them found me on the shore, and saved my life. I saw her but twice, and she is the only one in the world whom I could love; but you are like her, and you have almost driven her image out of my mind. She belongs to the holy temple, and my good fortune has sent you to me instead of her; and we will never part.”

“Ah, he knows not that it was I who saved his life,” thought the little mermaid. “I carried him over the sea to the wood where the temple stands: I sat beneath the foam, and watched till the human beings came to help him. I saw the pretty maiden that he loves better than he loves me;” and the mermaid sighed deeply, but she could not shed tears. “He says the maiden belongs to the holy temple, therefore she will never return to the world. They will meet no more: while I am by his side, and see him every day. I will take care of him, and love him, and give up my life for his sake.”

Very soon it was said that the prince must marry, and that the beautiful daughter of a neighboring king would be his wife, for a fine ship was being fitted out. Although the prince gave out that he merely intended to pay a visit to the king, it was generally supposed that he really went to see his daughter. A great company were to go with him. The little mermaid smiled, and shook her head. She knew the prince’s thoughts better than any of the others.

“I must travel,” he had said to her; “I must see this beautiful princess; my parents desire it; but they will not oblige me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her; she is not like the beautiful maiden in the temple, whom you resemble. If I were forced to choose a bride, I would rather choose you, my dumb foundling, with those expressive eyes.” And then he kissed her rosy mouth, played with her long waving hair, and laid his head on her heart, while she dreamed of human happiness and an immortal soul. “You are not afraid of the sea, my dumb child,” said he, as they stood on the deck of the noble ship which was to carry them to the country of the neighboring king. And then he told her of storm and of calm, of strange fishes in the deep beneath them, and of what the divers had seen there; and she smiled at his descriptions, for she knew better than any one what wonders were at the bottom of the sea.

In the moonlight, when all on board were asleep, excepting the man at the helm, who was steering, she sat on the deck, gazing down through the clear water. She thought she could distinguish her father’s castle, and upon it her aged grandmother, with the silver crown on her head, looking through the rushing tide at the keel of the vessel. Then her sisters came up on the waves, and gazed at her mournfully, wringing their white hands. She beckoned to them, and smiled, and wanted to tell them how happy and well off she was; but the cabin-boy approached, and when her sisters dived down he thought it was only the foam of the sea which he saw.

The next morning the ship sailed into the harbor of a beautiful town belonging to the king whom the prince was going to visit. The church bells were ringing, and from the high towers sounded a flourish of trumpets; and soldiers, with flying colors and glittering bayonets, lined the rocks through which they passed. Every day was a festival; balls and entertainments followed one another.

But the princess had not yet appeared. People said that she was being brought up and educated in a religious house, where she was learning every royal virtue. At last she came. Then the little mermaid, who was very anxious to see whether she was really beautiful, was obliged to acknowledge that she had never seen a more perfect vision of beauty. Her skin was delicately fair, and beneath her long dark eye-lashes her laughing blue eyes shone with truth and purity.

“It was you,” said the prince, “who saved my life when I lay dead on the beach,” and he folded his blushing bride in his arms. “Oh, I am too happy,” said he to the little mermaid; “my fondest hopes are all fulfilled. You will rejoice at my happiness; for your devotion to me is great and sincere.”

The little mermaid kissed his hand, and felt as if her heart were already broken. His wedding morning would bring death to her, and she would change into the foam of the sea. All the church bells rung, and the heralds rode about the town proclaiming the betrothal. Perfumed oil was burning in costly silver lamps on every altar. The priests waved the censers, while the bride and bridegroom joined their hands and received the blessing of the bishop. The little mermaid, dressed in silk and gold, held up the bride’s train; but her ears heard nothing of the festive music, and her eyes saw not the holy ceremony; she thought of the night of death which was coming to her, and of all she had lost in the world. On the same evening the bride and bridegroom went on board ship; cannons were roaring, flags waving, and in the centre of the ship a costly tent of purple and gold had been erected. It contained elegant couches, for the reception of the bridal pair during the night. The ship, with swelling sails and a favorable wind, glided away smoothly and lightly over the calm sea. When it grew dark a number of colored lamps were lit, and the sailors danced merrily on the deck. The little mermaid could not help thinking of her first rising out of the sea, when she had seen similar festivities and joys; and she joined in the dance, poised herself in the air as a swallow when he pursues his prey, and all present cheered her with wonder. She had never danced so elegantly before. Her tender feet felt as if cut with sharp knives, but she cared not for it; a sharper pang had pierced through her heart. She knew this was the last evening she should ever see the prince, for whom she had forsaken her kindred and her home; she had given up her beautiful voice, and suffered unheard-of pain daily for him, while he knew nothing of it. This was the last evening that she would breathe the same air with him, or gaze on the starry sky and the deep sea; an eternal night, without a thought or a dream, awaited her: she had no soul and now she could never win one. All was joy and gayety on board ship till long after midnight; she laughed and danced with the rest, while the thoughts of death were in her heart. The prince kissed his beautiful bride, while she played with his raven hair, till they went arm-in-arm to rest in the splendid tent. Then all became still on board the ship; the helmsman, alone awake, stood at the helm. The little mermaid leaned her white arms on the edge of the vessel, and looked towards the east for the first blush of morning, for that first ray of dawn that would bring her death. She saw her sisters rising out of the flood: they were as pale as herself; but their long beautiful hair waved no more in the wind, and had been cut off.

“We have given our hair to the witch,” said they, “to obtain help for you, that you may not die to-night. She has given us a knife: here it is, see it is very sharp. Before the sun rises you must plunge it into the heart of the prince; when the warm blood falls upon your feet they will grow together again, and form into a fish’s tail, and you will be once more a mermaid, and return to us to live out your three hundred years before you die and change into the salt sea foam. Haste, then; he or you must die before sunrise. Our old grandmother moans so for you, that her white hair is falling off from sorrow, as ours fell under the witch’s scissors. Kill the prince and come back; hasten: do you not see the first red streaks in the sky? In a few minutes the sun will rise, and you must die.” And then they sighed deeply and mournfully, and sank down beneath the waves.

The little mermaid drew back the crimson curtain of the tent, and beheld the fair bride with her head resting on the prince’s breast. She bent down and kissed his fair brow, then looked at the sky on which the rosy dawn grew brighter and brighter; then she glanced at the sharp knife, and again fixed her eyes on the prince, who whispered the name of his bride in his dreams. She was in his thoughts, and the knife trembled in the hand of the little mermaid: then she flung it far away from her into the waves; the water turned red where it fell, and the drops that spurted up looked like blood. She cast one more lingering, half-fainting glance at the prince, and then threw herself from the ship into the sea, and thought her body was dissolving into foam. The sun rose above the waves, and his warm rays fell on the cold foam of the little mermaid, who did not feel as if she were dying. She saw the bright sun, and all around her floated hundreds of transparent beautiful beings; she could see through them the white sails of the ship, and the red clouds in the sky; their speech was melodious, but too ethereal to be heard by mortal ears, as they were also unseen by mortal eyes. The little mermaid perceived that she had a body like theirs, and that she continued to rise higher and higher out of the foam. “Where am I?” asked she, and her voice sounded ethereal, as the voice of those who were with her; no earthly music could imitate it.

“Among the daughters of the air,” answered one of them. “A mermaid has not an immortal soul, nor can she obtain one unless she wins the love of a human being. On the power of another hangs her eternal destiny. But the daughters of the air, although they do not possess an immortal soul, can, by their good deeds, procure one for themselves. We fly to warm countries, and cool the sultry air that destroys mankind with the pestilence. We carry the perfume of the flowers to spread health and restoration. After we have striven for three hundred years to all the good in our power, we receive an immortal soul and take part in the happiness of mankind. You, poor little mermaid, have tried with your whole heart to do as we are doing; you have suffered and endured and raised yourself to the spirit-world by your good deeds; and now, by striving for three hundred years in the same way, you may obtain an immortal soul.”

The little mermaid lifted her glorified eyes towards the sun, and felt them, for the first time, filling with tears. On the ship, in which she had left the prince, there were life and noise; she saw him and his beautiful bride searching for her; sorrowfully they gazed at the pearly foam, as if they knew she had thrown herself into the waves. Unseen she kissed the forehead of her bride, and fanned the prince, and then mounted with the other children of the air to a rosy cloud that floated through the aether.

“After three hundred years, thus shall we float into the kingdom of heaven,” said she. “And we may even get there sooner,” whispered one of her companions. “Unseen we can enter the houses of men, where there are children, and for every day on which we find a good child, who is the joy of his parents and deserves their love, our time of probation is shortened. The child does not know, when we fly through the room, that we smile with joy at his good conduct, for we can count one year less of our three hundred years. But when we see a naughty or a wicked child, we shed tears of sorrow, and for every tear a day is added to our time of trial!”

**Djibouti (Africa)**

**Animals**

**The Singing Hippo**

<http://www.doyouclap.org/services-view/the-singing-hippo/>

Once upon a time, a hippopotamus lived in a river next to a big and solitary tree.

One day, a bird came and nested in the tree. The songs and the flight of the bird caused such envy in the hippo that he couldn’t think of anything else. Every day he would lament the fact that he had been born a hippo. This, despite the many times the bird told the hippo he was so lucky to be so big and such a good swimmer.

Finally, the hippo made his mind up that he would come out of the river, climb the tree, go out to perch on a branch, and start singing. However, when he tried to climb the tree it was all too clear that the hippo didn’t have wings, nor claws to climb with, and neither could he hop.

Realising that he would never manage it, he angrily rammed his whole weight against the tree until it came crashing to the ground. Then, triumphantly, he stepped onto the leaves of the fallen tree, and began singing.

Unfortunately, hippos can’t sing either. All that came from his mouth were horrible noises, and when the other animals heard this they all gathered round to make fun of the hippo standing on the branch of a fallen tree, trying to sing like a bird.

He was so embarrassed by this that he decided to never again regret being a hippo. He also felt bad about having knocked the tree over. He used all his strength to raise the tree back up again, replant it, and look after it until it had completely recovered.

**Dominica (North America)**

**Origins**

**The First People**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/nam/sa/lmbg/lmbg3b.htm>

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| --- |
| From on high mankind descended;  Not (as some would say) for food: They to *cleanse this world* intended,  That it might be fair and good, Bright and free from soil or stain, As the moon, or starry train. |
| While they toiled, the clouds receded,  Which had borne them from on high: Vainly for their help they pleaded;  None restored them to the sky. Thus mankind remained below, In a world of toil and woe. |
| \*  \*  \*  \*  \* |
| As they wandered, pangs of hunger  Forced them clayey earth to take; Which, that they might starve no longer,  Making fire, they tried to bake. But their cakes, when they were "done," Were like sand, or crumbling stone. |
|  |
| Tamosi[1](http://www.sacred-texts.com/nam/sa/lmbg/lmbg3b.htm" \l "page_104_note_1) had there provided  Wild fruits, suiting beast or bird. By those creatures kindly guided  To the trees which each preferred, Men partook: but still would sigh For the food they left on high |

**Dominican Republic (North America)**

**Royalty…**

**The King’s Advice**

<http://wws.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=27>

"Once there was an unhappy man who married an unhappy woman," she began, and smiled as I leaned back in my chair and gathered my arms in my lap. "When the woman got pregnant, the man decided to go to look for work so they could provide for the child. He walked into town and asked an old man, "Do you have any work for me?" The old man looked at the young man and replied, "No, I'm sorry, I don't have any work for you." But he felt sorry for the young man and told him, "Take this road until you reach the king. He will have work for you."

The young man thanked him and went to find the king. When he arrived, he asked the king for work, and the king said, "Yes, I have work for you, but I cannot pay you until you complete 20 years." The young man sighed. He did not want to wait 20 years, but there was no other work to be found.

"OK," said the young man, "I will work for you." The next day the young man woke up and went to the king. The king told him to eat breakfast with him first, and then he would show the man his work. They ate and talked. The young man told the king about his young, pregnant wife and his village far away. After a while the king brought the man out to his fields and instructed him to take a horse and keep watch over his land.

In the evenings, the king invited the young man to dine with him, and after many years they became good friends. The young man realized that he was the king's closest companion, and wondered what would happen after 20 years.

Eventually the day arrived. The man, no longer young, woke up, packed his bags and joined the king for breakfast. After a while, the man finally said to the king, "My king, today I complete my 20 years." The king looked at him surprised. "Do you really plan to go back to your wife and child after 20 years?"

"My king, I promised I would return," he replied. The king stood up and walked to the next room. When he returned, he said, "Then here is the payment for 20 years that I promised." But he hesitated. "Now you can take this and go on your way, or you can take my four pieces of advice." The man sighed. He did not want to refuse the money, but he had learned much over the years, and finally said, "OK, my king, I will take the four pieces of advice."

The king sat down and said to him: "The first piece of advice is, never hang your hammock over a place where there once ran water. The second is, never involve yourself in what you don't know anything about. The third is, always take the real path. The last is, never believe the first thing you hear." The man listened carefully to the king, and when he was done he nodded, thanked the king, and gathered his things. The king stood and said, "If you find your wife and child living and well, give them this loaf of bread." The man took the bread and left for his home.

He walked until dusk and finally decided to camp for the night. He found a tree and began to hang his hammock. But as he was tying the second rope he looked down and said to himself, "My king told me never to hang my hammock over where there once ran water, and there was water here before." He untied his hammock and walked up to a hilltop to tie it in another place. In the morning when he packed up his things and walked down the hill, he could see that the place where he had almost hung his hammock was completely washed away. The man reflected on the first piece of advice: "My king's advice has saved my life." He continued walking, happy he had chosen the advice.

That evening he came upon a house where an old man lived. He knocked and the old man invited him in. The visitor asked the old man if he could spend the night there, and the old man said yes. He brought him coffee and said, "Sit for a while and talk with me, but when you are tired, just tell me and I will tell you where you can sleep for the night."

So they sat by the fire and drank coffee and talked, and after a while the man said, "OK, I'm tired. Where can I sleep for the night?"

The old man led him to the door and said, "Do you see that old shed up there? Go in there and you can hang your hammock wherever you find a place." The visitor thanked the old man and walked up to the shed. But when he got there he found a small door, half the size of a man. Next to the small door was a large door with a huge, chained guard dog. The dog stared at the man. The man thought to himself, "My king told me never to involve myself in what I don't know anything about, and I don't know what this guard dog is here for, so I'm not going to move him." The man squeezed through the small door and hung his hammock and slept peacefully. The next morning he went down to the old man's house and was greeted with breakfast. After they ate, the old man asked him, "Did you take a look around the shed this morning?"

"No, I left right at dawn," the visitor said.

"Do me a favor and go to the shed and look around. Then come and tell me what you see," the old man said. So the man walked up to the shed and peered through the small doorway, the guard dog still standing in the large doorway. When he came back down to the old man, he told him, "The shed is full of people's bones."

The old man laughed and told him they were the bones of people who tried to move the guard dog. The visitor said goodbye quickly and left, thinking how his king's advice had saved him once again.

As he continued walking, he came upon an old woman, and he stopped to ask her for directions. "Do you know where this town is?" he asked her. "I'm looking for Fulana."

"Yes," she replied, "but if you continue on this path, you will not reach that town until tomorrow. You should walk this way, through the forest," she said, pointing, "and when you get to the bottom of this hill, turn right, and you will be there by nightfall." He thanked her and she continued on her way.

The man took one step and thought, "My king told me only to take the real path." He continued on the path and found a place to rest for the night. In the morning he followed the path, until he saw a dead goat and recognized the slope he had looked down the previous day. He saw that the shortcut he was going to take was full of thorny bushes and muddy earth. The goat had gotten tangled in the thorns and lost its footing in the mud. The man continued on the path, thinking again about the wonderful advice his king had given him.

In the evening he came upon a town, which he knew was his town, although it looked very different. As the man walked, another man came up to him and said, "Aren't you Fulano?"

The man nodded and asked the local man about his wife and child. "When you left and didn't come back, they thought you were dead. They even had a funeral. Your wife has remarried and your son has his own family. They have forgotten about you."

The man looked down, and felt sad, but remembered the last piece of advice, "Never believe the first thing you hear." He decided to go to find out for himself.

He walked down the street and finally asked a woman where Fulana lived. She motioned to the house in front of hers. He walked over to the house and saw a man reading a newspaper on the porch, who, without looking up, called inside the house, "There's someone here to see you."

When a woman appeared at the door, the returning man said to her, "Excuse me, but I have been traveling for several days and I need a place to stay for the night." She said he could come in and that she was just cooking dinner, and that he could bathe outside when he wanted to.

He sat for a bit and looked around. The house was nicely furnished. The woman served him coffee and the other man came in to join him. They chatted a bit and then the returning man asked the man from the porch, "Is that your wife?"

The man answered that it was his mother, and showed him where to bathe. When the man came back inside, the table was set and the man and woman were seated at the table. He joined them and they all ate in silence for a while. Then the returning man asked the woman, "Excuse me, I don't mean to be nosy, but what happened to your husband?"

The woman sighed and answered, "My husband left shortly after we married and after I got pregnant. He went to look for work. He never came back, and I eventually looked to the community to help me. I started a little business and paid for my son to go to school."

He asked her, "But you never remarried?"

"No, nor will I," she said. Then she stood and said; "I will always know my husband, because he was born with a birthmark on his chest in the shape of a star."

The man stood up and said, "Does it look like this?" and opened his shirt.

She screamed, "My son, your father has returned!" and embraced her husband.

After a moment, they sat and he began to tell them about the past 20 years. He told them he was going to bring back money, but took the four pieces of advice instead, and how they had saved his life. "My king told me if I found my wife and son alive and healthy to give them this," he said, as he brought out the loaf of bread. The woman placed it on the table and said they should each eat a little, to celebrate the husband's homecoming.

But as the woman broke the bread she found it full of gold.

**Ecuador (South America)**

**Magic**

**In Search of the Magic Lake**

<http://www.fairytales247.com/catalog/ecuador-folktales/>

FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO near Cuzco, capital of the Incas, there lived a girl named Ampata with her parents and two older brothers. Her family was poor and farmed the land as best they could to serve their emperor, the Sun King.

Alarmed, they learned that the health of the prince, who had been not well since birth, had worsened. The Sun King feared for the very life of his only son.

"Our only hope, sire," said the court magician, "is for your son to drink the water from the Magic Lake at the end of the earth. That is where the sky dips so low that it touches the lake's water and charges it with a magical healing power."

The Sun King announced that whoever could bring him water from the Magic Lake at the end of the earth would be richly rewarded. To the Incan people, gold and jewels were so abundant they had no more value than a barrel of corn; it was land, and the honor of joining the royal Inca family, that was a far greater treasure.

But to Ampata's two older brothers, it was the opportunity to serve their Sun King that inspired them to beg their parents to allow them to go. "We know we can find the Magic Lake," they insisted.

"The end of the earth is too far," said the father, crossing his arms. The mother agreed, adding, "Panthers, boa constrictors, falls from rocky ledges - who knows the dangers that could befall you!"

"But our prince will die without the water from the Magic Lake!" they cried. "We must try!"

Eventually the parents relented, and Ampata's brothers embarked on the journey. They traveled for months, trekking through endless mountain ranges, each time thinking the mountain they were climbing on must be the very last one on earth and beyond it they would reach the Magic Lake. But this did not happen.

One day, after climbing yet another mountain they had hoped was the last one on earth, only to discover at its summit dozens more peaks in the distance, one of the brothers said, discouraged, "We're not going to find the Magic Lake.

"I know," said the other, panting with exhaustion. "This is hopeless."

"What should we do?"

"Look, the harvest is coming and our parents need us back at the farm. Let's take some water from this mountain lake back to the prince. Who knows? We're far from Cuzco. Maybe the water will help cure him."

They had their doubts, but scooped the jar full of the mountain lake water, sealed it, and presented it to the Sun King at the castle.

But when the court magician poured their water into his flask, it sizzled and evaporated in a flash. The court magician frowned.

"My magic flask holds only water from the Magic Lake," said he. "This water is fake. The men are imposters!"

"How dare you try to trick the royal family!" bellowed the Sun King. "Throw them in prison!"

News of the young men's fate spread throughout the land. Though her brothers languished in jail, Ampata held out hope since at least they were still alive.

"Absolutely not!" said Ampata's parents, when she pleaded with them to allow her to go in search of the Magic Lake, too. "We'll have no children left at home," they said.

But Ampata implored them, saying it was the only way to win her brother's release from prison. Besides, the Sun King's poor son was worse than ever and had slipped into a coma. His situation was desperate.

At last her mother gave her a bag of toasted corn and nuts, and a llama to keep her company. Sighing, her parents bid their youngest child farewell.

On Ampata's first night, she snuggled into the warmth of her llama. But on the second night her sleep was shattered by the cry of a panther. She couldn't endanger her llama, and so she pointed the way back home for her pet and urged her to go, and quickly. That night, Ampata climbed the trees to spend the night safely out of harm's way.

The crook of a tree trunk is hardly a comfortable bed, but sleeping in the trees can bring unexpected benefits. The next morning Ampata watched, bemused, a pair of scarlet macaws circling overhead, those noisy, gorgeous deep red parrots with white patches on their faces and splotches of blue and yellow on their wings. While she watched, she chewed some toasted corn and nuts, and when the macaws alighted on the next branch, she spread some treats for them, too.

"Kwahh! Kwahh!" The macaws helped themselves to the treats. "What is a human girl doing in the trees?" Said the other bird, "Kwahh!"

These bright and engaging birds, more intelligent than most people realize, enjoy talking and interacting with others. Ampata told them her story - of the prince's mysterious sickness, her brothers' failed attempt to save him, and her determination to find the Magic Lake.

"You will never get there on your own!" said one of the macaws. "Kwahh!" The two birds bobbed their beaks and flew to the edge of the limb.

After a few moments one of them turned to her and said, "We enjoyed your tasty treats! And we know how to help you."

The macaws rubbed their backs against one another in a kind of dance. After three feathers fell, they picked them up and flew to Ampata.

Said one macaw, setting the feathers in her lap, "These three feathers have magic. Hold them together as a fan. They will take you wherever you want to go, and they will protect you from danger."

She spread the three feathers and tied the bottom of the fan with a ribbon of wool from her hair. "I can never thank you enough," she said to the two macaws. Holding the fan before her, she said, "If you please, will you take me to the Magic Lake at the end of the earth?"

As if she were a feather herself, Ampata was lifted far above the trees and whisked to the mountains.

Thousands of feet below her, the snow-topped peaks of the Andes Mountains - the world's longest mountain range - raced by and Ampata nervously clutched her fan. At last, she was lowered ever so gently onto the very last peak, and her feet alighted. There before her sparkled the Magic Lake. Indeed, where the sky touched the water, the water in the Magic Lake fizzed and sparkled. Ampata knew she had reached the end of the earth. She tucked the fan into her braided waistband.

Suddenly from the woods slithered a giant rattlesnake, many times larger than she! Shaking its rattle and flicking its long red tongue, it seemed to fly toward her. Horrified, Ampata snatched the fan up before her face and closed her eyes, knowing that if it did not protect her, she was doomed. A loud clump. She lowered the fan to just above her nose and was amazed to see the giant rattlesnake had collapsed on the ground. The rattle at the end of its tail, teetering, pitched over.

The next moment a huge red scorpion, snapping its sharp front claws, surprised her from behind. It scampered toward her on its many legs so quickly that she barely had time to raise the fan. Though as soon as she did, the sound of its rushing along the ground toward her stopped. The scorpion lay on its back as if asleep; its many legs waved in the air and then settled down to rest.

Carefully stepping around the scorpion and the rattlesnake, Ampata headed to the shore of the Magic Lake. Suddenly a low humming started behind her. Spinning around, she saw what looked like a low, dark cloud. Soon the humming became louder and the dark cloud became bigger and darker. She realized with horror that a swarm of ferocious army ants was about to surround her. Quickly she shot the fan in front of her face, not knowing if the feathers would protect her from so many ants coming from so many different directions. Yet in the next few seconds no ants bit her feet and climbed her legs.

Trembling, she peaked through the feathers. The swarm of deadly army ants silently lay around her, dead.

Ampata kept the fan in front of her face while she hurried to the Magic Lake and, with her other hand, dipped the jar into the magic waters. As soon as the jar was filled and sealed shut, she gripped the fan and said, "Right away please, take me to the castle of the Sun King."

The next moment, she was facing the Sun King's castle and its walls of huge interlocking cut stone.

When she announced she had brought water from the Magic Lake, the girl was ushered upstairs to the sick prince's room. Ampata gave her jar to the court magician, a looming man who regarded her suspiciously. But when he poured the water from her jar into his magic flask and it did not sizzle or disappear, he smiled and glanced at her with excitement. He dipped his finger into the flask and let a few droplets fall onto the lips of the pale-faced young prince. The sick man's lips parted, his tongue flicked out for a moment to taste the water, and then his eyes opened. Everyone in the royal bedroom cheered, and the prince smiled.

"Drink this, Your Highness," said the court magician, handing him the flask with Ampata's water from the Magic Lake. The prince took one long gulp and sat up. "I feel better," he said, and color rushed back to his cheeks.

The Sun King was overjoyed. "You did it!" he exclaimed to Ampata. "You brought back water from the Magic Lake." She relayed her adventures and the Sun King was impressed. "You may live here and join the royal family," said he.

"If you please, sir," said Ampata, "may I ask three favors instead?"

"Of course - whatever you want."

"First, would you release my two brothers from prison? I'm sure they are sorry for their mistake and would like nothing better than a second chance to serve you again.

"Consider it done," said the Sun King. "What else?"

"I'd like to return these three magic feathers to my friends, the scarlet macaws." Instantly, the fan pried itself free of her waistband, shot upward in the air, quickly spun around and flew out an empty window.

"It looks like that's taken care of, too," smiled the Sun King. "What is your third wish?"

"Would you grant my parents large flocks of llama, alpacas and vicunas, and enough land to herd them so they will not be poor in their old age, and so my brothers and I can take care of them?"

"My dear girl, I'll gladly grant this on one condition - that you promise to visit us often at the castle as our treasured friend, since you choose not to join the Incan royal family at this time."

As it turns out, years later Ampata joined the royal family after all; from many visits with the prince a close friendship deepened to love. And none were prouder and happier at their royal wedding than Ampata's parents and two older brothers.

**Egypt**

**Royalty**

**Stronger than Fate**

<http://www.gosanangelo.com/news/2013/feb/09/tell-me-a-story-210/?print=1>

Once upon a time, the queen of Egypt gave birth to a baby boy. The fairies gathered around the child to bless him, but one of the fairies shook her head.

“I fear it is the prince’s fate to die by crocodile or serpent or dog,” the fairy said. “We can do nothing.”

The king and queen were heartbroken and decided not to tempt fate. They built a castle atop a mountain and hired men to guard it day and night, and there the young prince lived, protected.

One day the boy noticed a dog playing outside his window. At once he wished to have a dog, and since the king and queen never denied him a wish, they decided to grant this as well. They found him a puppy, and trained him to protect the prince.

The prince and his puppy were great friends, but one day when he was 20, the prince told his father he longed to see the world.

“I know about the prophecy,” he said, “but my dog will protect me.”

Again, the king could not refuse. He sent the prince and his dog by ship to the other side of the Nile. There a beautiful horse awaited him, and with his dog by his side, the prince rode everywhere. He was delighted by all he saw.

One day while visiting a foreign land, he fell in love with a princess, and she fell in love with him.

“I wish to marry you,” the prince told her, “but my fate is to die at the hands of a crocodile, a serpent or a dog; you must not marry me.”

But the princess loved him dearly. “We shall resist fate,” she said. “True love can conquer anything so long as we believe it can.”

And so they married.

A few years passed, and the prince learned his father was ill. He and his wife traveled to visit him in Egypt. One night, while they were fast asleep in the palace, the princess suddenly heard a sound that woke her.

She stared into the darkness and spied a serpent coiled in the corner. She tried to recall all she had learned from the fairies. Quickly, she remembered that serpents couldn’t resist milk. So she slipped out of bed and filled a bowl with milk. When the creature saw the bowl, it began to lap it up so quickly that the princess was sure it would choke to death.

When the serpent had finished the milk, it fell fast asleep, and the princess summoned the guards to capture it and send it far away.

She had saved her husband from his deadly fate.

Sadly, the king died the next day. The prince began his rule. One day, as he was out hunting with one of his dogs, he suddenly tripped over a log on the riverbank. To his astonishment, he heard a voice.

This log was, in truth, a crocodile, and it said, “You cannot escape fate. Wherever you go, I will find you, and your only safety is a hole in sand filled with water that never dissolves.”

Terrified, the prince shared the news with his wife. “I’m doomed,” he said, but she was determined to save him.

“There is nothing we cannot overcome,” she said, remembering a plant her fairy godmother had told her about. The four-leafed herb grew in the desert and could keep water in a pit for one whole year.

The next day the princess set out to find it.

She left in the middle of the night, guided by starlight. She rode her snow-white donkey west, toward the desert, encouraging her poor, exhausted donkey with kind words. “I will love you as I love the prince,” she promised the donkey as they traveled on, enduring heat and storms and thirst.

At last they came to a mountain that cast a cool shadow. The plant grew at the very top of that mountain, but it was surrounded by a deep chasm.

The princess, however, had carried along a rope. She made a noose with one end and tossed the other across the chasm with all her strength. It caught on a branch. Trusting this to hold her weight, she climbed across the chasm.

A fierce wind assailed her, and still she climbed. Blinded by sand, she felt her way up the mountain to the very top.

She climbed on until she felt plants beneath her feet, and taking one she counted leaves — one, two, three, four. Her heart pounding, she held fast to the plant and slid down the rock, leapt over the chasm and mounted her donkey.

“Let’s go!” she cried. They rode across the desert.

Back home, the princess saw her beloved standing near the river beside a pit of sand he had dug. Beside the pit was a pot of water, and only a short distance away stood the crocodile. Its mouth was watering.

The princess ran to the hole. “Pour in the water,” she said, and as the prince did, she tossed in the plant.

Sure enough, the water did not seep through the sand, but remained.

The angry crocodile plunged back into the river and swam away.

The prince stared at his wife with gratitude and love. With her strength and commitment, he had overcome the second of the three fates the fairies had predicted so long ago.

Suddenly a wild duck flew past. The prince’s dog began to chase the duck, and he ran into his master’s legs. The prince and his dog both lost their balance and fell into the river, where mud and rushes caught them.

It seemed they might drown, but there was the princess with the rope in her hand. She cast the rope to her beloved and pulled him and his dog ashore.

Again, the prince stared into his wife’s eyes. “Your love is stronger than my fate,” he said.

“This is true,” she said with a smile.

And they lived happily ever after.

**El Salvador (Central America)**

**Magic**

**El Tabudo**

<http://www.elsalvadordestinos.com/ingles/cuentosyleyendas/eltabudo.php>

This legend has become very popular among fishermen, residents and visitors of Coatepeque Lake.

One day, a rich man and owner of a beautiful mansion located on the shores of Coatepeque Lake went to take a ride in a canoe; when he was near of the island, a groundwater flow dragged him and took him to the of the goddess of freshwater domain.

A few months later, the rich man appeared to his servants and gave his mansion to them. They were perplexed because his knees had widened both that seemed a couple of soccer balls, like his lips and resembled a marine creature rather than a human being.

"Tabas" is a word used in El Salvador with the meaning "knees", so "El Tabudo" means "man of big knees".

"El Tabudo" is as a kind of submarine creature that appears to be a humble fisherman to win the confidence of his victims, taking then to the middle of the lake; "El Tabudo" transforms men into big colorful fishes and women into freshwater sirens.

**Equatorial Guinea (Africa)**

**Animals**

**The Snake and the Crab**

<http://bioko3.info/bubi/folklore.php>

Once upon a time the neighbors in the jungle were suffering from a harsh food shortage. So severe was their hunger that they began to attack and devour one another.

There were two neighbors, a black snake, named Mappa, and a river crab, named Iteke. One day Mappa said to Iteke: "In spite of the hunger that is ruining our country and the fact that our companions are eating one another and that I, if I wanted to, could eat you, I don't want to hurt you. We have always been good neighbors and lived in peace and friendship. I only want to propose a method where neither of us will die, and that will serve to prolong our lives."

"Very good!" said Iteke. "Explain it to me."

Mappa continued: "You, Iteke, have many legs and without much trouble you can detach them and let them serve us as food during these critical times."

Iteke, fearing reprisal, accepted this proposal. So it was that daily Mappa would cut off one of Iteke's legs, season it, and both would eat it. This continued until Iteke noticed that he had been deprived of all his small legs, and that only a few large ones were left. He mentioned this, meekly, to Mappa and suggested that Mappa loan a bit of his large tail to their food intake.

Replied Mappa: "I cannot loan any of my tail. On the contrary, to do so would kill me."

Iteke did not believe this, so when Mappa was sleeping, Iteke cut a piece off the tail and prepared it. Later, Iteke invited Mappa to eat.

Mappa replied: "Friend, I can't. I feel indisposed."

Iteke said to him: "You ate all my feet, and with only a little piece of your tail cut off, you feel sick?"

Mappa replied: "Friend, I cannot move."

Iteke left Mappa's house to get some firewood. When he returned to the house, he called out to Mappa: "Friend, help me unload." Mappa did not answer. Iteke threw his bundle of wood on the ground and began to move things around, uncovering the pots, but could not find Mappa. Then he found him, dead, behind a pillar.

At that moment he began to sing: "Ah, Mappa, Mappa! You ate all of my legs, I gave your tail a little cut, and you died in just a little time."

Then Iteke returned to his old home in the river.

**French Guiana**

**Animals**

**The Wings of the Butterfly**

<http://www.aaronshep.com/stories/030.html>

On the banks of the Amazon River, in a clearing in the forest, there once lived a girl named Chimidyue. She dwelt with her family and relatives in a big pavilion-house called a *maloca.*

While the boys of the maloca fished and hunted with the men, Chimidyue and the other girls helped the women with household chores or in the farm plots nearby. Like the other girls, Chimidyue never stepped far into the forest. She knew how full it was of fierce animals and harmful spirits, and how easy it was to get lost in.

Still, she would listen wide-eyed when the elders told stories about that other world. And sometimes she would go just a little way in, gazing among the giant trees and wondering what she might find farther on.

One day as Chimidyue was making a basket, she looked up and saw a big morpho butterfly hovering right before her. Sunlight danced on its shimmering blue wings.

“You are the most magical creature in the world,” Chimidyue said dreamily. “I wish I could be like you.”

The butterfly dipped as if in answer, then flew toward the edge of the clearing.

Chimidyue set down her basket and started after it, imitating its lazy flight. Among the trees she followed, swooping and circling and flapping her arms.

She played like this for a long time, until the butterfly passed between some vines and disappeared. Suddenly Chimidyue realized she had gone too far into the forest. There was no path, and the leaves of the tall trees made a canopy that hid the sun. She could not tell which way she had come.

“Mother! Father! Anyone!” she shouted. But no one came.

“Oh no,” she said softly. “How will I find my way back?”

Chimidyue wandered anxiously about, hoping to find a path. After a while she heard a tap-tap-tapping. “Someone must be working in the forest,” she said hopefully, and she followed the sound. But when she got close, she saw it was just a woodpecker.

Chimidyue sadly shook her head. “If only you were human,” she said, “you could show me the way home.”

“Why would I have to be human?” asked the woodpecker indignantly. “I could show you just as I am!”

Startled but glad to hear it talk, Chimidyue said eagerly, “Oh, would you?”

“Can’t you see I’m busy?” said the woodpecker. “You humans are so conceited, you think everyone else is here to serve you. But in the forest, a woodpecker is just as important as a human.” And it flew off.

“I didn’t mean anything bad,” said Chimidyue to herself. “I just want to go home.”

More uneasy than ever, Chimidyue walked farther. All at once she came upon a maloca, and sitting within it was a woman weaving a hammock.

“Oh, grandmother!” cried Chimidyue joyfully, addressing the woman with the term proper for an elder. “I’m so glad to find someone here. I was afraid I would die in the forest!”

But just as she stepped into the maloca, the roof began to flap, and the maloca and the woman together rose into the air. Then Chimidyue saw it was really a tinamou bird that had taken a magical form. It flew to a branch above.

“Don’t you ‘grandmother’ me!” screeched the bird. “How many of my people have your relatives hunted and killed? How many have you cooked and eaten? Don’t you dare ask for *my* help.” And it too flew away.

“The animals here all seem to hate me,” said Chimidyue sorrowfully. “But I can’t help being a human!”

Chimidyue wandered on, feeling more and more hopeless, and hungry now as well. Suddenly, a sorva fruit dropped to the ground. She picked it up and ate it greedily. Then another dropped nearby.

Chimidyue looked up and saw why. A band of spider monkeys was feeding in the forest canopy high above, and now and then a fruit would slip from their hands.

“I’ll just follow the monkeys,” Chimidyue told herself. “Then at least I won’t starve.” And for the rest of that day she walked along beneath them, eating any fruit they dropped. But her fears grew fresh as daylight faded and night came to the forest.

In the deepening darkness, Chimidyue saw the monkeys start to climb down, and she hid herself to watch. To her amazement, as the monkeys reached the ground, each one changed to the form of a human.

Chimidyue could not help but gasp, and within a moment the monkey people had surrounded her.

“Why, it’s Chimidyue!” said a monkey man with a friendly voice. “What are you doing here?”

Chimidyue stammered, “I followed a butterfly into the forest, and I can’t find my way home.”

“You poor girl!” said a monkey woman. “Don’t worry. We’ll bring you there tomorrow.”

“Oh, thank you!” cried Chimidyue. “But where will I stay tonight?”

“Why don’t you come with us to the festival?” asked the monkey man. “We’ve been invited by the Lord of Monkeys.”

They soon arrived at a big maloca. When the Monkey Lord saw Chimidyue, he demanded, “Human, why have you come uninvited?”

“We found her and brought her along,” the monkey woman told him.

The Monkey Lord grunted and said nothing more. But he eyed the girl in a way that made her shiver.

Many more monkey people had arrived, all in human form. Some wore animal costumes of bark cloth with wooden masks. Others had designs painted on their faces with black genipa dye. Everyone drank from gourds full of manioc beer.

Then some of the monkey people rose to begin the dance. With the Monkey Lord at their head, they marched in torchlight around the inside of the maloca, beating drums and shaking rattle sticks. Others sang softly or played bone flutes.

Chimidyue watched it all in wonder. She told her friend the monkey woman, “This is just like the festivals of my own people!”

Late that night, when all had retired to their hammocks, Chimidyue was kept awake by the snoring of the Monkey Lord. After a while, something about it caught her ear. “That’s strange,” she told herself. “It sounds almost like words.”

The girl listened carefully and heard, “I will devour Chimidyue. I will devour Chimidyue.”

“Grandfather!” she cried in terror.

“What? Who’s that?” said the Monkey Lord, starting from his sleep.

“It’s Chimidyue,” said the girl. “You said in your sleep you would devour me!”

“How could I say that?” he demanded. “Monkeys don’t eat people. No, that was just foolish talk of this mouth of mine. Pay no attention!” He took a long swig of manioc beer and went back to sleep.

Soon the girl heard again, “I will devour Chimidyue. I will devour Chimidyue.” But this time the snores were more like growls. Chimidyue looked over at the Monkey Lord’s hammock. To her horror, she saw not a human form but a powerful animal with black spots.

The Lord of Monkeys was not a monkey at all. He was a jaguar!

Chimidyue’s heart beat wildly. As quietly as she could, she slipped from her hammock and grabbed a torch. Then she ran headlong through the night.

When Chimidyue stopped at last to rest, daylight had begun to filter through the forest canopy. She sat down among the root buttresses of a kapok tree and began to cry.

“I hate this forest!” she said fiercely. “Nothing here makes any sense!”

“Are you sure?” asked a tiny voice.

Quickly wiping her eyes, Chimidyue looked up. On a branch of the kapok was a morpho butterfly, the largest she had ever seen. It waved at her with brilliant blue wings.

“Oh, grandmother,” said Chimidyue, “nothing here is what it seems. Everything changes into something else!”

“Dear Chimidyue,” said the butterfly gently, “that is the way of the forest. Among your own people, things change slowly and are mostly what they seem. But your human world is a tiny one. All around it lies a much larger world, and you can’t expect it to behave the same.”

“But if I can’t understand the forest,” cried Chimidyue, “how will I ever get home?”

“I will lead you there myself,” said the butterfly.

“Oh, grandmother, will you?” said Chimidyue.

“Certainly,” said the butterfly. “Just follow me.”

It wasn’t long till they came to the banks of the Amazon. Then Chimidyue saw with astonishment that the boat landing of her people was on the other side.

“I crossed the river without knowing it!” she cried. “But that’s impossible!”

“Impossible?” said the butterfly.

“I mean,” said Chimidyue carefully, “I don’t understand how it happened. But now, how will I get back across?”

“That’s simple,” said the morpho. “I’ll change you to a butterfly.” And it began to chant over and over,

*Wings of blue, drinks the dew.   
Wings of blue, drinks the dew.   
Wings of blue, drinks the dew.*

Chimidyue felt herself grow smaller, while her arms grew wide and thin. Soon she was fluttering and hovering beside the other.

“I’m a butterfly!” she cried.

They started across the wide water, their wings glistening in the sun. “I feel so light and graceful,” said Chimidyue. “I wish this would never end.”

Before long they reached the landing, where a path to the maloca led into the forest. The instant Chimidyue touched the ground, she was changed back to human form.

“I will leave you here,” said the butterfly. “Farewell, Chimidyue.”

“Oh, grandmother,” cried the girl, “take me with you. I want to be a butterfly forever!”

“That would not be right,” said the butterfly. “You belong with your people, who love you and care for you. But never mind, Chimidyue. Now that you have been one of us, you will always have something of the forest within you.”

The girl waved as the butterfly flew off. “Good-bye, grandmother!”

Then Chimidyue turned home, with a heart that had wings of a butterfly.

**Eritrea**

**Humorous, trickster**

**The Center of the Earth**

<http://wws.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=68>

There once lived a farmer. In the planting season, he would plow his fields and sprinkle the earth with seeds of wheat. When the days grew longer and the sun burned brighter, he would water the crops and tend them, picking off stray bugs and protecting his fields from wild pigs and runaway goats. At harvest time, he would thresh the wheat and separate the grains, then grind them into flour.

The farmer's wife worked alongside her husband. Every morning she would wake before sunrise and pick the choicest fruits from the garden. Then, with a tin bucket in hand, she'd enter the stable and greet the couple's finest treasure, a golden cow. Tugging at the cow's udders, she'd whisper, "Please," and the cow would fill her bucket with the sweetest, creamiest milk in the land.

One year, very little rain fell. The stalks of wheat that once stood proud and strong now crumbled at the slightest breeze, and the fruit of the lemon trees turned from green to brown, never having enjoyed even a moment of yellow ripeness. The treasured cow, too, became tired and thin. Each morning the farmer's wife continued to kneel before her, whispering "Please." And though the cow would have liked to help the farmer's wife, all she could manage was a few drops, barely enough to fill a teaspoon.

One night, the farmer could not sleep. The supply of wheat was dwindling, and soon the farmer and his wife would be without food for the coming year. The next morning, just as his wife was returning from the stable, he approached. "Any milk?" he asked. When she shook her head, the farmer grabbed his cloak and staff.

"I am going to the village," the farmer told her. "I must sell the cow. She is too dry to give milk, and is of no use to us. We have only a few kilos of wheat left for the coming year. It is all I can do."

The farmer led the cow across the dry fields, dusty plains, and forest-covered mountain to the village. The cow moved very slowly, and the farmer, fearing that the cow would not make it to the village, pleaded in her ear, "Please."

When the farmer and the cow finally entered the village, the farmer asked a young boy if he knew of anyone who would be interested in buying a cow.

"That merchant over there," answered the boy, pointing to a store where a man was sitting outside.

Approaching the store, the farmer greeted the merchant and said, "I hear that you are looking for a cow. I would like to sell you my cow for 50 kilos of grain."

At this, the merchant laughed as if the farmer had just told him the funniest joke.

"You are a fool," said the merchant, catching his breath. "That cow can barely stand, let alone give milk."

"She is weak now," the farmer replied, "but that is because she needs care that I cannot afford." The farmer was not in the mood for the merchant's humor.

"I will give you one kilo of grain," said the merchant.

"I am not a fool," replied the farmer. "She is worth more than that."

"Farmer, you are not familiar with the ways of the world," the merchant said slowly. "This is the usual price."

The merchant and the farmer began to bicker, their voices growing louder and angrier with each exchange.

Finally the merchant screamed, "You know nothing!"

"I know many things!" the farmer yelled back.

"What things do you know, fool?" asked the merchant.

In an outburst, the farmer heard himself saying, "I know where the center of the Earth is and I know how many stars there are in the sky."

"Now you are making a fool of me," said the merchant, who was about to raise his fist to the farmer, when two men from the village interceded and stopped the fight. One man grabbed the farmer by the elbow, and one man grabbed the merchant by the collar. Together they led the merchant and the farmer to the judge's house.

By this time, evening was fast approaching. The judge was just about to take a nap before dinner when the merchant and the farmer appeared at his doorstep. After listening to the complaints of the merchant and the farmer, the judge said, "It is too late to settle this case today. Leave the cow in my stable tonight, and we will settle the argument in the morning."

Reluctantly, the farmer left the cow in the judge's stable, and, with a heavy heart, traveled back across the forest-covered mountain, dusty plains, and dry fields. When he finally arrived home, his wife had a steaming stew of lentils waiting for him. But as the farmer sat down, he pushed the stew away. Dropping his head into his hands, he said, "I am a fool." He told her what had happened that day.

"I claimed I knew where the center of the Earth is and how many stars there are in the sky. What should I do?"

For a few moments the farmer's wife was silent. Then she spoke: "I know what you must do...."

The next morning, when the farmer arrived back at the village, the judge, the merchant, and the golden cow were waiting for him.

"Are you ready to prove you are not a fool?" said the merchant.

"I am," said the farmer.

The farmer then picked up his staff, ran 10 steps, and jabbed the staff down into the ground.

"This is the center of the Earth. If you do not believe me, measure it for yourself," said the farmer. The merchant and the judge were silent.

He then picked up a handful of dust. "The grains of dust in my hand are equal to the number of stars in the sky. If you do not believe me, merchant, count them for yourself."

The merchant knew then that he had no case, and the judge ruled firmly: "This farmer is no fool. Merchant, pay the farmer the rightful cost of 50 kilos of grain for this cow."

But the farmer decided he no longer wanted to sell the cow, who seemed to have grown stronger and fatter overnight.

**Estonia (Europe)**

**Fairy Tale**

The Young Man Who Would Have His Eyes Opened

<http://www.mythfolklore.net/3043mythfolklore/reading/estonia/pages/11.htm>

Once upon a time there lived a youth who was never happy unless he was prying into something that other people knew nothing about. After he had learned to understand the language of birds and beasts, he discovered accidentally that a great deal took place under cover of night which mortal eyes never saw. From that moment he felt he could not rest till these hidden secrets were laid bare to him, and he spent his whole time wandering from one wizard to another, begging them to open his eyes, but found none to help him.

At length he reached an old magician called Mana, whose learning was greater than that of the rest, and who could tell him all he wanted to know. But when the old man had listened attentively to him, he said, warningly: 'My son, do not follow after empty knowledge, which will not bring you happiness, but rather evil. Much is hidden from the eyes of men, because did they know everything their hearts would no longer be at peace. Knowledge kills joy, therefore think well what you are doing, or some day you will repent. But if you will not take my advice, then truly I can show you the secrets of the night. Only you will need more than a man's courage to bear the sight.'

He stopped and looked at the young man, who nodded his head, and then the wizard continued, 'To-morrow night you must go to the place where, once in seven years, the serpent-king gives a great feast to his whole court. In front of him stands a golden bowl filled with goats' milk, and if you can manage to dip a piece of bread in this milk, and eat it before you are obliged to fly, you will understand all the secrets of the night that are hidden from other men. It is lucky for you that the serpent-king's feast happens to fall this year, otherwise you would have had long to wait for it. But take care to be quick and bold, or it will be the worse for you.'

The young man thanked the wizard for his [counsel](http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=counsel), and went his way firmly resolved to carry out his purpose, even if he paid for it with his life; and when night came he set out for a wide, lonely [moor](http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=moor), where the serpent-king held his feast. With sharpened eyes, he looked eagerly all round him, but could see nothing but a multitude of small [hillocks](http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=hillocks), that lay motionless under the moonlight. He crouched behind a bush for some time, till he felt that midnight could not be far off, when suddenly there arose in the middle of the moor a brilliant glow, as if a star was shining over one of the hillocks. At the same moment all the hillocks began to writhe and to crawl, and from each one came hundreds of serpents and made straight for the glow, where they knew they should find their king. When they reached the hillock where he dwelt, which was higher and broader than the rest, and had a bright light hanging over the top, they coiled themselves up and waited. The whirr and confusion from all the serpent-houses were so great that the youth did not dare to advance one step, but remained where he was, watching intently all that went on; but at last he began to take courage, and moved on softly step by step.

What he saw was creepier than creepy, and surpassed all he had ever dreamt of. Thousands of snakes, big and little and of every colour, were gathered together in one great cluster round a huge serpent, whose body was as thick as a beam, and which had on its head a golden crown, from which the light sprang. Their hissings and darting tongues so terrified the young man that his heart sank, and he felt he should never have courage to push on to certain death, when suddenly he caught sight of the golden bowl in front of the serpent-king, and knew that if he lost this chance it would never come back. So, with his hair standing on end and his blood frozen in his veins, he crept forwards

Oh! what a noise and a whirr rose afresh among the serpents. Thousands of heads were reared, and tongues were stretched out to sting the intruder to death, but happily for him their bodies were so closely entwined one in the other that they could not disentangle themselves quickly. Like lightning he seized a bit of bread, dipped it in the bowl, and put it in his mouth, then dashed away as if fire was pursuing him. On he flew as if a whole army of foes were at his heels, and he seemed to hear the noise of their approach growing nearer and nearer. At length his breath failed him, and he threw himself almost senseless on the turf. While he lay there dreadful dreams haunted him. He thought that the serpent-king with the fiery crown had twined himself round him, and was crushing out his life. With a loud shriek he sprang up to do battle with his enemy, when he saw that it was rays of the sun which had wakened him. He rubbed his eyes and looked all round, but nothing could he see of the foes of the past night, and the moor where he had run into such danger must be at least a mile away. But it was no dream that he had run hard and far, or that he had drunk of the magic goats' milk. And when he felt his limbs, and found them whole, his joy was great that he had come through such perils with a sound skin.

After the fatigues and terrors of the night, he lay still till mid-day, but he made up his mind he would go that very evening into the forest to try what the goats' milk could really do for him, and if he would now be able to understand all that had been a mystery to him. And once in the forest his doubts were set at rest, for he saw what no mortal eyes had ever seen before. Beneath the trees were golden [pavilions](http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=pavilions), with flags of silver all brightly lighted up. He was still wondering why the pavilions were there, when a noise was heard among the trees, as if the wind had suddenly got up, and on all sides beautiful maidens stepped from the trees into the bright light of the moon. These were the wood-[nymphs](http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=nymphs), daughters of the earth-mother, who came every night to hold their dances, in the forest. The young man, watching from his hiding place, wished he had a hundred eyes in his head, for two were not nearly enough for the sight before him, the dances lasting till the first streaks of dawn. Then a silvery veil seemed to be drawn over the ladies, and they vanished from sight. But the young man remained where he was till the sun was high in the heavens, and then went home.

He felt that day to be endless, and counted the minutes till night should come, and he might return to the forest. But when at last he got there he found neither pavilions nor nymphs, and though he went back many nights after he never saw them again. Still, he thought about them night and day, and ceased to care about anything else in the world, and was sick to the end of his life with longing for that beautiful vision. And that was the way he learned that the wizard had spoken truly when he said, 'Blindness is man's highest good.'

**Ethiopia (Africa)**

**Folk Tale, Animals**

<http://www.ethiopianfolktales.com/en/afar/30-the-trio>

The Trio

Narrated by Mohammed Ali Akitoy

A lion, a hyena and a fox had formed a hunting party and they always went hunting. Now one day, when they were hunting the lion caught himself a camel, the hyena caught a cow and the fox caught a goat.

Now, as they were coming back home, they stopped for a rest and the hyena wanted to sleep but the fox said, “Oh you know how the lion’s always unfair, just because he’s so strong, so he’s going to eat the camel, you’re going to eat the cow and I only have a small goat. So let me go hunting and if I get anything else, you and I can split it.”

So the fox left everything with the hyena and he went away. Now the lion woke up and he said, “I’m hungry. How do you think we should split the food?”

And the hyena said, “Well, you caught the camel, so you eat the camel, I caught the cow, so I’ll eat the cow and the fox can eat the goat.”

And the lion said, “You ridiculous creature, you only caught something because I was around, so how dare you suggest splitting the meat three ways?”

And he struck the hyena’s head, which flew off and got stuck up a tree. Then the lion buried the body so that the fox wouldn’t see anything.

Now when the fox came back he had seen the hyena’s head on the tree from far away and the lion said, “Well, Mr. Fox, how do you think we should share the food?”

And the fox said, “Well, to begin with, I’m honoured that you should seek my humble advice. After all, you are the king of the forest. You can have anything you like. But if you do ask for my advice I’ll give it to you.”

And the lion said, “Yes, tell me what I should do.”

And the fox said, “Well, I think that for breakfast you should eat the camel and for lunch you should have the cow and for dinner you should have the goat.”

The lion said, “And you? What will you eat?”

And the fox said, “Oh, that’s no problem. I’ll eat your leftovers.”

And the lion said, “You used to be very stupid. How have you become so intelligent and you’re giving me such a smart reply?”

And the fox said, “Oh, I’ve become more intelligent because I’m not only using my head, I’m also using the hyena’s head.”

And he ran away

**Fiji (Oceania)**

**Animals**

**Turtle Calling**

<http://www.seaturtle.org/mtn/archives/mtn58/mtn58p24a.shtml>

Many, many years ago in the beautiful village of Namuana, there lived a very lovely princess called Tinaicaboga who was the wife of the chief of Namuana village. Tinaicaboga had a charming daughter called Raudalice and the two women often went fishing on the reefs around their home. On one particular occasion, Tinaicaboga and Raudalice went further afield than usual and waded out on the submerged reefs which jut out from the rocky headland to the east of the bay. They became so engrossed with their fishing that they did not notice the stealthy approach of a great war-canoe filled with fishermen from the nearby village of Nabukelevu. This village is situated in the shadow of Mount Washington, the highest mountain on Kadavu Island. Suddenly the fishermen leapt from their canoe and seized the two women, bound their hands and feet with vines, tossed them into the bottom of the canoe, and set off in great haste for home. The cruel warriors from Nabukelevu were deaf to the pleadings and would not listen to the entreaties of the women.

The gods of the sea, however, were kind and soon a great storm arose and the canoe was tossed about by the huge waves which almost swamped it. As the canoe was foundering in the sea, the fishermen were astounded to notice that the two women lying in the water in the hold of the canoe had suddenly changed into turtles and to save their own lives, the men seized them and threw them into the sea. As they slipped over the side of the canoe the weather changed and there were no more waves. The Nabukelevu fishermen continued their journey back to their home village and the two women from Namuana who had been changed to turtles lived on in the waters of the bay. It is their descendants today who rise when the maidens of their own village sing songs to them from the cliffs. The translation of the strange song which is chanted on such occasions is as follows:

"The women of Namuana are all dressed in mourning  
Each carries a sacred club, each is tattooed in a strange pattern  
Do rise to the surface Raudalice so that we may look at you  
Do rise to the surface Tinaicaboga so we may also look at you."

The women of Namuana village still preserve the strange ritual of calling turtles from the sea. All the maidens of the village assemble on the rocks above the water and begin to sing a melodious chant. Slowly, one by one, giant turtles rise to lie on the surface in order to listen to the strange chanting.

**Finland (Europe)**

**Royalty**

**A Little Mouse That Was A Princess**

<http://oaks.nvg.org/fintal5.html#mouse-princess>

Once a farmer had three sons. One day when the boys were grown to manhood, he said to them, "My sons, it is high time that you were all married. Tomorrow I wish you to go out in search of brides."

"But where shall we go?" the oldest son asked. "I have thought of that, too," the father said. "Do each of you chop down a tree and then take the direction in which the fallen tree points. I'm sure that if you go far enough in that direction, each of you will find a suitable bride."

So the next day the three sons chopped down trees. The oldest son's tree fell pointing north.

"That suits me!" he said, for he knew that to the north lay a farm where a very pretty girl lived.

The tree of the second son when it fell pointed south. "That suits me!" the second son declared thinking of a girl that he had often danced with who lived on a farm to the south.

The youngest son's tree the youngest son's name was Veikko when it fell pointed straight to the forest.

"Ha! Ha!" the older brothers laughed. "Veikko will have to go courting one of the Wolf girls or one of the foxes!"

They meant by this that only animals lived in the forest and they thought they were making a good joke at Veikko's expense. But Veikko said he was perfectly willing to take his chances and go where his tree pointed.

The older brothers went gaily off and presented their suits to the two farmers whose daughters they admired. Veikko, too, started off with brave front but after he had gone some distance in the forest his courage began to ebb'

"How can I find a bride," he asked himself, "in a place where there are no human creatures at all?"

Just then he came to a little hut. He pushed open the door and went in. It was empty. To be sure, there was a little mouse sitting on the table, daintily combing her whiskers.

"There's nobody here!" Veikko said aloud.

The little mouse paused in her toilet and turning to wards him said reproachfully,"Why, Veikko, I'm here!"

"But you are only a mouse!"

"I count for something all the same!" the little mouse declared. "But tell me, what were you hoping to find?"

"I was hoping to find a sweetheart."

The little mouse questioned him further and Veikko told her the whole story of his brothers and the trees.

"The two older ones are finding sweethearts easily enough," Veikko said, "but I don't see how I can, off here in the forest. And it will shame me to have to go home and confess that I alone have failed."

"See here, Veikko," the little mouse said, "why don't you take me for your sweetheart?"

Veikko laughed heartily.

"But you're only a mouse! Whoever heard of a man having a mouse for a sweetheart?"

The mouse shook her little head solemnly.

"Take my word for it, Veikko, you could do much worse than have me for a sweetheart! Even if I am only a mouse I can love you and be true to you."

She was a dear dainty little mouse and as she sat looking up at Veikko with her little paws under her chin and her bright little eyes sparkling. Veikko liked her more and more.

Then she sang Veikko a little song and the song cheered him so much that he forgot his disappointment at not finding a human sweetheart and as he left her to go home he said, "Very well, little mouse, I'll take you for my sweetheart!"

At that the mouse made little squeaks of delight and she told him that she'd be true to him and wait for him no matter how long he was in returning.

Well, the older brothers when they got home boasted loudly about their sweethearts.

"Mine," said the oldest, "has the rosiest reddest cheeks you ever saw!"

"And mine," the second announced, "has long yellow hair!"

Veikko said nothing.

"What's the matter, Veikko?" the older brothers asked him, laughing. "Has your sweetheart pretty pointed ears or sharp white teeth?"

You see they were still having their little joke about foxes and wolves.

"You needn't laugh," Veikko said. "I've found a sweetheart. She's a gentle dainty little thing gowned in velvet."

"Gowned in velvet!" echoed the oldest brother with a frown.

"Just like a princess!" the second brother sneered.

"Yes," Veikko repeated, "gowned in velvet like a princess. And when she sits up and sings to me I'm perfectly happy."

"Huh!" grunted the older brothers not at all pleased that Veikko should have so grand a sweetheart.

"Well," said the old farmer after a few days, "now I should like to know what those sweethearts of yours are able to do. Have them each bake me a loaf of bread so that I can see whether they're good housewives."

"Mine will be able to bake bread I'm sure of that!" the oldest brother declared boastfully.

"So will mine!" chorused the second brother.

Veikko was silent.

"What about the princess?" they said with a laugh. "Do you think the princess can bake bread?"

"I don't know," Veikko answered truthfully. "I'll have to ask her."

He had no reason for supposing that the little mouse could bake bread, and by the time he reached the hut in the forest he was feeling sad and discouraged.

When he pushed open the door, he found the little mouse as before seated on the table daintily combing her whiskers. At sight of Veikko she danced about with delight.

"I'm so glad to see you!" she squeaked. "I knew you would come back!"

Then when she noticed that he was silent, she asked him what was the matter. Veikko told her, "My father wants each of our sweethearts to bake him a loaf of bread. If I come home without a loaf my brothers will laugh at me."

"You won't have to go home without a loaf!" the little mouse said. "I can bake bread."

Veikko was much surprised at this.

"I never heard of a mouse that could bake bread!"

"Well, I can!" the little mouse insisted.

With that she began ringing a small silver bell, tinkle^ tinkle, tinkle. At once there was the sound of hurrying footsteps, tiny scratchy footsteps, and hundreds of mice came running into the hut.

The little princess mouse, sitting up very straight and dignified, said to them, "Each of you go fetch me a grain of the finest wheat."

All the mice scampered quickly away and soon returned one by one, each carrying a grain of the finest wheat. After that it was no trick at all for the princess mouse to bake a beautiful loaf of wheaten bread.

The next day the three brothers presented their father the loaves of their sweethearts' baking. The oldest one had a loaf of rye bread. "Very good," the farmer said. "For hardworking people like us rye bread is good."

The loaf the second son had was made of barley. "Barley bread is also good," the farmer said.

But when Veikko presented his loaf of beautiful wheaten bread, his father cried out, "What! White bread! Ah, Veikko now must have a sweetheart of wealth!"

"Of course!" the older brothers sneered. "Did not he tell us she was a princess? Say, Veikko, when a princess wants fine white flour, how does she get it?"

Veikko answered simply, "She rings a little silver bell and when her servants come in, she tells them to bring her grains of the finest wheat."

At this the older brothers nearly exploded with envy until their father had to reprove them.

"There! There!" he said. "Don't grudge the boy his good luck! Each girl has baked the loaf she knows how to make and each in her own way will probably make a good wife. But before you bring them home to me, I want one further test of their skill in housewifery. Let them each send me a sample of their weaving."

The older brothers were delighted at this for they knew that their sweethearts were skilful weavers.

"We'll see how her ladyship fares this time!" they said, sure in their hearts that Veikko's sweetheart, whoever she was, would not put them to shame with her weaving.

Veikko, too, had serious doubts of the little mouse's ability at the loom.

"Whoever heard of a mouse that could weave?" he said to himself as he pushed open the door of the forest hut.

"Oh, there you are at last!" the little mouse squeaked joyfully. She reached out her little paws in welcome and then in her excitement she began dancing about on the table.

"Are you really glad to see me, little mouse?" Veikko asked.

"Indeed I am!" the mouse declared. "Am I not your sweetheart? I've been waiting for you and waiting, just wishing that you would return! Does your father want something more this time, Veikko?"

"Yes, and it's something I'm afraid you cannot give me, little mouse."

"Perhaps I can. Tell me what it is."

"It's a sample of your weaving. I do not believe you can weave. I never heard of a mouse that could weave."

"Tut! Tut!" said the mouse. "Of course I can weave! It would be a strange thing if Veikko's sweetheart couldn't weave!"

She rang the little silver bell, tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, and at once there was the faint scratch-scratch of a hundred little feet as mice came running in from all directions and sat up on their haunches awaiting their princess' orders.

"Go each of you," she said, "and get me a fibre of flax, the finest there is."

The mice went scurrying off and soon they began returning one by one each bringing a fibre of flax. When they had spun the flax and carded it, the little mouse wove a beautiful piece of fine linen. It was so sheer that she was able when she folded it to put it into an empty nutshell.

"Here, Veikko," she said, "here in this little box is a sample of my weaving. I hope your father will like it."

Veikko when he got home felt almost embarrassed for he was sure that his sweetheart's weaving would shame his brothers. So at first he kept the nutshell hidden in his pocket.

The sweetheart of the oldest brother had sent as a sample of her weaving a square of coarse cotton. "Not very fine," the farmer said, "but good enough."

The second brother's sample was a square of cotton and linen mixed. "A little better," the farmer said, nodding his head.

Then he turned to Veikko. "And you, Veikko, has your sweetheart not given you a sample of her weaving?"

Veikko handed his father a nutshell. His brothers burst out laughing at the sight of it. "Ha! Ha! Ha!" they laughed. "Veikko's sweetheart gives him a nut when he asks for a sample of her weaving."

But their laughter died as the farmer opened the nutshell and began shaking out a great web of the finest linen. "Why, Veikko, my boy!" he cried, "however did your sweetheart get threads for so fine a web?"

Veikko answered modestly, "She rang a little silver bell and ordered her servants to bring her in fibres of finest flax. They did so and after they had spun the flax and carded it, my sweetheart wove the web you see."

"Wonderful!" gasped the farmer. "I have never known such a weaver! The other girls will be all right for farmers' wives, but Veikko's sweetheart might be a princess! Well," concluded the farmer, "it's time that you all brought your sweethearts home. I want to see them with my own eyes. Suppose you bring them tomorrow."

"She's a good little mouse and I'm very fond of her," Veikko thought to himself as he went out to the forest, "but my brothers will certainly laugh when they find she is only a mouse! Well, I don't care if they laugh! She's been a good little sweetheart to me and I'm not going to be ashamed of her!"

So when he got to the hut he told the little mouse at once that his father wanted to see her.

The little mouse was greatly excited. "I must go in proper style!" she said.

She rang the little silver bell and ordered her coach and five. The coach when it came turned out to be an empty nutshell and the five prancing steeds that were drawing it were five black mice. The little mouse seated herself in the coach with a coachman mouse on the box in front of her and a footman mouse on the box behind her.

"Oh, how my brothers will laugh!" thought Veikko. But he did not laugh. He walked beside the coach and told the little mouse not to be frightened, that he would take good care of her. His father, he told her, was a gentle old man and would be kind to her.

When they left the forest, they came to a river that was spanned by a footbridge. Just as Veikko and the nutshell coach had reached the middle of the bridge, a man met them coming from the opposite direction.

"Mercy me!" the man exclaimed as he caught sight of the strange little coach that was rolling along beside Veikko. "What's that?"

He stooped down and looked and then with a loud laugh he put out his foot and pushed the coach, the little mouse, her servants, and her five prancing steeds all off the bridge and into the water below.

"What have you done! What have you done!" Veikko cried, "You've drowned my poor little sweetheart!"

The man thinking Veikko was crazy hurried away. Veikko with tears in his eyes looked down into the water.

"You poor little mouse!" he said. "How sorry I am that you are drowned! You were a faithful loving sweetheart and now that you are gone I know how much I loved you!"

As he spoke he saw a beautiful coach of gold drawn by five glossy horses go up the far bank of the river. A coachman in gold lace held the reins and a footman in pointed cap sat up stiffly behind. The most beautiful girl in the world sat in the coach. Her skin was as red as a berry and as white as snow, her long golden hair gleamed with jewels, and she was dressed in pearly velvet. She beckoned to Veikko and when he came close she said, "Won't you come sit beside me?"

"Me? Me?" Veikko stammered, too dazed to think.

The beautiful creature smiled. "You were not ashamed to have me for a sweetheart when I was a mouse," she said, "and surely now that I am a princess again you won't desert me!"

"A mouse!" Veikko gasped. "Were you the little mouse?"

The princess nodded. "Yes, I was the little mouse under an evil enchantment which could never have been broken if you had not taken me for a sweetheart and if another human being had not drowned me. Now the enchantment is broken forever. So come, we will go to your father and after he has given us his blessing we will get married and go home to my kingdom."

And that's exactly what they did. They drove at once to the farmer's house. And when Veikko's father and his brothers and his brothers' sweethearts saw the princess' coach stopping at their gate, they all came out bowing and scraping to see what such grand folk could want of them.

"Father!" Veikko cried, "don't you know me?"

The farmer stopped bowing long enough to look up.

"Why, bless my soul!" he cried, "It's our Veikko!"

"Yes, father, I'm Veikko and this is the princess that I'm going to marry!"

"A princess, did you say, Veikko? Mercy me, where did my boy find a princess?"

"Out in the forest where my tree pointed."

"Well, well, well," the farmer said, "where your tree pointed! I've always heard that was a good way to find a bride."

The older brothers shook their heads gloomily and muttered, "Just our luck! If only our trees had pointed to the forest we, too, should have found princesses instead of plain country wenches!"

But they were wrong: It was not because his tree pointed to the forest that Veikko got the princess, it was because he was so simple and good that he was kind even to a little mouse.

Well, after they had got the farmer's blessing they rode home to the princess' kingdom and were married. And they were happy as they should have been for they were good and true to each other and they loved each other dearly.

**France (Europe)**

**Cleverness**

**Quackling**

<http://www.aaronshep.com/stories/042.html>

Once there was a very small duck with a very loud quack. So they called him Quackling.

Now, Quackling was clever and he worked hard, so he saved up a good deal of money. In fact, he saved up so much that the King himself came to borrow some.

Quackling was proud to loan his money to the King. But a year went by, then two, then three, and the King never paid him back.

“I’ve waited long enough,” said Quackling. So he took a sack for the money, and he started for the castle, calling,

“Quack! Quack! Quack!   
I want my money back!”

Before long, he came upon a ladder leaning against a wall.

“Where are you going, Quackling?” said Ladder.

“To the King for my money,” said Quackling.

“To the King!” said Ladder. “How wonderful! Will you take me with you?”

“Why not?” said Quackling. “One can never have too many friends.” And he called out,

“Quack! Quack! Quack!   
Ladder into sack!”

Quick as you can blink, Ladder was in the sack. Then Quackling walked on, calling,

“Quack! Quack! Quack!   
I want my money back!”

Not much later, he came upon a river flowing through a wood.

“Where are you going, Quackling?” said River.

“To the King for my money,” said Quackling.

“To the King!” said River. “How splendid! Will you take me with you?”

“Why not?” said Quackling. “One can never have too many friends.” And he called out,

“Quack! Quack! Quack!   
River into sack!”

Quick as you can wink, River was in the sack. Then Quackling walked on, calling,

“Quack! Quack! Quack!   
I want my money back!”

In a little while, he came upon a beehive hanging from a tree.

“Where are you going, Quackling?” said Beehive.

“To the King for my money,” said Quackling.

“To the King!” said Beehive. “How marvelous! Will you take me with you?”

Now, Quackling’s sack was getting full, but he thought there might be just enough room.

“Why not?” said Quackling. “One can never have too many friends.” And he called out,

“Quack! Quack! Quack!   
Beehive into sack!”

Quick as you can think, Beehive was in the sack. Then Quackling walked on, calling,

“Quack! Quack! Quack!   
I want my money back!”

Soon after, Quackling arrived at the King’s castle. He marched right up to the guards and told them, “I’ve come for my money!”

The guards went inside and told the prime minister. The prime minister told the King.

“Who does that Quackling think he is?” said the King. “Never mind. Just put him in the pit!”

So they put Quackling in the pit and left him there.

“Help!” cried Quackling. “I’ll never get out!”

Then he remembered Ladder. So he called out,

“Quack! Quack! Quack!   
Ladder out of sack!”

Quick as you can blink, Ladder was out of the sack. Ladder leaned against the side of the pit, and Quackling climbed out. Then Quackling stood there, calling,

“Quack! Quack! Quack!   
I want my money back!”

“How did that Quackling get out of the pit?” said the King. “Never mind. Just put him in the pot!”

So they put Quackling in the pot and set it on the fire.

“Help!” cried Quackling. “I’m in a stew!”

Then he remembered River. So he called out,

“Quack! Quack! Quack!   
River out of sack!”

Quick as you can wink, River was out of the sack. River put out the fire and flowed away. Then Quackling got out, calling,

“Quack! Quack! Quack!   
I want my money back!”

“How did that Quackling get out of the pot?” said the King. “Never mind. Just bring him here, and I’ll put him in his place—for good!”

So they brought Quackling to the King. The King tried to grab him.

“Help!” cried Quackling. “This is the end!”

Then he remembered Beehive. So he called out,

“Quack! Quack! Quack!   
Beehive out of sack!”

Quick as you can think, Beehive was out of the sack. The bees rushed from the hive and started to sting the King.

“Help!” cried the King. He fled from the castle, and the bees followed. They chased him all the way to— Well, no one knows where, for they never saw him again.

“Hooray!” cried the people of the castle, and the prime minister said, “We never liked that King anyway.”

So they put Quackling on the throne and gave him a crown.

“Will you be our King?” said the guards.

“Why not?” said Quackling. “One can never have too many friends.”

**Gabon (Africa)**

**Magic**

**The Gift of a Cow Tail Switch**

A great warrior did not return from the hunt. His family gave him up for dead, all except his youngest child who each day would ask, "Where is my father? Where is my father?"

The child's older brothers, who were magicians, finally went forth to find him. They came upon his broken spear and a pile of bones. The first son assembled the bones into a skeleton; the second son put flesh upon the bones; the third son breathed life into the flesh.

The warrior arose and walked into the village where there was great celebration. He said, "I will give a fine gift to the one who has brought me back to life."

Each one of his sons cried out, "Give it to me, for I have done the most."

"I will give the gift to my youngest child," said the warrior. "For it is this child who saved my life. A man is never truly dead until he is forgotten!"

**Gambia, The (Africa)**

**Cleverness**

**The Crocodile and the Child**

<http://www.smcm.edu/gambia/documents/publications/gamble/Gamble%2048.pdf>

“One day it happened that a child went to look for firewood in the bush. He found a crocodile sitting on its eggs on the sandy bank. When the crocodile saw the child, he said to him, “Help me, carry me to the river, dawn found me here, the sun then became hot and I am not able to go.” The child said to the crocodile, “If it happens that you will not eat me, I will help you.” The crocodile said “I will not do that.” The child was sorry for him, he went to a fara tree, and stripped off some cord, came back and tied the crocodile’s legs. He put him on his head, and went with him to the river.

When they reached the edge of the river, the child was about to put him down. The crocodile said to him: “Complete you kindness, do not put me down here, take me to the water.” The child agreed, and went down with him to the mud, and was about to put him down there. The crocodile said: “Please, take me into the water, I am very tired, and cannot walk.” The child took him into the water, until the water came up to his waist. The crocodile said to him: “Put me down.” The child put him down, and loosened the cord. When he loosened him, the crocodile seized his leg, and said to him: “I am going to eat you.” The child said to him: “Are you going to repay my kindness with wickedness?” The crocodile said to him “The world is that way- the payment for goodness is wickedness.” The child said: “Well then, let me look for a witness.” The crocodile said: “Yes, three witnesses, if they all say the reward for kindness is kindness, I shall let you go, but if they say the reward for kindness is wickedness, I shall kill you.” The child said “I agree.” The child and the crocodile remained there until an old donkey came by, wanting to drink. The crocodile asked “Who is it?” The donkey replied. The crocodile said to him: “Before you drink, you should decide the truth between me and this child.” The donkey said “State your case.” The crocodile explained everything. The donkey said to him: “In this world the reward for kindness is only wickedness. Don’t you see how I am? When I was young, I had strength, I carried loads. My owner used to ride me. At that time he used to give me millet to eat; the children would cut grass for me, they would sweep my house, they would give me water to drink. But don’t you see now I am old, I have no strength, I cannot work, people ignore me, my owner does not even know if I am at home. He does not smoke my house, the mosquitoes are biting me. They have forgotten all my work. They do not even answer me. As for me, I know that humans repay goodness with wickedness.”

The crocodile said to the child “You hear?” He said “Yes”. The donkey drank and went off.

Not long after, an old horse came and was about to drink. The crocodile said to him: “Horse, what is the reason you are here?” The horse said to him: “Hn, man’s wickedness. The time I was young, my owner used to be concerned about me, he would take me to far-off places, he would make me dance, at that time I would live only on millet grain. Every day my body would be washed, water would be drawn for me, my house would be swept, everything would be done for me, but don’t you see, now that I’ve become old, my sinews are all cut, they ignore me, they have tossed me to one side…if it were formerly I would not have had to come to look for water here. They have paid for my kindness with wickedness.

The crocodile said to the child: “You’ve heard the second witness.” The child said “Yes”.

They were there until they saw a hare running along towards them. As he was about to pass, the crocodile called him. He stopped and asked “What is it?” The crocodile said to him “There is a court case here. I want to explain it to you. The hare said to him: “Tell it, but hurry, I don’t want nonsense.” The crocodile explained all to him. The hare asked the child, the child also told him his case. Hare said “No, I don’t believe that this child brought you here.” The crocodile said “He did”. The child also said “I did”. The hare said to them: “Well, then you all should come out of please.” The crocodile and the child came out of the water, and came and stood on the shore.

Hare said “I shall not believe you tale unless we all go to the place where you met. Child you must tie the crocodile, and carry him again, that we may go there.” They agreed. The child tied the crocodile and put him on his head. Hare followed behind them, till they reached the sandy bank. The child stopped and said “It was here.” He stopped and was about to put down the crocodile. Hare said: “wait, does your father eat crocodile?” The child said “Yes”. He asked “Does your mother eat it?” The child said “Yes”. He said to the crocodile “Did this child find you here?” The crocodile said “Yes”. Hare said to him: “If this child had not helped you to reach the river, what would have happened to you?” The crocodile said: “The dogs would have found me here, and would have killed me or else the hunters.”

Hare said to the child “Take him to your father and mother and eat him.”

He said to the crocodile “After today, the reward for kindness is kindness.”

The child went home with the crocodile. His father cut it up, and they had it for dinner.

That is the reason if someone does a good thing to you, you should repay it with goodness.

**Georgia (Asia)**

**Animals**

**The Fox and the Prince**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/asia/geft/geft17.htm>

THERE was once a king who had a son. Every one treated him badly, and chased him away. Even passers-by looked upon him with disfavour. The prince thought and thought, and at last he mounted his horse, took his bow and arrow, and departed from his father's palace.

When he had gone some distance he came into a sheltered wood. He wandered about until he found a suitable nook. He built for himself a mud hut, and dwelt there.

Every day the prince went out to hunt. He would shoot a stag or a roebuck, and bring it home. After he had eaten as much as he wanted, there was always enough meat left for the next day, but he never ate it the next day, as he went hunting again, and there was thus always a quantity of food left over.

A fox perceived this, and every day, when the prince had gone out to the chase, he stole into the hut and ate all the food that was left; then he stole away again. Some time passed thus. Then the fox said: 'There is no bravery in this! I carry away all his meat secretly, yet there is plenty. I will show myself to him.'

Once when the prince was hunting, the fox stole in, and, when his hunger was satisfied, he went about arranging everything. When the prince came home, the fox leaped out in front of him. The prince drew his bow, and was just about to shoot him, when the fox cried out: 'Do not kill me, and I will help to make thy fortune!' The prince did not kill him, and the fox attended to the horse, and led it about, until the sweat dried off its coat. They lived thus for some time. The fox lighted the fire, tidied the hut, and did all the work.

But, in spite of this, there was still meat left. 'I will go and find some one who will help to eat it,' said the fox. He went out, and saw a wolf hardly able to walk from want of food. It could scarcely move from the spot where it was. The fox said: 'Come home with me, and thou shalt have plenty of everything.' The wolf followed him. They both went into the hut, where the fox told his companion: 'I will tidy the house, thou must stay here, and when the master comes in attend to his horse.'

The master came, and on the saddle of his horse was slung a stag. The wolf sprang out to attend to the horse; the youth drew his bow, and was about to shoot the wolf, when the fox cried out: 'Do not kill him, he is a friend!' The prince did not kill him, but jumped down from his horse, took the stag, and went in. The wolf attended to the horse, and led him up and down, while the fox himself saw to the inside of the house; thus they lived for some time.

The fox noticed that there was much meat left even now. He ran out and brought in a famished bear. The wolf was sent for grass, the bear commanded to tend the horse, while the fox arranged the house. In a little time the prince came in, and when the bear jumped out to look after his horse he drew his bow to shoot him, but the fox cried out: 'Do not kill him, he is a friend!' The youth did not kill the bear, and he tended the horse and led it about; then the wolf came in with the grass, and gave it to the horse.

Some time passed. The fox saw that even yet there was meat to spare. He went out and sought until he found an eagle, which he brought home. He commanded the eagle to attend to the horse, sent the bear for grass, and the wolf for wood to burn, while he saw to household affairs. Thus each had his business to do. When the master returned, the eagle flew out to tend the horse. The prince was about to shoot him, when the fox cried out: 'Do not kill him, he is a friend!' The prince did not kill him, but thought to himself: 'What will this vile fox bring in next? I shall see all the game in the country here.' They lived thus some time.

Once the fox said to his master: 'Give us leave to go away for two weeks; at the end of that time we shall return to thee.' The master gave them leave, and thought to himself: 'I do not mind if I never see you again, for I am afraid of you all.' The fox, the wolf, the bear, and the eagle went away. They saw a glade in the wood, and rested there. The fox said to his companions: 'Now, let us build a good house for our master.' They all agreed, and set to work. The wolf cut down trees, the bear cut the wood into shape, and did the joiner work, the eagle carried it, and the fox gave orders. When the wood was ready, they set to and built the house. They built so beautiful a house that the prince could not have imagined one like it, even in his dreams. Everything was finished, but there was no furniture in it.

The fox arose and took his companions into a neighbouring town. They went into the bazaar, and looked at the house-furniture. Each one had his work to do again. The fox chose the goods, the wolf was ordered to break the shutters, the bear to carry the things to the door, and the eagle to take everything to the palace. They seized everything necessary for furnishing a house--domestic utensils, carpets, and vessels. They carried them to the palace, and placed them there; so now all was finished, and there was nothing more left to wish for.

Two weeks had expired, so the four went home. The prince was hunting, but they went to meet him. They surrounded him, and would not let him pass. The fox cried out: 'I command thee to come with us whither we lead thee.' The prince was afraid, he did not know what it could mean, but went with them. In a little while they arrived in the glade. It was girt by a wall over which no bird could fly. They opened the gates and went inside. When the king's son saw, he was stupefied with surprise. Inside the wall was laid out a beautiful garden, with fountains playing, and there stood a magnificent palace. Then they said: 'We have made all this ready in two weeks, now live happily in it.' The prince rejoiced greatly, and gave hearty thanks to his fox.

Some time passed after this. The fox said: 'I must see if I can find a good wife for my master.' He came to the prince, and again asked a fortnight's absence. Then he went away and made a sledge. He harnessed the wolf and bear to it, and said to the eagle: 'Fly up high, and keep a watch; when thou seest a beautiful princess, seize her in thy claws and carry her off.' He himself sat down and acted as coachman. Thus they travelled from place to place.

In the villages, the fox played the trumpet, and the bear and the wolf leaped and danced along. Crowds of people came out to look. When they came to the capital, a maiden, fair as the sun, looked from her window, the eagle seized her in his claws, and flew off. The bear and the wolf turned round and started for home. When the people saw this, they all set off in pursuit. The fox was behind his companions, and the dogs came nearer, and almost touched his cloak, but in some way or other they all escaped, and brought the fair one to their master.

The king's son could scarcely stand on his feet for joy. The princess's father was in the greatest consternation, and said: 'To him who finds and brings back my daughter will I give the half of my kingdom.' But none was able to find trace of her. At last an old woman appeared, and said to the king: 'I will find thy daughter.' She arose and went forth. At last she came to the prince's house, and asked: 'Do ye not want an attendant? I will come for small wages.' The fox, wolf, bear, and even the beautiful princess herself, said: 'We do not want thee, we shall not take thee.' But the prince did not agree with them, and engaged her as servant.

The old woman served them faithfully for a long time, and did not harm them. Then one day, when the prince was asleep, the old woman wanted the princess to go out into the garden with her. She did not wish to go, but the old woman pressed her until she consented. When they came to the fountains, the old woman offered her some water. The princess refused it, but the old woman insisted. She placed a *litra* (large jar) full of water to her lips, and it suddenly swallowed up the princess. Then the old woman put it to her own mouth, and it swallowed her. The *litra* rolled away. The fox saw and pursued, but that which he sought was soon lost to sight.

The fox reproached his master, but it was no use saying anything now. He asked again for a fortnight's leave, made another sledge like the former, and harnessed the bear and wolf to it. He sat up on the seat, and held tambourines in his paws. He struck them, and the wolf and bear pranced and danced along. The eagle flew up high, and looked round. All the people in the land came out to gaze at the sight. The king was angry with his beautiful daughter, and said, 'Do not go out! Do not even look out.' The eagle watched for a long time, but could not see her. At last he caught a glimpse of the princess through a little window; he struck against it, broke it, seized the princess, and flew away. He rejoined his companions, and all hastened off.

They brought the princess to their master. The king collected all his army, and sent the old woman with it to the prince's palace. The fox saw them appearing in the distance like a swarm of flies. He ordered the eagle to carry stones up high in the air. When the army approached, the eagle let the stones fall on the men; the fox, the bear, and the wolf attacked them, and completely exterminated them. There escaped only one single man; they fell upon him too, gnawed one of his feet, and said: 'Go and tell thy king what has befallen his hosts.'

When the king saw his man, and heard the sad end of his army, he was out of his mind with grief. He assembled all the chief priests in his kingdom, went in front of them, and they all came on bended knees. When they were near, the fox saw them, and told his master. The prince ran out to meet them, raised them all on their feet, and took them into his house. The father and son-in-law became reconciled, and lived happily together. Then the fox said to his master: 'I am getting old now, and the day of my death will soon be here, promise to bury me in a fowl-house.' The prince promised. The fox said to himself: 'Come, I will see if my master means to keep his promise,' and he stretched himself out as if he were dead. When the prince saw the corpse, he ordered it to be taken away and thrown into the earth.

The fox was enraged, jumped up and cried out: 'Is this the way thou rememberest my goodness to thee? Well, since thou halt done thus, when I die you will all be cursed, and there will not remain a trace of you.' Some time after this the fox died. After his death, his word came to pass, and they were all destroyed. The wolf, the bear, and the eagle remained masters of the field

**Germany (Europe)**

**Evil Queen/Witch, Magical Items, Supernatural (709)**

**Little Snow White**

It was in the middle of winter, when the broad flakes of snow were falling around, that a certain queen sat working at her window, the frame of which was made of fine black ebony; and, as she was looking out upon the snow, she pricked her finger, and three drops of blood fell upon it. Then she gazed thoughtfully down on the red drops which sprinkled the white snow and said, "Would that my little daughter may be as white as that snow, as red as the blood, and as black as the ebony window-frame!" And so the little girl grew up; her skin was a white as snow, her cheeks as rosy as blood, and her hair as black as ebony; and she was called Snow-White.

But this queen died; and the king soon married another wife, who was very beautiful, but so proud that she could not bear to think that any one could surpass her. She had a magical looking-glass, to which she used to go and gaze upon herself in it, and say—

"Tell me, glass, tell me true!

Of all the ladies in the land,

Who is fairest? tell me who?"

And the glass answered, "Thou, Queen, art fairest in the land"

But Snow-White grew more and more beautiful; and when she was seven years old, she was as bright as the day, and fairer than the queen herself. Then the glass one day answered queen, when she went to consult it as usual—

"Thou, Queen, may'st fair and beauteous be,

But Snow-White is lovelier far than thee?"

When the queen heard this she turned pale with rage and envy; and calling to one of her servants said, "Take Snow-White away into the wide wood, that I may never see her more." Then the servant led the little girl away; but his heart melted when she begged him to spare her life, and he said, "I will not hurt thee, thou pretty child." So he left her there alone; and though he thought it most likely that the wild beasts would tear her to pieces, he felt as if a great weight were taken off his heart when he had made up his mind not to kill her, but leave her to her fate.

Then poor Snow-White wandered along through the wood in great fear; and the wild beasts roared around, but none did her any harm. In the evening she came to a little cottage, and went in there to rest, for her weary feet would carry her no further. Everything was spruce and neat in the cottage: on the table was spread a white cloth, and there were seven little plates with seven little loaves and seven little glasses with wine in them; and knives and forks laid in order, and by the wall stood seven little beds. Then, as she was exceedingly hungry, she picked a little piece off each loaf, and drank a very little wine out of each glass; and after that she thought she would lie down and rest. So she tried all the little beds; and one was too long, and another was too short, till, at last, the seventh suited her; and there she laid herself down and went to sleep. Presently in came the masters of the cottage, who were seven little dwarfs that lived among the mountains, and dug and searched about for gold. They lighted up their seven lamps, and saw directly that all was not right. The first said, "Who has been sitting on my stool?" The second, "Who has been eating off my plate?" The third, "Who has been picking at my bread?" The fourth, "Who has been meddling with my spoon?" The fifth, "Who has been handling my fork?" The sixth, "Who has been cutting with my knife?" The seventh, "Who has been drinking my wine?" Then the first looked around and said, "Who has been lying on my bed?" And the rest came running to him, and every one cried out that somebody had been upon his bed. But the seventh saw Snow-White, and called upon his brethren to come and look at her; and they cried out with wonder and astonishment, and brought their lamps and gazing upon her, they said, "Good heavens! what a lovely child she is!" And they were delighted to see her, and took care not to waken her; and the seventh dwarf slept an hour with each of the other dwarfs in turn, till the night was gone.

In the morning Snow-White told them all her story, and they pitied her, and said if she would keep all things in order, and cook and wash, and knit and spin for them, she might stay where she was, and they would take good care of her. Then they went out all day long to their work, seeking for gold and silver in the mountains; and Snow-White remained at home; and they warned her, saying, "The queen will soon find out where you are, so take care and let no one in." But the queen, now that she thought Snow-White was dead, believed that she was certainly the handsomest lady in the land; so she went to her glass and said—

"Tell me, glass, tell me true!

Of all the ladies in the land,

Who is fairest? tell me who?"

And the glass answered—

"Thou, Queen, thou are fairest in all this land;

But over the Hills, in the greenwood shade,

Where the seven dwarfs their dwelling have made,

There Snow-White is hiding; and she

Is lovelier far, O Queen, than thee."

Then the queen was very much alarmed; for she knew that the glass always spoke the truth, and she was sure that the servant had betrayed her. And as she could not bear to think that any one lived who was more beautiful than she was, she disguised herself as an old pedlar woman and went her way over the hills to the place where the dwarfs dwelt. Then she knocked at the door and cried, "Fine wares to sell!" Snow-White looked out of the window, and said, "Good day, good woman; what have you to sell?" "Good wares, fine wares," replied she; "laces and bobbins of all colors." "I will let the old lady in; she seems to be a very good sort of a body," thought Snow-White; so she ran down, and unbolted the door. "Bless me!" said the woman, "how badly your stays are laced. Let me lace them up with one of my nice new laces." Snow-White did not dream of any mischief; so she stood up before the old woman who set to work so nimbly, and pulled the lace so tightly that Snow-White lost her breath, and fell down as if she were dead. "There's an end of all thy beauty," said the spiteful queen, and went away home.

In the evening the seven dwarfs returned; and I need not say how grieved they were to see their faithful Snow-White stretched upon the ground motionless, as if she were quite dead. However, they lifted her up, and when they found what was the matter, they cut the lace; and in a little time she began to breathe, and soon came to herself again. Then they said, "The old woman was the queen; take care another time, and let no one in when we are away."

When the queen got home, she went to her glass, and spoke to it, but to her surprise it replied in the same words as before.

Then the blood ran cold in her heart with spite and malice to hear that Snow-White still lived; and she dressed herself up again in a disguise, but very different from the one she wore before, and took with her a poisoned comb. When she reached the dwarfs' cottage, she knocked at the door, and cried, "Fine wares to sell!" but Snow-White said, "I dare not let any one in." Then the queen said, "Only look at my beautiful combs;" and gave her the poisoned one. And it looked so pretty that the little girl took it up and put it into her hair to try it; but the moment it touched her head the poison was so powerful that she fell down senseless. "There you may lie," said the queen, and went her way. But by good luck the dwarfs returned very early that evening; and when they saw Snow-White lying on the ground, they thought what had happened, and soon found the poisoned comb. And when they took it away, she recovered, and told them all that had passed; and they warned her once more not to open the door to any one.

Meantime the queen went home to her glass, and trembled with rage when she received exactly the same answer as before; and she said, "Snow-White shall die, if it costs me my life." So she went secretly into a chamber, and prepared a poisoned apple: the outside looked very rosy and tempting, but whosoever tasted it was sure to die. Then she dressed herself up as a peasant's wife, and travelled over the hills to the dwarfs' cottage, and knocked at the door; but Snow-White put her head out of the window, and said, "I dare not let any one in, for the dwarfs have told me not to." "Do as you please," said the old woman, "but at any rate take this pretty apple; I will make you a present of it." "No," said Snow-White, "I dare not take it." "You silly girl!" answered the other, "what are you afraid of? do you think it is poisoned? Come! do you eat one part, and I will eat the other." Now the apple was so prepared that one side was good, though the other side was poisoned. Then Snow-White was very much tempted to taste, for the apple looked exceedingly nice; and when she saw the old woman eat, she could refrain no longer. But she had scarcely put the piece into her mouth when she fell down dead upon the ground. "This time nothing will save thee," said the queen; and she went home to her glass, and at last it said—"Thou, Queen, art the fairest of all the fair." And then her envious heart was glad, and as happy as such a heart could be.

When evening came, and the dwarfs returned home, they found Snow-White lying on the ground; no breath passed her lips, and they were afraid that she was quite dead. They lifted her up, and combed her hair, and washed her face with wine and water; but all was in vain. So they laid her down upon a bier, and all seven watched and bewailed her three whole days; and then they proposed to bury her; but her cheeks were still rosy, and her face looked just as it did while she was alive; so they said, "We will never bury her in the cold ground." And they made a coffin of glass so that they might still look at her, and wrote her name upon it in golden letters, and that she was a king's daughter. Then the coffin was placed upon the hill, and one of the dwarfs always sat by it and watched. And the birds of the air came, too, and bemoaned Snow-White. First of all came an owl, and then a raven, but at last came a dove.

And thus Snow-White lay for a long, long time, and still only looked as though she were asleep; for she was even now as white as snow, and as red as blood, and as black as ebony. At last a prince came and called at the dwarfs' house; and he saw Snow-White and read what was written in golden letters. Then he offered the dwarfs money, and earnestly prayed them to let him take her away; but they said, "We will not part with her for all the gold in the world." At last, however, they had pity on him, and gave him the coffin; but the moment he lifted it up to carry it home with him, the piece of apple fell from between her lips, and Snow-White awoke, and exclaimed, "Where am I!" And the prince answered, "Thou art safe with me." Then he told her all that had happened, and said, "I love you better than all the world; come with me to my father's palace, and you shall be my wife." Snow-White consented, and went home with the prince; and everything was prepared with great pomp and splendor for their wedding.

To the feast was invited, among the rest, Snow-White's old enemy, the queen; and as she was dressing herself in fine, rich clothes, she looked in the glass and said, "Tell me, glass, tell me true! Of all the ladies in the land, Who is fairest? tell me who?" And the glass answered, "Thou, lady, art the loveliest *here*, I ween; But lovelier far is the new-made queen."

When she heard this, the queen started with rage; but her envy and curiosity were so great, that she could not help setting out to see the bride. And when she arrived, and saw that it was no other than Snow-White, whom she thought had been dead a long while, she choked with passion, and fell ill and died; but Snow-White and the prince lived and reigned happily over that land, many, many years.

**Ghana (Africa)**

**Animals, Humorous, Origin?**

**The Stealing of the Drums**

<http://wws.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=81>

Many years ago, there lived a strong and noble warrior. One day, as the warrior was racing through the jungle, following the tracks of a sleek and golden cat, he heard strange sounds. Forgetting the cat, he stopped. Never had he heard such beautiful rhythms. Entranced by the music, he turned and moved toward the direction of the sound.

Led by the music, the warrior crossed creeks, climbed over rocks, and swung through vines. With each step, the sound became louder and more frenetic. Finally, he spotted a clearing. The music, he knew, was coming from there. Hiding behind a nearby tree, the hunter stood in amazement and watched.

There, before him, a lion was swinging his wild red mane and beating what seemed to be a magical gourd. With every tap on the gourd, the lion created a rhythm that exploded in the night air like the heartbeats of heaven.

And animals were dancing in a frenzy!

An elephant was dancing with a hippo. A crocodile was swinging a python around his tail. A warthog was hopping beside a jigging baboon. An eland and a bush cow were nuzzling cheek-to-cheek. A grouse was strutting around a jumping guinea fowl.

From behind the tree, the warrior tapped his toes. He wanted desperately to join in the dance, but he dared not disturb such mighty beasts. As darkness fell, the warrior left the dancing animals and returned to his village. When he arrived home, he found the villagers gathered around a bonfire. The women were crying: It was very late—the warrior was not expected to be out in the jungle for so long—and they believed he had been killed.

"There he is!" cried a young boy, as he saw the warrior approaching through the smoky haze. The villagers rushed upon him, hugging him.

"We feared we had lost you," said the village chief. "What kept you for so long?" The warrior told them of the dancing animals, the magical gourd, and the rhythm that captured the heartbeats of heaven.

Hearing this, the people drew back.

"You lie!" said the chief angrily. "Do you expect us to believe your story? What have you been up to?" But the warrior repeated his story, saying, "It is true. What I tell you is true."

"Go. Leave this village!" ordered the chief. "You are not worthy to live among us. We are an honest tribe. Go into the jungle with your dancing animals!"

"Go!" shouted the villagers in chorus. Then they drew their clubs and chased the warrior back into the jungle.

Alone in the jungle, the warrior sat down beside a banana tree and tried to ignore the laugh of the hyenas and the squeals of the baboons. Although he was a fearless warrior in the light of day, he was not so fearless at night. "Was this day just a dream?" the warrior wondered to himself as he drifted off to sleep. "How could so much change in just one day?"

When the sun rose the next morning, the warrior traveled back to the clearing where he had seen the animals. They had been dancing all night. The warrior peeked once again from behind the tree.

"If only I had those magical gourds, the villagers would believe me," he thought. Then he had an idea. He burst from behind the tree screaming a war song and charged straight for the mighty lion. He tore the magic gourd from the lion's grip and raced back down the trail.

He ran all the way back to his village. He was so exhausted that he fell down to the ground. The people of the village gathered around the warrior, staring at the strange-looking gourd. Gradually, the warrior regained his breath and stood up.

"This, friends," he announced, holding the gourd in his hands, "is what I shall call a drum."

Turning to a young boy, he ordered. "Bring me some palm wine!"

Within moments, the young boy came back with a bowl of palm wine. The warrior then poured some wine on the ground—spilling much more than tradition called for—as an offering to the ancestors.

The warrior tapped the drum lightly and liked what he heard. He tapped harder, and the people liked what they heard. The hunter then beat the drum with the frenzy of the lion.

And the people went wild!

Day and night they danced, barely stopping to eat or sleep. They danced when they were happy, and they danced when they were sad. They danced when they were at war, and they danced when they were at peace. They danced when they were angry, and they danced when they were in love....

In fact, they are dancing even now.

**Greece (Europe)**

**Magic**

**Arachne**

<http://www.greek-gods.info/greek-gods/athena/stories/athena-arachne/>

In a small town of Ledia, in Northern Greece, there once lived a beautiful maid with the name Arachne. Arachne was famous in town for being a very skillful weaver and spinner and every day many girls and nymphs were stopping by to see her weave.   
  
However, Arachne was a very vain girl and couldn’t stop boasting about her talent. She claimed that she had learned the skill all by herself and that there was no one else in the world who could weave as delicately as her... she even felt that she could compete against [Athena](http://www.greek-gods.info/greek-gods/athena/), the goddess of skill, and win her with ease.   
  
When Athena heard these words, she got disappointed and decided to disguise as an old lady and appear in front of Arachne.  
"My dear", she told Arachne, "I am old and have much experience from life, so let me give you one advice: don’t ever mess up with a goddess! No mortal can compete against Athena. Take back your words and kindly ask for forgiveness..."

Arachne got furious and threw the thread against the old woman, telling her:  
"I don’t need your advice, I know best what I can do! If Athena really dares, then she should come here and compete against me!"

At that moment, the old woman transformed herself into the radiant goddess Athena. On her sight, everybody in the room kneeled down in awe... not so Arachne, who couldn't wait to compete against her.

Soon the competition started and both contestants were doing really well. Athena was weaving the Parthenon and her contest with god Poseidon. Arachne, on the other hand, was making fun of the gods by weaving scenes of gods full of weaknesses and fears.

Arachne’s work seemed to be perfect technically, yet it was not beautiful because it was showing disregard of the gods. When she saw this, Athena became very offended and told Arachne:  
"You may be foolish and stubborn, but you seem to love your work. So why don’t you go ahead and spin forever!"

Immediately, Athena sprinkled her with the juice of magical herbs and the body of Arachne transformed into a small and ugly animal, which nowadays is known as the spider.   
  
**Since then, the spider is cursed to be trapped inside her own web, weaving constantly and endlessly... but having finally all her works destroyed by man!**

**Greenland (North America)**

**Origin**

**The Girl and the Dogs**

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/658452?seq=2>

A man had a daughter with whom he lived alone at the winter hamlet. The girl rejected the advances of every suitor, stating that her father would not allow her to marry; but a dog once came to the hamlet, by whom the daughter had progeny, ten in number, half of whom had upper parts like men, but limbs and feet like dogs, the other half contrasting with the first ones in that their upper portions were dogs and their legs human.

Despite this, the girl’s father fetched the offspring from the mountain behind the hut and brought them up like ordinary children, employing these monsters, when old enough, in carrying his kajak, clothing, and implements to and from the dwelling and the beach. When, however, it occurred to him that his grandchildren might possibly exhaust all his resources, he turned both them and their parents (the girl and the dog) out on a barren island, but nevertheless permitted the dog to swim to the mainland occasionally and fetch a little food for the family, for which purpose the wife was wont to hang a pair of women’s boots about his neck. Ere long, however, the grandfather was loth to fulfill his new compact, and therefore on one occasion placed stones in the boots together with the food, so that the dog sank and was drowned on the way home. The mother was furious at this, and called on her sons for revenge; whereupon they all swam over and ate up their grandfather; but on returning thereafter she informed them that thenceforth they must support themselves. There and then she placed half of them on a willow leaf, which she pushed towards the land, crying, ‘Now, you can sail to the land and become ‘irqigdlit’ (which, according to the present interpretation of the word, means ‘Indians,’ but could scarcely have had this signification in the days of the origin of the tradition). The remainder she placed on the sole of an old shoe which she had already charmed, and shoved them out seawards, crying, ‘You may go off from shore and become ‘qavdlunait’ (now understood as ‘Europeans,’ but which could hardly have had this meaning in the days of the origin of the tale), ‘and there,’ she is said to have continued, ‘you can learn to take care of yourselves and make beads and many pretty little articles.’

Grenada (North America)

**Guatemala (Central America)**

**Animals, Origins**

**The Exquisite Quetzal**

<http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080428/LIFE/804280310>

Long ago, in the lush forests of Guatemala, where jaguars and serpents served as guardians of the bush, the humans who lived there were in harmony with the Earth, just as the gods had intended.

One day, a son was born to the chief of one of the forest tribes, and his parents named the boy Quetzal. On that very day, just after the child was born, a hummingbird landed on a tree before the chief's home.

This was no ordinary hummingbird. It was larger than most and brilliantly colored, and the chief was certain this must be a sign. He called the wise men of his tribe to tell him the meaning, for in those days everyone believed that each person had a spirit and creature companion.

The wise men told the chief that the appearance of the hummingbird meant that one day Quetzal would become a beloved chief. And, they said, there was something more.

"What else?" the chief asked.

The wise men shook their heads. "His future is unusual, but we cannot tell the whole story until he is older."

The chief was pleased to hear his son would be beloved, and he never noticed the way his brother, Chiruma, looked at Quetzal with jealousy. Each day Chiruma grew more jealous of his nephew. Chiruma longed to become chief of the tribe; he did not want Quetzal to take his rightful place.

Time passed, and Quetzal grew to be exactly as the wise men had foretold. He was strong and courageous, a fine hunter and fisherman, kind and generous as well. One day, it was clear, he would be a great leader.

Alas, one morning when he was still a young man, Quetzal called to his father to attend a meeting of the tribe. When his father did not respond, the young man went to find him and discovered to his deep sadness that his father had died in his sleep.

Everyone offered kind words to Quetzal, whose heart was broken, and when the days of mourning had ended, the wise men gathered and announced that Quetzal would be their new chief.

The wise men had this to add: "The sign of the hummingbird means this our chief Quetzal will never die. The gods have chosen him to be immortal."

The people were overjoyed at this news. They shouted their thanks to the gods as they celebrated. All that night they sang and danced and feasted, and so busy were they enjoying their great fortune that no one noticed the angry Chiruma, who sat in a corner plotting his revenge.

Not long after this, a neighboring tribe attacked, and Chiruma, seizing the opportunity, called upon his nephew to lead the others to battle.

Quetzal did not hesitate. He marched ahead of his warriors, and the enemies' arrows flew toward him. But before they reached his body, they simply arced and fell to the ground. When the enemy saw this, they fled in terror.

So it was true, the young man was protected by the gods. Chiruma's hatred of Quetzal deepened, and he pondered what strategy he must now employ.

Chiruma determined that Quetzal's protection must come from the charm he wore around his neck. One night he stole quietly into the young man's dwelling. Barely breathing, he lifted the blanket and saw the charm, a cord with a tiny hummingbird feather. Chiruma carefully cut the cord, took the feather and stole silently from the room.

The next morning, never noticing his feather was gone, Quetzal walked into the forest to hunt. When he heard a rustling of leaves behind him, he turned to see what creature might be there, but it was no animal. Instead, there stood his uncle, and Quetzal only heard the arrow as it whistled toward him. He felt the sting as it pierced his chest.

Quetzal collapsed and fell to the ground, and as he did he pulled the arrow from his chest. Desperately he tried to stop the flow of blood, but the flood was too great. Lying on the forest floor, Quetzal felt life ebbing from his body — but then, before his uncle's eyes, a miraculous thing happened. The young man transformed: His skin turned to feathers the color of blood and of the brilliant plants surrounding him. His arms became wings, and on his head there was a crown of green bristles. A yellow bill gleamed, bright eyes flashed, and the magnificent bird rose gracefully into the air.

The people say the gods always have their way, and they kept their promise to Quetzal. The hummingbird feather did not protect Chiruma, but the gods forever protected Quetzal. This brilliant bird, the most beautiful creature in the forest, lives still in the forests of Guatemala. The people call the Quetzal their holy bird, and when the people see it in glorious flight, their leader lives on in their hearts and memories.

**Guinea**

**Origin**

**The Story of the Lightening and Thunder**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/afr/fssn/fsn21.htm>

IN the olden days the thunder and lightning lived on the earth amongst all the other people, but the king made them live at the far end of the town, as far as possible from other people's houses.

The thunder was an old mother sheep, and the lightning was her son, a ram. Whenever the ram got angry he used to go about and burn houses and knock down trees; he even did damage on the farms, and sometimes killed people. Whenever the lightning did these things, his mother used to call out to him in a very loud voice to stop and not to do any more damage; but the lightning did not care in the least for what his mother said, and when he was in a bad temper used to do a very large amount of damage. At last the people could not stand it any longer, and complained to the king.

So the king made a special order that the sheep (Thunder) and her son, the ram (Lightning), should leave the town and live in the far bush. This did not do much good, as when the ram got angry he still burnt the forest, and the flames sometimes spread to the farms and consumed them.

So the people complained again, and the king banished both the lightning and the thunder from the earth and made them live in the sky, where they could not cause so much destruction. Ever since, when the lightning is angry, he commits damage as before, but you can hear his mother, the thunder, rebuking him and telling him to stop. Sometimes, however, when the mother has gone away some distance from her naughty son, you can still see that he is angry and is doing damage, but his mother's voice cannot be heard.

**Guinea-Bissau (Africa)**

**Origin**

**Why the Moon Waxes and Wanes**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/afr/fssn/fsn28.htm>

THERE was once an old woman who was very poor, and lived in a small mud hut thatched with mats made from the leaves of the tombo palm in the bush. She was often very hungry, as there was no one to look after her.

In the olden days the moon used often to come down to the earth, although she lived most of the time in the sky. The moon was a fat woman with a skin of hide, and she was full of fat meat. She was quite round, and in the night used to give plenty of light. The moon was sorry for the poor starving old woman, so she came to her and said, "You may cut some of my meat away for your food." This the old woman did every evening, and the moon got smaller and smaller until you could scarcely see her at all. Of course this made her give very little light, and all the people began to grumble in consequence, and to ask why it was that the moon was getting so thin.

At last the people went to the old woman's house where there happened to be a little girl sleeping. She had been there for some little time, and had seen the moon come down every evening, and the old woman go out with her knife and carve her daily supply of meat out of the moon. As she was very frightened, she told the people all about it, so they determined to set a watch on the movements of the old woman.

That very night the moon came down as usual, and the old woman went out with her knife and basket to get her food; but before she could carve any meat all the people rushed out shouting, and the moon was so frightened that she went back again into the sky, and never came down again to the earth. The old woman was left to starve in the bush.

Ever since that time the moon has hidden herself most of the day, as she was so frightened, and she still gets very thin once a month, but later on she gets fat again, and when she is quite fat she gives plenty of light all the night; but this does not last very long, and she begins to get thinner and thinner, in the same way as she did when the old woman was carving her meat from her.

**Guyana (South America)**

**Ghosts**

**THE OLE HIGUE**

<http://www.kaieteurnewsonline.com/2008/06/08/a-study-into-jumbies/>  
Ole Higues are also known as “Fire Rass” or Angeli. The ole higue is always a woman. It is said that she sucks the blood of unsuspecting victims as they sleep. Her favourite victims are young children and babies.  
The ole higue’s distinguishing feature is the fact that, during the day, she lives among other Guyanese as a somewhat introverted and quiet old lady. At night, this seemingly harmless old woman removes her skin, places it gently in a calabash, and travels across the sky as a ball of fire heading to the home of her intended victim.  
To enter the home she shrinks herself and enters through the keyhole.  
There have been countless sightings of these balls of fire all over the country, and many people still have a staunch belief in the reality of the ole higue.  
There are three ways to dispose of an ole higue. The first is to turn the key while she is trying to get through the keyhole. Even today many people still lock their doors and then turn their key to a horizontal position to allow an ole higue to make it partway into the hole.  
The rustling of the key should wake the tenant, who can then turn the key fully and crush the ole higue. It is said that the next morning a pile of bones should be seen on the doorstep.  
The second way is to find its skin in the calabash where it is stored and put hot peppers in the skin. An ole higue who tries to wear this skin will be burned by the pepper. The ole higue is very miserly, and the last way to catch the ole higue is to spill rice grains on the floor in front of the front door to the house. As the ole higue enters your house, she will be forced to count every rice grain before she can pass. It is better to make sure there is a large helping of rice on the floor and no bags in sight.  
This is because the ole higue will have to pick up the grains with her right hand and place counted grains in her left hand. Her hands can only hold so many rice grains, and it is only a matter of time before the grains begin to fall back to the ground and the process begins again. When the homeowners awake the next morning, they should find a very tired and incredibly distressed ole higue counting rice. This is when the homeowners will beat the woman to death with a broom.

**Haiti (North America)**

**Humour**

##### **BOUKI AND TI MALIC**

<http://www2.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/literature/folktale.htm>

Stories are introduced by the invitation to hear a story. The person willing to tell the story shouts out: **KRIK.** If people want to hear the tale, and they nearly always do, they answer in chorus: **KRAK.**

The most popular folk tales concern the smart, but mischievous Ti Malice and his very slow-witted friend Bouki. In this first issue of tales, I'll just share two very short anecdotal tales.

**KRIK?  
KRAK!**

One day Ti Malice went over to Bouki's house. When he arrived at the lakou (farm yard), was was shocked at what he saw, and watched for some time. Bouki was playing diminoes with his dog! Ti Malice say, "Bouki, what a brilliant dog you have! He can play diminoes." "I don't know,"said Bouki, "he's not so smart. I beat him 3 out of 5 games already!"

**KRIK?  
KRAK!**

**Bouki:**  "Did I tell you that Madame Joseph had triplets two weeks ago, and now she has twins!"

**Ti Malice:**  "But that's impossible! How can it be?"

**Bouki:**  "One of the triplets is staying at her grandmother's house."

**Honduras**

**Dragon**

**The Golden Lizard**

<http://frontiersofzoology.blogspot.com/2012/01/honduras-chupacabras-folklore-page-i.html>

 It is said that in the enclave of Piedra Blanca, near Trujillo (Atlantic Coast), there was a cave inhabited by a gold lizard who chased cattle. In the cave, which has paintings, strange noises were heard which intimidated the locals. Perhaps the oldest known about this lizard, which is more like a golden crocodile species, is the story that goes back to the early years of the conquest, when Spanish soldiers came up to the present municipality of El Corpus and found huge amounts of gold underground. To facilitate the exploitation of precious ore, they dug a tunnel three miles long.   
The legend goes that one Holy Thursday, the holes reached the exact spot where now stands the high altar of the church, and they discovered a green lagoon. At the bottom moved a huge gold lizard showing its powerful jaws menacing intruders.

**Hungary (Europe)**

**Trickster, Family**

**Are You Angry?**

WHERE it was, there it was, a certain village there was, in which lived a father with three sons. One of them was silly, and always sat in the chimney corner, [\*](http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/sfs/sfs18.htm" \l "fn_3) but the other two were considered clever. One of these went out to service in a village not far off. His mother put on his back a wallet full of cakes baked under the ashes. He went into a house and made an engagement with the master upon the terms that whichever got angry first was to have his nose cut off. The servant went to thresh. He was not called by his master either to breakfast or to dinner. His master asked him: 'Well, Mishek, are you angry?' 'What have I to be angry for?' Evening came, and supper was cooked; again they did not ask Mishek. His master asked him: 'Well, Mishek, are you angry?' 'What have I to be angry for?' He wasn't angry, for the cakes from home still held out. But during the second and third day the wallet was emptied, and again he wasn't summoned to dinner. His master asked him: 'Mishek, are you not angry?' 'Wouldn't even the devil be angry, when you are thus killing me with hunger?' Then his master pulled out a knife and cut off Mishek's nose. He hastened home noseless, and complained to his father and brothers of his wicked master. 'You simpleton!' said the next brother, Pavko. 'Stay, I'll go! Hey, mother, bake some cakes under the ashes!' Pavko started off and went straight to the same village and to the same house, and made an engagement with the same master, on the terms that whichever was the first to become angry was to have his nose cut off. They set him, too, to thresh for three days, but neither on the first, nor on the second, nor on the third day, did they call him to take a meal. 'Pavko, are you not angry?' 'Wouldn't even devils be angry with you? My belly has already grown to my backbone.' Thereupon his master pulled out a knife and cut off Pavko's nose. Pavko went home noseless, and said to his elder brother: 'That's a cruel house of entertainment; the devil's got nay nose.' Then Adam, the youngest, shouted from the chimney-corner: 'You are idiots! I'll go, and you'll see that I shall make a good job of it.' He went with cakes baked under the ashes in his wallet, and hit right upon the same village in which his brothers had been, and engaged himself with the same master upon the terms that whichever got angry first should have his nose cut off. But Adam knew how to proceed intelligently. When his master didn't call him to dinner, he went to the public-house with what he had threshed and pawned it all. His master came and didn't see a grain of corn. Adam then asked him: 'Master, are you angry?' 'Why should I be angry?' This occurred several times, and his master always said that he wasn't angry, for fear of losing his nose. Once there came a day on which the master and mistress were obliged to be from home, and they ordered Adam by their return to kill the first sheep that looked at him when he entered the stable, to dress it and boil it in a caldron, putting parsley with it. Adam went into the stable with great banging and noise, so that all the sheep looked at him at once, whereupon he slaughtered them all. One he dressed and put in the caldron, but instead of parsley he threw in a dog called by that name. His master and mistress came and asked Adam whether he had done everything properly? He said: 'I've slaughtered the sheep and thrown Parsley into the caldron till I' saw his feet. Now, master, are you angry?' 'What have I to be angry about?' he replied, for he preferred keeping his nose. On Christmas Eve, when they had to go to church, it was very dark. Adam's master said to him: 'It would be a good thing if somebody would light us as far as the church.' 'Go! go! I'll light you.' He took fire and set the roof on fire, till the whole house was in flames. The master hurried up, and Adam said to him: 'Master, are you angry?' 'Why should I be angry?' said he; for his nose was dearer to him than his house. But what was he to do without a house, without everything? They went into the world, master, mistress, and servant. They wanted to put him to death; and planned together, that when he was asleep his master should throw him into the water. But Adam was up to this; he didn't lie down on the side nearest the water, but got up in the night and threw his mistress, who was on that side, into the water. His master woke, and saw that his wife was gone; and began to cry out. But Adam asked him: 'Well, master, are you angry?' 'Wouldn't even the devil be angry, now that you've done me out of everything?' Adam took a knife and cut off his master's nose. He then took to his heels, went home, and said to his brothers: 'Now you see, you wiseacres, that I've earned the nose.

**Iceland (Europe)**

**Magic**

**The Guardian Spirits of Iceland**

<http://www.simnet.is/gardarj/folk/guard.htm>

The four Guardians of Iceland, one for each quarter,  
of the country are described in an old tale telling of a magician  
who was sent by King Harold Gormsson of Denmark to  
investigate the country prior to invasion.

The magician swam to Iceland in the form of a whale,  
and when he reached the country he saw that  
all hills and mountains were full of spirits, large and small.

He came to Vopnafjörður (Fjord of Weapons) on the East coast  
and a huge dragon approached him,  
accompanied by reptiles, worms and lizards.

He then swam north to Eyjafjörður (Fjord of Isles)  
and was approached there by a bird so huge,  
that the wings touched the mountains on each side of the valley.  
The bird was accompanied by numerous  
other birds of all sizes, large and small.

He went west and south and came to Breiðafjörður (Wide Fjord),  
where he was approached by a huge bull  
which waded into the sea and made loud noises,  
the bull was accompanied by by a large number of spirits.

He went from there and south of Reykjanes (Smoke Peninsula)  
and wanted to take land at Víkarsskeið (The Sands of Vikar),  
but was approached by a huge rock giant  
whose head was higher than the mountains and carried a large iron staff,  
and he was accompanied by a host of other giants.  
Then the magician went east along the south coast,  
where he could find no landing places.  
Thus the intentions of the King of the Danes  
came to naught due to the efforts of the Guardian Spirits of Iceland.

This story is embodied in The Seal of Iceland,  
where the Dragon represents the Eastern part,  
the Bird the Northern part,  
the Bull represents the Western part  
and the Rock Giant the Southern part.

**India (Asia)**

**Magic Items, Fairy Tales, Family, Treachery, Evil Sisters**

**The Magic Fiddle**

Once upon a time there lived seven brothers and a sister. The brothers were married, but their wives did not do the cooking for the family. It was done by their sister, who stopped at home to cook. The wives for this reason bore their sister-in-law much ill-will, and at length they combined together to oust her from the office of cook and general provider, so that one of themselves might obtain it. They said, "She does not go out to the fields to work, but remains quietly at home, and yet she has not the meals ready at the proper time." They then called upon their Bonga, and vowing vows unto him they secured his good-will and assistance; then they said to the Bonga, "At midday, when our sister-in-law goes to bring water, cause it thus to happen, that on seeing her pitcher, the water shall vanish, and again slowly re-appear. In this way she will be delayed. Let the water not flow into her pitcher, and you may keep the maiden as your own."

At noon when she went to bring water, it suddenly dried up before her, and she began to weep. Then after a while the water began slowly to rise. When it reached her ankles she tried to fill her pitcher, but it would not go under the water. Being frightened she began to wail and cry to her brother:

  "Oh! my brother, the water reaches to my ankles,  
  Still, Oh! my brother, the pitcher will not dip."

The water continued to rise until it reached her knee, when she began to wail again:

  "Oh! my brother, the water reaches to my knee,  
  Still, Oh! my brother, the pitcher will not dip."

The water continued to rise, and when it reached her waist, she cried again:

  "Oh! my brother, the water reaches to my waist,  
  Still, Oh! my brother, the pitcher will not dip."

The water still rose, and when it reached her neck she kept on crying:

  "Oh! my brother, the water reaches to my neck,  
  Still, Oh! my brother, the pitcher will not dip."

At length the water became so deep that she felt herself drowning, then she cried aloud:

  "Oh! my brother, the water measures a man's height,  
  Oh! my brother, the pitcher begins to fill."

The pitcher filled with water, and along with it she sank and was drowned. The Bonga then transformed her into a Bonga like himself, and carried her off.

After a time she re-appeared as a bamboo growing on the embankment of the tank in which she had been drowned. When the bamboo had grown to an immense size, a Jogi, who was in the habit of passing that way, seeing it, said to himself, "This will make a splendid fiddle." So one day he brought an axe to cut it down; but when he was about to begin, the bamboo called out, "Do not cut at the root, cut higher up." When he lifted his axe to cut high up the stem, the bamboo cried out, "Do not cut near the top, cut at the root." When the Jogi again prepared himself to cut at the root as requested, the bamboo said, "Do not cut at the root, cut higher up;" and when he was about to cut higher up, it again called out to him, "Do not cut high up, cut at the root." The Jogi by this time felt sure that a Bonga was trying to frighten him, so becoming angry he cut down the bamboo at the root, and taking it away made a fiddle out of it. The instrument had a superior tone and delighted all who heard it. The Jogi carried it with him when he went a-begging, and through the influence of its sweet music he returned home every evening with a full wallet.

He now and then visited, when on his rounds, the house of the Bonga girl's brothers, and the strains of the fiddle affected them greatly. Some of them were moved even to tears, for the fiddle seemed to wail as one in bitter anguish. The elder brother wished to purchase it, and offered to support the Jogi for a whole year if he would consent to part with his wonderful instrument. The Jogi, however, knew its value, and refused to sell it.

It so happened that the Jogi some time after went to the house of a village chief, and after playing a tune or two on his fiddle asked for something to eat. They offered to buy his fiddle and promised a high price for it, but he refused to sell it, as his fiddle brought to him his means of livelihood. When they saw that he was not to be prevailed upon, they gave him food and a plentiful supply of liquor. Of the latter he drank so freely that he presently became intoxicated. While he was in this condition, they took away his fiddle, and substituted their own old one for it. When the Jogi recovered, he missed his instrument, and suspecting that it had been stolen asked them to return it to him. They denied having taken it, so he had to depart, leaving his fiddle behind him. The chief's son, being a musician, used to play on the Jogi's fiddle, and in his hands the music it gave forth delighted the ears of all who heard it.

When all the household were absent at their labours in the fields, the Bonga girl used to come out of the bamboo fiddle, and prepared the family meal. Having eaten her own share, she placed that of the chief's son under his bed, and covering it up to keep off the dust, re-entered the fiddle. This happening every day, the other members of the household thought that some girl friend of theirs was in this manner showing her interest in the young man, so they did not trouble themselves to find out how it came about. The young chief, however, was determined to watch, and see which of his girl friends was so attentive to his comfort. He said in his own mind, "I will catch her to-day, and give her a sound beating; she is causing me to be ashamed before the others." So saying, he hid himself in a corner in a pile of firewood. In a short time the girl came out of the bamboo fiddle, and began to dress her hair. Having completed her toilet, she cooked the meal of rice as usual, and having eaten some herself, she placed the young man's portion under his bed, as before, and was about to enter the fiddle again, when he, running out from his hiding-place, caught her in his arms. The Bonga girl exclaimed, "Fie! Fie! you may be a Dom, or you may be a Hadi of some other caste with whom I cannot marry." He said, "No. But from to-day, you and I are one." So they began lovingly to hold converse with each other. When the others returned home in the evening, they saw that she was both a human being and a Bonga, and they rejoiced exceedingly.

Now in course of time the Bonga girl's family became very poor, and her brothers on one occasion came to the chief's house on a visit.

The Bonga girl recognised them at once, but they did not know who she was. She brought them water on their arrival, and afterwards set cooked rice before them. Then sitting down near them, she began in wailing tones to upbraid them on account of the treatment she had been subjected to by their wives. She related all that had befallen her, and wound up by saying, "You must have known it all, and yet you did not interfere to save me." And that was all the revenge she took.

**Indonesia (Asia)**

**Cleverness**

**Too-too-moo and the Giant**

<http://www.aaronshep.com/stories/022.html>

Once on the island of Java there was a little girl named Too-too-moo. She lived with her Mama in a one-room house in a forest. They were poor but they were happy.

Or they *would* have been happy, if not for a terrible giant who came every day.

Each morning, when Too-too-moo woke up, she fastened her hair in a knot with her long hairpin. Then she hurried into the woods to help Mama gather firewood and herbs to sell at the village market.

When that was done, Mama cooked a small pot of plain rice and shared it with Too-too-moo for breakfast. She also cooked a huge pot of sweet porridge. She made it from tasty rice flour, fragrant coconut milk, and lots of sugar.

But not even the tiniest bit of the porridge was for Too-too-moo and her Mama. It was all for the giant. Mama knew, if the giant came and did not find a full pot of porridge, he would eat Too-too-moo instead!

Then Mama left for the market, while Too-too-moo did the housework. She shook out their sleeping mat, swept the floor, and washed their few dishes. Then she went outside to play.

Soon she heard the giant’s terrible footsteps.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Too-too-moo ran into the house, picked up the covered pot of porridge, placed it outside on the doorstep, and shut and locked the door. Then she crouched and trembled in a corner.

The giant stamped up to the house. With one huge finger, he knocked on the door—*Tock, tock, tock.* Then he called,

“Too-too-moo!   
Where are *you?*”

And Too-too-moo answered, “In the house.”

“And where is your *Mama?*”

“At the market.”

“And where is my PORRIDGE?”

“In the pot!”

The giant took off the cover, picked up the pot, and swallowed the porridge in one big gulp. Then he threw down the pot and stamped back through the forest.

This happened every day.

When Mama returned in the evening, she brought food that she had bought with the money earned at the market. But since they had to feed the giant, there was never enough for themselves.

One day, Mama did not sell as much as usual. When she came home, she had only enough food for the giant. She and Too-too-moo had to go hungry.

The next day was the same. And so was the day after that.

Too-too-moo and her Mama were starving.

On the fourth morning, Too-too-moo got up, fastened her hair with her long hairpin, and helped Mama gather firewood and herbs. Then Mama cooked the porridge for the giant and left for the market.

The sweet smell of the porridge filled the little house. Too-too-moo was so hungry, she couldn’t stand it.

“I’ll eat just one spoonful,” she said to herself. “The giant will never know.”

Too-too-moo uncovered the pot and ate one spoonful. But she was too hungry to stop! Before she knew what she was doing, a quarter of the porridge was gone.

Then she heard the giant’s terrible footsteps.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Too-too-moo quickly covered the pot, placed it outside on the doorstep, and shut and locked the door. Then she crouched and trembled in a corner.

The giant stamped up to the house. With one huge finger, he knocked on the door—*Tock, tock, tock.* Then he called,

“Too-too-moo!   
Where are *you?*”

And Too-too-moo answered, “In the house.”

“And where is your *Mama?*”

“At the market.”

“And where is my PORRIDGE?”

“In the pot!”

The giant took off the cover, picked up the pot, stopped, and looked.

“This pot is not *full!*” bellowed the giant. He threw it down and called again,

“Too-too-moo!   
Where are YOU?”

Too-too-moo did not answer.

With one blow of his fist, the giant knocked down the door. He reached in his long arm and felt all around till he found Too-too-moo. Then he pulled her from the house, tossed her in his mouth, and swallowed her in one big gulp.

Too-too-moo tumbled into the giant’s stomach. “Please let me out!” she shouted.

But the giant didn’t listen as he turned and stamped back through the forest.

Too-too-moo cried and shook with fear. Then all of a sudden, she remembered her long hairpin.

Quickly she pulled it from her hair. With both hands and all her strength, Too-too-moo stuck it into the giant.

“YOW!” howled the giant.

Too-too-moo stuck him again.

“OUCH! YOW!” The giant danced about, but there was nothing he could do. “TOO-TOO-MOO, STOP!”

But Too-too-moo did not stop. She stuck the giant again and again.

The bellowing giant raced through the woods. Mad with pain, he did not look where he was going. He tripped on a root and cracked his head on a rock.

The giant was dead!

But Too-too-moo was still trapped inside.

At that moment, Mama was on her way home. She had been lucky that day, and had quickly sold all she had carried to market. So she had bought rice and fish and vegetables, and even roasted peanuts as a special treat for Too-too-moo.

But when she reached the house, she saw the porridge thrown down and the door knocked in. She called,

“Too-too-moo!   
Where are *you?*”

There was no answer.

Mama grabbed a big cooking knife and ran along the trail of the giant’s footsteps, calling,

“Too-too-moo!   
Where are YOU?”

Still no answer.

Then she came to where the giant lay dead. But her daughter was nowhere to be seen, so she called one last time,

“TOO-TOO-MOO!   
WHERE ARE YOU?”

And Too-too-moo answered, “IN THE GIANT!”

With both hands and all her strength, Mama slit open the giant’s side.

And out climbed—

Too-too-moo!

From that time on, Too-too-moo and her Mama were happy. There was no more giant to bother them. They always had enough to eat. And they had sweet porridge for breakfast, every single day.

**Iran (Asia)**

**Cleverness, Treasure**

**Forty Fortunes**

<http://www.aaronshep.com/stories/039.html>

Once, in the royal city of Isfahan, there lived a young man named Ahmed, who had a wife named Jamell. He knew no special craft or trade, but he had a shovel and a pick—and as he often told his wife, “If you can dig a hole, you can always earn enough to stay alive.”

That was enough for Ahmed. But it was not enough for Jamell.

One day, as she often did, Jamell went to the public bath to wash herself in the hot pool and chat with the other women. But at the entrance, the woman in charge told her, “You can’t come in now. The wife of the King’s Royal Diviner is taking the whole place for herself.”

“Who does she think she is?” protested Jamell. “Just because her husband tells fortunes!” But all she could do was return home, fuming all the way.

That evening, when Ahmed handed her his wages for the day, she said, “Look at these few measly coins! I won’t put up with this any longer. Tomorrow you’ll sit in the marketplace and be a diviner!”

“Jamell, are you insane?” said Ahmed. “What do I know about fortunetelling?”

“You don’t need to know a thing,” said Jamell. “When anyone brings you a question, you just throw the dice and mumble something that sounds wise. It’s either that, or I go home to the house of my father!”

So the next day, Ahmed sold his shovel and his pick and bought the dice and the board and the robe of a fortuneteller. Then he sat in the marketplace near the public bath.

Hardly had he gotten settled when there ran up to him the wife of one of the King’s ministers.

“Diviner, you must help me! I wore my most precious ring to the bath today, and now it’s missing. Please, tell me where it is!”

Ahmed gulped and cast the dice. As he desperately searched for something wise to say, he happened to glance up at the lady’s cloak. There he spied a small hole, and showing through the hole, a bit of her naked arm.

Of course, this was quite improper for a respectable lady, so Ahmed leaned forward and whispered urgently, “Madam, I see a hole.”

“A what?” asked the lady, leaning closer.

“A hole! A hole!”

The lady brightened. “Of course! A hole!”

She rushed back to the bath and found the hole in the wall where she had hidden her ring for safekeeping and forgotten it. Then she came back out to Ahmed.

“God be praised!” she said. “You knew right where it was!” And to Ahmed’s amazement, she gave him a gold coin.

That evening, when Jamell saw the coin and heard the story, she said, “You see? There’s nothing to it!”

“God was merciful on this day,” said Ahmed, “but I dare not test Him on another!”

“Nonsense,” said Jamell. “If you want to keep your wife, you’ll be back in the marketplace tomorrow.”

Now, it happened that on that very night, at the palace of the King, the royal treasury was robbed. Forty pairs of hands carried away forty chests of gold and jewels.

The theft was reported next morning to the King. “Bring me my Royal Diviner and all his assistants,” he commanded.

But though the fortunetellers cast their dice and mumbled quite wisely, not one could locate the thieves or the treasure.

“Frauds!” cried the King. “Throw them all in prison!”

Now, the King had heard about the fortuneteller who had found the ring of his minister’s wife. So he sent two guards to the marketplace to bring Ahmed, who appeared trembling before him.

“Diviner,” said the King, “my treasury has been robbed of forty chests. What can you tell me about the thieves?”

Ahmed thought quickly about forty chests being carried away. “Your Majesty, I can tell you there were . . . forty thieves.”

“Amazing!” said the King. “None of my own diviners knew as much! But now you must find the thieves and the treasure.”

Ahmed felt faint. “I’ll . . . do my best, Your Majesty, but . . . but it will take some time.”

“How long?” the King demanded.

“Uh . . . forty days, Your Majesty,” said Ahmed, guessing the longest he could get. “One day for each thief.”

“A long time indeed!” said the King. “Very well, you shall have it. If you succeed, I’ll make you rich. If you don’t, you’ll rot with the others in prison!”

Back home, Ahmed told Jamell, “You see the trouble you have caused us? In forty days, the King will lock me away.”

“Nonsense,” said Jamell. “Just find the chests like you found the ring.”

“I tell you, Jamell, I found nothing! That was only by the grace of God. But this time there’s no hope.”

Ahmed took some dried dates, counted out forty, and placed them in a jar. “I will eat one of these dates each evening. That will tell me when my forty days are done.”

Now, it happened that one of the King’s own servants was one of the forty thieves, and he had heard the King speak with Ahmed. That same evening, he hurried to the thieves’ meeting place and reported to their chief. “There is a diviner who says he will find the treasure and the thieves in forty days!”

“He’s bluffing,” said the chief. “But we can’t afford to take chances. Go to his house and find out what you can.”

So the servant climbed up to the terrace on the flat roof of Ahmed’s house, and he listened down the stairs that led inside. Just then, Ahmed took the first date from the jar and ate it. He told Jamell, “That’s one.”

The thief was so shocked, he nearly fell down the stairs. He hurried back to the meeting place and told the chief, “This diviner has amazing powers. Without seeing me, he knew I was on the roof! I clearly heard him say, ‘That’s one.’”

“You must have imagined it,” said the chief. “Tomorrow night, two of you will go.”

So the next night, the servant returned to Ahmed’s roof with another of the thieves. As they were listening, Ahmed ate a second date and said, “That’s two.”

The thieves nearly tumbled over each other as they fled the roof and raced back to the chief. “He knew there were two of us!” said the servant. “We heard him say, ‘That’s two.’”

“It can’t be!” said the chief. So the night after that, he sent three of the thieves, and the next night four, then five, then six.

And so it went till the fortieth night, when the chief said, “This time, I’ll go with you myself.” So all forty thieves climbed up to Ahmed’s roof to listen.

Inside, Ahmed gazed at the last date in the jar, then sadly took it out and ate it. “That’s forty. The number is complete.”

Jamell sat beside him and gently took his hand. “Ahmed, during these forty days, I’ve been thinking. I was wrong to make you be a diviner. You are what you are, and I should not have tried to make you something else. Can you forgive me?”

“I forgive you, Jamell, but the fault is mine as well. I should not have done what I knew was not wise. But none of this helps us now.”

Just then came a loud banging at the door.

Ahmed sighed. “The King’s men already!” He went to the door and unbolted it, calling, “All right, all right, I know why you’re here.”

He swung the door open. To his astonishment, he saw forty men kneeling before him and touching their heads to the ground again and again.

“Of course you know, O great diviner!” said the chief. “Nothing can be hidden from you. But we beg you not to give us away!”

Bewildered though he was, Ahmed realized that these must be the thieves. He thought fast and said, “Very well, I won’t turn you in. But you must replace every bit of the treasure.”

“At once! At once!” cried the chief.

And before the night was through, forty pairs of hands carried forty chests of gold and jewels back into the King’s treasury.

Early the next morning, Ahmed appeared before the King. “Your Majesty, my magic arts can find either the treasure or the thieves, but not both. Which do you choose?”

“The treasure, I suppose,” said the King, “though it’s a pity not to get the thieves. The boiling oil is all ready for them. Well, never mind. Tell me where the treasure is, and I’ll send my men right away.”

“No need, Your Majesty.” Ahmed waved his arms in the air and called, *“Pish posh, wish wosh, mish mosh.”* Then he announced, “By my magic, the chests have returned to their place.”

The King himself went with Ahmed to the treasury and found it so. “You are truly the greatest fortuneteller of the age!” he declared. “From this day forth, you shall be my Royal Diviner!”

“Thank you, Your Majesty,” said Ahmed with a bow, “but I’m afraid that’s impossible. Finding and restoring your treasure was so difficult, it used up all my powers. I shall never be a diviner again.”

“What a loss!” cried the King. “Then I must doubly reward you. Here, take two of these chests for your own.”

So Ahmed returned home to Jamell, safe, rich, and a good deal wiser. And as any diviner could have foretold, they lived happily ever after.

**Iraq (Asia)**

**Magic**

**The Enchanted Storks**

<http://www.aaronshep.com/stories/019.html>

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| --- |
| If favor now should greet my story,  Allah must receive the glory. |

Once, in the great and glorious city of Bagdad, there was a Calif—Commander of the Faithful and ruler of all Islam. The people of Bagdad loved their ruler, yet one thing mystified them. All who came before him were amazed by his intimate knowledge of their daily lives.

“The Calif has a thousand eyes,” muttered some, glancing behind them for spies. But the Calif’s real secret was this: Each afternoon, he and his trusted Vizier, Ali ben Manzar, would disguise themselves as merchants and slip through a hidden door in the palace wall. Then they would roam the bazaars of the city, listening to the talk and gossip of the day.

One afternoon, as the Calif and his Vizier made their way through the market, an old and wizened man thrust one of his wares under the Calif’s nose.

“What a lovely snuffbox!” said the Calif, admiring the carving and jeweled inlay. “What will you ask for it?”

“Just one gold coin,” the peddler wheezed.

The Calif gave him two, took the box, and walked on.

Reaching the edge of the city, the Calif and his Vizier strolled through the parks and orchards beyond. At last they stopped to rest by a quiet lake.

“I wonder if my new box holds any snuff,” said the Calif.

He opened the tiny box and found it filled with the pungent powder. “But what is this?” he said, pulling a piece of parchment from the underside of the lid.

The Vizier craned his neck to see. “What does it say, Glorious Lord?”

The Calif read,

A sniff of snuff, for wings to soar.   
*Casalavair* for hands once more.

“Why, I believe the snuff is magic!” said the Calif. He looked longingly at the sky. “I have always wanted to see my city from the air.”

“Perhaps we should be cautious,” said the Vizier. “What if the charm fails to change us back?”

“If the snuff works, then surely the magic word will too,” said the Calif. “Come, let us try our luck!”

He held out the box, and each took a pinch of snuff. Then together they inhaled the powder.

A flurry of wings, beaks, and feathers—and there in place of the Calif and his Vizier stood two storks.

“Wonderful!” the Calif said, snapping and clattering his beak—for that is how storks talk. A human would have heard only *Calap! Calap!* But since both the Calif and his Vizier were now birds, Ali ben Manzar understood perfectly.

*Calap! Calap!* “Quite amazing!” replied the Vizier.

*Calap! Calap!* “Let us test our wings!” said the Calif.

The two storks rose into the air, circling higher and higher. Spread below were meadows, ornamental gardens, orchards, and fields of crops. The great river Tigris flowed slowly across the plain, sprouting canals along its length. And basking on the banks of the river was Bagdad, capital of all Islam, City of Peace.

“Breathtaking, is it not?” called the Calif. “Come, let us fly over the city.”

Soon they soared above the streets, canals, bridges, and clay-brick buildings of Bagdad. In courtyard and bazaar, people bought and sold, worked and rested, fought and prayed, stole and chased, kissed and parted, laughed and wept.

“Truly,” said the Calif, “a stork knows more of this city than the Calif himself.”

As evening drew near, the Vizier called, “Glorious Lord, we had best return to the palace.”

Back they flew to the lake, and landed by the snuffbox. The Calif once more read the parchment, then cried, “Casalavair!”

And there stood—two storks.

“Casalavair!” called the Calif again. “Casalavair! Casalavair!”

But storks they remained.

“Ali ben Manzar, you try it!” said the terrified Calif.

“Casalavair! Casalavair!” cried the no-less-terrified Vizier.

But no matter how they called and hopped and flapped their wings, nothing changed.

At last they stood exhausted. “It seems,” the Vizier said, “some enemy has lured us into this enchantment.”

“But what can we do?” asked the Calif.

“I know of nothing,” said the Vizier. “Without the proper word to break the spell, we may never regain our true forms.”

The sun dipped into the lake as the two storks stood lost in thought. Finally the Calif said, “Stork or not, my stomach aches for food. What are we to eat?”

“Why, Glorious Lord,” said the Vizier, “we must eat what every stork eats! Fish and mice, frogs and toads, snakes and eels, snails and slugs, worms and grubs.”

So the storks poked their beaks among rushes at the lake edge, and into holes along the bank. When they had eaten as much as they could bear, each stood on one leg, crossed the other leg against it, hid his beak among his breast feathers, and slept.

\* \* \*

The next morning, they hid the snuffbox and flew to the palace. From high on a turret they watched the frantic scene within the palace walls. Soldiers, courtiers, and servants rushed about in search of the Calif and the Vizier—a search the storks knew too well was in vain.

Glancing then behind him, the Vizier cried out, “Look, Glorious Lord! A caravan approaches!”

Through the streets of Bagdad came a magnificent procession of horsemen, camel riders, and servants on foot. At its head rode a horseman in regal dress.

“By the beard of the Prophet,” cried the Calif, “it is my brother Omar! He has long coveted my throne.”

The caravan reached the gate, and the horseman called to the guards. “I am Omar, brother to the Calif. I have learned by secret means that the Calif is missing and will not return. As true successor of the Prophet Mohammed, I have come to take my brother’s place as Commander of the Faithful, ruler of all Islam.”

“Do not open the gate!” called the Calif.

But all that was heard by the startled people below was *Calap! Calap!* And when they looked up, all they saw was two storks—one of them hopping madly, flapping its wings, and clattering its beak.

“You see?” exulted Omar. “Even the storks welcome me. Open the gate!”

The gate opened, and Omar rode through in triumph.

High on the turret, the Calif stood silent and still.

“Glorious Lord,” the Vizier said gently, “we can do nothing here. Let us fly far from the city. In solitude we may find the strength to bear our fate.”

The two soared away, beyond the city and the plains, to a lonely forest in the foothills of the great mountains. There they began their new life. They dined on tree toads and fish, and tried not to speak of Bagdad or the affairs of a Calif.

One afternoon, the storks wandered into a different part of the forest. “How gloomy and silent it is here,” said the Vizier. “Not even a rustle of leaves.”

Just then, a quick *tap-tap-tap* made them jump. They turned to see a woodpecker hunting for worms in the bark of a tree. To their amazement, tears flowed from the woodpecker’s eyes.

“Good woodpecker,” said the Calif, “why do you weep?”

“Why should I not?” said the woodpecker. “You were born a bird and have known no other life, but I am a princess. The evil sorcerer Khadur threw this spell upon me, for I would not marry him. And a bird I must remain until another man asks me to wed.”

Her tears flowed faster. “Imagine, a man proposing to a bird! Do you see now why I weep?”

“I do,” the Calif said thoughtfully. “But how did you come to this forest? Is the sorcerer himself hereabouts?”

“There is a clearing nearby,” she said, pointing with her beak. “He meets there every night with his magicians.”

The Calif said to his Vizier, “Come, Ali ben Manzar. We may find a way to help our little friend—and perhaps ourselves as well.”

Making their way through the thick forest, the Calif and his Vizier reached a wide, rocky circle where no plant grew. They hid themselves in the bushes at its edge and waited for the gathering dark.

As the moon rose and cast its light into the clearing, three cloaked men entered the circle by different paths. They built a fire on a tall, flat rock in the very center and sat cross-legged around it. Then the flames leaped, and a fourth cloaked figure stood among them.

“Hail, Khadur, greatest of sorcerers!” the magicians shouted, touching their heads to the ground.

The Calif gasped. “By the beard of the Prophet! It is the peddler who sold us the box!”

Before the storks could recover from this surprise, there was another. With a clatter of hooves, into the clearing rode the Calif’s brother, Omar.

“Greetings, sorcerer,” said Omar as he pulled up before the fire.

“Greetings, Glorious Lord,” the sorcerer wheezed. “And how do you fare in the city of Bagdad?”

“Excellently,” said Omar. “The people long for their old ruler, but they learn to fear me and obey. As for you, sorcerer, you have well earned your reward.” He threw Khadur a bulging pouch. “But you have not yet told me—how did you get rid of my brother?”

Khadur wheezed with laughter. “Nothing easier, Glorious Lord. I disguised myself as a peddler and sold him a box of magic snuff. Your brother and his dolt of a Vizier changed themselves most obligingly into storks! I even provided the word of disenchantment—or nearly so.”

“What do you mean?” said Omar.

“I switched two letters,” said Khadur. “I wrote *Casalavair* instead of *Calasavair.*” The sorcerer laughed until he choked.

“A true master! I will have need of your services again,” said Omar. He spurred his horse and raced from the clearing.

“Now, to work!” Khadur told his magicians. “We have spells to prepare.”

“There will be no spells tonight!” cried the Calif.

All that the men heard was *Calap! Calap!*—but two storks were suddenly upon them, pummeling them with strong wings, pecking them with sharp beaks.

“It’s the Calif and the Vizier!” wheezed Khadur. He fled from the clearing, his magicians close behind.

“Should we not follow, Glorious Lord?” asked the Vizier.

“No, Ali ben Manzar,” said the Calif. “We have spells to undo.”

Even as he spoke, the woodpecker alighted beside them. “What was that noise?” she asked anxiously.

“You shall know presently, dear Princess,” said the Calif. Then drawing an anxious breath, he cried, “Calasavair!”

A flurry of wings, beaks, and feathers—and there in place of two storks stood the Calif and his Vizier.

“Princess,” said the Calif, turning to the astonished woodpecker, “will you honor me by becoming my wife?”

Another flurry of feathers, and there stood a young woman of slender figure and dancing eyes.

“The honor will be mine,” she said shyly, and offered him her hand.

\* \* \*

The next day, they borrowed horses at a nearby village and rode into Bagdad. By the time they reached the palace, a joyous crowd had gathered behind them.

“Open the gate!” called the Calif.

The gate flew open just as Omar appeared in the palace yard. When Omar saw the Calif, he turned the color of parchment.

“Seize him!” the Calif ordered, and the guards dragged Omar before him.

“Brother, spare my life!” pleaded Omar.

“For your treason, I should behead you,” said the Calif. “But instead I will banish you by ship to the farthest end of the earth. And by the beard of the Prophet, on the voyage you will eat nothing but toads and snails!”

\* \* \*

And so the Calif regained his throne, and gained a lovely wife besides. And if he seemed to know even more about his people than before, no one guessed how—for few even noticed the pair of storks that soared on many an afternoon above the streets of Bagdad.

|  |
| --- |
| The Calif saw much more than we,  But how much more does Allah see! |

**Ireland (Europe)**

**Magical Objects, Deception**

**Cuculin**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/mfli/mfli19.htm>

There was a king in a land not far from Greece who had two daughters, and the younger was fairer than the elder daughter.

This old king made a match between the king of Greece and his own elder daughter; but he kept the younger one hidden away till after the marriage. Then the younger daughter came forth to view; and when the king of Greece saw her, he wouldn't look at his own wife. Nothing would do him but to get the younger sister and leave the elder at home with her father.

The king wouldn't listen to this, wouldn't agree to the change, so the king of Greece left his wife where she was, went home alone in a terrible rage and collected all his forces to march against the kingdom of his father-in-law.

He soon conquered the king and his army and, so far as he was able, he vexed and tormented him. To do this the more completely, he took from him a rod of Druidic spells, enchantment, and ring of youth which he had, and, striking the elder sister with the rod, he said: "You will be a serpent of the sea and live outside there in the bay by the castle."

Then turning to the younger sister, whose name was Gil an Og, he struck her, and said: "You'll be a cat while inside this castle, and have your own form only when you are outside the walls."

After he had done this, the king of Greece went home to his own country, taking with him the rod of enchantment and the ring of youth. The king died in misery and grief, leaving his two daughters spellbound.

Now there was a Druid in that kingdom, and the younger sister went to consult him, and asked: "Shall I ever be released from the enchantment that's on me now?"

"You will not, unless you find the man to release you; and there is no man in the world to do that but a champion who is now with Fin MacCumhail in Erin."

"Well, how can I find that man?" asked she.

"I will tell you," said the Druid. "Do you make a shirt out of your own hair, take it with you, and never stop till you land in Erin and find Fin and his men; the man that the shirt will fit is the man who will release you."

She began to make the shirt and worked without stopping till it was finished. Then she went on her journey and never rested till she came to Erin in a ship. She went on shore and inquired where Fin and his men were to be found at that time of the year.

"You will find them at Knock an Ar," was the answer she got.

She went to Knock an Ar carrying the shirt with her. The first man she met was Conan Maol, and she said to him: "I have come to find the man this shirt will fit. From the time one man tries it all must try till I see the man it fits."

The shirt went from hand to hand till Cucúlin put it on. "Well," said she, "it fits as your own skin."

Now Gil an Og told Cucúlin all that had happened,—how her father had forced her sister to marry the king of Greece, how this king had made war on her father, enchanted her sister and herself, and carried off the rod of enchantment with the ring of youth, and how the old Druid said the man this shirt would fit was the only man in the world who could release them.

Now Gil an Og and Cucúlin went to the ship and sailed across the seas to her country and went to her castle.

"You'll have no one but a cat for company to-night," said Gil an Og. "I have the form of a cat inside this castle, but outside I have my own appearance. Your dinner is ready, go in."

After the dinner Cucúlin went to another room apart, and lay down to rest after the journey. The cat came to his pillow, sat there and purred till he fell asleep and slept soundly till morning.

When he rose up, a basin of water, and everything he needed was before him, and his breakfast ready. He walked out after breakfast; Gil an Og was on the green outside before him and said:

"If you are not willing to free my sister and myself, I shall not urge you; but if you do free us, I shall be glad and thankful. Many king's sons and champions before you have gone to recover the ring and the rod; but they have never come back."

"Well, whether I thrive or not, I'll venture," said Cucúlin.

"I will give you," said Gil an Og, "a present such as I have never given before to any man who ventured out on my behalf; I will give you the speckled boat."

Cucúlin took leave of Gil an Og and sailed away in the speckled boat to Greece, where he went to the king's court, and challenged him to combat.

The king of Greece gathered his forces and sent them out to chastise Cucúlin. He killed them all to the last man. Then Cucúlin challenged the king a second time.

"I have no one now to fight but myself," said the king; "and I don't think it becomes me to go out and meet the like of you."

"If you don't come out to me," said Cucúlin, "I'll go in to you and cut the head off you in your own castle."

"That's enough of impudence from you, you scoundrel," said the king of Greece. "I won't have you come into my castle, but I'll meet you on the open plain."

The king went out, and they fought till Cucúlin got the better of him, bound him head and heels, and said: "I'll cut the head off you now unless you give me the ring of youth and the rod of enchantment that you took from the father of Gil an Og."

"Well, I did carry them away," said the king, "but it wouldn't be easy for me now to give them to you or to her; for there was a man who came and carried them away, who could take them from you and from me, and from as many more of us, if they were here."

"Who was that man?" asked Cucúlin.

"His name," said the king, "is Lug Longhand. And if I had known what you wanted, there would have been no difference between us. I'll tell you how I lost the ring and rod and I'll go with you and show you where Lug Longhand lives. But do you come to my castle. We'll have a good time together."

They set out next day, and never stopped till they came opposite Lug Longhand castle, and Cucúlin challenged his forces to combat.

"I have no forces," said Lug, "but I'll fight you myself." So the combat began, and they spent the whole day at one another, and neither gained the victory.

The king of Greece himself put up a tent on the green in front of the castle, and prepared everything necessary to eat and drink (there was no one else to do it). After breakfast next day, Cucúlin and Lug began fighting again. The king of Greece looked on as the day before.

They fought the whole day till near evening, when Cucúlin got the upper hand of Lug Longhand and bound him head and heels, saying: "I'll cut the head off you now unless you give me the rod and the ring that you carried away from the king of Greece."

"Oh, then," said Lug, "it would be hard for me to give them to you or to him; for forces came and took them from me; and they would have taken them from you and from him, if you had been here."

"Who in the world took them from you?" asked the king of Greece.

"Release me from this bond, and come to my castle, and I'll tell you the whole story," said Lug Longhand.

Cucúlin released him, and they went to the castle. They got good reception and entertainment from Lug that night, and the following morning as well. He said: "The ring and the rod were taken from me by the knight of the island of the Flood. This island is surrounded by a chain, and there is a ring of fire seven miles wide between the chain and the castle. No man can come near the island without breaking the chain, and the moment the chain is broken the fire stops burning at that place; and the instant the fire goes down the knight rushes out and attacks and slays every man that's before him." The king of Greece, Cucúlin, and Lug Longhand now sailed on in the speckled boat towards the island of the Flood. On the following morning when the speckled boat struck the chain, she was thrown back three days' sail, and was near being sunk, and would have gone to the bottom of the sea but for her own goodness and strength.

As soon as Cucúlin saw what had happened, he took the oars, rowed on again, and drove the vessel forward with such venom that she cut through the chain and went one third of her length on to dry land. That moment the fire was quenched where the vessel struck, and when the knight of the Island saw the fire go out, he rushed to the shore and met Cucúlin, the king of Greece, and Lug Longhand.

When Cucúlin saw him, he threw aside his weapons, caught him, raised him above his head, hurled him down on the flat of his back, bound him head and heels, and said: "I'll cut the head off you unless you give me the ring and the rod that you carried away from Lug Longhand."

"I took them from him, it's true," said the knight; "but it would be hard for me to give them to you now; for a man came and took them from me, who would have taken them from you and all that are with you, and as many more if they had been here before him."

"Who in the world could that man be?" asked Cucúlin.

"The Dark Gruagach of the Northern Island. Release me, and come to my castle. I'll tell you all and entertain you well."

He took them to his castle, gave them good cheer, and told them all about the Gruagach and his island. Next morning all sailed away in Cucúlin's vessel, which they had left at the shore of the island, and never stopped till they came to the Gruagach's castle, and pitched their tents in front of it.

Then Cucúlin challenged the Gruagach. The others followed after to know would he thrive. The Gruagach came out and faced Cucúlin, and they began and spent the whole day at one another and neither of them gained the upper hand. When evening came, they stopped and prepared for supper and the night.

Next day after breakfast Cucúlin challenged the Gruagach again, and they fought till evening; when Cucúlin got the better in the struggle, disarmed the Gruagach, bound him, and said: "Unless you give up the rod of enchantment and the ring of youth that you took from the knight of the island of the Flood, I'll cut the head off you now."

"I took them from him, 'tis true; but there was a man named Thin-in-Iron, who took them from me, and he would have taken them from you and from me, and all that are here, if there were twice as many. He is such a man that sword cannot cut him, fire cannot burn him, water cannot drown him, and 'tis no easy thing to get the better of him. But if you'll free me now and come to my castle, I'll treat you well and tell you all about him." Cucúlin agreed to this.

Next morning they would not stop nor be satisfied till they went their way. They found the castle of Thin-in-Iron, and Cucúlin challenged him to combat. They fought; and he was cutting the flesh from Cucúlin, but Cucúlin's sword cut no flesh from him. They fought till Cucúlin said: "It is time now to stop till to-morrow."

Cucúlin was scarcely able to reach the tent. They had to support him and put him to bed. Now, who should come to Cucúlin that night but Gil an Og, and she said: "You have gone further than any man before you, and I'll cure you now, and you need go no further for the rod of enchantment and the ring of youth."

"Well," said Cucúlin, "I'll never give over till I knock another day's trial out of Thin-in-Iron."

When it was time for rest, Gil an Og went away, and Cucúlin fell asleep for himself. On the following morning all his comrades were up and facing his tent. They thought to see him dead, but he was in as good health as ever.

They prepared breakfast, and after breakfast Cucúlin went before the door of the castle to challenge his enemy.

Thin-in-Iron thrust his head out and said: "That man I fought yesterday has come again to-day. It would have been a good deed if I had cut the head off him last night. Then he wouldn't be here to trouble me this morning. I won't come home this day till I bring his head with me. Then I'll have peace."

They met in combat and fought till the night was coming. Then Thin-in-Iron cried out for a cessation, and if he did, Cucúlin was glad to give it; for his sword had no effect upon Thin-in-Iron except to tire and nearly kill him (he was enchanted and no arms could cut him). When Thin-in-Iron went to his castle, he threw up three sups of blood, and said to his housekeeper: "Though his sword could not penetrate me, he has nearly broken my heart."

Cucúlin had to be carried to his tent. His comrades laid him on his bed and said: "Whoever came and healed him yesterday, may be the same will be here to-night." They went away and were not long gone when Gil an Og came and said: "Cucúlin, if you had done my bidding, you wouldn't be as you are to-night. But if you neglect my words now, you'll never see my face again. I'll cure you this time and make you as well as ever;" and whatever virtue she had she healed him so he was as strong as before.

"Oh, then," said Cucúlin, "whatever comes on me I'll never turn back till I knock another day's trial out of Thin-in-Iron."

"Well," said she, "you are a stronger man than he, but there is no good in working at him with a sword. Throw your sword aside to-morrow, and you'll get the better of him and bind him. You'll not see me again."

She went away and he fell asleep. His comrades came in the morning and found him sleeping. They got breakfast, and, after eating, Cucúlin went out and called a challenge.

"Oh, 'tis the same man as yesterday," said Thin-in-Iron, "and if I had cut the head off him then, it wouldn't be he that would trouble me to-day. If I live for it, I'll bring his head in my hand to-night, and he'll never disturb me again."

When Cucúlin saw Thin-in-Iron coming, he threw his sword aside, and facing him, caught him by the body, raised him up, then dashed him to the ground, and said, "If you don't give me what I want, I'll cut the head off you."

"What do you want of me?" asked Thin-in-Iron.

"I want the rod of enchantment and the ring of youth you carried from the Gruagach."

"I did indeed carry them from him, but it would be no easy thing for me to give them to you or any other man; for a force came which took them from me."

"What could take them from you?" asked Cucúlin.

"The queen of the Wilderness, an old hag that has them now. But release me from this bondage and I'll take you to my castle and entertain you well, and I'll go with you and the rest of the company to see how will you thrive."

So he took Cucúlin and his friends to the castle and entertained them joyously, and he said: "The old hag, the queen of the Wilderness, lives in a round tower, which is always turning on wheels. There is but one entrance to the tower, and that high above the ground, and in the one chamber in which she lives, keeping the ring and the rod, is a chair, and she has but to sit on the chair and wish herself in any part of the world, and that moment she is there. She has six lines of guards protecting her tower, and if you pass all of these, you'll do what no man before you has done to this day. The first guards are two lions that rush out to know which of them will get the first bite out of the throat of any one that tries to pass. The second are seven men with iron hurlies and an iron ball, and with their hurlies they wallop the life out of any man that goes their way. The third is Hung-up-Naked, who hangs on a tree with his toes to the earth, his head cut from his shoulders and lying on the ground, and who kills every man who comes near him. The fourth is the bull of the Mist that darkens the woods for seven miles around, and destroys everything that enters the Mist. The fifth are seven cats with poison tails; and one drop of their poison would kill the strongest man."

Next morning all went with Cucúlin as far as the lions who guarded the queen of the Wilderness, an old hag made young by the ring of youth. The two lions ran at Cucúlin to see which would have the first bite out of him.

Cucúlin wore a red silk scarf around his neck and had a fine head of hair. He cut the hair off his head and wound it around one hand, took his scarf and wrapped it around the other. Then rushing at the lions, he thrust a hand down the throat of each lion (for lions can bite neither silk nor hair). He pulled the livers and lights out of the two and they fell dead before him. His comrades looking on, said: "You'll thrive now since you have done this deed;" and they left him and went home, each to his own country.

Cucúlin went further. The next people he met were the seven men with the iron hurlies (ball clubs), and they said; "'Tis long since any man walked this way to us; we'll have sport now."

The first one said: "Give him a touch of the hurly and let the others do the same; and we'll wallop him till he is dead."

Now Cucúlin drew his sword and cut the head off the first man before he could make an offer of the hurly at him; and then he did the same to the other six.

He went on his way till he came to Hung-up-Naked, who was hanging from a tree, his head on the ground near him. The queen of the Wilderness had fastened him to the tree because he wouldn't marry her; and she said: "If any man comes who will put your head on you, you'll be free." And she laid the injunction on him to kill every man who tried to pass his way without putting the head on him.

Cucúlin went up, looked at him, and saw heaps of bones around the tree. The body said: "You can't go by here. I fight with every man who tries to pass."

"Well, I'm not going to fight with a man unless he has a head on him. Take your head." And Cucúlin, picking up the head, clapped it on the body, and said, "Now I'll fight with you!"

The man said: "I'm all right now. I know where you are going. I'll stay here till you come; if you conquer you'll not forget me. Take the head off me now; put it where you found it; and if you succeed, remember that I shall be here before you on your way home."

Cucúlin went on, but soon met the bull of the Mist that covered seven miles of the wood with thick mist. When the bull saw him, he made at him and stuck a horn in his ribs and threw him three miles into the wood, against a great oak tree and broke three ribs in his side.

"Well," said Cucúlin, when he recovered, "if I get another throw like that, I'll not be good for much exercise." He was barely on his feet when the bull was at him again; but when he came up he caught the bull by both horns and away they went wrestling and struggling. For three days and nights Cucúlin kept the bull in play, till the morning of the fourth day, when he put him on the flat of his back. Then he turned him on the side, and putting a foot on one horn and taking the other in his two hands, he said: "'Tis well I earned you; there is not a stitch on me that isn't torn to rags from wrestling with you." He pulled the bull asunder from his horns to his tail, into two equal parts, and said: "Now that I have you in two, it's in quarters I'll put you." He took his sword, and when he struck the backbone of the bull, the sword remained in the bone and he couldn't pull it out.

He walked away and stood awhile and looked. "'Tis hard to say," said he, "that any good champion would leave his sword behind him." So he went back and made another pull and took the hilt off his sword, leaving the blade in the back of the bull. Then he went away tattered and torn, the hilt in his hand, and he turned up towards the forge of the Strong Smith. One of the Smith's boys was out for coal at the time: he saw Cucúlin coming with the hilt in his hand, and ran in, saying: "There is a man coming up and he looks like a fool; we'll have fun!"

"Hold your tongue!" said the master. "Have you heard any account of the bull of the Mist these three days?"

"We have not," said the boys.

"Perhaps," said the Strong Smith, "that's a good champion that's coming, and do you mind yourselves."

At that moment Cucúlin walked in to the forge where twelve boys and the master were working. He saluted them and asked, "Can you put a blade in this hilt?"

"We can," said the master. They put in the blade. Cucúlin raised the sword and took a shake out of it and broke it to bits.

"This is a rotten blade," said he. "Go at it again."

They made a second blade. The boys were in dread of him now. He broke the second blade in the same way as the first. They made six blades, one stronger than the other. He did the same to them all. "There is no use in talking," said the Strong Smith; "we have no stuff that would make a right blade for you. Go down now," said he to two of the boys, "and bring up an old sword that's down in the stable full of rust."

They went and brought up the sword on two hand-spikes between them; it was so heavy that one couldn't carry it. They gave it to Cucúlin, and with one blow on his heel he knocked the dust from it and went out at the door and took a shake out of it; and if he did, he darkened the whole place with the rust from the blade.

"This is my sword, whoever made it," said he.

"It is," said the master; "it's yours and welcome. I know who you are now, and where you are going. Remember that I'm in bondage here." The Strong Smith took Cucúlin then to his house, gave him refreshment and clothes for the journey. When he was ready, the Smith said: "I hope you'll thrive. You have done a deal more than any man that ever walked this way before. There is nothing now to stand in your way till you come to the seven cats outside the turning tower. If they shake their tails and a drop of poison comes on you, it will penetrate to your heart. You must sweep off their tails with your sword. 'Tis equal to you what their bodies will do after that."

Cucúlin soon came to them and there wasn't one of the seven cats he didn't strip of her tail before she knew he was in it. He cared nothing for the bodies so he had the tails. The cats ran away.

Now he faced the tower turning on wheels. The queen of the Wilderness was in it. He had been told by Thin-in-Iron that he must cut the axle. He found the axle, cut it, and the tower stopped that instant. Cucúlin made a spring and went in through the single passage.

The old hag was preparing to sit on the chair as she saw him coming. He sprang forward, pushed the chair away with one hand, and, catching her by the back of the neck with the other, said: "You are to lose your head now, old woman!"

"Spare me, and what you want you'll get," said she. "I have the ring of youth and the rod of enchantment," and she gave them to him. He put the ring on his finger, and saying, "You'll never do mischief again to man!" he turned her face to the entrance, and gave her a kick. Out she flew through the opening and down to the ground, where she broke her neck and died on the spot.

Cucúlin made the Strong Smith king over all the dominions of the queen of the Wilderness, and proclaimed that any person in the country who refused to obey the new king would be put to death.

Cucúlin turned back at once, and travelled till he came to Hung-up-Naked. He took him down, and putting the head on his body, struck him a blow of the rod and made the finest looking man of him that could be found. The man went back to his own home happy and well.

Cucúlin never stopped till he came to the castle of Gil an Og. She was outside with a fine welcome before him; and why not, to be sure, for he had the rod of enchantment and the ring of youth!

When she entered the castle and took the form of a cat, he struck her a blow of the rod and she gained the same form and face she had before the king of Greece struck her. Then he asked, "Where is your sister?" "In the lake there outside," answered Gil an Og, "in the form of a sea-serpent." She went out with him, and the moment they came to the edge of the lake the sister rose up near them. Then Cucúlin struck her with the rod and she came to land in her own shape and countenance.

Next day they saw a deal of vessels facing the harbor, and what should they be but a fleet of ships, and on the ships were the king of Greece, Lug Longhand, the knight of the island of the Flood, the Dark Guagach of the Northern Island and Thin-in-Iron: and they came each in his own vessel to know was there any account of Cucúlin. There was good welcome for them all, and when they had feasted and rejoiced together Cucúlin married Gil an Og. The king of Greece took Gil an Og's sister, who was his own wife at first, and went home.

Cucúlin went away himself with his wife Gil an Og, never stopping till he came to Erin; and when he came, Fin MacCumhail and his men were at KilConaly, near the river Shannon.

When Cucúlin went from Erin he left a son whose mother was called the Virago of Alba: she was still alive and the son was eighteen years old. When she heard that Cucúlin had brought Gil an Og to Erin, she was enraged with jealousy and madness. She had reared the son, whose name was Conlán, like any king's son, and now giving him his arms of a champion she told him to go to his father.

"I would," said he, "if I knew who my father is."

"His name is Cucúlin, and he is with Fin MacCumhail. I bind you not to yield to any man," said she to her son, "nor tell your name to any man till you fight him out."

Conlán started from Ulster where his mother was, and never stopped till he was facing Fin and his men, who were hunting that day along the cliffs of KilConaly.

When the young man came up Fin said, "There is a single man facing us."

Conan Maol said, "Let some one go against him, ask who he is and what he wants."

"I never give an account of myself to any man," said Conlán, "till I get an account from him."

"There is no man among us," said Conan, "bound in that way but Cucúlin." They called on Cucúlin; he came up and the two fought. Conlán knew by the description his mother had given that Cucúlin was his father, but Cucúlin did not know his son. Every time Conlán aimed his spear he threw it so as to strike the ground in front of Cucúlin's toe, but Cucúlin aimed straight at him.

They were at one another three days and three nights. The son always sparing the father, the father never sparing the son.

Conan Maol came to them the fourth morning. "Cucúlin," said he, "I didn't expect to see any man standing against you three days, and you such a champion."

When Conlán heard Conan Maol urging the father to kill him, he gave a bitter look at Conan, and forgot his guard. Cucúlin's spear went through his head that minute, and he fell. "I die of that blow from my father," said he.

"Are you my son?" said Cucúlin.

"I am," said Conlán.

Cucúlin took his sword and cut the head off him sooner than leave him in the punishment and pain he was in. Then he faced all the people, and Fin was looking on.

"There's trouble on Cucúlin," said Fin. "Chew your thumb," said Conan Maol, "to know what's on him."

Fin chewed his thumb, and said, "Cucúlin is after killing his own son, and if I and all my men were to face him before his passion cools, at the end of seven days, he'd destroy every man of us."

"Go now," said Conan, "and bind him to go down to Bale strand and give seven days' fighting against the waves of the sea, rather than kill us all."

So Fin bound him to go down. When he went to Bale strand Cucúlin found a great white stone. He grasped his sword in his right hand and cried out: "If I had the head of the woman who sent her son into peril of death at my hand, I'd split it as I split this stone," and he made four quarters of the stone. Then he strove with the waves seven days and nights till he fell from hunger and weakness, and the waves went over him.

**Israel (Asia)**

**Magic**

**The Fairy Frog**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/jftl/jftl26.htm>

Once upon a time there lived a man of learning and wealth who had an only son, named Hanina. To this son, who was grown up and married, he sent a messenger asking that he should immediately come to his father. Hanina obeyed, and found both his father and mother lying ill.

"Know, my son," said the old man, "we are about to die. Grieve not, for it has been so ordained. We have been companions through life, and we are to be privileged to leave this world together. You will mourn for us the customary seven days. They will end on the eve of the festival of the Passover. On that day go forth into the market place and purchase the first thing offered to thee, no matter what it is, or what the cost that may be demanded. It will in due course bring thee good fortune. Hearken unto my words, my son, and all will be well."

Hanina promised obedience to this strange injunction of his father, and events fell out in accordance with the old man's prediction. The aged couple died on the same day, were buried together and after the week of mourning, on the day preceding the Passover festival, Hanina made his way to the market place wondering what adventure was in store for him.

He had scarcely entered the market place, where all manner of wares were displayed, when an old man approached him, carrying a silver casket of curious design.

"Purchase this, my son," he said, "and it will bring thee good fortune."

"What does it contain?" asked Hanina.

"That I may not inform thee," was the reply. "Indeed I cannot, for I know not. Only the purchaser can open it at the feast which begins the Passover."

Naturally, Hanina was impressed by these words. Matters were shaping just as his father foretold.

"What is the price?" he asked.

"A thousand gold pieces."

That was an enormous sum, nearly the whole that he possessed, but Hanina, remembering his vow, paid the money and took the casket home.

It was placed upon the table that night when the Passover festival began. On being opened it was found to contain a smaller casket. This was opened and out sprang a frog.

Hanina's wife was sorely disappointed, but she gave food to the frog which devoured everything greedily. So much did the creature eat that when the Passover had ended, in eight days it had grown to an enormous size. Hanina built a cabinet for his strange possession, but it continued to grow and soon required a special shed.

Hanina was seriously puzzled, for the frog ate so ravenously that he and his wife had little food for themselves. But they made no complaint, although their hardships increased daily. They were compelled to dispose of almost everything they possessed to keep the frog supplied with food, and at last they were left in a state of abject poverty. Then only did the courage of Hanina's wife give way and she began to cry.

To her astonishment, the frog, which was now bigger than a man, spoke to her.

"Listen to me, wife of the faithful Hanina," it said. "Ye have treated me well. Therefore, ask of me what ye will, and I shall carry out your wishes."

"Give us food," sobbed the woman.

"It is there," said the frog, and at that very moment there was a knock at the door and a huge basket of food was delivered.

Hanina had not yet spoken, and the frog asked him to name his desire.

"A frog that speaks and performs wonders must be wise and learned," said Hanina. "I wish that thou shouldst teach me the lore of men."

The frog agreed, and his method of teaching was exceedingly strange. He wrote out the Law and the seventy known languages on strips of paper. These he ordered Hanina to swallow. Hanina did so and became acquainted with everything, even the language of the beasts and the birds. All men regarded him as the most learned sage of his time.

One day the frog spoke again.

"The day has arrived," he said, "when I must repay you for all the kindness you have shown me. Your reward shall be great. Come with me to the woods and you shall see marvels performed."

Hanina and his wife followed the giant frog to the woods very early one morning, and a comical figure it presented as it hobbled along.

Arrived at the woods, the frog cried out, in its croaking voice:

"Come to me all ye inhabitants of the trees, the caves and streams, and do my bidding. Bring precious stones from the depths of the earth and roots and herbs."

Then began the queerest procession. Hundreds upon hundreds of birds came twittering through the trees; thousands upon thousands of insects came crawling from holes in the ground; and all the animals in the woods, from the tiniest to the monsters, came in answer to the call of the frog. Each group brought some gift and laid it at the feet of Hanina and his wife who stood in some alarm. Soon a great pile of precious stones and herbs was heaped before them.

"All these belong to you," said the frog, pointing to the jewels. "Of equal worth are the herbs and the roots with which ye can cure all diseases. Because ye obeyed the wishes of the dying and did not question me, ye are now rewarded."

Hanina and his wife thanked the frog and then the former said: "May we not know who thou art?"

"Yes," replied the frog. "I am the fairy son of Adam, gifted with the power of assuming any form. Farewell."

With these words, the frog began to grow smaller and smaller until it was the size of an ordinary frog. Then it hopped into a stream and disappeared and all the denizens of the woods returned to their haunts.

Hanina and his wife made their way home with their treasures. They became famous for their wealth, their wisdom and their charity, and lived in happiness with all peoples for many, many years.

**Italy (Europe)**

**Magic, Fairy Tales, Rapunzel, Supernatural Opponents, (310)**

**Parsley**

This is one of the stories which that good soul, my uncle's grandmother (whom Heaven take to glory), used to tell; and, unless I have put on my spectacles upside down, I fancy it will give you pleasure.

There was, once upon a time, a woman named Pascadozzia, and one day, when she was standing at her window, which looked into the garden of an ogress, she saw such a fine bed of parsley that she almost fainted away with desire for some. So when the ogress went out she could not restrain herself any longer, but plucked a handful of it. The ogress came home and was going to cook her pottage when she found that some one had been stealing the parsley, and said, "Ill luck to me, but I'll catch this long-fingered rogue and make him repent it; I'll teach him to his cost that every one should eat off his own platter and not meddle with other folks' cups."

The poor woman went again and again down into the garden, until one morning the ogress met her, and in a furious rage exclaimed, "Have I caught you at last, you thief, you rogue; prithee, do you pay the rent of the garden that you come in this impudent way and steal my plants? By my faith, I'll make you do penance without sending you to Rome."

Poor Pascadozzia, in a terrible fright, began to make excuses, saying that neither from gluttony nor the craving of hunger had she been tempted by the devil to commit this fault, but from her fear lest her child should be born with a crop of parsley on its face.

"Words are but wind," answered the ogress, "I am not to be caught with such prattle; you have closed the balance-sheet of life, unless you promise to give me the child, girl or boy, whichever it may be."

The poor woman, in order to escape the peril in which she found herself, swore, with one hand upon the other, to keep the promise, and so the ogress let her go free. But when the baby came it was a little girl, so beautiful that she was a joy to look upon, who was named Parsley. The little girl grew from day to day until, when she was seven years old, her mother sent her to school, and every time she went along the street and met the ogress the old woman said to her, "Tell your mother to remember her promise." And she went on repeating this message so often that the poor mother, having no longer patience to listen to the refrain, said one day to Parsley, "If you meet the old woman as usual, and she reminds you of the hateful promise, answer her, Take it.'"

When Parsley, who dreamt of no ill, met the ogress again, and heard her repeat the same words, she answered innocently as her mother had told her, whereupon the ogress, seizing her by her hair, carried her off to a wood which the horses of the Sun never entered, not having paid the toll to the pastures of those Shades. Then she put the poor girl into a tower which she caused to arise by her art, having neither gate nor ladder, but only a little window through which she ascended and descended by means of Parsley's hair, which was very long, just as sailors climb up and down the mast of a ship.

Now it happened one day, when the ogress had left the tower, that Parsley put her head out of the little window and let loose her tresses in the sun, and the son of a Prince passing by saw those two golden banners which invited all souls to enlist under the standard of Beauty, and, beholding with amazement, in the midst of those gleaming waves, a face that enchanted all hearts, he fell desperately in love with such wonderful beauty; and, sending her a memorial of sighs, she decreed to receive him into favour. She told him her troubles, and implored him to rescue her. But a gossip of the ogress, who was for ever prying into things that did not concern her, and poking her nose into every corner, overheard the secret, and told the wicked woman to be on the look-out, for Parsley had been seen talking with a certain youth, and she had her suspicions. The ogress thanked the gossip for the information, and said that she would take good care to stop up the road. As to Parsley, it was, moreover, impossible for her to escape, as she had laid a spell upon her, so that unless she had in her hand the three gall-nuts which were in a rafter in the kitchen it would be labour lost to attempt to get away.

Whilst they were thus talking together, Parsley, who stood with her ears wide open and had some suspicion of the gossip, overheard all that had passed. And when Night had spread out her black garments to keep them from the moth, and the Prince had come as they had appointed, she let fall her hair; he seized it with both hands, and cried, "Draw up." When he was drawn up she made him first climb on to the rafters and find the gall-nuts, knowing well what effect they would have, as she had been enchanted by the ogress. Then, having made a rope-ladder, they both descended to the ground, took to their heels, and ran off towards the city. But the gossip, happening to see them come out, set up a loud "Halloo," and began to shout and make such a noise that the ogress awoke, and, seeing that Parsley had run away, she descended by the same ladder, which was still fastened to the window, and set off after the couple, who, when they saw her coming at their heels faster than a horse let loose, gave themselves up for lost. But Parsley, recollecting the gall-nuts, quickly threw one of the ground, and lo, instantly a Corsican bulldog started up—O, mother, such a terrible beast!—which, with open jaws and barking loud, flew at the ogress as if to swallow her at a mouthful. But the old woman, who was more cunning and spiteful than ever, put her hand into her pocket, and pulling out a piece of bread gave it to the dog, which made him hang his tail and allay his fury.

Then she turned to run after the fugitives again, but Parsley, seeing her approach, threw the second gall-nut on the ground, and lo, a fierce lion arose, who, lashing the earth with his tail, and shaking his mane and opening wide his jaws a yard apart, was just preparing to make a slaughter of the ogress, when, turning quickly back, she stripped the skin off an ass which was grazing in the middle of a meadow and ran at the lion, who, fancying it a real jackass, was so frightened that he bounded away as fast as he could.

The ogress having leaped over this second ditch turned again to pursue the poor lovers, who, hearing the clatter of her heels, and seeing clouds of dust that rose up to the sky, knew that she was coming again. But the old woman, who was every moment in dread lest the lion should pursue her, had not taken off the ass's skin, and when Parsley now threw down the third gall-nut there sprang up a wolf, who, without giving the ogress time to play any new trick, gobbled her up just as she was in the shape of a jackass. So Parsley and the Prince, now freed from danger, went their way leisurely and quietly to the Prince's kingdom, where, with his father's free consent, they were married. Thus, after all these storms of fate, they experienced the truth that—

"One hour in port, the sailor, freed from fears,  
Forgets the tempests of a hundred years."

**Jamaica (North America)**

**Humour**

**Tiger’s Breakfast**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/afr/jas/jas006.htm>

One day, Hanansi go Tiger house an' eat breakfas' every day, an' tell Tiger, say, "Brar Tiger, to-morrow you mus' come a my house; but when you hear me makin' noise you mus' come, for dat time breakfas' is on, but when you hear me stay still you mustn't come at all." So when Tiger go, Hanansi eat done. And say, "Brar Tiger, you foot short!" Tiger say, "No, me no hear you mak noise!" Hanansi say, "No, ***so*** me said, for when man makin' noise he kyan' eat." An' say, "Well, nex' day come back." When Tiger come, Hanansi tak shame, gi' him little breakfas' but say, "Brar Tiger, when we go fe eat, when I say 'Nyammy nyammy nyammy' you mus' say, 'Nyam a wha' eat'."[1] So Hanansi stay deh eat everyt'ing, Tiger never get one.

Tiger study fe him. Nex' day he go to Tiger yard. When Tiger gi' him breakfast an' gi' him enough meat he said to Tiger, "Brar Tiger, a whe' you get meat every day so?" Tiger said, "You know how me come by dis meat? When I see a cow lie down, I go up an' run me ban' inside of de cow an' hol' de man tripe, so I never out of meat." So Hanansi went his way an' do de same. De cow frighten on de hill-side an' turn head right down to lowland. Hanansi say, "Do, Brar Cow, don't shut up me han'!" Cow fasten de han' de better an' gallop right down de hill an' drag Hanansi over de stone. Dat's de reason let you see Hanansi belly white.

**Japan (Asia)**

**Animals**

**The Sagacious Monkey and the Boar**

Long, long ago, there lived in the province of Shinshin in Japan, a traveling monkey-man, who earned his living by taking round a monkey and showing off the animal's tricks.

One evening the man came home in a very bad temper and told his wife to send for the butcher the next morning.

The wife was very bewildered and asked her husband:

"Why do you wish me to send for the butcher?"

"It's no use taking that monkey round any longer, he's too old and forgets his tricks. I beat him with my stick all I know how, but he won't dance properly. I must now sell him to the butcher and make what money out of him I can. There is nothing else to be done."

The woman felt very sorry for the poor little animal, and pleaded for her husband to spare the monkey, but her pleading was all in vain, the man was determined to sell him to the butcher.

Now the monkey was in the next room and overheard ever word of the conversation. He soon understood that he was to be killed, and he said to himself:

"Barbarous, indeed, is my master! Here I have served him faithfully for years, and instead of allowing me to end my days comfortably and in peace, he is going to let me be cut up by the butcher, and my poor body is to be roasted and stewed and eaten? Woe is me! What am I to do. Ah! a bright thought has struck me! There is, I know, a wild bear living in the forest near by. I have often heard tell of his wisdom. Perhaps if I go to him and tell him the strait I am in he will give me his counsel. I will go and try."

There was no time to lose. The monkey slipped out of the house and ran as quickly as he could to the forest to find the boar. The boar was at home, and the monkey began his tale of woe at once.

"Good Mr. Boar, I have heard of your excellent wisdom. I am in great trouble, you alone can help me. I have grown old in the service of my master, and because I cannot dance properly now he intends to sell me to the butcher. What do you advise me to do? I know how clever you are!"

The boar was pleased at the flattery and determined to help the monkey. He thought for a little while and then said:

"Hasn't your master a baby?"

"Oh, yes," said the monkey, "he has one infant son."

"Doesn't it lie by the door in the morning when your mistress begins the work of the day? Well, I will come round early and when I see my opportunity I will seize the child and run off with it."

"What then?" said the monkey.

"Why the mother will be in a tremendous scare, and before your master and mistress know what to do, you must run after me and rescue the child and take it home safely to its parents, and you will see that when the butcher comes they won't have the heart to sell you."

The monkey thanked the boar many times and then went home. He did not sleep much that night, as you may imagine, for thinking of the morrow. His life depended on whether the boar's plan succeeded or not. He was the first up, waiting anxiously for what was to happen. It seemed to him a very long time before his master's wife began to move about and open the shutters to let in the light of day. Then all happened as the boar had planned. The mother placed her child near the porch as usual while she tidied up the house and got her breakfast ready.

The child was crooning happily in the morning sunlight, dabbing on the mats at the play of light and shadow. Suddenly there was a noise in the porch and a loud cry from the child. The mother ran out from the kitchen to the spot, only just in time to see the boar disappearing through the gate with her child in its clutch. She flung out her hands with a loud cry of despair and rushed into the inner room where her husband was still sleeping soundly.

He sat up slowly and rubbed his eyes, and crossly demanded what his wife was making all that noise about. By the time that the man was alive to what had happened, and they both got outside the gate, the boar had got well away, but they saw the monkey running after the thief as hard as his legs would carry him.

Both the man and wife were moved to admiration at the plucky conduct of the sagacious monkey, and their gratitude knew no bounds when the faithful monkey brought the child safely back to their arms.

"There!" said the wife. "This is the animal you want to kill—if the monkey hadn't been here we should have lost our child forever."

"You are right, wife, for once," said the man as he carried the child into the house. "You may send the butcher back when he comes, and now give us all a good breakfast and the monkey too."

When the butcher arrived he was sent away with an order for some boar's meat for the evening dinner, and the monkey was petted and lived the rest of his days in peace, nor did his master ever strike him again.

**Jordan (Asia)**

**Magic**

**The Hunter**

<http://www.barghouti.com/folklore/stories/hunter.shtml>

Once upon a time, there was a man who was a hunter and his name was Hunter, too. One day, he went hunting when he found a deer. When he aimed at the deer, it disappeared. He looked around and saw the deer in another place. He aimed again and suddenly that deer turned into a man. Hunter was shocked. The man came closer to Hunter and said, "Why do you always hunt deer and birds? Don't you think they have an owner?" "I have to feed my family, and this is our only source of income," replied Hunter. "How large is your family?" asked the man. "Two boys, a girl, my wife, and I," replied Hunter, "and this is how we make our living." "Well," said the man, "if I give you money, will you stop this?" "Of course," said Hunter, "as long as I have money, I will not hunt any more." At this point, the man pulled out fifty dinars and gave them to Hunter. "Before you go; what's your name?" the man asked. "I am Hunter, and you?" Hunter said. "Call me Abdallah," the man replied, "and I have a family like yours."

Hunter went home, cleaned his gun and hung it on the wall. He told his wife that he will not hunt any more and God has provided a source of money. However, it was not too long before the money was gone, so Hunter picked up his gun and took off to hunt. When he reached his usual spot, he found the deer in the same place he found it the first time. When he aimed at it, it turned into Abdallah. "Didn't we have an agreement?" asked Abdallah. "But the money was all gone," said Hunter, "and we almost starved to death." "Do you see that rock?" said Abdallah, "Whenever you need me, just come to it and say, O brother Abdallah, and I will come immediately." Then he gave hunter another fifty dinars.

Hunter was happy and went home. When he gave the money to his wife she demanded to know where he got it. He told her that he met this friend who promised to help him all the time and whenever they need him; Hunter only had to go to that rock and call him. "You are a stingy man!" said Hunter's wife, "You should have invited him to our house, so we could have food together and build on this friendship." So Hunter went back to the rock and called on Abdallah. After he apologized to Abdallah for not inviting him, Abdallah insisted that Hunter and his family were first invited to his house. After they agreed on eight o'clock in the morning, Hunter went home to tell his wife the latest news.

Hunter and his wife went and bought a present and took the children with them to the rock. When they got there, they found Abdallah and his family waiting. Each member of Abdallah's family welcomed a member of Hunter's and they held hands. In a blink of an eye, they found themselves in a different world. Abdallah's family prepared the feast and invited all the neighbors who brought presents and money to Hunter and his family. After they spent some time there, Hunter and his family gathered the presents and the money and went home. They had enough money to build a nice house. A few months later, it was a holiday, so Hunter went to visit his friend. When Abdallah showed up, he held Hunter's hand and in a blink of an eye, they were in a different place. Abdallah gave Hunter a thousand dinars this time.

Hunter took the money and went home. His wife said that now they have enough money to get their oldest son married. They found a nice girl for him and set a time for the wedding. Of course Hunter invited Abdallah and his family to the wedding. Abdallah asked Hunter to prepare a separate room for him and another twenty people and not to let anybody come near them. On the wedding day, everybody in town was invited and Hunter did what Abdallah asked him to do. People would see Hunter going into that room with full trays and getting out empty handed while they could not see anybody inside the room. After everybody left, Abdallah asked Hunter if they could go and give the bride her presents. They went in one by one and the bride was happy to receive all of the nice jewelery they gave her. Before Abdallah left, he told Hunter that they were all invited to his place for the whole week.

A couple of thieves in town knew where the bride put her jewelry box, so they raided the house and took the jewelry when Hunter and his family were at Abdallah's place. When Hunter and his family returned to the house, they discovered the robbery. All Hunter could do was seek help from his friend Abdallah. Abdallah comforted him and told him to go back and open the box. When Hunter went back and opened the box, he found double the amount of jewels in it. Abdallah came to Hunter and said, "Next time my brother, when you come to visit us, we will protect your home."

**Kazakhstan (Asia)**

**Cleverness**

**A Wise Daughter**

<http://www.riomediagroup.com/blanche35now/documents/wisedaughter.pdf>

Once upon a time an old man lived with his 12-year-old daughter. He had a camel, a

horse and a donkey and earned a living selling firewood. One day he laid the wood on the camel

and went to the market. An unknown man, a stranger, asked him, " How much does firewood cost?"

"Three tanga." said the Old Man. The stranger said, "Will you take 10 tanga for everything?" The old man gladly agreed. He brought the firewood into the yard of the buyer. When the old man put the wood on the ground and got 10 tanga, the buyer told him to leave the camel in his yard.

The old man laughed. "Why would I leave the camel?" "I bought the firewood with the camel together. Otherwise, why would I pay ten tanga instead of three?" They argued and then went to the biju to settle the dispute. The Bij asked the old man, "Is it true the buyer said that he had paid ten tanga for all?"

"Yes, but I thought he meant all the firewood." "Then he’s right. Give him the camel." The old man wept on his way home. The next day he packed the firewood on his horse and rode back to the market. This time the same thing happened to him. The same person fooled him with the same tricky words. Againthe Bij said that the buyer was right. Along with firewood he had bought a horse.

On the third day when the old man put the firewood on the donkey, his daughter said,

"I'll sell firewood. The camel and the horse were taken away dishonestly. I won't let them take

our donkey." When the girl got to the market, the same buyer came up and said, "Sell me everything

for five tanga?" The girl replied, "I will sell if you give money with everything." He agreed.

She brought the wood, dropped it on the ground and asked, "Where should I put your

donkey?" The buyer pointed to the place and gave the girl money. The girl grabbed his hand

and said, "You promised to give money with everything where they are, together with your

hand." They argued and then went to the biju. The Biy ordered the buyer to give the girl 500 dill

instead of his hand. The buyer had to give the money and said " I cheated many people, and you

have cheated me. Do you want to get more dill? Let's arrange a contest. Who tells the greatest

tales (false stories) will win 500 dill. They put their money in front of the Biy. The cheating man was the first to start: "Once, I planted wheat. The wheat grew so high that a camel could hide in it. Once 40

goats went into it and could not find the way out. When we harvested the wheat, the goats were

not found. Later, after we made the grain into flour, my wife used the flour to bake pies. I broke

off a piece and began to eat. But a goat was in my mouth; he yelled and rushed out. The other 39

followed. They had grown so fat that each of them was bigger than a bull." Then the girl said, "Your story is true. Such things happen often in our area. Now listen. In the middle of our village, I sowed a cotton seed. A huge tree grew out of it. When the cotton ripened, I hired a 100 workers to harvest it. We sold the cotton and bought 40 camel. My two brothers took them to Bukhara. For three years we had no news, but I have just been told that they were killed. And now I see my brother’s robe on you. I sewed it myself, and he wore it to go to Bukhara. So, you killed my brothers, and took their goods and camels." The buyer of firewood was angry. He realized that the girl had won. If he accepted that

the story was true, he would have to pay the girl her “coon” (fine) for killing her brothers , and,

in addition, return forty camels packed with goods. But if he said the story was false, he would

have to pay 500 dill according to the contract. He chose to give five hundred dill. "You win," he

said. This day the clever daughter brought her father a thousand dill,

**Kenya (Africa)**

**Origin**

**The Origin of Cattle**

<http://www.johntyman.com/africa/folk/#1>

In the beginning, the Maasai did not have any cattle. One day God called Maasinta, who was the first Maasai and said to him: "I want you to make a large enclosure, and when you have done so, come back and inform me." Maasinta went and did as he was instructed, and came back to report what he had done. Next God said to him: "Tomorrow, very early in the morning, I want you to go and stand against the outside wall of the house for I will give you something called cattle. But when you see or hear anything do not be surprised. Keep very silent."

 Very early in the morning, Maasinta went to wait for what was to be given him. He soon heard the sound of thunder and God released a long leather thong from heaven to earth. Cattle descended down this thong into the enclosure. The surface of the earth shook so vigorously that his house almost fell over. Maasinta was gripped with fear, but did not make any move or sound. While the cattle were still descending, the Dorobo, who was a house-mate of Maasinta, woke up from his sleep. He went outside and on seeing the countless cattle coming down the strap, he was so surprised that he said: "Ayieyieyie!", an exclamation of utter shock. On hearing this, God took back the thong and the cattle stopped descending. God then said to Maasinta, thinking he was the one who had spoken: "Is it that these cattle are enough for you? I will never again do this to you, so you had better love these cattle in the same way I love you." That is why the Maasai love cattle very much.

 How about the Dorobo? Maasinta was very upset with him for having cut God's thong. He cursed him thus: "Dorobo, are you the one who cut God's thong? May you remain as poor as you have always been. You and your offspring will for ever remain my servants. Let it be that you will live off animals in the wild. May the milk of my cattle be poison if you ever taste it." This is why up to this day the Dorobo still live in the forest and they are never given milk.

**Kiribati (Oceania)**

**Origin**

**The Story of Creation**

<http://www.janesoceania.com/kiribati_myths_legends_stories/>

Before we talk about the race living in the Gilberts let us look at some mythological tales and a few legends. They will act as windows on to the ideas and beliefs of the people and also give some idea of their history. The creation stories have a common base on all the islands but they vary from one narrator to the other in sometimes quite important details. Gilbertese tradition has plenty of thin or uneven patches, for race memory, like that of individual men, is nothing more than a skimming device.

To begin with here is a traditional story from Abemama in the Central gilberts which is one insight into the creation of man and all things. A few notes will help to explain the Gilbertese words which are somewhat difficult to translate. In the beginning there was nothing except three people: Na Areau (Nareau) the Father, Na Areau the Seeker and Na Areau the Small. Where they came from no one knows, though some people say that they came out of three shells. Heaven and earth clung together and there was only he Darkness and the Cleaving together: to Bo ma Te Maki.

Nareau walked hither and thither up in heaven and gave voice to this song:

North I go and tread heaven underfoot.

South I go and tread heaven underfoot.

You know nothing, O Darkness and Cleaving Together.

Spirits do not exist, Nor are there men or any things:

there is only myself, the giant, Na Areau.

Na Areau looked for a soft place where he could penetrate the surface. In the centre known as the Navel, he found a shell (or lump) also called Te Bo Te Maki.

This he pierced with an instrument called Te Wete n Airaro. Na Areau the Small was the first to go through the opening. There he met a second shell called the emptiness. this he opened using his staff and came to a third shell: utter nothingness. Next he came to a fourth shell - nothing remains, and the fifth shell he penetrated was called the Whole and complete.

Here is the song Na Areau made as he got ready to break through the first shell:

We sharpen the point of the staff

To create and examine the world

Oh break the navel of heaven and hell

Now joined together and united.

Who can do this great deed? Only I,

I, Nareau, can do this with my tongue.

There are two tips to it:

One kills and the other devours.

The tongue of Nareau, pointed and baleful,

The tongue of Nareau who rules the heavens.

After breaking through the fifth shell he came to thick darkness. Then Na Areau the Father stretched out his arm and taking hold of the darkness flung it to the east. He turned back and to the sun shone through the opening his arm and made, Na Areau looked through the hole thus made in the shell and dry land appeared: this was Samoa. so the world was created and fixed in its place. suddenly thee was a sound as of distant voices murmuring underground. Na Areau called out: 'Uka (the first man), Nan te WeneWene, Karitoro, Nabawe, Ngkoangkoa, where are you?' Away in the east something collapsed.

'Tabakea is that you?'

'Yes it is I, Tabakea.'

'Come out you others!'

'We cannot. Everywhere the heavens touch earth and bear down on us.'

Then Na Areau commanded Ko Wene (you who are lying down) to lift the heavens. Ko Wene crawled out and lifted the heavens a little. Then it was the turn of Ko Tekateka (you are seated) and after, in turn, came Ko Toro (you are squatting), Ko Katei Babai (you raise your hands), and Ko Tei (you are standing). Eutia (standing on tiptoes) and Ko Tare (you are losing your footing) raised the heavens in their turn as much as they could. The newly created multitudes could breathe more easily but still the sky was too low. The three of high rank discussed the matter and Na Areau the Father had to use the staff with which he had pierced the shells and which had a second name: Te Kai Riki or Riki, if shortened. The meaning is: may you be so. Na Areau spoke to his crowd of helpers: 'Give some food to Riki lest he should eat you when he is hungry.' Two large shellfish were placed on his shoulders so that he only needed to turn his head a little in order to eat or drink. While he worked at his task, they called out to him:

Raise the heavens higher!'

'How is it now?'

'Higher! Again ... again!'

He tried hard but could do no more, making so much effort that blood welled from his face and fell on Samoa. Where the blood fell there grew a famous tree: Tere moa te rara: sight of the first blood. 'If I let go,' shouted Riki, 'the heavens will collapse!'

Ten  Na Areau called the Caryatids for the cardinal points. He commanded them to go and support the four corners of the heavens. The four women grew roots and turned into strong trees. Thus the heavens remained high and well supported.

'Have you finished Riki?'

'Yes Na Areau, I've finished.'

Then Na Areau broke Riki's legs and placed his body in the sky. It became Naiabu, the Milky way that we can see up in the heavens. As for his legs, they fell into the sea in pieces and became all the many eels that live there. Now, Riki is the large salt-water eel.

Na Areau the Father withdrew. As Riki raised up the heavens so he ascended with them. He left behind two types of being: men and spirits. The spirits fell on the country where white people lived; the I-Matang. That is why they received intelligence and power as their lot. The species called  men stayed on Samoa and that is why all real men come from Samoa. Meanwhile Na Areau the Seeker and Na Areau the Small had stayed on earth to complete the creation and organization of the world. Everything: men, women, sky, land, north and south, was vague and indistinct and remained shut up in Nei Te Nano (Inside Woman). The first man was called Naewa (He) and his wife was Nei Oa (She) and so all things were ordered and arranged.

Not long after this they saw a basket come down from heaven at the end of a long rope. It stopped right in the middle of the multitude of men. On opening it oh what horror came amongst men! In the basket were naked skulls, white hair, decayed bones, toothless jaws, old age with its stick; all the illness and suffering and miseries of mankind. At the bottom of the basket, most horrific of all these gifts, was Death. 'I cannot bear the sight of what is in that basket,' said Naka. 'I am going away as far as possible.' He said his goodbyes but first shared out the tree of Samoa, Tere moa te rara, amongst those dwelling there. this is the song he made:

Let the eastern side of the tree be for Tabakea (turtle);

Give the western side to Bakoa; (the shark)

The south shall be for Te Raun and Te Baeao (pearl oyster)

No one dwells at the top of the tree.

Walt though, for men will come from the land of white people.

They will take the top of the tree. but the Gecko (little lizard)

Stands alone and makes the island of Beru.

We did not know that this was an evil place:

We have only known this in the age of men.

Naka went away with his wife Nei Bongibong (night) and his two daughters Nei Mataruarua and Nei Karamakuna. With them too went his son Taranga and his youngest daughter Nei Taunikai. Nor did he forget his two birds: te Kiriri (a sort of sandpiper) who carried news and scattered white pebbles on graves and te Kewe, the curiew, whose shrill cry heralds a death or some important event. In his hand, as a walking stick, and to help him over the water, Naka took a branch from the tree Tere moa te rara. As he travelled he sang thus:

It is all done, all finished; here is Nikunau.

Catch as you may the way of speaking elsewhere,

I use only the language of my own land,

Takoronga of Samoa.

The islands of Tabitgeuea and Tarawa come

Of the same age: the time of Naka the Father;

And the age of Na Areau the Father is gone.

On they went and every time they stopped to rest an island was born where they stood. so they came to Tabiteuea and then to Tarawa. the first piece of Tabiteuea to emerge was Takoronga and there Taranga, Naka's son, lived. Bikeman, in the centre of the lagoon, was the first part of Tarawa to appear from the waters. Tebua-tarawa (a line of reefs) is the body of Nei Bibongibong, Naka's wife. She remained on Tarawa with her youngest daughter Nei Taunikai.

As for Naka, he began to count the waves ... one ... two ... and on reaching nine he went away. He went to the north, no one knows where, with his two elder daughters: Nei Mataruarua and Nei karamakuna. In the north of Makin they show the rock from which Naka took off, carrying his coconut, pandanus fruit, fish (*te mon*) and*Tarakaimautu* (meaning happiness, abundance). When his supplies were finished they were renewed. Naka always looked to the north, turning his back on Samoa and the horrible figure of Death who pursued him still and had not ceased to terrify him. Naka's dwelling bars the way of those dead souls who are on the way to Bouru. All souls must go past him. While he waits for them, he spends day and night weaving a never-ending net. this is only a trick, for the movement he makes in handling the mesh is only a way to catch any soul that comes within reach.

There were many companion s of Naka's who lived at Samoa or who left after him. they were the Ancestors, the Heroes and the god-men (anti ma Aomata). Together with Naka himself, the best known are Tabakea (the turtle); Bakoa (the shark); Auriaria, Taburimai, Tabuariki (thunder) and the goddesses Nei Tituabine and Nei Tevenei (shooting star). Nei Tituabine left after Naka but no one knew where she want. She returned in a canoe from the land of the white people. It was this canoe and the strangers herein that upset the tree Tere moa te rara whose inhabitants were then scattered. the tree called Tekai n tiku aba or Te Ieretia replaced the fallen tree. On top of it Nei Tituabine placed the two birds she had brought from the country of the whites: Te Take, the red-tailed tropic-bird and Te Koroangutungutu, the yellow-billed tropic bird, together with Nei Tetiennag. those who lived in the tree multiplied in number and then there was discord amongst them. Teuribaba, who lived at the root of the tree, became angry and destroyed it. Nei Tituabine's birds flew away: Te Take landed at Beberiki and Te Koroangutungutu came to Motua. Nei Tetiennang went to Tekirikiri. the other inhabitants of the tree and its shade scattered and followed Naka to the north.

**Korea, North (Asia)**

**Animals**

**The Green Frog**

<http://www.sejongsociety.org/korean_theme/korean_folk_tales/green_frog.html>

Long ago, the green frog lived with his widowed mother in a small pond. The green frog never listened to his mother, and when she told him to do something, he always did the opposite. If his mother told him to play in the hills, he went to the river. If she told him to go up, he went down. If she told him left, he went right. If she told him this, he did that.

The mother frog worried about what she would do with her son—he caused her so much distress and embarrassment. “Why can’t he be like other frogs?” she said to herself. “Why can’t he respect his elders and do what he’s told?” She worried about what would happen to him when she was gone. She knew she would have to do something to break his bad habits.

Day after day, week after week, the mother frog scolded the green frog and tried to teach him the proper way to behave, but he continued to ignore her and did just as he wished. The mother frog was growing old, and she worried so much that eventually she became sick. But even then the green frog did not change his ways.

Finally, when the mother frog knew she was going to die, she called her son to her side. She wanted a proper burial on the ountain, and since she knew that the green frog would do the opposite of what she told him, she chose her words carefully. “I don’t have much longer to live,” she said. “When I die, do not to bury me on the mountainside. You must bury me on the bank of the river.”

The green frog looked at her forlornly with his head bowed.

“Promise me,” said the mother frog. “You must promise.”

“I promise,” said the green frog.

Four days later, the mother frog died and the green frog was terribly sad. He blamed himself for her death and he was sorry for all the heartache he had caused her. He knew it was too late to undo all of his past misdeeds, but he could become a good frog for her now. He resolved finally to listen to his mother’s instructions. “I always did the opposite of what she told me when she was alive,” he said to himself, “but now I will do exactly as she told me.”

So, even knowing that it was unwise, the green frog buried his mother by the river. And when it rained, he stood watch, praying to heaven that the water would not rise. But when the monsoon rains came that summer, the river rose higher and higher—it flowed over its banks and washed his mother’s grave away.

The green frog sat in the pouring rain by the river bank, crying and crying for his mother. And that is why, to this day, the green frogs cry when it rains.

**Korea, South (Asia)**

**Animal**

**The Tiger & the Persimmon**

<http://www.sejongsociety.org/korean_theme/korean_folk_tales/tiger_and_persimmon.html>

Deep in the mountains, there was a small, quiet village, and on the mountain behind this village lived an enormous tiger, a terrible beast whose roar would make every creature tremble for miles around. One snowy winter evening, the tiger was hungry and he crept down into the village to get something to eat.

By and by, the tiger came to a house and paused outside the window where a baby was crying inside. “Aaang! Aaang! Aaang!” The child sounded exhausted, as if he had been crying for a long time, and yet he went on and on without pause.

“What an annoying brat,” thought the tiger. “By eating him, I’ll put an end to this racket.” He had a quick peek into the room, and he was just about to leap inside when he heard the baby’s mother.

“Look! A fox!” she said. “Stop crying or he’ll hear you and come eat you up!”

The baby was hardly distracted—he cried just as loudly. The mother tried to comfort the child, then to cajole him, but he would not stop. So she tried again. “Look! It’s a bear! He’s opening his huge jaws to eat you up!”

But the baby wasn’t frightened at all. He kept right on crying without even the smallest interruption.

Crouching outside the window, the tiger pondered this. “What sort of baby is not afraid of foxes or bears?” he thought. “Surely, this is a brave child.” He was full of admiration, but then the rumble in his belly reminded him why he had come down into the village, and he prepared to pounce into the room.

“Look!” cried the mother, “The big tiger from the mountain is here, right outside the window!”

At that, the tiger paused. “Let’s see how terrified he is before I eat him,” he thought, and he peeked into the room to gloat. But the baby was still crying without the slightest sign of fear.

The tiger had never, in his long years, come across a human or an animal that did not fear him. Even the trees and stones trembled at his approach. But this boy—what manner of child was he that he did not fear a tiger? The tiger was troubled by this question, but in the end he was a tiger, and he decided to resolve the issue by eating the child.

But just as he was about to pounce, the mother cried, “Look! A persimmon!” and the baby stopped in mid-cry. Just like that! Not a peep.

In the sudden silence, a terrible idea occurred to the tiger. “A Persimmon!” he thought. “More fearsome than a fox or a bear! Even more terrible than me! What a horrible monster it must be!” He quickly glanced left and right, his heart pounding with fear. “I’m done for if the Persimmon sees me,” he thought, and in a single leap he left the village and ran away back up into the mountain.

**Kosovo (Asia)**

**Ghost**

**The Kosovo Maiden**

<http://www.umotvorine.net/en/articles/details/199/The+Kosovo+Maiden>

On a Sunday early in the morning   
The Maid of Kosovo awoke to brilliant sun   
And rolled her sleeves above her snow-white elbows;  
On her back she carries warm, white bread,   
And in her hands she bears two golden goblets,   
one of water, one of dark red wine.   
Seeking out the plain of Kosovo,   
She walks upon the field of slaughter there   
Where noble Lazarus, the Tsar, was slain,   
And turns the warriors over in their blood;  
Should one still breathe she bathes him with the water   
And offers him, as if in sacrament,   
The dark red wine to drink, the bread to eat.  
At length she comes to Pavle Orlovich,   
Standard-bearer of his lord the Tsar,   
And finds him still alive, though torn and maimed:  
His right hand and his left leg are cut off   
And his handsome chest is crushed and broken  
So that she can see his lungs inside.   
She moves him from the pool of blood   
And bathes his wounds with clear and cool water;  
She offers him, as if in sacrament,   
The dark red wine to drink, the bread to eat.  
When she has thus attended to his needs,   
Pavle Orlovich revives and speaks:  
"Maid of Kosovo, my dearest sister,   
What misfortune leads you to this plain   
To turn the warriors over in their blood?   
Whom can you be looking for out here?   
Have you lost a brother or a nephew?   
Have you lost perhaps an aging father?"   
And the Maid of Kosovo replies:  
"O my brother, O my unknown hero!   
It is not for someone of my blood   
I'm searching: not an aging father;  
Neither is it for a brother or a nephew.   
Do you remember, brave and unknown warrior,   
When Lazar gave communion to his army  
With the help of thirty holy monks   
Near the lovely church of Samodrezha   
And it took them twenty days to do it?   
All the Serbian army took communion.   
At the end there came three warrior Lords:  
The first was captain Milosh Obilich,   
The next was Ivan Kosanchich,   
And the last the warrior Milan Toplitsa.   
It happened that I stood beside the gates   
As Milosh Obilich passed grandly by-   
There is no fairer warrior in this world-   
He trailed his saber there upon the stones   
And on his head he wore a helmet made   
Of wound white silk with feathers intertwined   
A brightly colored cloak hung down his back   
And round his neck he wore a silken scarf.   
As he passed he turned and looked at me   
And offered me his brightly colored cloak,   
Took it off and gave it to me, saying:  
'Maiden, take this brightly colored cloak   
By which I hope you will remember me-  
This cloak by which you can recall my name:  
Dear soul, I'm going out to risk my life   
In battle for the great Tsar Lazarus;  
Pray God, my love, that I return alive,   
And that good fortune shortly shall be yours:  
I will give you as a bride to Milan,   
Milan Toplitsa, my sworn blood-brother,   
Noble Milan who became my brother   
Before God Almighty and Saint John:  
To him I'll give you as a virgin bride.'  
After him rode Ivan Kosanchich-   
There is no fairer warrior in this world.   
He trailed his saber there upon the stones   
And on his head he wore a helmet made   
Of wound white silk with feathers intertwined,   
A brightly colored cloak hung down his back   
While round his neck he wore a silken scarf   
And on his hand he had a golden ring.   
As he passed he turned and looked at me   
And offered me the glowing golden ring,   
Took it off and gave it to me saying:  
'Maiden, take this golden wedding ring   
By which I hope you will remember me-   
This ring by which you can recall my name:  
Dear soul, I'm going out to risk my life   
In battle for the great Tsar Lazarus;  
Pray God, my love, that I return alive,   
And that good fortune shortly shall be yours:  
I will give you as a bride to Milan,   
Milan Toplitsa, my sworn blood-brother,   
Noble Milan who became my brother   
Before God Almighty and Saint John:  
I will be the best man at your wedding.'  
After him rode Milan Toplitsa-   
There is no fairer warrior in this world.   
He trailed his saber there upon the stones   
And on his head he wore a helmet made   
Of wound white silk with feathers intertwined,   
A brightly colored cloak hung down his back   
While round his neck he wore a silken scarf   
And on his wrist he had a golden torque  
As he passed he turned and looked at me   
And offered me the shining golden torque,   
Took it off and gave it to me, saying:  
'Maiden, take this shining golden torque   
By which I hope you will remember me-   
This torque by which you can recall my name:  
Dear soul, I'm going out to risk my life   
In battle for the great Tsar Lazarus;  
Pray God, my love, that I return alive,   
And that good fortune shortly shall be yours   
And I will take you for my faithful wife.'   
With that the warrior Lords all rode away-   
And so I search upon this field of slaughter."  
Pavle Orlovich then spoke and said:  
"O my dearest sister, Maid of Kosovo!   
Do you see, dear soul, those battle-lances   
Where they're piled the highest over there?   
That is where the blood of heroes flowed   
In pools higher than the flanks of horses,  
Higher even than the horses' saddles-   
right up to the riders' silken waistbands.   
Those you came to find have fallen there;  
Go back, maiden, to your white-walled dwelling.   
Do not stain your skirt and sleeves with blood."  
When she has heard the wounded hero's words   
She weeps, and tears flow down her pale face;  
She leaves the plain of Kosovo and walks   
To her white village wailing, crying out:-   
"O pity, pity! I am cursed so utterly  
That if I touched a greenly leafing tree   
it would dry and wither, blighted and defiled."

**Kuwait (Asia)**

**Treasure**

**The Fisherman and the Big Fish**

He was very poor, he was living alone, no wife, no sons, no parents and no friends.  He was the poor fisherman who lived in a small hut near the beach.  He was dreaming of being wealthy; one day while he hunted for fish, he caught a very large fish.  He was very happy.  "That's the first time in my life I caught a strange fish like this, but nobody will be able to believe me later."  "Please let me go, don't kill me!"  That is what the fisherman heard when he was carrying the big fish with him, and suddenly he stopped, he was asking:  Who is talking?  He thought that someone was talking to him, or maybe he imagined that he heard somebody talk, but no, the sound repeated many times; it was the fish, the fish was the one that was talking to him.  He didn't believe that, and he started asking the fish, "Who are you?  And what do you want?"  She said: "Please, don't kill me, please leave me to go, and I will do whatever you want, whatever you wish, I can give it to you, but please, leave me to go."  The fisherman was thinking about that; he told the fish, "OK, I will leave you to go, but I want to be wealthy, very wealthy."  The big fish said to him, "OK, you go now, and you will find much money, gold and jewelry in your hut, and if you need anything, just yell on the beach and you will find me under your service.  The fisherman left the fish to go; he ran to his hunt, he found much money, gold and the jewelry, he yelled, "I'm wealthy, I'm wealthy, I'm not poor anymore, but I'm still living in this small hut; I want to live in a big palace."  He went to the beach and yelled at the fish.  The big fish came very quickly.  "Yes, what more do you wish?"  "I want to live in a big palace."  "OK, you go now and you will find a big palace instead of your small hut."  He went there and he found a very big palace.  Nobody had a palace like this in his town.

   After many years, this man became a tempter, he thought that he could do whatever he wanted, and one day while he was walking with some of his friends in the backyard of his palace, the rain came to descend very hard from the sky, and he said: "Oh, dammit, I want this rain to stop, I want to enjoy this day with my friends."  He went to the beach and yelled at the big fish.  He asked her to stop the rain.  She told him, "That's what I can't do for you, because it's between the hands of God."  Then, after that, the man lost everything; he lost the money, the gold, the jewelry, and the palace, and he returned back to his job as a fisherman.

**Kyrgyzstan (Asia)**

**Animals**

**Mother Wolf**

<http://wws.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=76>

Thousands of years ago, high in the white mountains of Siberia, there lived a wolf. All of the other wolves in her clan had been driven off the land. She was all alone.

A band of Turks had settled in the valley below her. Although the wolf would, on occasion, run down to the Turks' village to tease a milkmaid or frighten a young herder coming home late from the fields, the wolf and the Turks lived together in peace. From her lofty crag, the wolf would watch as the Turks gathered each night around a bonfire. There, they would sing songs of thanks for the food they ate, the work they shared, and the life they loved. In the distance, the wolf would join in their song, howling to the frosty moon. The passion of a thousand nights echoed in her throat. Hearing her, the villagers would bow their heads in gratitude, knowing that the lone wolf protected them, the lone wolf was one of them.

One day at sunset, just as the milkmaids and young herders were coming home from the fields and the night air was filling with the delicious aroma of dinner, an army of soldiers invaded the village. The Turks had no time to gather their weapons and fight. Swiftly and calmly, the soldiers shot ailing grandfathers in their beds and young mothers in their kitchens. Although the men of the village tried to fight back, they were unprepared and outnumbered.

The children of the village ran as fast as their legs could carry them, heading frantically for the forest. Nonetheless, the soldiers caught all of them—all except three brothers. The two older brothers were too fast for the soldiers to catch, and the youngest brother—a child of five—hid inside an abandoned wheelbarrow.

As soon as the wolf had seen the soldiers approach, she tried to warn the villagers and protect their young. But the wolf, too, was overpowered. An arrow had wounded her paw. Much to the amusement of the soldiers, she limped through the village, dodging their countless arrows, and trying desperately to help the villagers. But it was no use. The village that had been joyous and vibrant only hours before was now as silent as the cold, silvery moon.

By midnight all the soldiers had fled into the forest. Only one survivor remained in the village—the little boy inside the wheelbarrow. The boy dared not move from his hiding place and he dared not make a sound. Still, he could not help but tremble.

Hearing the child's muffled weeping, the wolf limped over to the wheelbarrow and lay beside it. Up above, the moon glowed bright against the velvet sky. And though the passion of a thousand nights burned like bitter fire in her throat, the wolf did not sing that night.

When the sun rose the next morning, the wolf gently barked to the boy, urging him to come out of the wheelbarrow. The wolf feared that the soldiers would soon return to the village, as they had forgotten to take the villagers' livestock and grain. The wolf's bark was a great relief to the young boy, who, like everyone else in the village, knew and respected the wolf. As the boy climbed out, the wolf grabbed his sleeve with his teeth. She pulled the boy, encouraging him to run with her high up to the mountain. There, the wolf knew, the boy would be safe. From that day forward, she would protect him, feed him, and raise him as if he were her own pup.

Seven years passed. The boy grew to be as smart and loyal as his adoptive mother, the wolf. She taught him how to hunt deer and rabbits, how to savor the taste of raw meat, and how to find his way through the snow and ice.

One night the mother wolf and wolf boy sat silently high atop a mountain crag. Below them lay the ruins of the Turks' village that the soldiers had destroyed many years before. In the moonlight, they could see movement—two young men were inspecting the ruins. Startled, the mother wolf pierced the night air with a threatening howl. But upon hearing her, the two men smiled and called to her.

"Do you remember us?" they shouted up to the wolf. Immediately, the mother wolf ran down to the two men. The wolf boy, unsure of what was happening, followed his mother's lead.

The mother wolf jumped upon the two men and nipped their legs playfully.

The wolf boy slowly moved closer. Turning their attention away from the wolf, the men stared at the strange figure: The wolf boy was covered from head to toe in a filthy deerskin. The two men strained to see his face. It was their brother!

The boy was suspicious of the men, but the mother wolf urged him forward. As the boy came closer, the young men hugged the wolf boy tightly. Memories of the life he had known as a child washed over him, and he threw his arms around his brothers, crying fiercely.

The two men urged their young brother to return with them to the land they had settled in. But the boy did not want to leave the mother wolf.

"You can help us," said the eldest brother. "You have the instinct of a wolf.

Come with us and join our attack against the invaders who destroyed our clan." The wolf boy looked at his mother. They both knew that he had no choice. He had the strength, cunning, and daring to lead the Turks to victory.

Before the wolf boy could change his mind, the mother wolf disappeared into the white mountains. Taking her place against the stark outline of the moon, she howled with the tenderness and hope of a thousand dawns.

With her voice flowing through his veins, the wolf boy followed his brothers through the forest, determined to save his people from extinction.

**Laos (Asia)**

**Ghost**

**The Ghost Named Kongkoi**

<http://nyenoona.wordpress.com/2009/02/28/lao-folktales-phi-kongkoi-the-ghost-named-kongkoi/>

Once there was a man named Thid Kaew who lived with his old mother.  Thid Kaew was a grateful son who took very good care of his mother.  He earned a living by fishing.  At first he could get a lot of fish, but later there was no fish, not a single fish.  So he went to tell his mother about this.

“There must be someone stealing our fish.  Why don’t you go and watch the trap?”  suggested his mother.

So Thid Kaew went to hide near his fish trap.  Later that night he saw a dark shadow emerging from a bush, shrieking, “Kok kok kok Koi koi koi.”  It was Phi Kongkoi, the female ghost named Kongkoi.

Thid Kaew jumped on the shadow, and it cried, “Kok kok kok Koi koi koi, (Hungry! Hungry!).”  Thid Kaew wrestled the shadow down, and they struggled for a long time.  Finally he subdued the hungry ghost.  Now she looked beautiful to him.  He became the husband of Phi Kongkoi.  He was very happy.

As the golden rays of the sun appeared in the sky at dawn, the rooster crowed, “Egg-I-en-egg.” Thid Kaew woke up.  He stretched, but…whoops! He almost fell off the high branch of a tree.  “Oh, no.  How did I get up here?”  he asked himself.  He called out:

“Help! Help! Thid Kaew can climb up the tree, but not down.  Help! Help! Thid Kaew can climb up the tree, but not down.”

It was cool in the morning, but Thid Kaew was drenched with sweat.  Nobody came to help.  Thid Kaew tried to climb down, with difficulty, and finally he managed to get down from the tree.  Once his feet touched the ground, he began running, running, running.

He was running around and around in the forest until dark.  He came across a little hut in the field.  There he saw Phi Kongkoi, crying, saying, “Oh, dear husband, we can’t live together.  I have to go my way.  But before I go away, I will give you some treasures that I have.”  Then she handed the treasures to Thid Kaew, and Phi Kongkoi disappeared.

Thid Kaew grabbed the treasures and ran back home to his mother.  It was real treasure.  And the ghost lady was really gone forever.  So they lived happily ever after.

**Latvia (Europe)**

**Cleverness**

**The Giant and Pastaris**

<http://www.fairy-tale.info/index.php/action_show_id_NDl8PDwmPj58NTN8PDwmPj58NTl8PDwmPj58.html>

Once upon a time a giant kidnapped a young fisherman named Pastaris. The giant carried Pastaris into a great palace. nωЫθㄓＷwｗ。FＡｉＲY-TａＬＥ．IＮＦｏ+Rャ∽

"Here you'll stay," said the giant. "Do not light a fire, no matter what happens!" Pastaris heard a terrible wailing. The next night the same thing happened. Ｗｗｗ.ｆaiRy-tale.IｎＦoǐㄣБねЬu

On the third night Pastaris decided he must build a fire so he could see where the wailing was coming from, so he decided to use a flint and tinder to light a candle. ㄞゥWｗＷ。fＡｉRｙ-ｔaｌe．Ｉnfｏ№くた

When the room lit up, the giant stormed into Pastaris' room. "You disobeyed me!" he thundered, and he carried Pastaris to a tall mountain and left him at the top.

For two days Pastaris sat there, but on the third day he decided to climb down. When he reached the bottom of the mountain, he walked through the forest, and came upon four men standing around a fallen horse.

"Do not pass by us!" the men cried. "We need you to divide this horse among us as we don't know how to divide it."

Pastaris advised the men on how to divide the horse and then he turned to leave.

"Wait, we must reward you for your help."

The first man gave Pastaris a hair from a bull. "Spin this hair and your strength will be greater than the strength of any man."

The second man gave Pastaris a feather. "Spin this, and you'll move faster than any creature moves." タㄚυЬｗwW.FａｉＲｙ－ｔalE.Inｆos◎※ǎほ⌒جم

"And this," said the third man, handing Pastaris a scale, "will help you swim faster than any fish." ぇ※З◎wｗw.ＦaＩｒＹ－talE。iＮＦoЙほ≈

The fourth man gave him an ant's leg and said, "With this you'll be able to dig to the center of the Earth."

Pastaris thanked them and set off, but that evening the ground began to tremble, and the giant's voice roared, "Who told you to leave the mountain?"

"I did," said Pastaris.

"Is that so?" the giant thundered. "Then I shall kill you!" ムˇネㄛWWｗ。FＡiｒＹ-ｔAｌe。IＮＦＯà

However, Pastaris spun the hair of the bull and struck the giant.

The giant reeled and fell to the ground; and Pastaris said, "Now I shall kill you!"

"My soul is not inside my body," the giant laughed. ㄈサみkУｗＷW.fAIｒｙ－TAlＥ。iＮｆoC

"Then tell me where it is," said Pastaris," and I will destroy it."

"On the other side of the ocean stands a post. Hit this post with your finger, and a sword will fall down from heaven. With this sword kill a snake in the forest, and a rabbit will appear and race away. Catch the rabbit and cut off its head, and a dove will appear. If you can catch the dove when it flies to heaven, an egg will fall, and in that egg is my life. You will never have it."

Pastaris left the giant and twirled the fish scale, and in one second he swam across the ocean. He found the post, and he hit that post with his finger. A great sword fell to the ground.

Pastaris grabbed the sword and hurried into the forest, and there he found a snake. He struck the snake, and a rabbit ran out from the place where the snake had been. Pastaris twirled his feather, and suddenly it seemed as if he were flying. He caught the rabbit, chopped off its head, and a dove appeared. αュㄜWww.ＦＡirｙ－ｔａlＥ．iＮfＯ∽◎P)も$

Again Pastaris twirled his feather, flew up into the clouds and caught the dove. Sure enough, an egg dropped from the sky, plunging down into the ground. Pastaris twirled the ant leg, and just as the man had told him, he was able to climb into the ground after that egg and catch it.

Pastaris carried that egg back to the giant's palace and smashed it to pieces.

The giant died.

And Pastaris lived happily ever after.

**Lebanon (Asia)**

**Royalty**

**The Prince and the Princess**

<http://www.topics-mag.com/folk-tales/folk-tale-happiness-lebanan.htm>

A long time ago, there was a prince who was very brave and a great knight. There was a princess too who was very beautiful and kind. They lived happily in a big castle.

One day, a witch went to the castle and said to them "I hate you both, and I hate love, too. I am going to kill you."

"No, I will kill you and kill evil with you!" the prince replied bravely. Then, the prince tried to kill the witch, but he wasn't able to do anything because he changed into a fox as soon as the witch said "Prince, change into a fox."

Then, the princess tried to help her love, but the witch changed her into a frog. After that, the witch took them to a prison in a tower.

After a few days, someone sent a dragon to help the prisoners. The dragon went to the witch and blew some fire from his mouth and burnt her. After the witch was killed by the dragon, the prince and the princess returned to their natural selves and lived happily together for the rest of their lives.

**Lesotho (Africa)**

**Animals**

**Jackal and Hen**

<http://tdn.com/lifestyles/article_a2170a22-8a58-11e0-ab23-001cc4c002e0.html>

Once upon a time Hen saw Jackal coming. She hurried to the top of a stack of wheat so she could eat the grain - and be safe from Jackal.

"Oh dear, oh dear, the Jackal is coming," Hen clucked. "Jackal makes me so nerrrrrvous, so nerrrrrvous."

Jackal loped to the stack and looked up at Hen.

"Hello, Mother Hen! How are you feeling today?"

"Hellooo Brother Jackal, hellooo," Hen replied. "I'm feeling gooood, very good, how are yooooooou?"

"I'm doing very well, Mother Hen, thank you for asking," Jackal said. "It looks like you're enjoying a delicious lunch up there."

"Yes, I aaaaaaam, I am," she replied.

Jackal's mouth watered as he looked at Hen, so plump and juicy. He couldn't climb up the slippery wheat, so he decided to trick Hen into coming down to him.

"Mother Hen, have you heard the great news?" he asked. "There is peace among everybody on earth! It was just announced today. Animals will no longer be allowed to catch, bite or eat each other, because of the peace."

"Peeeeeeeeace? Peeeeeeeace? Did I heeeeeear you correctly, Jackal?"

"Yes, Mother hen, you did indeed," Jackal said. "The animal chiefs called a big meeting and they decided there would be peace on all the earth."

Hen fluttered her wings in confusion, unsure if Jackal could be trusted.

"Oh deeeeear, oh deeeear, what to dooooo?" she clucked to herself.

Jackal flashed a friendly grin.

"Isn't it great?" he said. "There has never been such a big peace. Why don't you come down here to celebrate? I'm getting a crick in my neck looking up."

He began to drool again, thinking of a drumstick.

But instead of coming down, the Hen looked across the field.

"What are you looking at?" Jackal asked.

"A pack of dogs running this waaaaaaaaaay," Hen replied. "It's a goood thing there's peeeace among the animals. There's no daaaaaanger."

Jackal leaped in terror.

"I just remembered, I have a lot of work to do!" he cried. "Goodbye!"

"Why are you afraaaaaaaid?" Hen called after him. "Didn't you just tell me the animal chiefs had a big meeting of peeeeeace?"

"I don't think the dogs came to the meeting!" Jackal shouted as he ran away.

The Hen fell back on the wheat, laughing.

"Buc-buc-buc-bacaw!" she clucked. "I thought so! Jackal was trying to foooool me. But I fooled him instead!"

**Liberia (Africa)**

**Cleverness**

**Two Ways to Count to Ten**

<http://www.calacademy.org/exhibits/africa/exhibit/count.htm>

A long time ago, deep in the forests of Liberia, King Leopard began to think about the future. He thought, "I'm getting old and one day when I get real old, I'm going to get sick and die". Now a wise king would not wait until he was old to pick a successor, someone who could take his place as king after he died. No, a wise king would pick his successor while still young and healthy. But how could King Leopard choose when he loved all the members of the animal kingdom the same? How could he choose one over the other?

King Leopard sat beneath a tree and started to think. After a while, he came up with a plan. He summoned his messengers and sent them out into the forests of Liberia. He told them to ask all of the animals of the animal kingdom to come to his palace. He was going to throw a big party and at this party, he was going to make an important announcement. So away the messengers ran, to all four corners of the forest.

On the night of the party, the forest came alive with excitement. It seemed like all the animals were at King Leopard's palace. They sang and they danced and had a great time. Then, after the moon had risen above the trees, King Leopard came and stood in the middle of the clearing. The animals looked up and saw the king. They stopped their singing and dancing and showed their respect for the king by listening quietly as he began to speak.

"I've been thinking that it's time for me to pick a successor. But because I love all of you equally, I can't decide who among you is most worthy. I have decided to let a contest decide for me."

King Leopard walked a short way into the trees and came back carrying a spear. He said, "The first one among you who can take this spear and throw it into the sky and count all the way to ten before it touches the ground will be my successor."

As soon as King Leopard finished making this announcement, the animals began to talk excitedly among themselves. But suddenly they were disturbed by a loud noise from the rear. The animals looked around to see what was going on, and had to quickly move out of the way for Elephant was stomping through the crowd to the front. Elephant was going to participate in the contest. As he came forward, he said "Move out of my way. Move out of my way. I'm gonna be king. I'm gonna be king. I'm the biggest, I oughta be king."

"All right," said King Leopard "you can be the first. But before you throw the spear you must first do a dance of victory."

Elephant lumbered around the clearing, stomping his legs and trumpeting with his trunk. After a few minutes, Elephant took the spear and curled it up in his long trunk. Then he thrust his head way back and threw the spear into the sky.

"One! Two! Three!" Elephant cried.

The spear hit the ground on the count of four.

Elephant did not win the contest. He was so angry that he started stomping and blowing his trumpet. King Leopard told him "Elephant, you only get one chance and you've had your chance." And so Elephant had to leave.

After Elephant left, the animals started to talk excitedly amongst themselves again, but as before, they were disturbed by a loud noise coming from the rear.

Boar came charging through the crowd saying "Get outa my way. Get outa my way. I'm gonna be king. I'm gonna be king. I've got the biggest muscles, I oughta be king."

"All right, alight" said King Leopard. "You know the rules. Before you throw the spear, you must first do a dance of victory."

And so the boar did his dance of victory. He dropped to the ground and lifted his entire weight on one foot, then he jumped up and down and all around.

Finally, with his sharp claws, Boar began to dig a hole in the ground. He made the hole deeper and deeper until all you could see was the top of his head. Then he took the spear, clenched it in his teeth, threw his head back and cast the spear into the sky.

"One! Two! Three! Four! Five!" he shouted.

The spear hit the ground on the count of six.

Boar did not win the contest. He was so angry that he started blowing and fuming and tossing clods of dirt into the air. King Leopard told him "Boar, you only get one chance and you've had your chance." And so Boar had to leave.

After that, the animals started to express. They said things like, "Goodness! This contest is hard. Elephant couldn't do it, and he's real big. Boar couldn't do it either, and he's real strong. I don't think any body's gonna win this contest!"

Right about then, they heard another sound coming from the rear and when the animals looked around, they couldn't believe their eyes. The saw Monkey coming through the crowd. As Monkey came forward, he chanted "I can do it. I can do it. I know I can do it. I can do it, nothing to it. I can do it. I know I can do it."

"All right" said Leopard, "Go ahead with your dance of victory."

"Sure thing king," said Monkey, "I love to dance. Stand back and give me room."

And so Monkey did his dance of victory. He leapt up and down and all around. He grabbed up a branch from the ground and shook it and danced around and around.

"All right Monkey", said Leopard. "Here's your spear."

Monkey took the spear and he backed way up. Then he pulled his arm back, charged forward, leapt into the air and threw the spear into the sky.

"One! Two! Three! Four! Five! Six! Seven!" cried Monkey.

The spear hit the ground on the count of eight. Monkey did not win the contest. Monkey was upset. He was so angry that he started turning flips, complaining and making all sorts of excuses and begging for a second chance. But King Leopard told him "No Monkey, you only get one chance". And so Monkey had to leave.

After that happened, the animals really began to doubt that any animal could win the contest. They said things like "My goodness. This contest is so hard! I thought our king was wise and smart, but maybe he's finally decided to use his smarts against us! Maybe he knows that nobody can take that spear and throw it into the sky and count all the way to ten before it hits the ground! Why King Leopard might be making fools out of us all! I for one am not going to stand around here and be made a fool of." And so some of the animals turned and started to head for home, but as they were leaving, they heard yet another sound coming from the rear.

When they animals looked around this time, they saw an unbelievable sight. They saw a tiny, tiny antelope coming through the crowd. As the antelope came forward, he said, "Wait, wait. Let me try. Let me try. I can do it. I can do it. Let me try."

When the animals heard that, they all burst out laughing. Elephant rumbled up to Antelope and said "What do you mean, you can do it? Why if I can't do it, you certainly can't. Go home you little runt."

At this, the animals really started to laugh. King Leopard jumped up and shouted angrily, "Stop it! Stop it! I will not have you making fun of antelope like that! Who is to say that small animals can't do things that big animals can do? If antelope wants to have a chance, he's going to be given the same chance that all the other animals had. So stand back and let Antelope do his dance of victory."

On that long ago night, deep in the forests of Liberia little antelope did dance, but his dance was real different from the dances of the other animals. Antelope slowly moved around in a circle, extending his legs gracefully while lifting his head towards the sky almost as if he were thanking the heavens for being alive. Then Antelope turned towards the animals and it was as if he was saying that he loved all the animals and was happy and proud to be part of such a beautiful and diverse animal kingdom. Finally, Antelope turned and looked towards the king and it was as if he was saying that he loved the king, who was so wise and yet so kind. Antelope bowed down to his king, turned and took the spear in his mouth. He backed up, clenched the spear hard between his teeth and with every ounce of strength in his tiny body he started running. When he reached the center of the clearing, he leapt upwards and released the spear.

"Five plus five equals ten" he shouted.

All the animals were quiet. "What is this?" Asked Elephant. "Five plus five equals ten?" Monkey scratched his head in confusion.

King Leopard came forward and explained everything. He said "Yes Antelope! Yes, you're absolutely right. Five plus five does equal ten and so does three plus seven and lots of other combinations! Five plus five is another way to get to ten! This contest was not a contest to find out who was the biggest or who was the strongest. It was a contest to see who is the smartest!"

And that's how Antelope, the smallest animal of the forest became king after Leopard stepped down. Not because he was the biggest or the strongest, but because he was the smartest.

**Libya (Africa)**

**Royalty**

**Fatoom, the Daughter of the Beggars**

<http://www.thebirdali.com/2011/04/fatoom-daughter-of-beggars.html>

Fatoom was a beautiful, smart girl. But she was very poor. Her father died, and her mother started begging, wandering and asking people for alms.

One day her mother brought her a little bit of rice, lentils and some meat, and asked her to cook while wandering around in the market, hoping to get more food or some money.

Fatoom started cooking. She stood in front of the pot till the food ripped. As soon as she finished cooking the door was knocked. When she opened the door she saw an old woman asking for some food. Fatoom invited her in and poured her a bowl of food. The old woman thanked her and ate all the food. Then she asked for another and another until the pot was empty. Fatoom did not show dissatisfaction. Then she wished the old woman good luck when she left.

Fatoom was puzzled. What can she do? She poured some water in the pot and brought it over the fire, and left water to boil with what remained in the bottom of the pot.

 When her mother returned in the evening, her daughter gave her a bowl of water, and some grains of rice, lentils. The mother got angry and screamed at her daughter: "Where is the food?" The girl did not know what to say, rising the mother's anger, so she attacked the girl to hit her but she opened the door of the house and ran away.

Fortunately her feet led to the king's palace. She sat down the fence. The king was in the balcony, he saw her. He ordered the servants to bring her and then ordered them to take her to the bathroom, and dress her well.

When Fatoom came out of the bathroom she looked like a princess in silk clothes. As soon as the King saw her he was amazed by her beauty, and immediately announced his desire to marry her. Joy and happiness spread all over the country. And the wedding ceremonies lasted for "seven days and eight nights in the city. All people were invited to eat and drink from the King's palace.

 Fatoom was happy in her new life, and so was the king.

One day Fatoom stood in her balcony, she saw her mother at the bottom of the wall of the palace begging. She sent the servants to get her. When they brought her, Fatoom told her mother who she is and asked her to leave the life of begging and live with her in the palace. But the mother got angry, and yelled out "What did you do with the food I asked you to cook that day you daughter of beggars? Fatoom tried to comfort, and persuade her to keep silent. She promised to give her jewels and pearls instead, but the screams of the mother were becoming increasingly louder. The girl had to use deception. She told her mother that the dish of food is in courtyard of the palace at the bottom of the window. She led her to the window to see it. When the mother looked, she pushed her and fell down dead. Then the girl rushed to the courtyard of the palace, dug a hole at the bottom of the window, and buried her mother.

After that Fatoom forgot what she did and lived happily with her husband the king. But one day she looked down from her window and saw that a plant emerged in the courtyard of the palace where she had buried her mother. She did not care for it. But day after day, the plant raised and grew, until it became a tree. One day while the girl was looking at the twigs and branches extending in front of the window, the breeze blew. It moved the leaves. The sound was like someone saying: "What did you do with the food I asked you to cook that day you daughter of beggars?

One night while Fatoom was sitting with her husband talking about different issues with the window of the room open, soft breezes blew and she heard the leaves saying "What did you do with the food I asked you to cook that day you daughter of beggars?

She ran to the window, and closed it with great fear and confusion. When she returned to the table, the King noticed her pale face and the changes in her expressions. He also saw tears in her eyes. He asked her about what happened to cause all that. She tried to evade the answer, but he insisted. She told him that she did not like the palace because the toilet in her father's house is bigger and more beautiful than the palace.

The King was shocked when he had heard that. He decided to see the toilet of her father's house and if it was not as she said he would kill her. Fatoom did not believe that she had said that, and regretted it.

  She had to walk with her husband the king, to guide him to her father's house. She was walking like the one who got lost, did not know where to go and the king kept on asking her: "Where is your father's house? When will we reach?" She kept walking and spinning, until they reached a barren land. The king said to her: "You are no doubt a liar and you must be killed". He drew his sword, but she begged him for a permission to empty behind the hill; he gave her.

Fatoom intend to run away, but when she reached behind the hill she saw a large turtle. The turtle suddenly said: "What is the error that you did Fatoom?", Fatoom was astonished, and then said to her: "Please help me," It asked her to go immediately and bring King, and promised her to find in the place where the turtle itself stood a tile with a ring on it. All she has to do is to lift it and lower, to see what will surprise the king. Fatoom was about to speed to the king, when the tortoise warned her not to stay at the bottom more than seven days, or else things will turn against her.

Fatoom returned to her husband the king, with signs of pleasure on her face, while he was still angry, and the sword is in his hand. She told him that they had reached the house of her father, and then led him to where the tortoise was behind the hill. She saw a tile with a ring on it. She lifted it and saw a crypt. She descended with the king to find a palace that they had not seen one like it before. It had high domes, wide doors, with alabaster stairs, and coral lamps, as if made by elves.

The King stayed with his wife Fatoom in the palace for days, enjoying every thing they do until the seventh day. Fatoom remembered what the turtle said to her. So she said to her husband: "I long for your palace, and I miss it, I will not mention my father's palace anymore" the King forgave her.

They came out of the crypt, and again they found themselves in the barren land. After walking a few steps, Fatoom said to the king, "Excuse me, I want to go behind the hill to empty" and she returned back to the hill. She saw the turtle, where it was seven days ago. She thanked her and asked her who she really is. The turtle told her that she is the old woman that Fatoom welcomed and fed long ago. The king and his wife, Fatoom, the daughter of the beggars, returned home to spend the rest of their lives together happily.

**Liechtenstein (Europe)**

**Brother Merry**

<http://www.worldoftales.com/European_folktales/German_folktale_14.html>

In days of yore there was a war, and when it was at an end a great number of the soldiers that had been engaged in it were disbanded. Among the rest Brother Merry received his discharge, and nothing more for all he had done than a very little loaf of soldier's bread, and four halfpence in money. With these possessions he went his way. Now a saint had seated himself in the road, like a poor beggar man, and when Brother Merry came along, he asked him for charity to give him something. Then the soldier said—

"Dear beggar man, what shall such as I give you? I have been a soldier, and have just got my discharge, and with it only a very little loaf and four halfpence. When that is gone I shall have to beg like yourself."

However, he divided the loaf into four parts, and gave the saint one, with a halfpenny. The saint thanked him, and having gone a little further along the road seated himself like another beggar in the way of the soldier. When Brother Merry came up the saint again asked alms of him, and the old soldier again gave him another quarter of the loaf and another halfpenny.

The saint thanked him, and seated himself in the way a third time, like another beggar, and again addressed Brother Merry. Brother Merry gave him a third quarter of the loaf, and the third halfpenny.

The saint thanked him, and Brother Merry journeyed on with all he had left—one quarter of the loaf and a single halfpenny. When he came to a tavern, being hungry and thirsty, he went in and ate the bread, and spent the halfpenny in beer to drink with it. When he had finished, he continued his journey, and the saint, in the disguise of a disbanded soldier, met him again and saluted him.

"Good day, comrade," said he; "can you give me a morsel of bread, and a halfpenny to get a drop of drink?"

"Where shall I get it?" answered Brother Merry. "I got my discharge, and nothing with it but a loaf and four halfpence, and three beggars met me on the road and I gave each of them a quarter of the loaf and a halfpenny. The last quarter I have just eaten at the tavern, and I have spent the last halfpenny in drink. I am quite empty now. If you have nothing, let us go begging together."

"No, that will not be necessary just now," said the saint. "I understand a little about doctoring, and I will in time obtain as much as I need by that."

"Ha!" said Brother Merry, "I know nothing about that, so I must go and beg by myself."

"Only come along," replied the saint, "and if I can earn anything, you shall go halves."

"That will suit me excellently," replied Brother Merry.

So they travelled on together.

They had not gone a great distance before they came to a cottage in which they heard a great lamenting and screaming. They went in to see what was the matter, and found a man sick to the death, as if about to expire, and his wife crying and weeping loudly.

"Leave off whining and crying," said the saint. "I will make the man well again quickly enough," and he took a salve out of his pocket and cured the man instantly, so that he could stand up and was quite hearty. Then the man and his wife, in great joy, demanded—

"How can we repay you? What shall we give you?"

The saint would not, however, take anything, and the more the couple pressed him the more firmly he declined. Brother Merry, who had been looking on, came to his side, and, nudging him, said—

"Take something; take something. We want it badly enough."

At length the peasant brought a lamb, which he desired the saint to accept, but he declined it still. Then Brother Merry jogged his side, and said—

"Take it, you foolish fellow; take it. We want it badly enough."

At last the saint said—

"Well, I'll take the lamb, but I shall not carry it. You must carry it."

"There's no great hardship in that," cried Brother Merry. "I can easily do it;" and he took it on his shoulder.

After that they went on till they came to a wood, and Brother Merry, who was very hungry, and found the lamb a heavy load, called out to the saint—

"Hallo! here is a nice place for us to dress and eat the lamb."

"With all my heart," replied his companion; "but I don't understand anything of cooking, so do you begin, and I will walk about until it is ready. Don't begin to eat until I return. I will take care to be back in time."

"Go your ways," said Brother Merry; "I can cook it well enough. I'll soon have it ready."

The saint wandered away, while Brother Merry lighted the fire, killed the lamb, put the pieces into the pot, and boiled them. In a short time the lamb was thoroughly done, but the saint had not returned; so Merry took the meat up, carved it, and found the heart.

"That is the best part of it," said he; and he kept tasting it until he had finished it.

At length the saint came back, and said—

"I only want the heart. All the rest you may have, only give me that."

Then Brother Merry took his knife and fork, and turned the lamb about as if he would have found the heart, but of course he could not discover it. At last he said, in a careless manner—

"It is not here."

"Not there? Where should it be, then?" said the saint.

"That I don't know," said Merry; "but now I think of it, what a couple of fools we are to look for the heart of a lamb. A lamb, you know, has not got a heart."

"What?" said the saint; "that's news, indeed. Why, every beast has a heart, and why should not the lamb have one as well as the rest of them?"

"No, certainly, comrade, a lamb has no heart. Only reflect, and it will occur to you that it really has not."

"Well," replied his companion, "it is quite sufficient. There is no heart there, so I need none of the lamb. You may eat it all."

"Well, what I cannot eat I'll put in my knapsack," said Brother Merry.

Then he ate some, and disposed of the rest as he had said. Now, as they continued their journey, the saint contrived that a great stream should flow right across their path, so that they must be obliged to ford it. Then said he—

"Go you first."

"No," answered Brother Merry; "go you first," thinking that if the water were too deep he would stay on the bank where he was. However, the saint waded through, and the water only reached to his knees; but when Brother Merry ventured, the stream seemed suddenly to increase in depth, and he was soon up to his neck in the water.

"Help me, comrade," he cried.

"Will you confess," said the saint, "that you ate the lamb's heart?"

The soldier still denied it, and the water got still deeper, until it reached his mouth. Then the saint said again—

"Will you confess, then, that you ate the lamb's heart?"

Brother Merry still denied what he had done, and as the saint did not wish to let him drown he helped him out of his danger.

They journeyed on until they came to a kingdom where they heard that the king's daughter lay dangerously ill.

"Holloa! brother," said the soldier, "here's a catch for us. If we can only cure her we shall be made for ever."

The saint, however, was not quick enough for Brother Merry.

"Come, Brother Heart," said the soldier, "put your best foot forward, so that we may come in at the right time."

But the saint went still slower, though his companion kept pushing and driving him, till at last they heard that the princess was dead.

"This comes of your creeping so," said the soldier.

"Now be still," said the saint, "for I can do more than make the sick whole; I can bring the dead to life again."

"If that's true," said Brother Merry, "you must at least earn half the kingdom for us."

At length they arrived at the king's palace, where everybody was in great trouble, but the saint told the king he would restore his daughter to him. They conducted him to where she lay, and he commanded them to let him have a caldron of water, and when it had been brought, he ordered all the people to go away, and let nobody remain with him but Brother Merry. Then he divided the limbs of the dead princess, and throwing them into the water, lighted a fire under the caldron, and boiled them. When all the flesh had fallen from the bones, the saint took them, laid them on a table, and placed them together in their natural order. Having done this, he walked before them, and said—

"Arise, thou dead one!"

As he repeated these words the third time the princess arose, alive, well, and beautiful.

The king was greatly rejoiced, and said to the saint—

"Require for thy reward what thou wilt. Though it should be half my empire, I will give it you."

But the saint replied—

"I desire nothing for what I have done."

"O thou Jack Fool!" thought Brother Merry to himself. Then, nudging his comrade's side, he said—

"Don't be so silly. If you won't have anything, yet I need somewhat."

The saint, however, would take nothing, but as the king saw that his companion would gladly have a gift, he commanded the keeper of his treasures to fill his knapsack with gold, at which Brother Merry was right pleased.

Again they went upon their way till they came to a wood, when the saint said to his fellow-traveller—

"Now we will share the gold."

"Yes," replied the soldier, "that we can."

Then the saint took the gold and divided it into three portions.

"Well," thought Brother Merry, "what whim has he got in his head now, making three parcels, and only two of us?"

"Now," said the saint, "I have divided it fairly, one for me, and one for you, and one for him who ate the heart."

"Oh, I ate that," said the soldier, quickly taking up the gold. "I did, I assure you."

"How can that be true?" replied the saint. "A lamb has no heart."

"Ay! what, brother? What are you thinking of? A lamb has no heart? Very good! When every beast has why should that one be without?"

"Now that is very good," said the saint. "Take all the gold yourself, for I shall remain no more with you, but will go my own way alone."

"As you please, Brother Heart," answered the soldier. "A pleasant journey to you, my hearty."

The saint took another road, and as he went off—

"Well," thought the soldier, "it's all right that he has marched off, for he is an odd fellow."

Brother Merry had now plenty of money, but he did not know how to use it, so he spent it and gave it away, till in the course of a little time he found himself once more penniless. At last he came into a country where he heard that the king's daughter was dead.

"Ah!" thought he, "that may turn out well. I'll bring her to life again."

Then he went to the king and offered his services. Now the king had heard that there was an old soldier who went about restoring the dead to life, and he thought that Brother Merry must be just the man. However, he had not much confidence in him, so he first consulted his council, and they agreed that as the princess was certainly dead, the old soldier might be allowed to see what he could do. Brother Merry commanded them to bring him a caldron of water, and when every one had left the room he separated the limbs, threw them into the caldron, and made a fire under it, exactly as he had seen the saint do. When the water boiled and the flesh fell from the bones, he took them and placed them upon the table, but as he did not know how to arrange them he piled them one upon another. Then he stood before them, and said—

"Thou dead, arise!" and he cried so three times, but all to no purpose.

"Stand up, you vixen! stand up, or it shall be the worse for you," he cried.

Scarcely had he repeated these words ere the saint came in at the window, in the likeness of an old soldier, just as before, and said—

"You impious fellow! How can the dead stand up when you have thrown the bones thus one upon another?"

"Ah! Brother Heart," answered Merry, "I have done it as well as I can."

"I will help you out of your trouble this time," said the saint; "but I tell you this, if you ever again undertake a job of this kind, you will repent it, and for this you shall neither ask for nor take the least thing from the king."

Having placed the bones in their proper order, the saint said three times—

"Thou dead, arise!" and the princess stood up, sound and beautiful as before. Then the saint immediately disappeared again out of the window, and Brother Merry was glad that all had turned out so well. One thing, however, grieved him sorely, and that was that he might take nothing from the king.

"I should like to know," thought he, "what Brother Heart had to grumble about. What he gives with one hand he takes with the other. There is no wit in that."

The king asked Brother Merry what he would have, but the soldier durst not take anything. However, he managed by hints and cunning that the king should fill his knapsack with money, and with that he journeyed on. When he came out of the palace door, however, he found the saint standing there, who said—

"See what a man you are. Have I not forbidden you to take anything, and yet you have your knapsack filled with gold?"

"How can I help it," answered the soldier, "if they would thrust it in?"

"I tell you this," said the saint, "mind that you don't undertake such a business a second time. If you do, it will fare badly with you."

"Ah! brother," answered the soldier, "never fear. Now I have money, why should I trouble myself with washing bones?"

"That will not last a long time," said the saint; "but, in order that you may never tread in a forbidden path, I will bestow upon your knapsack this power, that whatsoever you wish in it shall be there. Farewell! you will never see me again."

"Adieu," said Brother Merry, and thought he, "I am glad you are gone. You are a wonderful fellow. I am willing enough not to follow you."

He forgot all about the wonderful property bestowed upon his knapsack, and very soon he had spent and squandered his gold as before. When he had but fourpence left, he came to a public-house, and thought that the money must go. So he called for three pennyworth of wine and a pennyworth of bread. As he ate and drank, the flavour of roasting geese tickled his nose, and, peeping and prying about, he saw that the landlord had placed two geese in the oven. Then it occurred to him what his companion had told him about his knapsack, so he determined to put it to the test. Going out, he stood before the door, and said—

"I wish that the two geese which are baking in the oven were in my knapsack."

When he had said this, he peeped in, and, sure enough, there they were.

"Ah! ah!" said he, "that is all right. I am a made man."

He went on a little way, took out the geese, and commenced to eat them. As he was thus enjoying himself, there came by two labouring men, who looked with hungry eyes at the one goose which was yet untouched. Brother Merry noticed it, and thought that one goose would be enough for him. So he called the men, gave them the goose, and bade them drink his health. The men thanked him, and going to the public-house, called for wine and bread, took out their present, and commenced to eat. When the hostess saw what they were dining on, she said to her goodman—

"Those two men are eating a goose. You had better see if it is not one of ours out of the oven."

The host opened the door, and lo! the oven was empty.

"O you pack of thieves!" he shouted. "This is the way you eat geese, is it? Pay for them directly, or I will wash you both with green hazel juice."

The men said—

"We are not thieves. We met an old soldier on the road, and he made us a present of the goose."

"You are not going to hoax me in that way," said the host. "The soldier has been here, but went out of the door like an honest fellow. I took care of that. You are the thieves, and you shall pay for the geese."

However, as the men had no money to pay him with, he took a stick and beat them out of doors.

Meanwhile, as Brother Merry journeyed on, he came to a place where there was a noble castle, and not far from it a little public-house. Into this he went, and asked for a night's lodging, but the landlord said that his house was full of guests, and he could not accommodate him.

"I wonder," said Brother Merry, "that the people should all come to you, instead of going to that castle."

"They have good reason for what they do," said the landlord, "for whoever has attempted to spend the night at the castle has never come back to show how he was entertained."

"If others have attempted it, why shouldn't I?" said Merry.

"You had better leave it alone," said the host; "you are only thrusting your head into danger."

"No fear of danger," said the soldier, "only give me the key and plenty to eat and drink."

The hostess gave him what he asked for, and he went off to the castle, relished his supper, and when he found himself sleepy, laid himself down on the floor, for there was no bed in the place. He soon went to sleep, but in the night he was awoke by a great noise, and when he aroused himself he discovered nine very ugly devils dancing in a circle which they had made around him.

"Dance as long as you like," said Brother Merry; "but don't come near me."

But the devils came drawing nearer and nearer, and at last they almost trod on his face with their misshapen feet.

"Be quiet," said he, but they behaved still worse.

At last he got angry, and crying—

"Holla! I'll soon make you quiet," he caught hold of the leg of a stool and struck about him.

Nine devils against one soldier were, however, too much, and while he laid about lustily on those before him, those behind pulled his hair and pinched him miserably.

"Ay, ay, you pack of devils, now you are too hard for me," said he; "but wait a bit. I wish all the nine devils were in my knapsack," cried he, and it was no sooner said than done.

There they were. Then Brother Merry buckled it up close, and threw it into a corner, and as all was now still he lay down and slept till morning, when the landlord of the inn and the nobleman to whom the castle belonged came to see how it had fared with him. When they saw him sound and lively, they were astonished, and said—

"Did the ghosts, then, do nothing to you?"

"Why, not exactly," said Merry; "but I have got them all nine in my knapsack. You may dwell quietly enough in your castle now; from henceforth they won't trouble you."

The nobleman thanked him and gave him great rewards, begging him to remain in his service, saying that he would take care of him all the days of his life.

"No," answered he; "I am used to wander and rove about. I will again set forth."

He went on until he came to a smithy, into which he went, and laying his knapsack on the anvil, bade the smith and all his men hammer away upon it as hard as they could. They did as they were directed, with their largest hammers and all their might, and the poor devils set up a piteous howling. When the men opened the knapsack there were eight of them dead, but one who had been snug in a fold was still alive, and he slipped out and ran away to his home in a twinkling.

After this Brother Merry wandered about the world for a long time; but at last he grew old, and began to think about his latter end, so he went to a hermit who was held to be a very pious man and said—

"I am tired of roving, and will now endeavour to go to heaven."

"There stand two ways," said the hermit; "the one, broad and pleasant, leads to hell; the other is rough and narrow, and that leads to heaven."

"I must be a fool indeed," thought Brother Merry, "if I go the rough and narrow road;" so he went the broad and pleasant way till he came at last to a great black door, and that was the door of hell.

He knocked, and the door-keeper opened it, and when he saw that it was Merry he was sadly frightened, for who should he be but the ninth devil who had been in the knapsack, and he had thought himself lucky, for he had escaped with nothing worse than a black eye. He bolted the door again directly, and running to the chief of the devils, said—

"There is a fellow outside with a knapsack on his back, but pray don't let him in, for he can get all hell into his knapsack by wishing it. He once got me a terribly ugly hammering in it."

So they called out to Brother Merry, and told him that he must go away, for they should not let him in.

"Well, if they will not have me here," thought Merry, "I'll e'en try if I can get a lodging in heaven. Somewhere or other I must rest."

So he turned about and went on till he came to the door of heaven, and there he knocked. Now the saint who had journeyed with Merry sat at the door, and had charge of the entrance. Brother Merry recognised him, and said—

"Are you here, old acquaintance? Then things will go better with me."

The saint replied—

"I suppose you want to get into heaven?"

"Ay, ay, brother, let me in; I must put up somewhere."

"No," said the saint; "you don't come in here."

"Well, if you won't let me in, take your dirty knapsack again. I'll have nothing that can put me in mind of you," said Merry carelessly.

"Give it me, then," said the saint.

Brother Merry handed it through the grating into heaven, and the saint took it and hung it up behind his chair.

"Now," said Brother Merry, "I wish I was in my own knapsack."

Instantly he was there; and thus, being once actually in heaven, the saint was obliged to let him stay there.

**Lithuania (Europe)**

**Animals**

**Egle**

<http://tikslai.blogas.lt/the-most-popular-lithuanian-folk-tale-1044.html>

“Once somewhere in Lithuania lived a family that had three daughters and nine brothers. The youngest of the sisters, Egle, was the most beautiful of them. One day Egle and her sisters went to a beautiful lake for an evening swim. They left their clothes on the shore and ran into the cool water. Having swum and bathed as much as they wanted, the maidens left the water and started to dress. Egle, the youngest of them, discovered a serpent in her clothes. The serpent started speaking to her in a human voice. He asked Egle to marry him - then he would give her clothes back. Egle couldn’t imagine herself marrying a snake, but she just wanted the snake to leave and promised to become his wife. The serpent slithered out of the folds of her dress and disappeared into the thick grass. Seven days went by, and Egle forgot about her strange promise.

One morning she heard a great rumbling noise and saw that it was made by a carriage pulled by hissing grass-snakes. Soon there were snakes all over the ground. Frightened, Egle told her parents all that had happened that night at the lake. Egle’s parents could not accept the thought of losing their daughter. They dressed a white goose as the bride, adorned her with white flowers and lifted her into the carriage. The grass-snakes departed swiftly to the nearby forest. There they heard a cuckoo saying that this was not the bride they should have had, only a white goose. Furious, the snakes returned thundering to Egle’s house. They returned to claim the real bride. They startled her parents who still did not want to lose their daughter - and give them a sheep dressed all in white. The cuckoo warned the snakes once more.

Again they returned rumbling even more loudly. They started threatening to burn the house down if they were deceived once more. This time Egle had to keep her promise. Parents wept and bid farewell to their beloved daughter.

The grass-snakes brought Egle to the sea shore where she found a handsome young man waiting for her. He revealed that he was that same serpent she had seen at the lake shore and promised to marry. He was also the king of the snakes - his name was Zhilvinas. Zhilvinas escorted Egle to his underwater castle. There she found everything her heart desired, and Egle spent her days happily with her loving husband. They had four children - Azhuolas (Oak), Berzhas (Birch), Uosis (Ash) and a little daughter Drebule (Aspen). Days went by, and Egle longed for her home and the sunny beach. She longed for her sisters and her parents more and more.

Zhilvinas promised her a trip home if she would wear out the iron shoes he had given for her. Egle walked on the rocks and pebbles, but the shoes did not have even a tiniest scratch on them. In despair, Egle turned to an old sea witch for advice. The witch told Egle to have a smith put these shoes in his forge - the shoes would wear out soon after that. The next day, Egle returned the worn shoes to her husband. She then received another challenge from him. She had to spin a tuff of silk. It seemed to be an endless job, for it did not shrink no matter how much she spun. Egle turned to the sea witch once more for help. She told Egle to throw the silk into the fireplace. The silk blazed up for a moment and the fire went out because it had a magic spell cast upon it. Afterwards she could quickly finish the spinning. Zhilvinas had then a third request for Egle. He asked Egle to bake some bread to bring home to her family. If she completed this task, then she would be free to go.He then hid every dish in the kitchen except an old sieve.

Tears ran down Egle’s bright face, for she did not know how to make bread without any pans. The old witch helped Egle once more. Eglewas told to go to the spring of fresh water, find some soft clay and stuff the holes of the sieve with it - then she could bring home some water and make a dough for the bread. After she completed this chore, there was nothing else to keep Egle from going home. In parting, Zhilvinas told Egle and the children not to stay longer than 9 days and upon returning to the seashore to call him by name and say: if you are alive, come as milk foam, if you are dead, come as blood foam.

Egle left with her sons and the daughter. Her kinfolk had never expected to see their dearest daughter alive again and had a great feast to celebrate her visit. Egle’s brothers had no desire to lose Egle again and plotted to kill her beloved husband. At night they took the oldest son Azhuolas with them to pasture the horses and started asking him how they were to call their father when they wanted to return home. But Azhuolas was a stout boy and did not betray his father. Neither did Berzhas and Uosis when they were asked by Egle’s brothers on the next two days. On the fourth day, the brothers took little Drebule to the pasture. The little one was afraid of her angry uncles and their whipping switches. Afraid they would hurt her, she cried as she told them all about the song. The brothers at once set forth to the sea and called Zhilvinas. They saw that the waves had a milk foam and Zilvinas coming on them and attacked Zhilvinas with their scythes. After nine days Egle set out to journey back home. On the seashore she sang the song she was told to sing by her husband. She then looked for the milk foam on the sea. But instead, what she saw was a bright crimson blood foam.

Deep pain shook Egle’s heart - she cast a spell on her children and they all turned into great Lithuanian trees. The sons became trees that are valued even today for their great strength. The little daughter turned to a frail aspen tree that shakes in the mildest wind. Egle herself turned to a fir tree and stayed close to the sea shore to mourn for her husband forever.”

Luxembourg

Macau

**Macedonia (Europe)**

**Cleverness**

**Fate vs. Mind**

<http://wws.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=5>

Once upon at time on a high mountain somewhere in Macedonia, Fate and Mind crossed paths. As is true of most fictional, supernatural beings, they were proud and stubborn, and so they began to argue about who was more important. Mind insisted that if man did not have a mind, he could not become rich. Fate laughed and retorted that even if man had a mind, man could not become rich without fate.

As the supernatural beings continued this hazy argument, an unsuspecting shepherd passed by. Fate, tired of the theoretical nature of the argument, suggested that they conduct an experiment with the unsuspecting shepherd. "Here you will see," said Fate, "I will make this poor, unsuspecting shepherd rich. I will make him the son-in-law of a king!" Fate then proceeded to drop a huge bag of money into the poor, unsuspecting shepherd's path.

Thrilled with his good fortune, the poor, unsuspecting, and not-so-bright shepherd ran off to the big city and spent all of the money on food and wine and useless trinkets. Having observed the whole ridiculous scene, Mind turned to Fate and declared, "See, I told you so. Without a mind, man cannot be rich." But Fate was a persistent supernatural being and, in spite of the obvious setback, went ahead and made the poor, unsuspecting, and not-so-bright shepherd the son-in-law of the king. The red carpet was rolled out and wedding bells were heard all over the kingdom.

After only one year of marriage, the poor, unsuspecting, not-so-bright, and rather simple shepherd started thinking about his old job and he was sad. He missed his sheep. His beautiful princess bride tried to cheer him up, but she was always unsuccessful. In a moment of despair, the beautiful princess confessed the news to her father, the king, that her husband was eternally unhappy. The king was outraged and put in an order for the poor, unsuspecting, not-so-bright, and rather simple shepherd to be hanged.

Fate and Mind were, of course, observing all of these goings-on, and when Fate realized that due to his meddling the poor, unsuspecting, not-so-bright, and rather simple shepherd was about to be hanged—well, he felt a wee bit of compassion. Not that compassion is something that supernatural beings are known to feel, but after all, he was to blame for the poor fellow's plight. So Fate turned to Mind and politely asked for his assistance.

Mind, being a rational supernatural being, concluded that he should, at this point in the sordid tale, intervene. So Mind, using his supernatural capabilities, invaded the thoughts of the poor, unsuspecting, not-so-bright, and rather simple shepherd, sending him, without delay, to discuss this life-threatening matter with the king.

Using the well-argued psychic suggestions of Mind, the poor, unsuspecting, not-so-bright, and rather simple shepherd explained to the king that he was sad because he missed his family and his sheep, but that he could never leave because he loved the beautiful princess very, very, very much and could not bear to be parted from her. The king, recognizing the clever, well-argued, and rational point of view, somehow being articulated by the poor, unsuspecting, not so bright, and rather simple shepherd, decided that maybe there was more to the story and that he should forgive him. And so the hanging was called off.

Mind, quite pleased with himself, turned to Fate and said, "See my friend, fate may be essential for man to prosper, but good fortune is of no value to him (and actually may be a bit hazardous) without a mind." Fate agreed and the supernatural beings ended their argument, deciding that for man to be happy, he needs both a strong mind and the good fortune that fate could bestow upon him.

**Madagascar (Africa)**

**Origin**

**A Malagasy Folktale**

<http://carainmadagascar.blogspot.com/2009/12/malagasy-folktale.html>

"One day long ago, Zanahary [Creator God] asked the first man and woman if they would prefer to die like the moon or like a banana tree. The couple looked at each other in confusion until the woman asked, 'What does it mean to die like the moon?'  
  
Zanahary replied, 'The moon is always reborn. Each month the moon starts out as a sliver and grows bigger. Then it gets smaller until one night it disappears. The next night it's a sliver again.'  
  
The couple thought about this for a moment. The the man asked, 'How does one die like a banana tree?'  
  
'A banana tree sends off shoots. After the tree dies, the shoots continue to live, eventually growing into young trees,' answered Zanahary.  
  
So if the couple didn't have children, they could live forever like the moon does. If they did have kids, they would give life to others like the banana tree does. The first couuple thought about this choice, and they decided to die like a banana tree. Because of their decision, humans have only one lifetime on earth."  
  
-From Madagascar, by Mary N. Oluonye

**Malawi (Africa)**

**Cleverness**

**The Lion and the Herbalist**

<http://arjentola.blogspot.com/2007/05/malawi-folk-tale.html>

Long time ago, a hunter set out to hunt with his dog. He set up some traps in the jungle and went home killing only a porcupine. At home, the Hunter fell sick and did not go back to check on what his trap had gotten. One day, a herbalist came into the bush searching for some herbs for medication. He dug out some roots, took barks, plucked leaves and collected some animal shells. He moved from one place to the other doing this. Bending to take a certain root, the Herbalist heard someone calling him. When he turned back he saw that a lion had been trapped. The Herbalist was frightened. He quickly took his herbs and started to walk in the opposite direction. But the Lion continued calling him, asking for help. It moaned loudly and promised that it would do anything the Herbalist wanted, if it was helped out of the trap.

The Herbalist was flattered and pitied the Lion. He returned and went to see what had happened to the Lion. But at the trap, the Herbalist just stood looking at the Lion. He feared getting too close to it. The Lion moaned again and promised that it would do anything if helped out of the trap. Before the Herbalist decided to help the Lion, he heard some footsteps. Looking behind, the Herbalist saw a passer-by who had some wild fruits in his hands. The Passer-by came close to the two.

‘What are you doing here, brother?’ The Passer-by asked the Herbalist.

‘Young man, the Lion here is trapped and wants to be helped out. In fact, it promises to do anything for me if I help it out.’ The Herbalist told the Passer-by.

‘Don’t you know that lions are dangerous animals?’ The Passer-by asked the Herbalist.

Before the Passer-by responded, the Lion spoke.

‘Passer-by with an iron heart, I can do a lot for this man. Have I ever attacked your relatives before or friends?’ The Lion asked the Passer-by, avoiding eye contact with him.

Before the Passer-by could even answer the question, the Herbalist spoke.

‘You know, the Lion can help me quite a lot with my work,’ he said.

‘No, no, no. Do not only look at it that way. Haven’t you ever heard of people being attacked by lions before?’ The Passer-by asked the Herbalist further.

‘Well, it’s up to you!’ The Passer-by said as he turned away and went ahead with his search for fruits.

When the Passer-by had gone, the Herbalist helped the Lion out of the trap. But smiling, the Lion at once grabbed the Herbalist by his hand.

‘You have indeed, helped me, and I greatly appreciate it. But you know my dear friend, I have had no food for some days in this trap. So, you will make my food,’ the Lion, yawning, said.

The Herbalist could not believe what he had heard. He thought that he had not heard properly.

‘What are you saying Lion?’ Astonished, he asked.

With no pity at all, the Lion repeated its words. It opened its mouth and immediately salivated.

Remembering the words of the Passer-by, the Herbalist cried out loudly. He tried to loosen the tight grip of the Lion on his hand. But though he moved this way and that, he completely failed to escape. The Lion warned the Herbalist that it did not pity any animal which was to make its food.

While they were arguing a hare, which was disturbed by the noise, walked quickly over to see who it was that was making noise. The Hare had been enjoying singing and whistling as it walked in the jungle. There! The Hare found the Herbalist and the Lion arguing. Surprised, the Hare came close. The Herbalist cried more loudly when he saw the Hare. The Hare asked what it was that was happening. With tears in his eyes, the Herbalist quickly told the Hare of the situation he was in.

After the tale, the Hare shouted at the Herbalist.

‘I cannot understand what you are saying. Tell me your story again,” the Hare said.

Meanwhile, the Passer-by was now getting out of the bush. He heard the loud cry and came to find out what was happening. To his surprise, he found that the Lion had grabbed the Herbalist. When the Herbalist saw the Passer-by, he pitied himself. He wished he had taken heed of the Passer-by’s advice. Tears fell down his cheeks. The Passer-by came close to see and keenly listen to the tale of the Herbalist.

Throughout the Herbalist’s narration, the Hare pretended not to understand anything on how the Herbalist had helped the Lion. Explaining more, the Passer-by told the Hare how he had found the two. Still, the Hare said that he did not understand a thing the Herbalist was telling him.

‘I think you are lying. Is it really true the Lion was trapped. I have never seen the Lion, King of the Jungle, in a trap before,’ the Hare said.

‘How did it happen anyway?’ the Hare wondered.

‘Well, I want to see what exactly happened,’ the Hare said, sitting on a rock to watch how the Lion was trapped.

‘Can you help set the trap?’ the Hare asked the Passer-by.

The Herbalist and the Passer-by helped each other to set the trap. Then, the Lion quickly went on the trap. In no time, it was trapped again.

‘Fine, so it’s in that state that the Herbalist helped you out?’ the Hare asked the Lion.

‘Yes!’ the Lion, Herbalist and Passer-by answered in a loud chorus.

‘And after being saved, Lion! You thought of killing the one who saved you?’ the Hare asked the Lion.

The Lion hesitated to respond.

‘Aha! You should take yourself out of the trap then,’ the Hare finally ordered.

The Herbalist was all smiles. He looked at the Hare and Passer-by in disbelief. The Hare advised the Herbalist to always be careful. He told the two to go home at once. The Herbalist and Passer-by thanked the Hare and started off home. The Hare continued with its journey leaving the Lion on the trap.

Just a few metres from the trap, the two met the Hunter who had set the trap. The Herbalist and the Passer-by told the Hunter about the Lion on the trap. They explained what the Herbalist had experienced. Together, they went to the trap. They found the Lion lying helplessly. It was ashamed to see the Herbalist and the Passer-by. The Hunter did not waste time but killed the Lion. The three skinned the Lion. At home, the Hunter made a nice cloth from the lion’s skin.

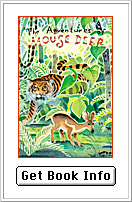
**Malaysia (Asia)**

**Animals**

**Mouse Deer and Tiger**

<http://www.aaronshep.com/stories/R01.html>

|  |
| --- |
| I’m quick and smart as I can be.  Try and try, but you can’t catch me! |

[[](http://www.aaronshep.com/books/MouseDeer.html)](http://www.aaronshep.com/books/MouseDeer.html)Mouse Deer sang his song as he walked through the forest. He was looking for tasty fruits and roots and shoots.

Though he was small, he was not afraid. He knew that many big animals wanted to eat him. But first they had to catch him!

Then he heard something. *Rowr!*

There was Tiger!

“Hello, Mouse Deer. I was just getting hungry. Now you can be my lunch.”

Mouse Deer didn’t want to be lunch. He looked around and thought fast. He saw a mud puddle.

“I’m sorry, Tiger. I can’t be your lunch. The King has ordered me to guard his pudding.”

“His pudding?” said Tiger.

“Yes. There it is.” Mouse Deer pointed to the mud puddle. “It has the best taste in the world. The King doesn’t want anyone else to eat it.”

Tiger looked longingly at the puddle. “I would like to taste the King’s pudding.”

“Oh, no, Tiger! The King would be very angry.”

“Just one little taste, Mouse Deer! The King will never know.”

“Well, all right, Tiger. But first let me run far away, so no one will blame me.”

“All right, Mouse Deer, you can go now.”

Mouse Deer ran quickly out of sight.

“Imagine!” said Tiger. “The King’s pudding!” He took a big mouthful.

*Phooey!* He spit it out.

“Yuck! Ugh! Bleck! That’s no pudding. That’s mud!”

Tiger ran through the forest. *Rowr!* He caught up with Mouse Deer.

“Mouse Deer, you tricked me once. But now you will be my lunch!”

Mouse Deer looked around and thought fast. He saw a wasp nest in a tree.

“I’m sorry, Tiger. I can’t be your lunch. The King has ordered me to guard his drum.”

“His drum?” said Tiger.

“Yes. There it is.” Mouse Deer pointed to the wasp nest. “It has the best sound in the world. The King doesn’t want anyone else to hit it.”

Tiger said, “I would like to hit the King’s drum.”

“Oh, no, Tiger! The King would be very angry.”

“Just one little hit, Mouse Deer! The King will never know.”

“Well, all right, Tiger. But first let me run far away, so no one will blame me.”

“All right, Mouse Deer, you can go now.”

Mouse Deer ran quickly out of sight.

“Imagine!” said Tiger. “The King’s drum!” He reached up and hit it. *Pow.*

*Bzzzzzzzzzzzzz.* The wasps all flew out. They started to sting Tiger.

“Ouch! Ooch! Eech! That’s no drum. That’s a wasp nest!”

Tiger ran away. But the wasps only followed him! *Bzzzzzzzzzzzzz.*

“Ouch! Ooch! Eech!”

Tiger came to a stream. He jumped in—*splash!—*and stayed underwater as long as he could. At last the wasps went away.

Then Tiger jumped out. *Rowr!* He ran through the forest till he found Mouse Deer.

“Mouse Deer, you tricked me once. You tricked me twice. But now you will be my lunch!”

Mouse Deer looked around and thought fast. He saw a cobra! The giant snake was coiled asleep on the ground.

“I’m sorry, Tiger. I can’t be your lunch. The King has ordered me to guard his belt.”

“His belt?” said Tiger.

“Yes. There it is.” Mouse Deer pointed to the cobra. “It’s the best belt in the world. The King doesn’t want anyone else to wear it.”

Tiger said, “I would like to wear the King’s belt.”

“Oh, no Tiger! The King would be very angry.”

“Just for one moment, Mouse Deer! The King will never know.”

“Well, all right, Tiger. But first let me run far away, so no one will blame me.”

“All right, Mouse Deer, you can go now.”

Mouse Deer ran quickly out of sight.

“Imagine!” said Tiger. “The King’s belt!” He started to wrap it around himself.

The cobra woke up. *Ssssssssssssss.* It didn’t wait for Tiger to finish wrapping. It wrapped itself around Tiger. Then it squeezed him and bit him. *Sstt!*

“Ooh! Ow! Yow! That’s no belt. That’s a cobra! Help! Mouse Deer! Help!”

But Mouse Deer was far away. And as he went, he sang his song.

|  |
| --- |
| I’m quick and smart as I can be.  Try and try, but you can’t catch me! |

Mildives

**Mali (Africa)**

**Animals**

**Why Hippos Don’t Eat Fish**

<http://www.victoriafalls-guide.net/hippos-don't-eat-fish.html>

The Kikuyu People believe that in the days of long, long ago, when the Good Lord N'gai  made his plans for all the creatures upon his earth, he made the hippopotamus as an animal of the forests and plains.  But the hippopotamus was greedy and, finding plenty of food all round him and no enemies to worry about, he grew fatter, and fatter and fatter. And the fatter he grew, the more he suffered from the heat of the Equatorial midday sun.

Day after day, when he waddled down to the river for his drink, he gazed with envy at the little fishes that swam  in the pool which was cooled by the melted snows from far-away Mount Kenya. "Oh" he would sigh, " how wonderful it would be if I could live, like N'gai's little fishes, in the clear, cool, refreshing water!." The hippopotamus pondered over his trouble for many days, and eventually decided to approach The Lord of All Creation. "Please, Good Lord N'gai" he cried loudly to the heavens upon one particularly hot day, "allow me to leave the forests and the plains.  Let me  live instead in the clear, cool waters of your rivers and lakes, for the heat of the fiery sun is killing me!"

"No", replied Lord N'gai, "for my little fishes are very dear to me, and if you were to live in the rivers and  lakes, you might try a change of your eating habits, and begin to eat those little fishes.  That would never do. No, you  must continue to live upon the dry land."

So the hippopotamus stayed sadly in his home in the forests and plains, where the sun continued to beat down mercilessly on his unprotected hide.  "This is more that I can bear!" moaned the poor creature. "Please, please, Good Lord N'gai. let me leave the forests and plains, and become a creature of the rivers and lakes, I promise most faithfully that I will  not eat your little fishes."

The Great Lord N'gai thought the matter over, while he looked down upon the plains baking in the heat of the tropical sun, and eventually  his heart softened. "Very well," he agreed, " I will allow you to  live in my rivers and lakes, but how will you prove to me that you are not eating my little fishes?"

"I will lie in the cool of the water by day, and at night time I will browse along the banks of the rivers, and in the vleis," replied the hippopotamus. "I promise that I will not eat your little fishes."

"But that will not be proof to me that you are keeping your promise!" pointed out The Great Lord N'gai.

"Well then," answered the hippopotamus, "I will come out of the water every time that food passes through my body, and I will scatter my dung on the earth with  my tail All that I have eaten will be spread out in your sight, and you will see for yourself that there are no fish bones.  Surely this will be proof enough!"

So this is way, to this very day, the hippopotamus comes out of the water to scatter its dung as it looks up to heaven and says, "Look N'gai, no fishes!" - and that is why hippos don't eat fish!

Malta

Marshall Islands

**Mauritania (Africa)**

**Trickster**

**The Talking Turtle**

<http://selibabyshelbs.blogspot.com/2010/02/folktalesstoriesfolklore.html>

"Once upon a time a turtle (who represents patience, wisdom) worked at a blacksmith and he tells everyone to keep their mouth shut or he'll burn their mother, but a neighbor just says 'wow! a talking turtle!' and runs to the king and says 'look! a talking turtle!' The king says if he's lying he will be killed so he tries and tries to get the turtle to talk but he won't. They hang the man and right before he dies the turtle says 'keep your mouth shut or i'll burn your mother!' MORAL: Keep your mouth shut about other peoples business."

Mauritius

**Mexico (North America)**

**Royalty**

**The Gypsy Queen**

<http://www.g-world.org/magictales/reina.html>

There was a king who had one son. When the prince reached a marriageable age, he told his parents, "I want to marry the most beautiful woman in the whole world. Therefore, I am going to journey all over the world until I find her."

The prince left the palace and traveled until he came to a fountain where he stopped to take a drink. As the youth bent over to drink, he saw reflected in the water three oranges. Looking up, he saw three large and beautiful fruits on the branch of an orange tree.

"How tasty they look," said the prince. Climbing the tree, he removed the oranges from the branch.

The prince cut the first orange in half and from its interior a beautiful maiden appeared.

"Give me bread," said the maiden to the prince.

"I can't," answered he, "because I don't have any."

"Then to my orange I will return," said the maiden, and the orange became whole again.

The prince cut the second orange, and from this fruit also sprang a maiden, much more beautiful than the first.

"Give me bread," the second maiden told the youth.

"I can't," said the prince, "because I don't have any."

"Then to my orange I will return," said the maiden, and the orange became whole again.

The prince thoughtfully considered the situation. He decided to get some bread in case another maiden should appear asking for it.

As the prince was making his plans, a gypsy went by in a cart.

"Amigo," cried the prince, "I will give you a golden coin for a piece of bread."

Hurriedly the gypsy left his cart, hastening to give the prince some bread.

The prince, now happy and satisfied, cut the third orange. And from the orange sprang a maiden, much more beautiful than the other two.

"Give me bread," the third maiden said.

The prince, joyously, gave her bread. The lady of the orange then exclaimed, "I am now yours. You can do as you please with me."

"I will marry you," answered the prince.

The maiden was utterly naked, and since the prince wanted to take her back to the palace he could not let her go as she was. He examined the gypsy's clothes but they were dirty. The prince then told the maiden, "Remain here with this gypsy while I go and bring some garments for you."

The gypsy had a daughter who had been asleep in the cart and who had not witnessed what had taken place. The daughter awoke when the prince was riding away, and at sight of him, she fell in love.

The gypsy's daughter jumped from the cart and asked her father what had taken place. He told her all that had happened.

The gypsy girl saw the beautiful maiden and said to her, "Let me comb your hair so that you will be much more beautiful when the prince returns."

The maiden agreed. As the gypsy girl began combing, she suddenly stuck a pin in the lady's head. Immediately the maiden turned into a dove. The gypsy girl then took her clothes off and sat where the maiden had been.

Soon the prince returned and, seeing the gypsy witch, exclaimed, "Señora, how dark you have become!"

"The sun has burnt my skin," the witch answered.

The prince, believing the witch was the maiden from the orange, took the gypsy woman to his palace and there married her.

One day a dove arrived at the garden of the king and asked the gardener, "Gardener to the king, how are the princess and his wife?"

"Sometimes he sings, but more often does he cry," answered the gardener.

From then on the little dove would come to the garden and ask the same question again and again. Finally, the gardener told the prince about the dove.

The prince then ordered him to capture the bird next time it came to the garden. The gardener limed the tree where the dove always rested. The next day, when it tried to fly away, it could not and the gardener captured it and took it to the prince.

The prince fell in love with the little dove. He took the bird in his hands and began stroking its head. Feeling the pin in the dove's head, he jerked it out. Immediately the dove changed back into the maiden of the orange.

The beautiful maide told the prince all that had happened and the prince told the king the maiden's story.

The king became greatly angered and ordered that the gpsy witch be burned at the stake. And the prince and the maiden married and lived happily ever after.

Micronesia

**Moldova (Europe)**

**Magic**

**The Maple Flute**

<http://www.savannahtree.com/tree-fun/tree-lore-myths/>

A Moldavian folk tale from the old world tells the story of a King’s young daughter, who fell in love with a shepherd after he charmed her with a Maple wood flute.

This young daughter went into the fields with her two older sisters to gather the first strawberries of the spring season. Their wretched old father thought so much more of his victuals than of his kingdom or his family, that he promised his kingdom to the first daughter who should return to him with a basket full of fruit. When the young daughter’s basket was the first one filled, it maddened the two older sisters into a jealous rage. Hence, they killed her and buried her body under a Maple tree. The two older sisters divided the berries between them and returned with the improbable story that an elk had eaten her. The King’s sadness was plain for all to see. Sad, too, were the musings of the shepherd on the hill. Blow as he might, the Maple wood flute made no sound, nor did his lady appear.

On the third day the Shepherd, passing the Maple tree beneath which his love was buried, noticed a fair new shoot that had sprung up from the ground at the base of the tree. He cut off the shoot and fashioned a new and more ornate flute, which began to sing when he put it to his lips. The new flute did not sing in wordless notes, but in prophetic lyrics. “Play, dearest! Once I was a King’s daughter; then I was a Maple shoot; now I am but a wooden flute.”

Astonished at this disclosure, the shepherd rushed to the palace and demanded an audience with the King. The King was amazed, as well he might be, when he put the flute to his own mouth and heard it say “Play, my father! Once I was a King’s daughter; then I was a Maple shoot; now I am but a wooden flute.” Wishing to test his senses, he called the wicked daughters and commanded that they also blow into the instrument. As each did so, it cried, “Play, murderer! Once I was a King’s daughter; then I was a Maple shoot; now I am but a wooden flute.” Realizing what atrocity had been committed, the King drove the daughters from the palace and banished them to a remote and desolate island in the Black Sea. The shepherd went back to his sheep and assuaged his loneliness with the voice of his beloved.

Monaco

**Mongolia (Asia)**

**Cleverness Animals**

**The Foolish Wolf**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/dna/place-lancashire/plain/A1021519>

Once upon a time a wolf was walking along a road when he saw a black pudding lying right in the middle of it. The wolf wanted to eat it at once but the black pudding cried, 'Mister Wolf, do not eat me! A little way further a three-year-old mare is stuck in the mud. Why don't you go there and eat her instead?'

The wolf followed the black pudding's advice and there really was a mare stuck in the mud. When the wolf saw her, he wanted to eat her but the mare said, 'Mister Wolf, if you want to eat me, you'd better pull me out off the mud first.' So that was what the wolf did.

He pulled the mare from the mud and was just about to eat her, when the mare said, 'Oh, but I am covered in mud. You should lick me clean first before you eat me.' Once again the wolf did as the mare told him and licked her clean.

But when he wanted to eat her, she told him, 'There is something written on the hoof of my hind leg. Wouldn't you like to read it before you eat me?' When the wolf went to her hind legs to read what was written there, and the mare kicked out. She hit his neck and ran away while the wolf lost consciousness and fell to the ground.

When he came to again and looked around, the mare was already far away. So he got to his feet and with his nose sniffing at the ground he ran to and fro between the bushes and the hills. He was lucky and found a one-year-old calf on one of the hills. The wolf went to the calf wanting to eat it but the calf said, 'If you eat me up here on the hill, humans will see you. It would be better if you'd take me to a small gorge and eat me there!' So the wolf brought the calf down from the hill.

'Mister Wolf, you seem to be tired and exhausted. Sit on me and I will carry you!' the calf told him. The wolf did as the calf told him. 'When we climb down into the gorge, you'd better close your eyes so you won't get dizzy,' the calf suggested. And so the wolf closed his eyes. The calf, though, carried the wolf right in front of the ail[2](http://news.bbc.co.uk/dna/place-lancashire/plain/A1021519" \l "footnote2" \o "An ail is an accumulation of a few yurts, a mobile settlement so to speak. A yurt (ger in Mongolian) is the traditional home of the Mongolian nomads; it is a kind of mixture of a tent and a house.) of a family of Mongolian nomads. As soon as the people saw the wolf, they started hollering and beating him and then chased him away.

The wolf fled and thought to himself:

*What am I doing in the distant mountains?   
What am I doing near the humans?   
I was a fool going along this way.   
I was a block-head to be tricked by a black pudding.   
Am I the owner to pull the horse from the mud?   
Am I the mother to lick the mare clean?   
When did I ever learn to read and write?   
And do I not have legs of my own to walk with?   
I am dumb and now I am dying...*

**Montenegro (Europe)**

**Magic**

**Beauty and the Horns**

<http://www.worldoftales.com/European_folktales/Jugoslav_Folktale_2.html>

There was once a rich man who when he was dying called his son to his bedside and said:

"Danilo, my son, I am leaving you my riches. The only thing I ask of you is this: close your ears to all reports of an enchanted maiden who is known as Peerless Beauty and when the time comes that you wish to marry choose for wife some quiet sensible girl of your native village."

Now if the father had not mentioned Peerless Beauty all might have been well. Danilo might never have heard of her and after a time he would probably have fallen in love with a girl of his native village and married her. As it was, after his father's death he kept saying to himself:

"Peerless Beauty, the enchanted maiden of whom my father warned me! I wonder is she really as beautiful as all that! I wonder where she lives!"

He thought about her until he could think of nothing else.

"Peerless Beauty! Peerless Beauty! Oh, I must see this enchanted maiden even if it costs me my life!"

His father had a brother, a wise old man, who was supposed to know everything in the world.

"I will go to my uncle," the young man said. "Perhaps he will tell me where I can find Peerless Beauty."

So he went to his uncle and said:

"My dear uncle, my father as he lay dying told me about a wonderful maiden called Peerless Beauty. Can you tell me where she lives because I want to see her for myself and judge whether she is as beautiful as my father said."

His uncle looked at him gravely and shook his head.

"My poor boy, how can I tell you where that enchanted maiden lives when I know it would mean death to you if ever you saw her? Think no more about her but go, find some suitable maid in the village, and marry her like a sensible young man."

But his uncle's words, far from dissuading Danilo, only excited him the more.

"If my uncle knows where Peerless Beauty lives," he thought, "other men also know."

So one by one he went to all the old men in the village and asked them what they knew of Peerless Beauty. One by one they shook their heads and told him that Peerless Beauty was no maiden for him to be thinking about.

"Put her out of your mind," they said. "These enchanted maidens are a snare to young men. What you want to do is marry some quiet industrious girl here in the village and settle down like a sensible young man."

But the oftener Danilo heard this advice, the more firmly convinced he became that it was just what he did not want to do.

"Time enough to settle down after I've seen Peerless Beauty," he told himself. "She must be beautiful indeed, or all these old men would not be so anxious to keep me from seeing her. Well, if they won't tell me where she is, I'll go out in the world and find her for myself."

So he put on rich clothes as befitted his wealth, took a bag of the gold his father had left him, mounted his horse, and rode off into the world. Everywhere he went he made inquiries about Peerless Beauty and everywhere he found old men who knew about the enchanted maiden but would tell him nothing. Every one of them advised him to go home like a sensible young man and think no more about her. But all they said only made him the more determined to see the maiden for himself.

Finally one day as evening approached he came to a little hut in the woods. At the door of the hut sat a poor old woman. She held out her hand as he passed and begged an alms. Danilo, being a kind hearted young man, gave her a gold piece.

"May God reward you!" the old woman said.

"Granny," Danilo asked, "can you tell me the way to Peerless Beauty?"

"Aye, my son, that I can but he is a rash youth who seeks that maiden! It were better for you to turn back than to go on!"

"But I'm not going to turn back!" Danilo declared. "Whatever the outcome I'm going to find Peerless Beauty and see for myself why all men fear her."

When the old woman saw that Danilo was determined, she gave up pleading with him and pointed out a faint trail in the forest which, she told him, would lead him to Peerless Beauty's castle.

He slept that night in the old woman's hut and early next morning set out on the forest trail. By afternoon he reached the castle.

"What do you want?" the guards demanded roughly.

"I want to see Peerless Beauty."

"Have you gold?" they asked him.

Danilo showed them his bag of ducats.

They led him into a hall of the castle and told him to put his gold on a table. If he did so, perhaps Peerless Beauty would show herself and perhaps she wouldn't.

Danilo did as the guards directed and then faced a curtain behind which, they told him, Peerless Beauty was seated. The curtain opened a little, but instead of showing her face Peerless Beauty extended only one finger. However, that finger was so ravishingly beautiful that Danilo almost fainted with delight. He would have stayed gazing on that one enchanting finger for hours if the guards had not taken him roughly by the shoulders and thrown him out of the castle.

"Come again when you've got more gold!" they shouted after him.

Like a man in a dream Danilo rode back to the old woman's hut.

"Now, my son, are you satisfied?" she asked him. "Are you ready now to go home and settle down like a sensible young man?"

"Oh, granny!" Danilo raved. "Such a finger! I must see that finger again if it cost me my whole fortune!"

He slept that night in the old woman's hut and the next day returned to his native village. There he got another bag of the golden ducats which his father had left him and at once started back to the castle of Peerless Beauty.

This time that heartless maiden stripped him again of his gold, showed him two of her enchanting fingers, and as before had her guards throw him out of the castle.

"Come again when you've got more gold!" they shouted after him.

That's exactly what the poor young man did. He went back and back until the fortune that his father had left him was entirely squandered. And all he had seen of Peerless Beauty up to that time were the fingers of one hand! Shouldn't you suppose that now with all his wealth lost he would get over his foolish infatuation? Well, he didn't.

"I must go back again!" he kept telling himself.

His gold was gone but he still had his father's house. It was a big old house with garrets and cellars.

"Perhaps if I hunt I shall find some treasures hidden away in odd corners," Danilo said.

So he hunted upstairs and down. He opened old boxes and rummaged about among the dark rafters. One day he came upon a funny looking little cap.

"I wonder whose this was," he thought to himself.

He went to a mirror and tried the cap on. Then a strange thing happened. The moment the cap touched his head, Danilo disappeared.

"Ah!" he cried, "it's a magic cap and the moment I put it on I become invisible! Now I can slip into Peerless Beauty's chamber and see her lovely face!"

With his magic cap pulled tightly down over his forehead, he set off once more for Peerless Beauty's castle. Sure enough he was able to pass unseen the guards at the gate, he was able to go boldly into the great hall, and beyond it through the curtain into Peerless Beauty's own chamber.

The Beauty was seated with her back to the curtain and a serving maid was combing out her hair for the night. It was lovely hair and it fell down over Beauty's shoulders like a mantle of gold. At mere sight of it Danilo was so overcome with emotion that he sighed.

"What's that?" Beauty cried. "There's some one in my chamber!"

The serving maid looked under the bed and behind the chairs and in the corners.

"There's no one here, my lady."

"That's strange!" Beauty said. "I feel as though some one were looking at me."

When Danilo saw the actual face of the enchanted maiden, it was all he could do to keep from crying aloud. She was so unutterably beautiful that he almost swooned away in ecstacy.

Presently the maiden went to bed and fell into an uneasy sleep. The light of a single candle shed a faint radiance over her face making it lovelier than ever. Through all the long hours of night Danilo stood perfectly still, gazing at her, afraid almost to breathe lest he should disturb her.

"Unless I win her for wife," he thought to himself, "I shall nevermore be happy!"

When morning came the maiden awoke with a start and said:

"There's some one looking at me! Who is it? Who is it?"

"It's only your poor Danilo," a voice answered.

"Danilo? Who is Danilo?"

"The youth whom you have been treating so cruelly. But though you have treated me cruelly, I love you still!"

"If you love me still," the maiden said, "let me see you."

Danilo took off the magic cap and there he stood, a handsome youth, at the foot of her bed. Then the crafty maiden spoke him fair and Danilo told her about the magic cap, and when she said to him that she repented having treated him so cruelly and asked him to let her see the cap, the poor young man was so dazzled by her beauty and her seeming kindness that he handed it to her at once.

Instantly she clapped it on her head and disappeared. Then she laughed in derision and called out loudly to the guards:

"Ho, there! Take out this young man and drive him forth! Let him return when he has another treasure to offer me!"

So the guards dragged Danilo out and drove him away.

With no more gold, with no more magic cap, Danilo returned to his father's house.

"Perhaps there are other treasures hidden away," he thought. "I'll search further."

In his search he came upon an old pitcher and thinking it might be silver he began rubbing it. Instantly there was a clap of thunder and a company of soldiers appeared. Their captain saluted Danilo respectfully and said:

"We are the servants of that magic pitcher. What does our master wish?"

"Magic pitcher?" stammered Danilo. "And am I your master?"

"Yes," said the captain, "you are our master as long as you hold the magic pitcher in your hands."

"You may disappear now," Danilo said. "I will rub the pitcher when I need you."

Delighted with this unexpected good fortune, he hurried off to the woods to the hut of the old woman who had befriended him before. He showed her the pitcher and demonstrated for her how it worked. Then he asked her to carry a message to Peerless Beauty.

"Tell her," he said, "that unless she consents to marry me at once I'll lead a mighty army against her, take her captive, and then send her off in exile to that howling wilderness which people call the Donkeys' Paradise."

"I will deliver your message," the old woman said, "on condition that you promise me to be on your guard this time. Don't let the maiden trick you again. She is under an enchantment that makes her cruel and crafty and the enchantment will never be broken until she meets a man upon whom her wiles have no effect."

"Trust me this time," Danilo said. "I've had my lesson."

So the old woman delivered the message and when Peerless Beauty received it with scorn, Danilo at once set out for the castle with the magic pitcher in his hand. He began rubbing and every time he rubbed a company of soldiers appeared. Soon the castle was surrounded by a great army and in fright and dismay Peerless Beauty sent out word that she was ready to make an unconditional surrender.

When Danilo entered the castle he found her humble and meek.

"I have treated you cruelly," she said. "Now I am in your power, do with me what you will." And she began weeping softly until the sight of her tears drove Danilo distracted.

"Weep no more, dear lady!" he cried. "You have nothing to fear from me! I love you! I am your slave!"

The Peerless one slowly dried her tears.

"If you love me as you say you do, you will tell me by what magic you have raised this great army."

Then Danilo, forgetting the old woman's warning, took the magic pitcher out of his shirt and showed the maiden how it worked.

"Ah!" she murmured wonderingly. "It looks like any old pitcher! Please, Danilo, let me see it in my own hands."

Danilo handed her the pitcher and, quick as a flash, she rubbed it. There was a clap of thunder, a company of soldiers appeared, and their captain saluting her respectfully said:

"What does the mistress of the pitcher want?"

"Nay!" cried Danilo, "it is I who own the pitcher, not she!"

"We are the servants," the captain said, "of whoever holds the pitcher."

At that Peerless Beauty laughed loud and scornfully until the castle rang with her merriment.

"Seize that wretch!" she said, pointing to Danilo. "Tie his hands and drive him out in exile to the Donkeys' Paradise! Let him stay there until he has another treasure to present me!"

So they drove Danilo out to the wilderness and left him there.

He wandered about for many days hungry and thirsty, subsisting on roots and berries, and having for drink only the water that collected in the hoof prints of the wild beasts.

"See what I've come to!" he cried aloud. "Why didn't I heed the old woman's warning! If I had, I should have broken the evil enchantment that binds my Peerless Beauty and all would have been well!"

One day as he wandered about he came upon a vine that was laden with great clusters of luscious red grapes. He fell upon them ravenously and ate bunch after bunch. Suddenly he felt something in his hair and lifting his hands he found that horns had grown out all over his head.

"Fine grapes these are!" he exclaimed, "to bring out horns on a person's head!"

However, he was so hungry that he kept on eating until his head was one mass of horns.

The next day he found a vine that had clusters of white grapes. He began eating the white grapes and he hadn't finished a bunch before the horns all fell off his head.

"Ha!" he said. "The red grapes put horns on and the white grapes take them off! That's a trick worth knowing!"

He took some reeds and fashioned two baskets one of which he filled with red grapes and the other with white grapes. Then staining his face with the dark juice of a leaf until he looked brown and sunburned like a countryman, he went back to Peerless Beauty's castle. There he marched up and down below the Peerless one's window crying his wares like a huckster:

"Sweet grapes for sale! Who wants my fresh sweet grapes!"

Now it was not the season for grapes, so Peerless Beauty when she heard the cry was surprised and said to her serving maid:

"Go quickly and buy me some grapes from that huckster and mind you don't eat one yourself!"

The serving maid hurried out to Danilo and he sold her some of the red grapes. As she carried them in, she couldn't resist the temptation of slipping a few into her mouth. Instantly some horns grew out on her head.

"That's to punish me for disobeying my mistress!" the poor girl cried. "Oh, dear, what shall I do?"

She was afraid to show herself to Peerless Beauty, so she pretended she was taken sick and she went to bed and pulled the sheet over her head and sent in the grapes by another serving maid.

Peerless Beauty ate them all before she discovered their frightful property. Then there was a great to-do, and cries of anger and of fright, and a quick sending out of the guards to find the huckster. But the huckster had disappeared.

What could Peerless Beauty do now? She tried to pull the horns out but they wouldn't come. She tried to cut them off but they resisted the edge of the sharpest knife. She was too proud to show herself with horns, so she swathed her head with jewels and ribbons and pretended she was wearing an elaborate head-dress.

Then she sent heralds through the land offering a huge reward to any one who could cure her serving maid of some strange horns that had grown out on her head. You see she thought if she could get hold of some one who would cure the maid, then she could make him cure her, too.

Well, doctors and quacks and all sorts of people came and tried every kind of remedy, but all in vain. The horns stayed firmly rooted.

A whole week went by and when the last of the quacks had come and gone, Danilo, disguised as an old physician, presented himself and craved audience with the Peerless one. He carried two small jars in his hands one of which was filled with a conserve made from the white grapes and the other with a conserve made from the red grapes.

Peerless Beauty, her horns swathed in silk and gleaming with jewels, received him coldly.

"Are you one more quack?" she asked.

"Not a quack," he said, bowing low, "but a man who has happened upon a strange secret of nature. I can cure your serving maid of her horns provided she confess to me all her misdeeds and hand over to me anything she has that does not belong to her."

Peerless Beauty had him shown to the room where the serving maid lay in bed. The poor frightened girl at once confessed that she had stolen a few of her mistress's grapes and eaten them. Danilo spoke kindly to her, gave her some of the white grape conserve, and as soon as she had tasted it the horns of course dropped off.

Thereupon Peerless Beauty led Danilo to her own chamber, ordered all her people out, and then acknowledged that she, too, was suffering from horns.

"I am sure I can cure you," Danilo told her, "provided you confess to me all your misdeeds and hand over to me whatever you have that belongs to some one else."

"I cheated a foolish young man out of five bags of gold," Peerless Beauty said. "Here they are in this chest. Take them."

Danilo opened the chest and took out his own five bags of gold.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"Yes, that is all."

Danilo gave her some of the red grape conserve and of course, instead of the horns already on her head falling off, more grew on.

"You're not telling me the truth," Danilo said, "and I can't cure you. There's no use my treating you further."

He turned to go and Peerless Beauty, in great fright, begged him to stay.

"I do remember another misdeed," she confessed. "I took by trickery a magic pitcher from the same foolish young man."

She gave Danilo the pitcher and he hid it in his shirt.

"Is that all?"

"Yes, that is all."

Danilo gave her some more of the red grape conserve and, of course, more horns grew out on her head. Then he pretended to get angry.

"How can you expect to be cured when you don't tell me the truth? I told you I could not cure you unless you confessed all!"

Peerless Beauty wanted much to keep the magic cap but when the strange physician thundered and scowled and threatened again to leave her, more horned than ever, she acknowledged that she had taken the cap, too, and handed it over.

This time Danilo gave her some of the white grape conserve and as soon as she had eaten it all the horns fell off and her head shimmered and shone as of old with her beautiful hair.

Then Danilo told her who he was and at once the maiden sought to ensnare him again with her wiles.

"What a wonderful man you are, Danilo! I could love you now if you loved me, but I know of course that you will never love me again after the cruel way I have treated you!"

"But I do love you!" Danilo cried. "I do love you!"

"No, you don't!" she said, and she pretended to weep. "If you did love me, you'd tell me where you found those red grapes and what this magic conserve is made of. But of course you don't love me enough to tell me."

Because she looked more beautiful than ever with the tears on her lovely cheeks, Danilo was about to tell her what she wanted to know when he remembered the old woman's warning. That was enough. He hardened his heart and declared:

"No! I'll never tell you! Do you hear me: I'll never tell you!"

She wept and implored him and used all her wiles, but Danilo remembering the past was firm. And presently he had the reward that a man always has when he's firm, for as soon as it was evident that she could no longer befool him, the evil enchantment that bound her broke with a snap and Peerless Beauty became a human maiden as gentle and sweet and loving as she was beautiful.

She knelt at Danilo's feet and humbly begged his pardon and promised, if he would still marry her, to make him the most dutiful wife in the world.

So Danilo married Peerless Beauty and with the servants of the magic pitcher transported her and her castle and her riches together with the old woman who had befriended them both to his own native village. There he still lives happy and prosperous.

His uncle and all the old men in the village take credit to themselves for the success of his adventures.

"It is due entirely to us," they tell any one who will listen to them, "that Danilo went out in search of Peerless Beauty in the first place. When he came to us and asked our advice we said to him: 'Go, by all means! You're young and brave and of course you'll win her!' If we hadn't urged him to go, he would probably have settled down here at home, married some quiet village girl, and never be heard of again!"

That's how the old men talk now, but we know what they really did say at the time!

Yet after all that doesn't matter. All that matters is that Danilo and Peerless Beauty love each other and are happy.

**Morocco (Africa)**

**Love, Royalty**

**Tislet and Isli**

<http://wws.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=85>

Many years ago, the chief of the Ait Haddidou tribe announced the birth of his daughter, Tislet. In her honor, the chief declared that a feast would be held.

"No expense will be spared," he announced to the villagers. "This will be a celebration unlike anyone has ever seen!"

When the day of the festivities arrived, the people of the village agreed that the chief was indeed a man of his word. From dawn until dusk that day, the people of the village gathered under a canopy of palm trees, singing ancient songs and dancing to the rhythms of the Atlas winds. As the sun set across the coral dunes, the people of the tribe raised their glasses of mint tea and toasted the child's long and happy life.

But no sooner had they sipped their tea when the village fortuneteller cut through the crowd, heading straight for the chief's daughter. No one was surprised when she inspected the baby's chubby hand and announced that the girl would grow to be loving and kind. A few raised their brows, however, when the fortuneteller further declared that the girl would one day be more beautiful than the spring rain. Surely too much beauty, they whispered among themselves, was a dangerous thing. Still, no one expected her final words: "This child is destined to marry the son of our enemy."

The singing and toasting abruptly ended; all sat stunned by the child's fate. No one was as shocked as the chief himself, who had fought long and hard against his Berber enemy in the south. He hated them with a poisonous vengeance.

Immediately, the chief's counselors stepped forward. Perhaps, they advised their chief, Tislet should be killed. A marriage of his daughter to their Berber enemy would doubtless incite a bitter and lasting war. Wasn't peace in the region worth the sacrifice of one life? The chief sat in stony silence as his wife threw herself at his feet, begging for mercy for the child. But just as the chief was about to announce his decision, one of his wife's kinsmen, who was intrigued by the fortuneteller's claim of the girl's beauty, interceded.

"Do not harm her," said the kinsman. "As soon as she comes of age, I shall marry the girl. I will take her to the north. There, she will never set eyes upon the son of our enemy, and our people will be safe."

Tears gathered in the chief's eyes as he threw his arms around the kinsman. To see his tiny daughter slaughtered—even for such a worthy cause—would have ravaged his soul deeper than any wound in battle.

"The girl's life shall be spared," he whispered. Then, in a loud voice, he decreed: "Tislet will be removed from the village. She will live high in the mountains, far from any people, until her marriage day. Our clan shall live in peace."

The feast ended. Slowly and silently, the villagers returned to their homes, unconvinced that even a good and noble chief could outwit fate.

For many years, Tislet lived in a cave high in the Atlas mountains with only a nursemaid as a companion. In the beginning, Tislet's mother came to visit every week. Her father came, too, when he was not detained by his duties in the village. As happy as her parents were to see her, the pain of leaving her was very great. Each time they turned to go back to their village, it became more difficult. Unable to bear such sorrow, their visits became less frequent.

Tislet's days were not unhappy. She was a kind and cheerful girl who befriended every flower, every ant, every snake, and every star within miles. One day, when Tislet was 12, she noticed a white pigeon flying overhead.

"Good morning, Lalla," she called to the pigeon. As she waved to the bird, an arrow flew across the sky, striking the pigeon down to the ground.

Tislet ran to the wounded bird. Finding it, she picked it up and cradled it in her arms. A boy with auburn curls and green eyes emerged from behind a bush. He was a year or two older than Tislet, and carried a bow and arrows.

"Did you do this?" Tislet said to him angrily through her tears.

The boy was captivated by the girl's beauty.

"I'm sorry," he responded. "I didn't know it was your bird."

The boy tenderly took the pigeon from the girl's arm. "She's not hurt badly. I can try to mend her wing."

Seeing how sorry he was, Tislet softened. And before the day was over, Tislet and the boy, who was known as Isli, were friends. Each day at noon, Isli would sneak away from his village to see Tislet. From below her cave, he would call out a signal. Hearing it, Tislet would pry herself away from the watchful eye of her nursemaid and run to meet him.

One day, just as Isli was climbing the mountain, he saw Tislet emerge from her cave, shouting, "Father!" She then ran up to a man who was ascending the mountain from the other side. The man was dressed in the robe of the northern Ait Haddidou tribe—the enemy of Isli's clan. The boy was stunned. With tears in his eyes, he ran back down the mountain, vowing never to see Tislet again.

Meanwhile, Tislet's father took her by the hand. "Daughter, I have news," he said. "The time has come for you to marry our kinsman. He will take you up to the far north. There you can live in a village and raise a family. You will be content."

Tislet was silent. Her father continued, "The marriage will take place in two days."

After her father left, Tislet ran down the mountain, searching for Isli. She could not bear to be separated from him. He was the one she loved. For hours she wandered through the mountains, calling his name. But she could not find him. At nightfall, she returned to her cave and cried herself to sleep.

The next day, Tislet waited for Isli at noon. Once again, he did not come. By evening, she was frantic. Tislet then realized that there was only one thing to do: She had to run away. If she couldn't be with Isli, she would not marry any man. But as she gathered clothes and food for her journey, she heard a familiar sound.

Overjoyed, she ran out of the cave and, spotting Isli, threw herself in his arms. Tislet recounted her father's news of the marriage that was to take place the next day. "I must run away," she told him. "I will not marry anyone but you."

"I vowed never to see you again," Isli replied. "But I cannot live without you." He then told her about their families' long-standing feud. "Our families will never allow us to marry. Our fathers are bitter enemies."

All night, the two planned their escape. They would run to the west, toward the ocean. They would build a beautiful home of mud and stone. They would have five children; three boys and two girls.

As the sun rose, Tislet and Isli lay down sleepily upon a rock. They did not notice that a band of men was slowly ascending the mountain.

When Tislet's father saw his daughter asleep in the arms of Isli, he threw himself upon the boy in a blind rage. But Isli dodged the chief's blows and ran.

"I'm going after him," said the chief. "Take the girl," he said to his kinsman. "Get her out of here!"

Tislet was crying hard. Tearing herself from the kinsman's grip, she ran as fast as she could. When she could go no farther, she stopped.

But her tears did not cease. Tislet cried so hard that a pool of water gathered at her feet, and the earth began to crumble. As she fell into the wet earth, Tislet screamed out, "Isli!" The word echoed throughout the mountainside.

Within moments, a lake had formed at the spot where she had stood. From a mile away, Isli heard her voice.

"Tislet!" he screamed back. He knew she was dying. Isli then began to weep with such fierceness that the earth opened and he fell into it. The chief watched mystified as the boy drowned in a lake of his own tears.

"Truly you did love my daughter," the chief said.

Slowly, the chief walked down to the spot where his daughter had last stood. The chief knelt beside the lake. For many days, he stayed there, whispering through his tears, "Forgive me."

The chief later decreed that no daughter in his clan should be forced to marry against her will. In honor of Tislet and Isli, he declared that a bridal festival would be held each year in which young men and women throughout the Atlas Mountains could gather in the hope of finding and marrying their true love.

**Mozambique (Africa)**

**Animals**

**The Lost Message**

<http://www.aren.org/prison/documents/african/3/3.pdf>

THE ant has had from time immemorial many enemies, and because he is small and destructive, there have been a great many slaughters among them. Not only were most of the birds their enemies, but Anteater lived almost wholly from them, and Centipede beset them every time and at all places when he had the chance.

So now there were a few among them who thought it would be well to hold council together and see if they could not come to some arrangement whereby they could retreat to some place of safety when attacked by robber birds and aninials.

But at the gathering their opinions were most discordant, and they could come to no decision.

There was Red-ant, Rice-ant, Black-ant, Wagtail-ant, Gray-ant, Shining-ant, and many other varieties. The discussion was a true babel of diversity, which continued for a long time and came to nothing.

A part desired that they should all go into a small hole in the ground, and live there; another part wanted to have a large and strong dwelling built on the ground, where nobody could enter but an ant; still another wanted to dwell in trees, so as to get rid of Anteater, forgetting entirely that there they would be the prey of birds; another part seemed inclined to have wings and fly.

And, as has already been said, this deliberation amounted to nothing, and each party resolved to go to work in its own way, and on its own responsibility.

Greater unity than that which existed in each separate faction could be seen nowhere in the world; each had his appointed task, each did his work regularly and well. And all worked together in the same way. From among them they chose a king-that is to say some of the groups did-and they divided the labor so that all went as smoothly as it possibly could.

But each group did it in its own way, and not one of them thought of protecting themselves against the onslaught of birds or Anteater.

The Red-ants built their house on the ground and lived under it, but Anteater leveled to the ground in a minute what had cost them many days of precious labor. The Rice-ants lived under the ground, and with them it went no better. For whenever they came out, Anteater visited them and took them out sack and pack. The Wagtail-ants fled to the trees, but there on many occasions sat Centipede waiting for them, or the birds gobbled them up. The Gray-ants had intended to save themselves from extermination by taking to flight, but this also availed them nothing, because the Lizard, the Hunting-spider, and the birds went a great deal faster than they.

When the Insect-king heard that they could come to no agreement he sent them the secret of unity, and the message of Work-together. But unfortunately he chose for his messenger the Beetle, and he has never yet arrived at the Ants, so that they are still to-day the embodimentof discord and consequently the prey of enemies.

**Namibia (Africa)**

**Animals**

**The Zebra’s Apparel**

<http://www.felid.org/activities/page_97.htm>

In the early days when the earth was young, the land was hot and dry.  In this new world, water could only be found in a few small holes scattered around the desert.

At one such waterhole, a baboon stood guard.  The baboon proclaimed that he was the owner of this waterhole and no one could drink there.  He said that this water is mine alone.  The baboon would always chase anyone who came by to drink.

The baboon had built a fire close to the pool so that he could protect it during the very cold desert nights.

One day a zebra came by to quench his thirst after a very long and tiring journey.  In these early days, the zebra had no stripes.  He wore a dazzling coat of pure white fur.

The baboon jumped up in anger when the zebra approached.  "Who are you?  Go away!.  I am the lord of this water!.  It is mine."  The zebra was in no mood to listen to this selfish baboon.  "This is not your water, you ugly monkey, it belongs to everyone" shouted the zebra.

The baboon was furious and said that if the zebra wanted the water, he must fight for it.  The baboon and the zebra were soon engaged in a fierce struggle.  Locked in combat, they rolled around back and forth around the waterhole.  Finally, the zebra gave one mighty kick and the baboon was sent flying high up into the rocks behind the waterhole.

The zebra had kicked the baboon so hard that he lost his balance and fell into the baboon's fire.  The zebra sent burning sticks flying into the air when he tried to escape the fire.  These charred sticks left black scorch marks all over the zebra's fine white coat.

Hurt and frightened, the zebra galloped to the plains where he has remained ever since.  Eventually, the zebra came to like his new apparel which made him stand out among the other animals.

The baboon in the meantime, had landed on his rear-end with a mighty thud against the hard rocks.  The baboon has remained in the koppies ever since, nursing his bald red bottom, still as angry as ever.

Nauru

**Nepal (Asia)**

**Cleverness**

**Bundar Bahadur Poon**

<http://folk-tales-from-nepal.blogspot.com/>

Bundar Bahadu Poon was a great nuisance to his seven uncles. He was always getting into mischief-taking their tools, playing house in their best clothes, drinking their rice wine. Even Bundar’s mother complained about her son’s behavior; but because she was his mother, she loved him and fed him well.

Bundar’s father had been killed on the trail by a falling rock, so Bundar lived with his mother and his seven uncles and aunts on the old family farm. In many ways Bundar was much like other village boys. He laughed at silly jokes and teased the village girls. But in one way he was very different. Bundar Bahadur Poon was a monkey.

One day Bundar’s uncles decided to go hunting.

“I want to go hunting, too!” shouted Bundar when he heard the news.

“No!” complained the uncles in one voice. “You will scare all the game away. Now run along and play with your friends.”

Bundar disappeared as if to do their bidding, but when the uncles left the courtyard he came out from his hiding place and followed at a safe distance behind them.

“For once our monkey nephew would have been useful,” laughed the eldest brother. “If he were here now, we could send him into the trees to get some good mangoes. These on the ground are spoiled.

“Here I am!” shouted Bundar. “I will pick some good mangoes for you.”

He was already in the trees throwing down the fruit before the uncles could scold him for his disobedience. Soon he began tossing the green mangoes to his uncles and keeping the ripe ones for himself.

“Oh, what a rogue you are!” shouted the uncles, throwing the green fruit at him. “Go home where you belong and do not follow us anymore.”

Bundar leaped through the trees as fast as he could to escape the hail of green mangaoes. “Ama, Ama, Ama,” he cried, to make his uncles think he was running home. But when the uncles were out of sight, he turned around and followed them again.

As it grew dark, rain started to fall. Again the hunters wished they had allowed their monkey nephew to come with them.

“He could have climbed high into a tree and searched the darkness for a light, so we would know where to look for shelter,” said the youngest uncle.

“Here I am!” shouted Bundar once more, and before the uncles could recover from their surprise, Bundar was running through the trees pointing to a light across the valley.

The uncles followed Bundar’s directions back and forth along the winding, slippery trail until at last they reached the door of a low stone house covered with thick wooden shingles.

“Ho!” the eldest uncle called out. “Is anybody home?”

No one answered.

The eldest uncle shouted louder this time. “Ey, Ama! Can you give us shelter for the night?”

Suddenly the door opened, and there on the porch stood a beautiful woman.

“What do you want?” she asked in a very deep voice.

The uncles looked at each other is distress. From the tone of the woman’s voice they knew she was not a beautiful woman at all. She was a monster in disguise.

They whispered together for a moment, trying to decide what to do. Most of them wanted to run, but it was too late for that. It was raining heavy hard now and had become so dark they could only vaguely see the person in front of them. Finally, the eldest spoke again.

“We were out hunting and could not return to our home before dark, so we are looking for a place to spend the night.”

“You may stay here,” replied the monster woman, “if you are prepared to marry my daughters.”

The uncles were afraid of this woman but when they looked back they were wore afraid of the forest, bhoots and prates and other evil spirits lurked by the trail and captured people who walked after dark. So they agreed to marry the monster’s daughters in return for a night’s lodging.

As soon as their hostess had brought mats for Bundar and his seven uncles, so they could sit beside the fire, she turned to her daughters and said:

“The Brahman pried will be called in the morning for the wedding ceremony, so give our guests the best food and wine we have in the house and let them smoke as much as they wish.”

While the men were drying their clothes and eating the meal prepared for them, the monster woman went into the back room to make the beds. This wicked creature did not intend that the uncles should marry her daughters at all. She wanted to eat them for supper. She fixed seven beds on one side of the room, for the uncles, and seven beds on the other side, for her daughters-covering the uncles’ beds with red blankets and her daughter’s beds with white blankets, so she wouldn’t get them mixed up. Bundar’s bed was in a basket put in the corner.

While everyone was settling for the night, the monster went to bed herself, and pretended to sleep. Soon the only noise in the house was the deep breathing of the people asleep. The monster was just about to get up to eat the seven brothers, when she remembered Bundar Bahadur Poon.

“Oh, Sister’s Son,” she whispered. “Are you asleep?”

“Yes,” came the reply.

“You are not, or you could not say ‘yes’,” said the monster in huff. “What do you want.”

“I’m thirsty,” answered the monkey. “I want some milk to drink.”

The monster was so eager for Bundar to go to sleep that she got up and warmed some milk for him. When he finished drinking it, he lay back in his basket and covered himself with his blankets.

In a few minutes the monster whispered again. “Oh, Sister’s Son, are you asleep now?”

“No,” was the reply.

“Why not? What do you want this time?”

“I am hungry.”

“Hungry!” repeated the monster in an angry voice. “My daughters fed you chicken and rice, with wine and spiced eggs. What more do you want?”

“My uncles ate it all,” whined Bundar. “I wand some rice pudding.”

The monster was very annoyed, but she didn’t want to waken the others by arguing with the monkey, so she rose from her bed and made Bundar some rice pudding. After he had eaten it, he crawled under the covers and pretended once more to sleep.

When she was quite sure he would not answer, the monster whispered: “Are you asleep now, Sister’s Son?”

“No. I can’t go to sleep,” was the answer.

“WHY NOT?” growled the monster.

“Because I have no popcorn. I always have to have popcorn before I go to sleep.”

The monster was getting very hungry, herself. She looked longingly at the seven uncles and pictured the wonderful feast she would have if she could ever satisfy this stubborn monkey. She got up and cooked Bundar some popcorn. Climbing back into her bed again, she was so tired from all her extra work that she dozed off. Her heavy snoring rattled the brass rice spoon on the shelf.

As soon as Bundar heard her snoring, he jumped up and scampered about the room as fast as he could, putting the white blankets on his sleeping uncles and covering the monster’s seven daughters with the red ones. After he had changed all the blankets he hopped back into bed and lay very still.

Suddenly the monster woman sat up with a start. She leaped out of bed and peering into Bundar’s basket.

“Are you asleep at last, Sister’s Son?” she whispered.

This time she received no answer.

“Oh quickly!” she said to herself. “I must eat before everyone wakes up.” She grabbed her kukari from the wall, ran to the beds covered with red blankets, ad fell to gobbling up her daughters. “Such delicious hunters,” she keep thinking with every bite. “So juicy and tender!” she was so stuffed when she finished eating her last daughter, she dropped into bed. This time she slept soundly.

Bundar jumped down from his basket and awakened his uncles. When they heard what had happened, they ran out into the jungle and hid in a large oak tree.

In the morning, when the monster woke up and discovered her terrible mistake, she shrieked with rage. She rushed out of the house in a frenzy and started hacking at the forest wherever her kukari chanced to fall. A jaybird, calling to warn all the jungle creatures to stay in their nests, only made the monster more angry. She looked up to throw a stone at him, and there she saw the frightened uncles, clinging to the branches of the oak tree.

“Ha!” she screamed. “I have found you already. Now I will make you pay for your evil trick!” She lunged at the tree and started to chop it own. Huge chips flew every where. With each blow of her big kukari, the uncles were almost thrown from their perch. Suddenly, without warning, the weight of the seven men broke the tree and it fell with agreat crash to the ground. The surprised monster, who had no been able to jump out of the way, was killed instantly.

The uncles cried aloud in their joy. They climbed out of the tree and ran as fast as they could back to the monster’s house. There they loaded themselves with presents for their wives- all the silver jewelry and fine clothes that had belonged to the wicked monster and her seven daughters. Bundar, who took only an old drum, danced and sang at the head of the procession all the way home.

The seven aunts were delighted with their gifts, but Bundar’s mother was very disappointed.

“See, Bundar Bahadur Poon, what my brothers have brought their wives,” she said sadly. “And you have brought me only an old drum.”

“Don’t be unhappy with me, Ama” replied Bundar. “Hand me the maana measure from the storage basket.”

“What have you brought that can me measured?” she asked in pique.

“You will see,” said Bundar patiently.

He gave the drum a blow on the head with his kukari, and to the mother’s amazement goldent coins spilled out all over the floor.

“Oh, Bundar!” cried the mother, hugging her son with joy. “What she we do with all this money?”

“Tomorrow I will go with my uncles to the bazaar to buy rice. Would you like to eat rice the rest of you life, Ama, instead of corn?”

“Oh, yes, good son! Let us plant lots of rice,” answered the mother. “I am so tired of corn.”

The next morning, when Bundar’s uncles were ready to go to the bazaar to buy rice, Bundar said he wanted to go with them. But they had forgotten that he had saved them from being eaten by the wicked monster. All they remembered was the nuisance he made of himself when they wanted some good mangoes.

“Oh, no!” the eldest uncle replied. “You might tell the shopkeeper we have lots of jewels. Then he would charge us more money for the rice. Go away; go and play with your drum.”

Bundar went back into the house, pretending to do as he was told. But when his uncles were out of sight, he followed them to the bazaar. After they had purchased their rice seed and started home, he went into the same shop; but instead of buying rice he bought a handful of gourd seeds. When his mother saw what he had done she let out a sob.

“Oh, Bundar,” she moaned. “Just when I think you are being very clever, you do something very stupid. Now, when your uncles and aunts are eating rice, what will we be eating? We cannot eat gourds!”

“Don’t worry,Ama,” said Bundar reassuringly. “We will have rice to eat, also. Just be patient.”

The day before the uncles rice was to be harvested Bundar went to the rice fields and caught a big rat.

“Rat,” Bundar announced, holding him at arm’s length, “I am going to kill you!”

“Oh please do not kill me,” pleaded the rat. “I will do anything you wish.”

“Very well. I will give you a chance to save your life. If you will harvest all my uncles’ rice and store it in my gourds by tomorrow morning. I will not kill you.”

“Of course! That is easy,” answered the rat. “Let me go and I will show you how fast it can be done.”

Bundar opened his hands and the grateful rat leaped down and disappeared into the rice paddy. That night he called all of this relatives together and told them what they had to do to save his life. The next morning every grain of rice from the uncles’ fieds was harvested and stored in the Bundar’s gourds.

When bundar showed his mother the gourds, she started in disbelief. Her son had not plowed. He had not planted. He had even been spared the tedious job of harvesting the crop. All he had done to fill their storage bins with rice as to sprinkle a few gourd seeds on the stony ground. She never dreamed her son could be so clever.

As for the uncles, they had learned their lesson will. Never again did they go anywhere without their nephew Bundar Bahadur Poon.

And Bundar’s mother never again complained of having a mischievous monkey for a son.

**Netherlands (Europe)**

**Magic**

**The Ice King and his Wonderful Grandchild**

<http://www.worldoftales.com/European_folktales/Dutch_folktale_7.html>

In the far-off ages, all the lands of northern Europe were one, for the deep seas had not yet separated them. Then our forefathers thought that fairies were gods. They built temples in their honor, and prayed to them. Then, in the place where is now the little town of Ulrum in Friesland was the home of the spirit in the ice, Uller. That is what Ulrum means, the home of the good fairy Uller.

Uller was the patron of boys and girls. They liked him, because he invented skates and sleds and sleighs. He had charge of things in winter and enjoyed the cold. He delighted also in hunting. Dressed in thick furs, he loved to roam over the hills and through the forests, seeking out the wolf, the bear, the deer, and the aurochs. His bow and arrows were terrible, for they were very big and he was a sure shot. Being the patron of archery, hunters always sought his favor. The yew tree was sacred to Uller, because the best bows were made from its wood. No one could cut down a yew tree without angering Uller.

Nobody knew who Uller's father was, and if he knew himself, he did not care to tell any one. He would not bestow many blessings upon mankind; yet thousands of people used to come to Ulrum every year to invoke his aid and ask him to send a heavy fall of snow to cover the ground. That meant good crops of food for the next year. The white snow, lying thick upon the ground, kept back the frost giants from biting the earth too hard. Because of deep winter snows, the ground was soft during the next summer. So the seed sprouted more easily and there was plenty to eat.

When Uller travelled over the winter snow, to go out on hunting trips, he strapped snow-shoes on his feet. Because these were shaped like a warrior's shield, Uller was often called the shield-god. His protection was especially invoked by men who fought duels with sword or spear, which were very common in early days; or by soldiers or hunters, who wished to be very brave, or had engaged in perilous ventures.

Now when Uller wanted a wife to marry him, he made love to Skadi, because she was a huntress and liked the things which he liked. So they never had a quarrel. She was very strong, fond of sports, and of chasing the wild animals. She wore a short skirt, which allowed freedom of motion to her limbs. Then she ranged over the hills and valleys with wonderful swiftness. So rapid were her movements that many people likened her to the cold mountain stream, that leaps down from the high peaks and over the rocks, foaming and dashing to the lowlands. They gave the same name to both this fairy woman and the water, because they were so much alike.

Indeed Skadi was very lovely to look at. It was no wonder that many of the gods, fairies and men fell in love with her. It is even said that she had had several husbands before marrying Uller. When you look at her pictures, you will see that she was as pretty as bright winter itself, when Jack Frost clothes the trees with white and makes the cheeks of the girls so rosy. She wore armor of shining steel, a silver helmet, short white skirts and white fur leggings. Her snow-shoes were of the hue of winter. Besides a glittering spear, she had a bow and sharp arrows. These were held in a silver quiver slung over her shoulders. Altogether, she looked like winter alive. She loved to live in the mountains, and hear the thunders of cataracts, the crash of avalanches, the moaning of the winds in the pine forests. Even the howling of wolves was music in her ears. She was afraid of nothing.

Now from such a father and mother one would expect wonderful children, yet very much like their parents. It turned out that the offspring of Uller and Skadi were all daughters. To them—one after another—were given the names meaning Glacier, Cold, Snow, Drift, Snow Whirl, and Snow Dust, the oldest being the biggest and hardiest. The others were in degree softer and more easily influenced by the sun and the wind. They all looked alike, so that some people called them the Six White Sisters.

Yet they were all so great and powerful that many considered them giantesses. It was not possible for men to tame them, for they did very much as they pleased. No one could stop their doings or drive them away, except Woden, who was the god of the sun. Yet in winter, even he left off ruling the world and went away. During that time, that is, during seven months, Uller took Woden's throne and governed the affairs of the world. When summer came, Uller went with his wife up to the North Pole; or they lived in a house, on the top of the Alps. There they could hunt and roam on their snow-shoes. To these cold places, which the whole family enjoyed, their daughters went also and all were very happy so far above the earth.

Things went on pleasantly in Uller's family so long as his daughters were young, for then the girls found enough to delight in at their daily play. But when grown up and their heads began to be filled with notions about the young giants, who paid visits to them, then the family troubles began.

There was one young giant fairy named Vuur, who came often to see all six of Uller's daughters, from the youngest to the oldest. Yet no one could tell which of them he was in love with, or could name the girl he liked best; no, not even the daughters themselves. His character and his qualities were not well known, for he put on many disguises and appeared in many places. It was believed, however, that he had already done a good deal of mischief and was likely to do more, for he loved destruction. Yet he often helped the kabouter dwarfs to do great things; so that showed he was of some use. In fact he was the fire fairy. He kept on, courting all the six sisters, long after May day came, and he lengthened his visits until the heat turned the entire half dozen of them into water. So they became one.

At this, Uller was so angry at Vuur's having delayed so long before popping the question, and at his daughters' losing their shapes, that he made Vuur marry them all and at once, they taking the name of Regen.

Now when the child of Vuur and Regen was born, it turned out to be, in body and in character, just what people expected from such a father and mother. It was named in Dutch, Stoom. It grew fast and soon showed that it was as powerful as its parents had been; yet it was much worse, when shut up, than when allowed to go free in the air. Stoom loved to do all sorts of tricks. In the kitchen, it would make the iron kettle lid flop up and down with a lively noise. If it were confined in a vessel, whether of iron or earthenware, when set over the fire, it would blow the pot or kettle all to pieces, in order to get out. Thinking itself a great singer, it would make rather a pleasant sound, when its mother let it come out of a spout. Yet it never obeyed either of its parents. When they tried to shut up Stoom inside of anything, it always escaped with a terrible sound. In fact, nothing could long hold it in, without an explosion.

Sometimes Stoom would go down into the bowels of the earth and turn on a stream of water so as to meet the deep fires which are ever burning far down below us. Then there would come an awful earthquake, because Stoom wanted to get out, and the earth crust would not let him, but tried to hold him down. Sometimes Stoom slipped down into a volcano's mouth. Then the mountain, in order to save itself from being choked, had to spit Stoom out, and this always made a terrible mess on the ground, and men called it lava. Or, Stoom might stay down in the crater as a guest, and quietly come out, occasionally, in jets and puffs.

Even when Jack Frost was around and froze the pipes in the house, or turned the water of the pots, pans, kettles and bottles into solid ice, Stoom behaved very badly. If the frozen kettles, or any other closed vessel were put over the stove, or near the fire, and the ice melted at the bottom too fast, Stoom would blow the whole thing up. In this way, he often put men's lives in danger and made them lose their property.

No one seemed to know how to handle this mischievous fairy. Not one man on earth could do anything with him. So they let him have his own way. Yet all the time, though he was enjoying his own tricks and lively fun, he was, with his own voice, calling on human beings to use him properly, and harness him to wheels; for he was willing to be useful to them, and was all ready to pull or drive, lift or lower, grind or pump, as the need might be.

As long as men did not treat him properly and give him the right to get out into the air, after he had done his work, Stoom would explode, blow up and destroy everything. He could be made to sing, hiss, squeal, whistle, and make all kinds of sounds, but, unless the bands that held him in were strong enough, or if Vuur got too hot, or his mother would not give him drink enough, when the iron pipes were red with heat, he would lose his temper and explode. He had no respect for bad or neglected boilers, or for lazy or careless firemen and engineers.

Yet properly harnessed and treated well, and fed with the food such as his mother can give, and roused by his father's persuasion, Stoom is greater than any giant or fairy that ever was. He can drive a ship, a locomotive, a submarine, or an aeroplane, as fast as Fro's boar, horse or ship. Everybody to-day is glad that Stoom is such a good servant and friend all over the world.

Netherlands Antilles

**New Zealand (Oceania)**

**Magician, Magic, Love**

**The Golden Kowhai**

The blossoming of the Kowhai, New Zealand's flower of spring, came rather later than usual this year, and the tui and the bellbird, those melodious honey-suckers that mimic each other's songs, must have wondered what delayed the opening of their favourite sweets feast.

The peculiarity of this loveliest of our small flowering trees is the fact that it produces its blossoms before the leaves. The most charming of forest pictures is the scene on the edge of the bush or along a river, such as the upper part of the Wanganui, when the pendulous Kowhai flowers cover every bough without a sign of foliage, and when the tuis are chattering joyously as they flutter from branch to branch, sometimes giving a kind of looping the loop exhibition in their excited exploration of the honey-laden blooms.

Long ago, in the back country of the Rotorua Lakes region, I heard a Maori explanation of the Kowhai's singular habit of flowering on bare and leafless branches.

### *The Miraculous Flowering.*

On the shore of one of these lakes, said the arboreal fairy tale, there sat one day in the misty long ago a young Maori man and girl. The man pressed his love on the beautiful Kotiro; he sought her for his wife, but the maid laughed—Maori maids are as “kittle cattle” as their Pakeha sisters—and said she'd see; she would wait; she would not accept his love until her suitor—who was an Ariki of high rank and a tohunga too—performed some great and unexampled deed before she would become his wife. She would wed none but a famous man, a man whose exploits no one could outdo.

The lover accepted the challenge. “You shall see what I can do,” he said, He turned to the tree under which they were sitting. It was a Kowhai. The time was about our Pakeha month of August. The tree was quite bare of both flower and leaf.

### *To Please a Maiden's Eyes.*

“I shall,” said the young tohunga, “cause this tree to spring into flower before your eyes.” With those words he put forth all his occult powers, the command of mind over matter, which had been taught him by the wise men in the sacred house of instruction. He recited in quick tense tones his magic prayers. And, all in a moment, a miracle! All at once the tree burst forth into a blaze of blossom. All its naked boughs were covered in a breath with golden hanging flowers.

The amazed girl saw, and was conquered. No man surely could rival that wonder-feat of her priestly lover.

And ever since that day, says the Maori, the Kowhai has flowered on leafless branches, a sign and a reminder of the ancient miracle.

**Nicaragua (Central America)**

**Ghost**

**Journey to the Afterlife**

<http://marthaisabelarana.typepad.com/blog/folktales/>

A Miskito man named Nakili lost his wife who he loved very much. Visiting her grave, he found her soul, which was only about two feet high, preparing for her journey to the afterlife.   
  
The husband wanted to accompany her but she answered him that it was not possible to satisfy his desire since he still was alive. The husband insisted and could not be convinced to remain in this world. So they began the journey together.   
  
She guided him and led him down a narrow footpath that he never had seen before.   
  
They arrived at a place where many birds of prey were flying. She jumped back in fear, but he chased them off and they continued their trip.   
  
After awhile the trail passed between two pines that were very close to each other. They were so close that the wife's soul could barely pass between them, but he, being the size of a normal person, could not get through. He decided to go around them.   
  
They continued on until they arrived at a precipice that could be only crossed by a bridge the width of a human hair. Beneath the bridge was a gigantic pot of boiling water, taken care of by birds of prey. The soul of the wife weighed little and was small enough to pass the narrow bridge, but Nakili, considering the small distance, crossed it with a single jump.   
  
Later they arrived at a great river where they found a canoe paddled by four toads. In the water they watched a great amount of small fish, sardines calledBlim or Bilim or Bilam, which the soul mistook for sharks. Across the river Nakili and his wife's soul saw the world of the afterlife, where everyone seemed happy. When the souls of people who didn't lead virtuous lives tried to cross the river, the canoe tipped over and the sardines devoured them. The toads ferried the wife's soul safely across, but the man had to reach the other side by swimming.   
  
There they were welcomed by Más Allá, a robust woman with many breasts, to whom the inhabitants arrived once in a while to suck like babies. Más Allá was displeased by the arrival of Nakili and ordered to him to return to the Earth. He begged to stay because he loved his wife so much he could not separate from her. Finally she agreed that he could remain in the kingdom of the afterlife.   
  
In this country nobody had to work. There was abundant food and rich drinks and diversion. But after staying there a long time, Nakili felt the desire to return to Earth to see his children again. Más Allá gave him permission to leave on the condition that he would not return to the afterlife until after the death of his own body.   
  
She sat him on a great stalk of bamboo and dropped it in the river. After a moment he realized he was in the middle of the ocean by the great waves that surrounded him. Finally a gigantic wave threw him ashore, leaving him right in front of his own small house.

**Niger (Africa)**

**Royalty**

**The Calabash Princess**

<http://wws.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=67>

Once there was a handsome young prince who refused to marry. Although his parents, the king and queen, searched throughout the land for the most beautiful women for him to meet, the prince was unmoved by their charms.

The prince was also indifferent to the affairs of the kingdom. Rather than attend a royal ceremony or entertain nobles at a feast, he would take long walks in the forest. There, he would spend many hours lying in a grassy clearing and staring up at the trees and sky.

One morning, as the prince was wandering in the forest, he noticed a vine wrapped around a tree. The vine held the most beautiful calabash he had ever seen. The skin of the calabash was smooth and clear, the color of fine, fresh butter. "This would be a fine calabash to drink *hura*from," he thought, as he plucked the calabash from the vine.

The instant the prince touched the calabash, it hit the ground and split in two. Out popped a beautiful young woman wearing a shiny indigo dress and silver jewelry. Immediately, the woman threw herself at the prince's feet.

"Do not tell anyone you have seen me!" she cried. She then told the prince of her miserable past. Her father was a king, and her sisters, jealous of their father's love for her, had threatened to kill her. Rather than lose her life, she chose to live out her days inside a calabash.

The prince held the calabash princess in his arms and dried her tears. He promised to keep their meeting a secret. But suddenly the princess sprang from his arms. She had forgotten that her calabash was split in two and, frantically, began searching for a place to hide.

Off in the distance, the prince spotted another calabash in a tree beside a waterfall. But before the princess could climb into the gourd, the prince took her hand and led her to a clearing near the stream. There, the two talked about clouds and trees and stars until long after the sun had set. Near midnight, the princess crawled into her calabash and the prince returned home. But neither one could sleep very well. They were in love.

Every day thereafter, the prince returned to the spot near the waterfall, carrying a basket of food for himself and his love. Each time he would call out, "Here I am," and the princess would pop out of her calabash to greet him.

The king and queen had not failed to notice that each day their son was disappearing into the forest carrying a large basket of food. As he was heading out one morning, they confronted him. Much to their relief, however, the prince announced that he was in love and wished to be married.

"I would like to bring her home with me tonight," said the prince. That night, the king and queen anxiously waited to meet their son's bride. A sumptuous feast was prepared, and a special seat of honor was set aside for the woman who would one day be queen.

At dusk, the prince arrived at the feast with the calabash in hand. "I am going to marry the calabash!" he exclaimed with great joy.

"My son has lost his mind!" the queen cried out before she fainted.

Although his parents pleaded with him to be reasonable, the prince was adamant. He ordered all the wedding arrangements to be completed within three days. Then he asked that two dinners be sent to his tent. "We prefer to dine alone," he said as he left the dining area, carrying his calabash.

The king and queen had no other recourse. Sadly, they agreed to their son's wishes. On the appointed day, several stately camels were led from the royal tent: the first two carried the king and queen; the third carried the prince; and the fourth carried the calabash. When they finally reached the tent where the marriage contract was to be signed, the prince proudly lifted the calabash from the camel and held it tightly in his arms.

From that day forward, the prince and calabash princess lived very happily together. While the prince was away during the day, the princess would hide in the calabash. At night, the prince would return to his tent and, there, away from all prying eyes, she would step out from the calabash and lie beside him. When dawn would break, she would slip back into the calabash.

The king was puzzled. What kind of satisfaction could the boy possibly obtain from being married to a calabash? One night, he decided to find out for himself. Hiding outside the prince's tent, he watched as the princess climbed out of the calabash. The king was greatly smitten by the young woman's beauty. "I see that my son is no fool after all," he said to himself.

For weeks, the king could think of nothing else but the sweet face of the calabash princess. His passion for her became so great that he could not eat or drink or carry out his royal duties. "I must have her as my second wife," he thought. He would allow no one to stand in his way.

One night, just as the prince was about to enter his tent, the king approached his son, saying, "My son, I hear there is an evil spirit out in the forest who has been terrifying our people. I need your help. Let us go and chase it away tomorrow at dawn."

The calabash princess overheard the king's words and shivered with fright. "Something is wrong," she warned her husband. Before the prince left his tent the next morning, she wove into his hair a string of dates and pleaded with him, "Be careful."

The king and the prince rode their camels many miles into the forest until they reached an old, abandoned well. The king handed a rope to his son and said, "Fasten this rope to your waist. I will lower you into the well. See if there is an evil spirit at the bottom."

The prince did as he was told. When he got to the bottom of the deep, dark well, however, the king dropped the rope in after him and left.

Although the prince tried desperately to scale the walls of the well, they were too smooth. Every time he tried, he fell back into the pit, where snakes and scorpions gnawed upon his hands and feet.

Meanwhile, the king returned to the prince's tent. Walking into the prince's tent, he split open the calabash with his sword. The frightened princess stepped out.

"Your husband fell down a well and died while we were out in the forest. But do not worry. Marry me and become my second wife. I will take care of you."

The poor princess was inconsolable. Although the king tried to soothe her, she wrestled herself from his arms.

Every day the king asked her to marry him. Every day the princess refused. She cried until her eyes were red and her face was chapped. Her beauty had all but faded.

For many years, the prince remained in the well, surviving on water and the dates that his wife had woven into his hair. Luckily, the date pits had taken root in the bottom of the well and, as time passed, a tree began to grow. When its branches had grown to the edge of the well, the prince climbed out.

Immediately, the prince ran back to the king's tent. Once there, he found the calabash princess weeping in his father's chambers. As soon as she saw him, the princess rushed into his arms. She was overjoyed! The queen, too, was very happy to see her son after so many years. The king pretended to be pleased.

"Allah is great!" said the king. "My son, I thought you were dead when you fell in the well, but Allah has restored you to us!"

"I am happy to see you again, too, father," replied the prince. "So happy, in fact, that I would like to have a feast. I will roast a sheep in your honor." The king accepted. To prepare for the feast, the son killed a fat sheep and roasted it on a spit. Then he dug a very deep pit. Over the pit, he laid a rug and comfortable cushions.

When the king arrived, he smelled the crisp, tender meat, and his mouth began to water.

"Please, father," said the prince. "Sit on this rug I have prepared for you." The king stepped onto the rug and fell down deep into the Earth. And there he stayed until the day he died.

**Nigeria (Africa)**

**Explanation tale**

**Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky**

Many years ago the sun and water were great friends, and both lived on the earth together. The sun very often used to visit the water, but the water never returned his visits. At last the sun asked the water why it was that he never came to see him in his house, the water replied that the sun's house was not big enough, and that if he came with his people he would drive the sun out.

He then said, "If you wish me to visit you, you must build a very large compound; but I warn you that it will have to be a tremendous place, as my people are very numerous, and take up a lot of room."

The sun promised to build a very big compound, and soon afterwards he returned home to his wife, the moon, who greeted him with a broad smile when he opened the door. The sun told the moon what he had promised the water, and the next day commenced building a huge compound in which to entertain his friend.

When it was completed, he asked the water to come and visit him the next day.

When the water arrived, he called out to the sun, and asked him whether it would be safe for him to enter, and the sun answered, "Yes, come in, my friend."

The water then began to flow in, accompanied by the fish and all the water animals.

Very soon the water was knee-deep, so he asked the sun if it was still safe, and the sun again said, "Yes," so more water came in.

When the water was level with the top of a man's head, the water said to the sun, "Do you want more of my people to come?" and the sun and moon both answered, "Yes," not knowing any better, so the water flowed on, until the sun and moon had to perch themselves on the top of the roof.

Again the water addressed the sun, but receiving the same answer, and more of his people rushing in, the water very soon overflowed the top of the roof, and the sun and moon were forced to go up into the sky, where they have remained ever since.

**Norway (Europe)**

**Cleverness, Animals**

**The Three Billy Goats Gruff**

<http://www.worldoftales.com/European_folktales/Norwegian_folktale_12.html>

Once on a time there were three *Billy-goats*, who were to go up to the hill-side to make themselves fat, and the name of all three was “*Gruff*.”

On the way up was a bridge over a burn they had to cross; and under the bridge lived a great ugly*Troll*, with eyes as big as saucers, and a nose as long as a poker.

So first of all came the youngest billy-goat *Gruff* to cross the bridge.

“Trip, trap! trip, trap!” went the bridge.

“Who’s that tripping over my bridge?” roared the *Troll*.

“Oh! it is only I, the tiniest billy-goat *Gruff*; and I’m going up to the hill-side to make myself fat,” said the billy-goat, with such a small voice.

“Now, I’m coming to gobble you up,” said the *Troll*.

“Oh, no! pray don’t take me. I’m too little, that I am,” said the billy-goat; “wait a bit till the second billy-goat *Gruff* comes, he’s much bigger.”

“Well! be off with you,” said the *Troll*.

A little while after came the second billy-goat *Gruff* to cross the bridge.

“Trip, trap! trip, trap! trip, trap!” went the bridge.

“WHO’S THAT tripping over my bridge?” roared the *Troll*.

“Oh! It’s the second billy-goat *Gruff*, and I’m going up to the hill-side to make myself fat,” said the billy-goat, who hadn’t such a small voice.

“Now, I’m coming to gobble you up,” said the *Troll*.

“Oh, no! don’t take me, wait a little till the big billy-goat *Gruff* comes, he’s much bigger.”

“Very well! be off with you,” said the *Troll*.

But just then up came the big billy-goat *Gruff*.

“TRIP, TRAP! TRIP, TRAP! TRIP, TRAP!” went the bridge, for the billy-goat was so heavy that the bridge creaked and groaned under him.

“WHO’S THAT tramping over my bridge?” roared the *Troll*.

“IT’S I! THE BIG BILLY-GOAT GRUFF,” said the billy-goat, who had an ugly hoarse voice of his own.

“Now, I’m coming to gobble you up,” roared the *Troll*.

|  |
| --- |
| “Well, come along! I’ve got two spears, And I’ll poke your eyeballs out at your ears; I’ve got besides two curling-stones, And I’ll crush you to bits, body and bones.” |

That was what the big billy-goat said; and so he flew at the *Troll* and poked his eyes out with his horns, and crushed him to bits, body and bones, and tossed him out into the burn, and after that he went up to the hill-side. There the billy-goats got so fat they were scarce able to walk home again; and if the fat hasn’t fallen off them, why they’re still fat; and so:

|  |
| --- |
| Snip, snap, snout, This tale’s told out. |

**Oman (Asia)**

**Cleverness**

**The Princess’ Choice**

<http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20110214/LIFE/102140301/-1/LIFE>

Once upon a time, a king sought a husband for his beautiful daughter. Many young men wanted to marry her, and whoever did would inherit the kingdom. But the king's daughter had one flaw; she refused to speak.

One day, the king announced he would give his daughter's hand in marriage to anyone who enticed her to speak. If anyone tried and failed, he must remain to serve as the princess's servant.

In another kingdom, there lived a king with three sons. Naturally, he wished that one of his sons would marry the princess. He gave his eldest son a fine ship that he filled with many gifts, and as he waved farewell, he said, "The moment she sees you, she'll speak."

The eldest prince was confident the princess would love him. After all, he was immensely handsome, tall and strong and brave.

He sailed to shore and appeared before the princess, where he bowed. She said not a word, and so he offered her silks and satins, jewels and brocades, sweets and beads. He bowed. He preened. He promised her the world. But no matter what, she would not speak.

When the first prince did not return, the king decided to send along his second son. Like his brother, he was handsome and brave, and he could sing more beautifully than anyone. "I'll woo her easily," the second prince told his father confidently.

Once again his father gave him a ship filled with magnificent gifts.

When the second prince arrived before the princess, he began to sing. He smiled. He told her beautiful tales. And still she would not speak, and he, too, was ordered to remain to serve the princess.

Then the king's third son, whose name was Abu, asked his father if he might follow in his brothers' footsteps. Abu was kind and was well liked and generous to the poor, unlike his brothers.

The king refused. "The princess won't like you. You do not sing. You are not as handsome as your brothers. All your life you have done nothing but engage in silly pursuits. You are not bold or brave. A princess will never love you."

Abu begged the king's advisers to change his father's mind.

The advisers said to the king, "Give him a chance. If he never returns, so much the better. You will no longer have to watch him waste his life."

And so the king agreed to send Abu to see the princess. But this time, he gave only a small sack of money and a tiny boat.

When Abu presented himself before the princess, her father was not impressed. This young man had no money, no gifts, no impressive talents to show.

"You realize," said the king, "you must make my daughter speak within the day or you will lose even your freedom."

"I understand," Abu said, but he requested to go to the majlis, the meeting room. There he greeted everyone in his warm, friendly way, and instead of speaking only to the princess, he spoke to everyone.

"I have a question," he told the people gathered there. "Whoever answers my question will earn a great deal of money."

"We are listening!" the people said, and they moved in close.

"Three brothers own a farm. The first plows the land. The second sows the seeds. The third brother waters the land. Who, then, owns the land?"

Before anyone else could say a word, the princess cried, "The brother who waters it!"

When the king heard this, he turned pale. "Unfair," he said. "You may not marry my daughter, but you shall have one more day to make her speak again. This time you may not use a trick."

Abu agreed, and the next day he appeared before the people assembled in the majlis and said, "Three brothers seek the hand of a princess. The first has a telescope, the second a magic carpet, the third a magic apple. When the brothers look through the telescope, they see, in the distance, that the princess is dying. They climb upon the carpet and fly to her side. The third brother offers her the apple, and when she bites it, she is healed. Who saved her life?"

The princess cried, "It is the brother who gave her the apple!"

The king was mystified, but he could no longer refuse his daughter's hand in marriage.

"I will marry the princess," Abu said. "But I also want to sail to my own land and to take my brothers back home."

The king agreed to this plan, and the two were married.

The next day, Abu and his princess, along with his brothers, boarded the small boat to sail home. During the voyage, the two older brothers threw Abu overboard.

When they reached home, the king was overjoyed to see his eldest sons and the beautiful princess.

But the princess was crying.

"Why are you sad?" the king asked. "You can marry one of my brave sons!"

She shook her head. "I loved your youngest son," she wept. "I loved Abu."

Meanwhile, the dolphins rescued Abu and carried him upon their backs to the shore, and when the people of Abu's land saw him, they cheered. "Kind Abu has returned!"

When the princess heard the people calling out her husband's name, she ran down to the sea. When she saw Abu, she hugged him tightly. "I love you, my husband!" she said.

Abu's father and brothers finally understood that they could do nothing to undo true love, and Abu and the princess who chose him lived happily ever after

**Pakistan (Asia)**

**Treasure**

**The Gifts of Wali Dad**

<http://www.aaronshep.com/stories/018.html>

In a mud hut far from town lived an old grass-cutter named Wali Dad.

Every morning, Wali Dad cut and bundled tall, wild grass. Every afternoon, he sold it as fodder in the marketplace.

Each day, he earned thirty paisa. Ten of the small coins went for food. Ten went for clothes and other needs. And ten he saved in a clay pot under his bed.

In this manner Wali Dad lived happily for many years.

One evening, Wali Dad dragged out the pot to see how much money it held. He was amazed to find that his coins had filled it to the brim.

“What am I to do with all this money?” he said to himself. “I need nothing more than I have.”

Wali Dad thought and thought. At last he had an idea.

The next day, Wali Dad loaded the money into a sack and carried it to a jeweler in the marketplace. He exchanged all his coins for a lovely gold bracelet.

Then Wali Dad visited the home of a traveling merchant.

“Tell me,” said Wali Dad, “in all the world, who is the noblest lady?”

“Without doubt,” said the merchant, “it is the young queen of Khaistan. I often visit her palace, just three days’ journey to the east.”

“Do me a kindness,” said Wali Dad. “The next time you pass that way, give her this little bracelet, with my compliments.”

The merchant was astonished, but he agreed to do what the ragged grass-cutter asked.

Soon after, the merchant found himself at the palace of the queen of Khaistan. He presented the bracelet to her as a gift from Wali Dad.

“How lovely!” she said, admiring the bracelet. “Your friend must accept a gift in return. My servants will load a camel with the finest silks.”

When the merchant arrived back home, he brought the silks to the hut of Wali Dad.

“Oh, no!” said the grass-cutter. “This is worse than before! What am I to do with such finery?”

“Perhaps,” said the merchant, “you could give it to someone else.”

Wali Dad thought for a moment. “Tell me,” he said, “in all the world, who is the noblest man?”

“That is simple,” said the merchant. “It is the young king of Nekabad. His palace, too, I often visit, just three days’ journey to the west.”

“Then do me another kindness,” begged Wali Dad. “On your next trip there, give him these silks, with my compliments.”

The merchant was amused, but he agreed. On his next journey, he presented the silks to the king of Nekabad.

“A splendid gift!” said the king, admiring the silks. “In return, your friend must have twelve of my finest horses.”

So the merchant brought the king’s horses to Wali Dad.

“This grows worse and worse!” declared the old man. “What could I do with twelve horses?”

But after a moment Wali Dad said, “I know who should have such a gift. I beg you, keep two horses for yourself, and take the rest to the queen of Khaistan!”

The merchant thought this was very funny, but he consented. On his next visit to the queen’s palace, he gave her the horses.

Now the queen was perplexed. She whispered to her prime minister, “Why does this Wali Dad persist in sending gifts? I have never even heard of him!”

The prime minister said, “Why don’t you discourage him? Send him a gift so rich, he can never hope to match it.”

So in return for the ten horses from Wali Dad, the queen sent back twenty mules loaded with silver.

When the merchant and mules arrived back at the hut, Wali Dad groaned. “What have I done to deserve this? Friend, spare an old man! Keep two mules and their silver for yourself, and take the rest to the king of Nekabad!”

The merchant was getting uneasy, but he could not refuse such a generous offer. So not long after, he found himself presenting the silver-laden mules to the king of Nekabad.

The king, too, was perplexed and asked his prime minister for advice.

“Perhaps this Wali Dad seeks to prove himself your better,” said the prime minister. “Why not send him a gift he can never surpass?”

So the king sent back twenty camels with golden anklets, twenty horses with golden bridles and stirrups, twenty elephants with golden seats mounted on their backs, and twenty liveried servants to care for them all.

When the merchant guided the servants and animals to Wali Dad’s hut, the grass-cutter was beside himself. “Will bad fortune never end? Please, do not stop for a minute! Keep for yourself two of each animal, and take the rest to the queen of Khaistan!”

“How can I go to her again?” protested the merchant. But Wali Dad pleaded so hard, the merchant consented to go just once more.

This time, the queen was stunned by the magnificence of Wali Dad’s gift. She turned again to her prime minister.

“Clearly,” said the prime minister, “the man wishes to marry you. Since his gifts are so fine, perhaps you should meet him!”

So the queen ordered a great caravan made ready, with countless horses, camels, and elephants. With the trembling merchant as guide, she and her court set out to visit the great Wali Dad.

On the third day, the caravan made camp, and the queen sent the merchant ahead to tell Wali Dad of her coming.

When Wali Dad heard the merchant’s news, his head sank to his hands. “Oh, no!” he moaned. “Now I will be paid for all my foolishness. I have brought shame on myself, on you, and on the queen. What are we to do?”

“I fear we can do nothing!” said the merchant, and he headed back to the caravan.

The next morning, Wali Dad rose before dawn. “Good-bye, old hut,” he said. “I will never see you again.”

The old grass-cutter started down the road. But he had not gone far when he heard a voice.

“Where are you going, Wali Dad?”

He turned and saw two radiant ladies. He knew at once they were peris from Paradise.

Wali Dad sank to his knees and cried, “I am a stupid old man. Let me go my way. I cannot face my shame!”

“No shame can come to such as you,” said one of the peris. “Though your clothes are poor, in your heart you are a king.”

The peri touched him on the shoulder. To his amazement, he saw his rags turn to fine clothes. A jeweled turban sat on his head. The rusty sickle at his waist was now a gleaming scimitar.

“Return, Wali Dad,” said the other peri. “All is as it should be.”

Wali Dad looked behind him. Where his hut had stood, a splendid palace sparkled in the rising sun. In shock, he turned to the peris, but they had vanished.

Wali Dad hurried back along the road. As he entered the palace, the guards gave a salute. Servants bowed to him, then rushed here and there, preparing for the visitors.

Wali Dad wandered through countless rooms, gaping at riches beyond his imagining. Suddenly, three servants ran up.

“A caravan from the east!” announced the first.

“No,” said the second, “a caravan from the west!”

“No,” said the third, “caravans from both east and west!”

The bewildered Wali Dad rushed outside to see two caravans halt before the palace. Coming from the east was a queen in a jeweled litter. Coming from the west was a king on a fine horse.

Wali Dad hurried to the queen.

“My dear Wali Dad, we meet at last,” said the queen of Khaistan. “But who is that magnificent king?”

“I believe it is the king of Nekabad, Your Majesty,” said Wali Dad. “Please excuse me for a moment.”

He rushed over to the king.

“My dear Wali Dad, I had to meet the giver of such fine gifts,” said the king of Nekabad. “But who is that splendid queen?”

“The queen of Khaistan, Your Majesty,” said Wali Dad with a smile. “Please come and meet her.”

And so the king of Nekabad met the queen of Khaistan, and the two fell instantly in love. A few days later their marriage took place in the palace of Wali Dad. And the celebration went on for many days.

At last Wali Dad had said good-bye to all his guests. The very next morning, he rose before dawn, crept quietly from the palace, and started down the road.

But he had not gone far when he heard a voice.

“Where are you going, Wali Dad?”

He turned and saw the two peris. Again he sank to his knees.

“Did I not tell you I am a stupid old man? I should be glad for what I have received, but . . . .”

“Say no more,” said the other peri. “You shall have your heart’s desire.” And she touched him again.

So Wali Dad became once more a grass-cutter, living happily in his hut for the rest of his days. And though he often thought warmly of his friends the king and queen, he was careful never to send them another gift.

Palau

**Palestinian Territories (Asia)**

**Animals, Trickster, Cleverness**

**You can Fight with Your Mind**

There was a group of rabbits living in quiet and peace.  The area where they were living was full of grass and it had a nice lake.  They were living alone but with peace.

   One day a group of elephants came to this area looking for food and water.  After they came, the rabbits couldn't live in peace and quiet.  In addition, they couldn't drink or eat.  They were hiding in their houses under ground.  So. they were about to decide to leave the area.  One of these rabbits got an idea to throw these elephants out of the area.

   He went out and asked to speak with the king of the elephants.  The king allowed him to speak.  The rabbit said: "I'm a prophet from the moon.  The moon is very angry because you and your friends drink from his lake."  The king said:  "Can you prove that?"  The rabbit said:  "OK.  Please look at the lake and you can believe me.  After the king looked at the lake he believed the rabbit, because he didn't notice that he was just looking at the reflection of the moon on the water.  Then the rabbit asked the king to drink.  When the king put his trunk in the water to start drinking, the lake started rippling.  As a result the reflection of the moon started shimmering.  The rabbit said:  "Please, Mr King, look how the moon is shaking; he is very angry."  The king believed that and shouted to all elephants to leave the area quickly.  After the elephants left, the rabbits could live in peace and quiet again.

**Panama (Central America)**

**Humorous**

**Why People are Hairy**

<http://wws.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=70>

There once was a little old man who was known here on the island as Old Grandfather. Every morning at dawn he would set out in his canoe and paddle to the mainland, where his fields were. Old Grandfather always kept to himself and wouldn't allow anyone to come within a mile of his land. No one caught sight of him until evening, when he paddled back to the island with his canoe so loaded with bananas, corn, squash, yams, and coconuts that he almost sank straight down to the ocean floor.

All the people scratched their heads. How could little Old Grandfather harvest so much every day? No one could figure it out.

His nephews wondered most of all. They begged Old Grandfather to take them with him to his fields. But the old man shook his head, saying, "No, I work alone. You boys make too much noise."

Now, the nephews weren't the type to just sit still and take "no" as the final word. They decided to follow Old Grandfather to the mainland and find out his secret.

The next day, Old Grandfather got up at dawn and walked down to his canoe. His nephews were wide awake, but lay quietly in the dark, listening to the old man's every move. As soon as they heard his paddle hit the water, they jumped up, ran to their canoe, and headed out behind him.

Old Grandfather paddled to the mainland with his nephews hot on his trail, keeping their heads down low in the canoe and trying hard to keep from talking.

Old Grandfather turned into a bend where the river meets the ocean and began paddling upstream. The nephews didn't have a clue where they were, so they kept bobbing their heads up from the floor of the canoe to make sure they didn't lose sight of Old Grandfather up ahead.

They passed through mango and coconut groves, which looked really tempting to the nephews since they didn't have it in their plan to pack some food. Just as the nephews were about to jump up and grab breakfast, Old Grandfather pulled his canoe onto a patch of land and took out his machete and bag. Then he walked off into the jungle.

The nephews held their breath, waiting under the cool shade of the mango groves for Old Grandfather to clear out of sight. Then, oh-so-quietly, they pulled up their canoe alongside the old man's and followed him.

They climbed over weeds and thorns and rocks and streams. Seeing that they were coming to a clearing up ahead, the nephews crept behind a bush and peered out through the leaves. There in front of them was Old Grandfather, lying down against a tree and snoring as if he had a horn blowing through his nose.

And he was bald!

All the hairs from Old Grandfather's head were strutting across the ground. One hair was swinging the machete, another was planting new yams. A third hair was carrying bananas. Other hairs were harvesting squash and hauling coconuts. And all the while, bald Old Grandfather kept on snoring under the tree, sound asleep.

Seeing all these hairs marching around Old Grandfather's fields scared the living daylight out of the nephews. They might have kept still, but the hair with the machete started swinging it in their direction. The two nephews let out one big walloping yell!

Old Grandfather jumped up and started shouting, "Oh no, little hairs! They've found our secret! Come, quick! Come, quick!"

The little hairs dropped their machetes and seeds and bananas and came leaping back toward Old Grandfather. But they were rushing so much that instead of all landing on his head, some jumped onto his arms, some onto his legs, others onto his chest, and a great big bunch got stuck in his armpits.

So that's why, today, people have hair all over their bodies—because of crazy Old Grandfather.

**Papua New Guinea (Oceania)**

**Animals**

**Legend of Cassowary**

<http://wws.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=75>

There once was a skilled and patient hunter who could track down any animal in the forest. He would position himself against a rock or a tree, and for days, and even weeks, would not stir or blink. Eventually, the animals became so accustomed to the sight of him that many concluded that he must be a peculiar type of moss indigenous to the region. But just when the animals felt free to nuzzle up against him, the hunter would whip out his bow and arrow and strike.

One day, the hunter went into the jungle to hunt for wild birds. Seeing a large tree next to a pond, he walked toward it to appraise its texture. Noting that the tree was not too rough and not too thin, he leaned up against it and prepared himself for a long and quiet vigil.

At midnight, however, the hunter saw the prize he was looking for. Five giant cassowaries flew into the tree's branches. They then circled the pond in a happy dance, and chased each other to the water's edge. But just as the hunter was about to aim an arrow at the plumpest bird, all five birds slipped off their feather coats—revealing themselves to be five beautiful sisters.

The hunter—who had never before stirred or blinked during his countless hunting trips—trembled at the sight. The youngest woman, in particular, was so lovely that he could not help but sigh. The hunter knew instantly that he must make this young woman his wife.

The next day, at the stroke of midnight, the cassowaries again flew into the tree branches. The hunter watched as they raced to the pond and slipped off their coat of feathers. The hunter took special note of the youngest sister's coat. But he did not approach the young woman that night. He was, after all, a skilled and patient hunter who knew better than to make his move too quickly.

On the third night, the hunter was ready. As soon as the youngest sister took off her feathers and swam across the pond, the hunter ran up to the water's edge and stole her coat.

In no time at all, the five sisters finished their moonlit swim. As the youngest sister approached the shore, she realized that her coat was not where she had left it. Although her sisters tried to help her find her missing coat, they were sleepy and anxious to retire to their comfortable nest.

"Go home," the youngest sister urged them. "As soon as I find my coat, I'll join you."

When her sisters were out of sight, the hunter walked up to the water's edge holding the girl's coat of feathers in his hand.

"Is this what you're looking for?" the hunter asked the young woman, smiling.

"Yes!" the cassowary woman replied, "May I please have it back?"

But the hunter shook his head, "no," and started to walk away. The beautiful woman followed him, begging him to please, please, give back her feathers.

The hunter led her out of the forest and back to his house. By the time the young woman reached the hunter's house, she fell down in exhaustion. She was not accustomed to walking for such a long time. The hunter carried her to bed and covered her in a warm blanket.

When she awoke seven days later, the hunter fed her hot soup and tended to her every need. But the young woman asked only for her coat of feathers.

"It is lost," the hunter replied. "I cannot find it."

The cassowary woman continued to be very tired—even though she had slept for so many days. She decided to stay with the hunter until she regained her strength and could find her lost feathers.

But slowly, the cassowary woman's memories of her life as a bird began to fade. And one day, when the hunter said, "Marry me!" the cassowary woman realized that she could think of no reason not to marry him. Within three weeks, they were husband and wife, and within the year, she gave birth to a son.

For three years, the hunter, the cassowary woman, and their son lived happily. But one day, while she was cleaning the house, the cassowary woman noticed that a box was buried underneath the dirt floor. Curious, she began to dig. Pulling the box out of the ground, she opened it.

Her coat of cassowary feathers was hidden inside! As she stroked the soft feathers, the cassowary woman began to cry. She had forgotten that she had ever been a bird. She had forgotten the great joy she had once known.

The cassowary woman slipped on the coat of feathers and immediately turned into a bird. Flapping her wings, she flew out of the window.

Outside, her young son and husband were just coming home after a day in the forest.

"Look," cried the little boy, pointing to the cassowary overhead. "What a pretty bird!"

Recognizing the feathers, the hunter screamed to his wife, "Don't...!"

But it was too late. The cassowary remembered who she was, and soared into the noon sun in search of her sisters.

**Paraguay (South America)**

**Origin**

**Yerba Mate**

<http://www.miyerbamate.com/content/Yerba+Mate+and+the+legend+of+the+guarani.htm>

There is an old Guarani Native American legend that relates the origins of the Guarani in the Forests of Paraguay. According to the legend, the ancestors of the Guarani at one time in the distant past crossed a great and spacious ocean from a far land to settle in the Americas. They found the land both wonderful yet full of dangers; through diligence and effort they subdued the land and inaugurated a new civilization.   
  
The Guarani tribes worked the land and became excellent craftsmen. They looked forward to the coming of a tall, fair-skinned, blue eyed, bearded God (Pa' i Shume) who, according to legend, descended from the skies and expressed his pleasure with the Guarani. He brought religious knowledge and imparted to them certain agricultural practices to be of benefit during times of drought and pestilence as well as on a day-to-day basis. Significantly, He unlocked the secrets of health and medicine and revealed the healing qualities of native plants. One of the most important of these secrets was how to harvest and prepare the leaves of the Yerba Mate tree. The Mate beverage was meant to ensure health, vitality and longevity.   
  
It was like this: the tribe would clear part of the forest, plant manioc and corn, but after four or five years the soil would be worn out and the tribe had to move on. Tired of such moving, an old Indian refused to go on and preferred to stay where he was. The youngest of his daughters, beautiful Jary, had her heart split: to go on with the tribe's youths, or remain isolated, helping the old man until death would take him to Ivy-Marae's peace. Despite her friends' pleas, she ended up staying with her father.   
  
This love gesture deserved a prize. One day, a unknown shaman arrived at the ranch and asked Jary what she wanted in order to feel happy. The girl did not ask anything. But the old man asked: "I want new forces to go on and take Jary to the tribe that went away".   
  
The shaman gave him a very green plant, perfumed with kindness, and told him to plant it, pick the leaves, dry them on fire, grind them, put the pieces in a gourd, add cold or hot water and sip the infusion. "In this new beverage, you will find an healthy company, even in the sad hours of the cruelest solitude." After which he went away.   
  
Thus was born and grew the "caá-mini," whence came the[caá-y beverage](http://www.miyerbamate.com/content/Yerba%2BMate%2Bassociated%2Bterms%2Band%2Bvocabulary.htm) that white people would later adopt under the name of Chimarrão in Brazil and Yerba Mate in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay.   
  
Sipping the green sap, the old man recovered, gained new strengths and was able to resume their long journey toward meeting their kinsmen. They were received with the greatest joy. And the whole tribe adopted the habit of drinking the green herb, bitter and sweet, which gave strength and courage and would comfort friendships at the sad hours of utmost solitude.

Mate became the most common ingredient in household cures of the Guarani, and remains so to this day. In current practice in modern Paraguay and Southern Brazil, Mate tea is made from the leaves steeped in hot water. Actually, a large quantity of ground leaf is first soaked in cold water, then the hot water is added, over and over again, until all the good stuff has been extracted. In between each addition of hot water the tea is ingested through a special wood or metal straw, called a bombilla, which filters out the leafy material. It is also used as a cold beverage, often referred to as [Terere](http://www.miyerbamate.com/content/Yerba%2BMate%2Bways%2Bto%2Bdrink%2Byerba%2Bmate.htm)most common to Paraguay.

**Peru (South America)**

**Animals**

**The Frog and the Condor**

<http://www.storiestogrowby.com/stories/frog_condor_body.html>

***H***IGH in the Andes Mountains there once lived a frog in a cool stream. This poor frog was born not like the others - her front right leg was nearly twice as long as her left one. "If only I had two perfect legs like my brothers and sisters," the frog bemoaned whenever she caught her limping reflection in the rushing waters.  
  
                    Near the stream, and feeling just as sad as the frog, lived a girl in the cave of a *condor,*a huge black vulture. She was forced to remain at his nest in a faraway cave on a rocky mountain outcrop. The giant black bird had plucked her from her happy livelihood as a shepherdess and carried her back to its nest, where she had to work hard every day, beating his vicuna skins into blankets for his bed and into rugs for his nest, and preparing huge meals to satisfy his voracious appetite.   
  
                    The little frog would sometimes watch the condor sail high in the air, then swoop for his prey. And the frog sometimes followed the condor home, to the girl and her wailings, a sound that reminded her of her own sad heart. One day, she overheard this conversation-   
  
                    "So - did you beat the new vicuna skins to add to my bed?"  
  
                    "Yes, sir."  
  
                    "And where is my dinner?"  
  
                    "It's ready for you, sir. Now please, may I go to the stream to wash my clothes?"  
  
                    "Absolutely not! Do you take me for a fool? You would try to escape!"  
  
                    "No I wouldn't - please - I simply must wash my clothes. And besides, as long as you hear me beating my clothes on the rocks, you'll know I'm still there."  
  
                    "Hmm, very well then, but be sure I hear you beating your clothes or I'll fly there in a second and beat you myself!"  
  
                    So the girl, whose parents had named her Collyur, which means Morning Star, wrapped herself in one of the vicuna skins and tied her clothes into a bundle that she carried to the stream.  
  
                    As Collyur beat her clothes against the rocks, she cried bitterly for her lost freedom. She was nothing but a slave, tending to the condor's every demand, while fearing every moment for her very life. With each beat of her clothes she burst out with another wail.  
  
                    "Please don't cry," said a small voice. Collyur looked down to see a little frog on a rock, looking at her with sympathy. "What is the matter?" And the girl poured out her troubles to the frog while the creature listened and sighed.  
  
                    "I can help you," said the frog finally.  
  
                    "I'm afraid there is nothing on earth that can help me." Collyur turned away, still careful to hit her clothes against the rocks with a regular beat.  
  
                    "But I can," said the frog. "I have a bit of magic. For a few minutes, I can change myself into any creature. If I change myself into you and keep beating your clothes, the condor will think you're still here and you can escape."  
  
                    "Do you think it would work?" Collyur brightened and looked with wonder at this little frog, who seemed at that moment to be the most beautiful creature on earth. She leaned over and kissed the frog on the forehead.  
  
                    "We cannot wait a second more," said the frog, and in an instant changed into the image of Collyur. The new Collyur picked up the girl's clothes and resumed beating them against the rocks.  
  
                    "Now go!"  
  
                    At once, Collyur ran as fast as she could down the mountain to the valley and the shepherd's home. The little frog, as the image of Collyur, kept beating the clothes with the same motion.  
  
                    "What's keeping that foolish girl?" the condor hissed after many minutes had passed. "She'll make me wait here all day!" The condor flew to the stream where he saw the image of Collyur kneeling over the rocks, beating her clothes. Landing on a high rock, he shook his beak, a hook powerful enough to pierce the hide of a llama, and shrieked, "Stop it at once, you silly girl! Come back with me now!"  
  
                    The girl stood up, jumped into the stream, and completely disappeared. The condor flew directly over the very spot but saw no shadow of a girl swimming underneath the water, only a frog hopping about. While the condor flew up and down the stream, she was running away, closer and closer to freedom. After several hours had passed and he could find no sign of the girl, he flew back to his cave in a rage.  
  
                    When the frog rejoined her brothers and sisters in the stream, they all gathered around her in a crowd. "What is it?" said the little frog nervously, and she tucked her too-large right leg underneath so it wouldn't show as much.  
  
                    "Why - you're beautiful!" said one sister. Fearing a joke, the little frog glanced in the water and noticed a shiny jewel glimmering on her forehead, where Collyur had planted the kiss.   
  
                    "It's like the morning star!" said another. From then on, the frog lifted her head with pride, no longer afraid to catch a glimpse of her own reflection in the rushing waters.

**Philippines (Asia)**

**Magic, Animals, Shape-shifter**

**The Story of Tikgi**

“Tikgi, tikgi, tikgi, we will come to work for you. Let us cut your rice.”

Ligi had gone to the field to look at his growing rice, but when he heard this sound he looked up and was surprised to see some birds circling above and calling to him.

“Why, you cannot cut rice,” said Ligi. “You are birds and know only how to fly.”

But the birds insisted that they knew how to cut rice; so finally he told them to come again when the grain was ripe, and they flew away.

No sooner had the birds gone than Ligi was filled with a great desire to see them again. As he went home he wished over and over that his rice were ready to cut. As soon as Ligi left the field the tikgi birds began using magic so that the rice grew rapidly, and five days later when he returned he found the birds there ready to cut the ripened grain. Ligi showed them where to begin cutting, and then he left them.

When he was out of sight, the tikgi said to the rice cutters:

“Rice cutters, you cut the rice alone.” And to the bands which were lying nearby they said: “Bands, you tie into bundles the rice which the cutters cut”

And the rice cutters and the bands worked alone, doing as they were told.

When Ligi went again to the field in the afternoon, the tikgi said:

“Come, Ligi, and see what we have done, for we want to go home now.”

Ligi was amazed, for he saw five hundred bundles of rice cut. And he said:

“Oh, Tikgi, take all the rice you wish in payment, for I am very grateful to you.”

Then the tikgi each took one head of rice, saying it was all they could carry, and they flew away.

The next morning when Ligi reached the field, he found the birds already there and he said:

“Now, Tikgi, cut the rice as fast as you can, for when it is finished I will make a ceremony for the spirits, and you must come.”

“Yes,” replied the tikgi, “and now we shall begin the work, but you do not need to stay here.”

So Ligi went home and built a rice granary to hold his grain, and when he returned to the field the rice was all cut. Then the tikgi said: “We have cut all your rice, Ligi, so give us our pay, and when you go home the rice will all be in your granary.”

Ligi wondered at this, and when he reached home and saw that his granary was full of rice, he doubted if the tikgi could be real birds.

Not long after this Ligi invited all his relatives from the different towns to help him make the ceremony for the spirits. As soon as the people arrived, the tikgi came also; and they flew over the people’s heads and made them drink basi until they were drunk. Then they said to Ligi:

“We are going home now; it is not good for us to stay here, for we cannot sit among the people.”

When they started home Ligi followed them until they came to the bana-asi tree, and here he saw them take off their feathers and put them in the rice granary. Then suddenly they became one beautiful maiden.

“Are you not the tikgi who came to cut my rice?” asked Ligi. “You look to me like a beautiful maiden.”

“Yes,” she replied; “I became tikgi and cut rice for you, for otherwise you would not have found me.” Ligi took her back to his house where the people were making the ceremony, and as soon as they saw her they began chewing the magic betel-nuts to find who she might be.

The quid of Ebang and her husband and that of the tikgi went together, so they knew that she was their daughter who had disappeared from their house one day long ago while they were in the fields. In answer to their many questions, she told them that she had been in the bana-asi tree, where Kaboniyan had carried her, until the day that she changed herself into the tikgi birds and went to the field of Ligi.

Ligi was very fond of the beautiful girl and he asked her parents if he might marry her. They were very willing and decided on a price he should pay. After the wedding all the people remained at his house, feasting and dancing for three months.

**Poland (Europe)**

**Royalty, Folktale, princess, magical objects**

**The Princess of the Brazen Mountain**

There was a young prince, who was not only most handsome and well-grown, but also most kind-hearted and good. Now sooner or later kindness always meets its reward, though it may not seem so at first.

One summer's evening the prince was walking on the banks of a lake, when he looked up, and saw to his great surprise, in the air, against the rosy clouds of the sunset, three beautiful beings with wings—not angels, nor birds—but three beautiful damsels.

And having alighted on the ground they dropped their wings and their garments, and left them lying on the shore and leaped into the cool water, and began splashing and playing about in it, like so many waterfowl.

As soon as the prince saw this he came out from his hiding-place in the bushes, picked up one pair of wings and hid himself again.

When they had been long enough in the water, the beautiful damsels came again to land, and dressed themselves quickly.

Two of them soon had on both their white dresses and their wings; but the youngest could not find hers.

They held a short consultation, and the result was, that the two elder flew away in the shape of birds, as fast as they could, to fetch another pair of wings for their younger sister.

They soon vanished in the blue sky; but she remained alone, wringing her hands, and crying.

"What are you crying for, you lovely maiden?" asked the prince, emerging from the bushes.

"Oh! I am so unhappy!" she replied. "I am a princess of the Brazen Mountain; my sisters and I came here to bathe in the lake; and somebody has stolen my wings; so I must wait here, until they bring me another pair."

"I am a prince," he replied; "this is my father's kingdom; be my wife, and I will give you back your wings."

"Very well," she said; "I consent, only you must give me back my wings at once."

"Let us first go to church, and get married," he answered, and taking the lovely princess by the hand, he brought her to his father and mother, and asked their permission to marry her.

The king and queen were delighted with their beautiful daughter-in-law, gave them their blessing, and all was got ready for the wedding.

And directly they came back from church the prince, overcome with joy, kissed his bride, and gave her back her wings.

She took them joyfully, fastened them to her shoulders; then flew out of the window, and vanished.

All the wedding-guests were in consternation; the king looked very serious; the queen wept bitterly; but the prince so grieved after his bride, that, having obtained his parents' consent, he went out into the wide world to search for that Brazen Mountain, where he hoped to find her.

He travelled for a long time, inquiring about it of every one he met; but nobody had ever heard of such a mountain; and he began to give up all hope of ever finding it.

Late one evening he saw a twinkling light before him, which he followed, in the hope of coming to some habitation. It led him on a long way, across level plains, through deep defiles, and at length some way into a dark forest. But at last he came to whence the light proceeded—from a solitary hermitage.

He went in; but found the hermit lying dead, with six wax candles burning around him. He had evidently been dead for some time. Yet there seemed to be nobody near him, nor any inhabitants at all in this desolate region.

The prince's first thought was how to get him buried, and with proper rites, when there was no priest—nor indeed any people at all—to be found in the neighbourhood.

While he was thinking over this, something fell from a peg in the wall, close beside him; it was a leather whip.

The prince took it up, and read on the handle these words:

"The Magic Whip."

As he knew its virtue, he called out:

"Ho! Magical Whip! To right and left skip! And do what I will!"

The whip jumped from his hand, became invisible, and flew away.

In a short time there was the hum of a multitude through the forest; and the head-forester entered, breathless, followed by a crowd of under-keepers, and many more people with them.

Some set about making a coffin, others began digging a grave, and the head-keeper rode off to fetch a priest.

And as soon as it was dawn mass was said; the bells began ringing from several far-distant churches; and at sunrise the corpse was decently buried. When the funeral was over all the people dispersed to their homes, and the Magical Whip returned of itself to the prince's hand.

He stuck it into his girdle, and went on, till after an hour or two he came to a clearing in the forest, where twelve men were fighting desperately among themselves.

"Stop, you fellows!" exclaimed the prince. "Who are you? and what are you fighting about?"

"We are robbers," they replied, "and we are fighting for these boots, which were the property of our deceased leader. Whoever has them can go seven leagues at one step; and he who gets them will be our leader. As you are a stranger we will abide by your decision, as to whom this pair of boots shall belong, and give you a heap of gold into the bargain for your trouble."

The prince drew on the boots, took the Magical Whip from his girdle, and said:

"Ho! Magical Whip! To right and left skip! And do what I will!"

The whip jumped from his hand, became invisible, and well thrashed the robbers. In the midst of the confusion the prince made his escape, and having the boots on he went seven miles at every step, and was soon far enough away from the robbers' den.

But as he was no nearer to finding out where the Brazen Mountain was, he had no need to go quite so fast; so he took off the seven-league boots, put them under his arm, and the Magic Whip in his girdle, and went at his ordinary pace, till he came to a narrow path between some rocks, where again he came upon twelve men fighting.

They explained that they were fighting for an invisible cap, which had belonged to their late leader; and asked him, as a stranger, to decide who should have it.

So he set the Magical Whip, as before, to work; and there was a nice confusion among these robbers, for not seeing where the blows came from they fell upon one another; and at last, frightened out of their senses, they took flight, and scattered in all directions. The prince, having put on the invisible cap, was able to walk among them, and talk to them; and they all heard, though they could not see him.

He now began to consider whether he could not use all these treasures to help him to find the Brazen Mountain. So he drew on the seven-league boots, settled the invisible cap on his forehead, and taking the Magical Whip from his girdle, said:

"Oh! thou wondrous Magic Whip! Lead me on; I'll follow thee! Onward to the Brazen Mountain Lead me, where I fain would be!"

The whip sprang from his hand. It did not become invisible this time, but glided rapidly a little above the ground, like a boat over a calm sea. Though it flew like a bird, the prince was quite able to keep pace with it, because he had on the seven-league boots. He was scarcely aware of the fact, when in less than a quarter of an hour they came to a standstill—at the Brazen Mountain.

At first the prince was overjoyed at having reached the goal of his wishes; but when he looked more closely at its smooth perpendicular sides, hard as adamant—its summit lost in the clouds—he was in despair; for how was he ever to get to the top of it?

However, he thought there must be some way up after all; so taking off his boots and cap, he set off to walk round the base of the mountain.

In half an hour he came to a mill, with twelve millstones. The miller was an old wizard, with a long beard down to the ground. He stood beside a stove—whereupon a kettle was boiling—stirring the contents with a long iron spoon, and piling wood on the fire.

The prince looked into the kettle.

"Good morning to you, gaffer. What are you doing there?"

"That's my own business," replied the miller gruffly.

"What mill is this?" the prince next asked.

"That's no business of yours," replied the miller.

The prince was not going to be satisfied with this; so he gave his usual orders to the Magical Whip, which forthwith became invisible, and began to lash the miller soundly. He tried to run away; but it was no use; till the prince took pity on him, and called the whip back again. He put it up, and then said:

"Whose mill is this?"

"It belongs to the three princesses of the Brazen Mountain," replied the miller. "They let down a rope here every day, and draw up all the flour they want by the rope."

As he said this a thick silken rope came down, with a loop at the end, which struck the threshold of the mill.

The prince made ready; and when the usual sack of wheat flour was bound fast in the loop, he climbed upon it, having first put on his invisible cap, and was thus drawn up to the top of the Brazen Mountain.

The three princesses, having drawn up their supply of flour, put it into their storehouse, and went back to their dwelling.

Their palace was most beautiful, all silver without, and all gold within. All the windows were of crystal; the chairs and tables were made of diamonds, and the floors of looking-glass. The ceilings were like the sky, with mimic stars and moon shining therein; and in the principal saloon there was a sun, with rays all round; beautiful birds were singing, monkeys were telling fairy tales; and in their midst amongst all this sat three most beautiful princesses.

The two eldest were weaving golden threads in their looms; but the youngest, the prince's wife, sat silently apart from her sisters, listening to the murmur of a fountain, her head leaning on her hand, in deep thought. And as she sat there two pearly tears coursed down her lovely face.

"What are you thinking of, sister?" asked the two elder princesses.

"I am thinking of the prince, my husband. I love to think of him, and I am so sorry for him, poor fellow! To think I left him for no fault at all; and when we loved one another so dearly! Oh! sisters! I shall have to leave you, and go back to him; only I fear he will never forgive me, however I entreat him, for having behaved so unkindly to him."

"I forgive you, I forgive you everything, darling!" exclaimed the prince throwing off the invisible cap, and embracing her rapturously.

Then she gave him wings like her own, and they flew away together. In an hour or two they arrived in his father's kingdom.

The king and queen welcomed them joyfully, and all was greatest joy and happiness henceforward.

**Portugal (Europe)**

**Royalty**

**The Ugly Princess**

<http://www.worldoftales.com/European_folktales/Romanic_folktale_2.html>

There was once a king who had an only daughter, and she was so very ugly and deformed that, when she rode through the streets of Alcantara, the children ran away, thinking she was a witch.

Her father, however, thought her the most lovely creature in his kingdom; and as all the courtiers agreed with him, and the Court poet was always singing her praises, the princess had been led to believe what most ladies like to believe; and as she was expecting a prince from a distant country, who was coming expressly to marry her, she had ordered many rich dresses which only made her look uglier.

The city of Alcantara was ready to receive Prince Alanbam, who was going to espouse the Princess Altamira.

Crowds thronged the streets, martial music was heard everywhere, and in the public square a splendid throne had been erected for the king, Princess Altamira, and Prince Alanbam.

Around the throne were formed large bodies of well-equipped cavalry, dark visaged warriors clad in white and gold, and mounted on superb Arab steeds.

Behind the king, on his left side, stood the royal barber with his retinue of apprentices; and on his right side was seen Nabó the headsman, a man of gigantic stature, with his implement of office, an axe, over his shoulder.

Seated on the steps of the throne were a number of musicians, and below these a guard of honour, composed of foot soldiers dressed in short vests, called “aljubas,” and wide lower garments, and with their aljavas, or quivers, full of bright arrows.

From the throne the king could see the splendid bridge on six pillars, built by Trajan, along which a brilliant cavalcade was proceeding, namely, the procession formed by Prince Alanbam and his retainers.

As soon as the prince, after saluting the king, beheld the princess, he turned pale, for he had never seen any one so ugly; and however much he might have desired to keep up an appearance of courtesy to the princess before her father’s subjects, he could not kiss her as she expected him to do, nor could he be persuaded to occupy the chair reserved for him beside the princess.

“Your mercy,” said he, addressing the king, “must excuse my insuperable bashfulness; but the fact is that the Princess Altamira is so transcendently beautiful, and so dazzling to behold, that I can never expect to look upon her face again and live.”

The king and the princess were highly flattered; but as Prince Alanbam continued obdurate in his professions of bashfulness, they commenced to feel somewhat vexed, and at last the king said in a loud voice—

“Prince Alanbam, we fully appreciate the motive that prompts your conduct, but the fact is the Princess Altamira is present to be wedded to you; and, as a Christian king, the first of my line, I desire to lead to the altar my only daughter, Princess Altamira, and her affianced husband, Prince Alanbam.”

“It cannot be,” said the prince. “I would rather marry some one less beautiful. Sir king, forgive me if I annoy you, but I will not be wedded to so much beauty.”

The king was now incensed beyond measure, and the princess his daughter, thinking to spite Prince Alanbam, said—

“With your permission, royal father, since I am too beautiful for a prince, I will be married to the most learned man in your kingdom—Bernardo, the royal barber.”

“And that you shall,” said the king; but, on turning round to speak to the barber, he found that this the most learned man in his kingdom was all of a tremble, as if dancing to the music of St. Vitus.

“What has possessed thee, caitiff?” asked the king. “Hearest not thou the honour that is to be conferred on thee?”

“My royal master,” muttered the poor frightened man of learning and lather, “I can no more avail myself of the honour which you would confer on me than the Archbishop of Villafranca could. His grace is bound to celibacy, and I am already married.”

Now, the barber had on many occasions rendered himself obnoxious to Sanchez, the royal cobbler, who, seeing the king’s perplexity, and a chance of avenging past insults, exclaimed—

“Royal master, it would be most acceptable to your subjects that so much beauty should be wedded to so much learning. Our good friend, Bernardo, was, it is true, married; but since he has been in attendance at the palace, he has so fallen in love with Princess Altamira that he no longer notices his wife; therefore, may it please your mercy to dissolve the first marriage, and announce this new one with her highness, your daughter?”

The barber at this harangue became so infuriated that he rushed blindly at the cobbler, and with his razor would have severed his head from the rest of his body, but that he was prevented by the guard, who held him down.

“Executioner, do your work!” cried the baffled king; and at one blow the head of the unfortunate barber rolled on the ground.

Prince Alanbam seeing this, and fearing that more mischief might ensue, proposed to the king that one hundred knights should be chosen, and that these should fight for the hand of the lovely Princess Altamira. “I myself will enter the lists,” said the prince; “and the survivor will be rewarded by marrying your daughter.”

“That is a good idea,” said the king; and calling together ninety-nine of his best knights, he bade them fight valiantly, for their reward was very precious.

Fifty knights, mounted on beautiful chargers, placed themselves on one side, and were opposed by forty-nine equally well-mounted knights and Prince Alanbam; and at the word of command, given by the king, they advanced at headlong speed against each other; but, much to the astonishment of the spectators, no knight was unhorsed; rather did it seem that each knight did his utmost to get run through by his opponent.

At it they went again and again, but with the same result, for no man was hurt, although seeming to court death.

“We will alter the order of things,” exclaimed the king. “The knight who is first wounded shall be the one to marry the princess.”

This was no sooner said than the knights seemed to be possessed of a blind fury, and at the first charge nearly every knight was unhorsed and every one wounded, while the confusion and noise were awful. They were all accusing each other of being the first wounded; so that, in utter despair, the king declared his daughter should be married to the Church, enter a convent, and thus hide her transcendent beauty.

“No, father,” exclaimed the ugly princess; “I will get a husband; and if in all the states of Spain no one be found worthy enough to be my husband, I will leave Spain for ever. There is a country where the day never dawns, and night is eternal. Thither will I go; for in the dark, as all cats are gray, so are all degrees of beauty brought to one common level. I now know that it is just as unfortunate to be too beautiful as it is to be very ugly.”

Having delivered herself of this speech, Princess Altamira bade the king, her father, good-bye, and was on the point of leaving the royal presence, when the handsome figure of Felisberto, the blind fiddler, was seen to approach.

“Princess,” exclaimed blind Felisberto, “to Spain nothing is denied. You speak of proceeding to the North, where the day never dawns, in search of a husband. You need but look at me to behold one to whom night and day, extreme ugliness and transcendent beauty, are alike; and since all are so bashful that they will not marry you, allow me, fair princess, to offer you my services as a husband. In my world ‘handsome is that handsome does.’”

The king was so pleased with the blind fiddler’s speech that he immediately made him a Grandee of Spain, and acknowledged him as his son-in-law elect.

**Qatar (Asia)**

**Trickster**

**The Bulls and the Lion**

<http://leverettfolktales.blogspot.com/2012/06/bulls-and-lion.html>

There were three bulls who lived with al ion, a white bull, a red bull, and a black bull.  They were enjoying themselves.  One day, the lion said, "Would you like to go on a picnic?"  The three bulls said, "That's a good idea."  However, the lion was planning to eat one bull, and knew that he couldn't eat all three together.  The lion said to the red and black bulls, "Let me eat the white bull, because his color is different."  The two bulls said, "Yes, that is a good idea."  After a few days, the lion said to the red bull, "If you let me eat the black bull, the other animals will think you are a lion, because your color is similar to my color."  The red bull said, "Why not?"  After a while, thel ion said to the red bull, "Now I have to eat you, because I'm hungry."  Then the red bull knew that the lion would not be able to eat him, if he hadn't allowed him to eat his friends the white bull and the black bull.  Finally he requested that the lion allow him to say something before he ate him.  He said, "The lion ate me, when he ate the white bull."

**Romania (Europe)**

**Magic**

**The Wonderful Bird**

<http://www.worldoftales.com/European_folktales/Romanian_folktale_2.html>

Once upon a time, something happened. If it had not happened, it would not be told.

There was a good, pious emperor, who had three sons. Among many other benefits bestowed upon the inhabitants of his empire he built a church, about which marvelous stories were told, for he adorned it with gold, precious stones and every thing the workmen of that country regarded as beautiful and valuable. Within and in front of this church were numbers of marble columns, and it was supplied with the finest paintings, silver chandeliers, huge silver lamps, and the rarest books. The more the emperor rejoiced in its beauty, the more sorrowful he felt that he could not finish it, for the steeple continually fell down.

"How is it that this sacred church can not be completed?" he asked. "I have spent all my property and it is not yet done." So he ordered a proclamation to be sent throughout the empire, stating that any architect who could finish the church steeple would receive great gifts and honors. Besides this, a second proclamation was issued, commanding prayers to be read and services held in all the churches, that God might take pity on him and send him a good architect. The third night the monarch dreamed that if any one would fetch the wonderful bird from the other shore and put its nest in the steeple, the church could be finished. He told this dream to his sons, and they vied with each other in offering to set out and devote themselves to their imperial father's service.

The emperor replied: "I see, my sons, that you all desire to fulfill your duty to God, but you can't all three go at once. My oldest son shall set out first, if he does not succeed, the second one, and so on until the Lord takes pity upon us."

The younger sons silently submitted; the oldest one made his preparations for the journey. He traveled as best he could, and when he had passed the frontiers of his father's empire, found himself in a beautiful grove. After lighting a fire he stood waiting until his food was cooked. Suddenly he saw a fox, which begged him to tie up his hound, give it a bit of bread and a glass of wine, and let it rest by his fire. Instead of granting the request the prince released the hound, which instantly pursued the animal, whereupon the fox, by a magic spell, transformed the emperor's son into a block of stone.

When the sovereign saw that his oldest son did not return, he listened to the entreaties of his second son, and gave him permission to set forth to find the wonderful bird. After making his preparations and taking some provisions with him, this prince also departed. On the spot where his brother had been turned to stone, the same thing happened to him, because he also refused the fox's entreaties, and tried to catch it, to get its skin.

The emperor grew very thoughtful, when after a long time his sons failed to return, either with or without the wonderful bird.

At last the youngest said: "You see, father, it is now a long time since my brothers set out to find the wonderful bird, and they haven't come home yet; give me some money and clothes for the journey that I may try my luck also. If I succeed, you will rejoice, because your dream will be fulfilled, and if I do not, you will suffer no mortification from it."

"Your older brothers have apparently been unable to get this wonderful bird," replied the emperor; "nay, perhaps they have even lost their lives, they have been absent so long. I am old; if you go too, who will help me in the cares of government; if I die, who is there to ascend the throne except you, my son? Stay here, my dear child, do not leave me."

"You know, my royal father, that I have never swerved a hair's breadth from your commands, and if I now venture to urge my petition it is only because, if possible, I would fain fulfill a wish that gives you no rest, which you have cherished so many years and striven to realize at so great a cost."

After many entreaties, the emperor yielded. The prince chose from the imperial stables a horse that pleased him, took a dog for a companion, supplied himself with sufficient food and departed.

After some time had passed, the emperor's two older sons suddenly arrived with the magic bird and a young girl, who was placed in charge of the poultry-yard. Every body wondered at the beauty of the bird, whose plumage glittered with a thousand hues, each feather shining like the sun, and the church-steeple did not fall after the bird and its nest were placed within. One thing, however, was noticed; the bird seemed dumb, it never uttered a note, and all who saw it grieved that so beautiful a creature should have no song; even the emperor, spite of all the pleasure he took in the church and steeple, was sorrowful because the bird did not sing.

People began to forget the youngest son, so great was the rejoicing over the bird that seemed to keep the steeple from falling, and thus enabled the workmen to finish the church; but the emperor grieved because the prince was not there to share his subjects' pleasure.

One day the poultry-keeper came to him and said: "May thy face shine, mighty emperor, the whole city is marveling at the singing of the magic bird—a shepherd entered the church early this morning, and the bird instantly began to sing as if it would burst its throat, and is so happy that it can hardly keep in its nest. This has happened to-day for the second time. While the shepherd is in the church the bird never stops singing, but as soon as he goes away, it is silent."

"Let the shepherd be brought before me at once."

"Your majesty, the shepherd seems to be a stranger; no one here knows him. Your majesty's sons, I hear, have set guards to arrest him."

"Silence," said the emperor; "do not mention my sons; it is not seemly for you to speak against them."

The sovereign sent some of his most trusty servants to keep watch, seize the shepherd as soon as he entered the church and the bird began to sing, and bring him before him. But, not content with this, he went himself the next holiday to hear the bird's wonderful singing with his own ears, and see the shepherd. If he had not been present, a violent conflict would have arisen between his own people and the spies sent by his sons, who evidently wished to lay hands on the shepherd. The emperor ordered that he should be brought to the palace, for a strange feeling stirred in his heart when he saw the timid youth with the figure of a hero.

When he came out of church, the monarch went directly home to his palace, for his heart told him that there must be something unusual about this shepherd. On seeing him, he said:—

"Tell me, my son, from what part of the country do you come? Have you any parents, and how did you get here?"

"My story is a long one, most noble emperor. I have parents and brothers. I shall need more time to tell you how I came hither, but if it is your majesty's will, I am ready. I will come to your majesty early to-morrow morning, it is too late to-day."

"Very well, my brave fellow, I will expect you at dawn to-morrow."

Early the next morning the shepherd came to await the emperor's commands; but as soon as the emperor heard that he had arrived, he summoned him.

"Tell me, my son, what is the reason the magic bird sings as soon as you enter the church, and stops when you go out."

"To understand that and other things, your majesty, let me tell you my whole story."

"I will listen; tell me anything you please."

The shepherd then began:—

"I have a father, and brothers. I left my home to do something to please my father, who was sad because he had a wish that could not be fulfilled. After a journey of several days I reached a beautiful meadow, from which branched several roads. Intending to spend the night there, I lighted a fire, took out some of the provisions I had brought with me, and was just sitting down to eat them, when I suddenly saw a fox beside me. Whence it came I did not know; it seemed as if it had sprung up out of the earth.

"'Please let me warm myself by your fire,' it said. 'See, I am so cold that my teeth chatter. Give me a bit of bread and a glass of wine, that I may satisfy my hunger and thirst, and tie your dog, so I can eat in peace and rest without fear.'

"'Very well,' I replied, 'come and warm yourself. Here are my provisions and my flask, eat and drink as much as you choose.'

"I tied my dog, and we sat down by the fire and talked together. Among other things, I told the fox where I was going, and even asked if it could tell me what I should do to accomplish the task I had voluntarily undertaken.

"'Have no anxiety about that,' replied the fox. 'We'll set out together early to-morrow morning, and if I don't help you to the goal, never trust me again.'

"We sat by the fire, feasting like two friends, then the fox bade me good-night, and vanished like a shadow. I wondered how it had been possible that I did not see what direction the animal took, and while racking my brains to find out how it had managed to go and come unperceived, I fell asleep. When the fox came at dawn next morning, it found me gazing in astonishment at several blocks of stone, which resembled two men, two dogs, and two horses. As soon as I saw the animal, we prepared to set out.

"The fox turned three somersaults and suddenly changed into a handsome hero. On the way he told me that the place where I had spent the night was part of his property, that he was married and had several children, but had been condemned to wear the form of a fox until some human being would take pity on him and receive him, let him warm himself by the same fire, give him a bit of bread and glass of wine. As I was this man, he was now released from the spell, and would go with me and never leave me until I had accomplished my object. This event pleased me, and we journeyed on and on all through the long summer day until late at night when we reached a mountain meadow, where we encamped. My traveling companion told me that the next day we should be obliged to pass through the lands of several dragons, and he thought we should there find what we sought.

"The following morning we entered the dragons' country, though somewhat timidly, and about noon reached the dragon-palace. It is impossible to describe the magnificent things we saw there. Gardens with all sorts of flowers and fruits, rooms that seemed lined with silver, so that they shone in the sun like mirrors, walls covered with paintings and carved flowers. Every corner of the palace was gilded, and fountains cast jets of water into the air. Luckily for us, the dragons were not at home when we arrived. On the threshold we met a beautiful girl, a girl who looked as sweet as if she were made of sugar, and who advised us not to enter the court-yard in the dragons' absence, or we should meet with some misfortune. Then she wept for joy at seeing people from the place from whence the dragons had stolen her. When we asked her about the wonderful bird, she said it was in the possession of some other dragons, relatives of those on whose lands we were.

"'Go there,' she added, 'for with God's help, I hope you will succeed, and when you return, take me with you.'

"After she had told us how we could enter the dragons' court-yard and what we must do, I swore by what was dearest to me in the world, my father, that I would not leave her in the dragons' power, but take her[24] away. Then we continued the journey. To tell the truth, I loved her as soon as I saw her.

"When we reached the borders of the next dragon-kingdom, we stopped to rest, but at dawn the following day we crossed the frontier and by noon reached their palace, which was even more beautiful than the first one. As soon as I had dismounted from my horse, I went to the stable, but my companion turned back, for this was what the girl had advised. The horses were at their cribs. One turned its head and looked at me. I patted its eyes, pulled its ears, threw a bridle over its neck, mounted it, and in riding by, took the cage with the magic bird that hung in the entry."

"You brought the wonderful bird?" cried the emperor. "Then you are my son, whom all believe dead."

"Even so, father." And after kissing the emperor's hand, he begged him to send for the poultry-keeper. When she came, the shepherd said, "This is the girl of whom I told you."

"How is that possible!" replied the emperor. "How did she become a poultry maid?"

"She'll tell you that herself. I don't know. So, as I was saying," he continued, "after I had snatched the cage I fled as fast as I could on the horse I had taken from the dragons, but the other horses began to neigh and make such a noise that my hair fairly bristled, yet I held firm. The dragons chased me until I reached my comrade, who was waiting for me on the frontier. If it had not been for him, they would have seized me, and who knows what would have become of me then. But my companion stretched out his hand, shouting, 'Stop!' The dragons seemed to be suddenly turned to stone; not another step forward did they take. After embracing and kissing me he admired the bird's beauty. The dragons did every thing in their power to get it from me, and made all sorts of promises, but when they saw they could not persuade me, begged me at least to give them the horse. I perceived it would not be right to leave them in such a sad state, so I returned the horse and went on with my companion and the bird, but the dragons almost stared their eyes out after it.

"When we reached the other dragon palace, the girl was waiting for us at the gate. Cracking her whip three times the whole building changed into an apple, which she put in her pocket. I passed my arm around her, and we set out. But oh! dear, when the dragons discovered it! How they chased us, roaring so that our blood curdled in our veins. I summoned all my courage, spurred my horse, and fled like the wind with my companion. But the dragons came as fast as thought. When my comrade saw this, and perceived that there was no possibility of escape, he stopped, made a sign and turned them into blocks of stone. Then we continued our journey till we reached the field from which we had started and which was part of the fox's property. After we had rested and I had thanked God that we had accomplished our task, I asked my comrade what those stone pillars meant.

"He answered: 'If you know you will regret it, and if you don't know, you will also regret it.'

"'Pray tell me.'

"'These are your brothers,' he answered. 'Instead of kindly granting my request, as you did, they set their hounds on me, which condemned me to wear the loathsome fox-skin still longer, so I turned them to stone.'

"'For my sake,' I entreated, 'for the sake of our friendship, make them men again as they were before.'

"'I prize your friendship greatly,' he replied, 'so let it be as you wish—but you'll repent it.'

"In an instant he made a sign with his hand, the stones suddenly shook, and my brothers remained motionless with amazement, when they saw us before them. We took leave of my comrade and set out on our way home. But see what a fine trick my brothers played me.

"'Brother,' they said, after we had ridden about a mile, 'we are tired by the long distance, and it is very warm. Let us go to a pond we know here and each drink a little to cool ourselves.' I agreed, and we went there. The oldest drank, so did the second one, but when I was going to drink too, lying face downward at the edge of the pond, so that I could reach the water with my lips, as they had done, I suddenly felt a terrible burning sensation in both feet, and when I turned to see the cause, could not get up; my brothers had cut off both my feet, and then hurried off, without listening to my complaints and entreaties.

"I spent three days and nights beside the pond. When my good horse saw a dragon coming, it lifted me by my clothes with its teeth, ran as far as it could and kicked so violently that no wild beast could approach us.

"At last, on the fourth day, I met a blind man groping his way along. 'Who are you?' I asked.

"'A poor, maimed fellow,' said he. Then, after he had told me that his brothers, out of envy, had put out his eyes, I told him that my brothers had cut off my feet.

"'I'll tell you what!' he exclaimed. 'We'll take an oath of brotherhood. I have feet, you have eyes, so I'll carry you on my back. I'll walk for you, and you shall see for me. A huge scorpion lives close by, whose blood cures all kinds of diseases.'

"I accepted his offer, and we went to the scorpion's house. He was not at home, so the blind man put me behind the door, telling me to kill him with my sword as soon as he came in; then he hid himself behind the stove. We did not wait long before the scorpion entered in a great rage, for he had noticed that somebody had broken into his house. When I saw him my heart shrunk till it was no bigger than a flea, but as he came in I waited till he was close by me, then struck one blow that chopped all three of his heads off at once.

"I instantly smeared myself with the hot blood and as soon as it touched my feet they stuck as fast as if they had never been cut off. I also smeared the blind man's eyes, and his sight returned. After thanking God, each set out on his own way.

"I did not want to go home at once, but thought it best to hire out as a shepherd and leave God to arrange things so that the criminals' guilt should appear. I was not disappointed in my confidence, for you see His power is great and His judgment just."

"Now tell me how you became a servant and poultry-maid," said the emperor to the maiden.

"After your imperial majesty's oldest sons had cut off their youngest brother's feet, one of them took me, the other the wonderful bird. I thought my heart would dissolve with grief because I was obliged to part from your majesty's youngest son, whom I loved because he was such a noble man. They proposed that I should love one of them, and promised that he would marry me as soon as we reached the emperor's court. After refusing all their offers, I preferred to take service as your majesty's poultry maid, rather than go any where else, for I knew God would not let a man who did right perish, and now I thank Him for having shown me that a good deed is never lost."

"Can you prove," asked the emperor, "that you are the girl and no one else?"

"This apple will show every one that I am she," replied the girl, drawing it from her bosom. "Your older sons knew nothing about it, or they would have taken it from me."

With these words she went out of doors, cracked a little whip three times over the apple and a magnificent palace, more splendid than any in the kingdom, instantly arose.

The emperor himself was astonished. He wished to celebrate his youngest son's return, but the latter said, "Father, before we thank God that I have come home alive, let us three brothers submit to His judgment."

The emperor could make no objection. The brothers were led before him and he ordered the older ones to kneel and ask the youngest son's forgiveness. But he replied: "If God forgives you, I will also."

As they could not avoid it, they went in front of the church, and set out three bee-hives at equal distances apart. Each brother stood with his feet in one, and hurled a stone into the air from a sling. The elder brothers' stones in falling back struck them so hard on the head that they were killed, but the youngest brother's fell in front of him.

Many had assembled to witness this trial. After the wedding was over and the emperor had married his son to the poultry-maid, he came down from the throne and gave it to the prince, who, if alive, reigns there still.

I was present at these events, and now tell them to those who listen.

**Russia (Europe)**

**Magical Animals, Royalty**

**The Story of the Duck with the Golden Eggs**

Once upon a time there lived an old man named Abrosim, with his old wife Fetinia: they were in great poverty and want, and had a son named Ivanushka, who was fifteen years of age. One day the old man Abrosim brought home a crust of bread for his wife and son to eat; but hardly had he begun to cut the bread than Krutchina (Sorrow) sprang from behind the stove, snatched the crust out of his hands and ran back. At this the old man bowed low to Krutchina, and begged her to give him back the bread as he and his wife had nothing to eat. Old Krutchina answered: “I will not give you back the bread; but I will give you instead a duck, which lays a golden egg every day.”

“Well and good,” said Abrosim; “at all events I shall go to bed without a supper to-night; only do not deceive me, and tell me where I shall find the duck.”

“Early in the morning, as soon as you are up,” replied Krutchina, “go into the town and there you will see a duck in a pond; catch it and bring it home with you.” When Abrosim heard this, he laid himself down to sleep.

Next morning the old man rose early, went to the town, and was overjoyed when he really saw a duck in the pond: so he began to call it, and soon caught it, took it home with him, and gave it to Fetinia. The old wife handled the duck and said she was going to lay an egg. They were now both in great delight, and, putting the duck in a bowl, they covered it with a sieve. After waiting an hour, they peeped gently under the sieve and saw to their joy that the duck had laid a golden egg. Then they let her run about a little on the floor; and the old man took the egg to town to sell it; and he sold the egg for a hundred roubles, took the money, went to market, bought all kinds of vegetables, and returned home.

The next day the duck laid another egg, and Abrosim sold this also; and in this way the duck went on, laying a golden egg every day, and the old man in a short time grew very rich. Then he built himself a grand house, and a great number of shops, and bought wares of all sorts, and set up in trade.

Now, Fetinia had struck up a secret friendship with a young shopman, who did not care for the old woman, but persuaded her he did to make her give him money. And one day, when Abrosim was gone out to buy some new wares, the shopman called to gossip with Fetinia, when by chance he espied the duck; and, taking her up, he saw written under her wing in golden letters: “Whoso eats this duck will become a Tsar.” The man said nothing of this to Fetinia, but begged and entreated her for love’s sake to roast the duck. Fetinia told him she could not kill the duck, for all their good luck depended upon her. Still the shopman entreated the old woman only the more urgently to kill and cook the duck; until at length, overcome by his soft words and entreaties, Fetinia consented, killed the duck and popped her into the stove. Then the shopman took his leave, promising soon to come back and Fetinia also went into the town.

Just at this time Ivanushka returned home, and being very hungry, he looked about everywhere for something to eat; when by good luck he espied in the stove the roast duck; so he took her out, ate her to the very bones, and then returned to his work. Presently after, the shopman came in, and calling Fetinia, begged her to take out the roast duck. Fetinia ran to the oven, and when she saw that the duck was no longer there she was in a great fright, and told the shopman that the duck had vanished. Thereat the man was angry with her, and said: “I’ll answer for it you have eaten the duck yourself!” And so saying he left the house in a pet.

At night Abrosim and his son Ivanushka came home, and, looking in vain for the duck, he asked his wife what had become of her. Fetinia replied that she knew nothing of the duck; but Ivanushka said: “My father and benefactor, when I came home to dinner, my mother was not there; so, looking into the oven, and seeing a roast duck, I took it out and ate it up; but, indeed, I know not whether it was our duck or a strange one.”

Then Abrosim flew into a rage with his wife, and beat her till she was half-dead, and hunted his son out of the house.

Little Ivan betook himself to the road, and walked on and on, following the way his eyes led him. And he journeyed for ten days and ten nights, until at length he came to a great city; and as he was entering the gates, he saw a crowd of people assembled, holding a moot; for their Tsar was dead, and they did not know whom to choose to rule over them. Then they agreed that whoever first passed through the city gates should be elected Tsar.

Now just at this time it happened that Little Ivan came through the city gates, whereupon all the people cried with one voice: “Here comes our Tsar!” and the Elders of the people took Ivanushka by the arms, and brought him into the royal apartments, clad him in the Tsar’s robes, seated him on the Tsar’s throne, made their obeisance to him as their sovereign Tsar, and waited to receive his commands. Ivanushka fancied it was all a dream; but when he collected himself, he saw that he was in reality a Tsar. Then he rejoiced with his whole heart, and began to rule over the people, and appointed various officers. Amongst others he chose one named Luga, and calling him, spoke as follows: “My faithful servant and brave knight Luga, render me one service; travel to my native country, go straight to the King, greet him for me, and beg of him to deliver up to me the merchant Abrosim and his wife; if he gives them up, bring them hither; but if he refuses, threaten him that I will lay waste his kingdom with fire and sword, and make him prisoner.”

When the servant Luga arrived at Ivanushka’s native country he went to the Tsar, and asked him to give up Abrosim and Fetinia. The Tsar knew that Abrosim was a rich merchant living in his city, and was not willing to let him go; nevertheless, when he reflected that Ivanushka’s kingdom was a large and powerful one, fearing to offend him, he handed over Abrosim and Fetinia. And Luga received them from the Tsar, and returned with them to his own kingdom. When he brought them before Ivanushka, the Tsar said: “True it is, my father, you drove me from your home; I therefore now receive you into mine: live with me happily, you and my mother, to the end of your days.”

Abrosim and Fetinia were overjoyed that their son had become a great Tsar, and they lived with him many years, and then died. Ivanushka sat upon the throne for thirty years, in health and happiness, and his subjects loved him truly to the last hour of his life.

**Rwanda (Africa)**

**Royalty**

**Sebwgugu & His Wife**

<http://rwanda.worldvision.org.nz/news/nine.html>

Many years ago, a man called Sebwgugu married a young and very beautiful woman. The day after they were wed there was a severe drought. Food and water became terribly scarce. One day during the drought, Sebwgugu's wife set out to collect firewood.

While walking the forest floor, she came to a clearing and happened upon a thriving pumpkin patch. She was quite pleased, under the dry conditions, with the rare and lucky find. Carrying as many pumpkins as she could possibly manage, she returned home. That evening she and Sebwgugu had a delicious pumpkin meal. The newly weds were very happy.

One morning, Sebwgugu's wife noticed their supply of pumpkins was running low. She decided to walk back to the patch and collect more. Out of curiosity, Sebwgugu followed his wife. He simply wanted to see from where the pumpkins were coming. When Sebwgugu arrived, he suggested to his wife that the pumpkin patch be weeded in hopes of growing bigger pumpkins. She disagreed and kindly asked that he leave the patch be and let it grow naturally.

The next day, without his wife's knowledge, Sebwgugu returned to the patch and weeded the entire area. Soon after, the pumpkin supply at home was again low. Sebwgugu's wife returned to the patch and found it dry. There were no more pumpkins. Although very upset that he weeded the patch after she asked him not to, she said nothing to her husband. The pumpkins stored at home were quickly finished. The morning after the last pumpkin was consumed, Sebwgugu's wife told her husband that she was going to search for water. She lied. Still upset that he weeded the pumpkin patch, their only source of food during the continued drought, she decided to run away.

Later that evening Sebwgugu's wife stumbled upon a splendid house. She knocked on the door but nobody answered. Surprised to find the door unlocked and needing a place to sleep for the night, she entered the house. Although there was nobody home, the house was filled with food. She cooked herself a nice dinner and went to bed. The next morning, Sebwgugu went looking for his wife and found her at the splendid house. She told him she got lost and had to spend the night. He believed her and they sat down for dinner.

While eating, Sebwgugu's wife shared that the night before, a big and mean animal arrived to the house and asked for help unloading what it was carrying. Scared, she told the big animal to go away, locked all the doors to the house and went back to bed. She then asked Sebwgugu to please not help the mean animal if it returned.

Sure enough, later that night under the moonlit sky the big animal knocked on the door. Sebwgugu answered. The animal asked for help and, ignoring his wife's warning, Sebwgugu obliged. When he stepped outside to help, the big animal ate Sebwgugu in one bite. Proud of his tricking Sebwgugu, the animal yelled into the forest, "I have eaten a man and will now look for a women and do the same." Startled by this, Sebwgugu's wife jumped out of bed and grabbed an ax to protect herself. When the mean animal tried to enter the house, Sebwgugu's wife smote it in the head, killing it at once.

She then found a drum and beat it joyously as the sun rose, throughout the day and all through the night. The entire forest echoed with her brilliant drumming. The next morning, a handsome man appeared. He was the King of the forest and owner of the splendid house, yet was frightened away by the big and mean animal. Hearing the familiar drum he returned to investigate. Sebwgugu's wife told the King all that had happened to her. Impressed by her beauty and bravery the King asked for her hand in marriage. She agreed with a smile, they were married and lived happily ever after

Saint Kitts and Nevis

Saint Lucia

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Samoa

San Marino

Sao Tome and Principe

**Saudi Arabia (Asia)**

**Cleverness**

**The Three Princes**

## http://www.fairytales247.com/catalog/saudi-arabia-folktales/skazka-the-three-princes-675/

LONG AGO on the Arabian Peninsula, when cities flourished along the major trade routes that stretched across the desert to transport spices, almonds and dates, there ruled in one of those cities a king whose daughter had come of marriageable age.

Three princes of nearby cities came to court her. But the princess looked at them with alarm. One prince was bossy, the second prince was unclean in his habits, and the third suitor was vain.

"Father, I beg you, don't make me marry any of them!" she cried.

The king loved his daughter, but he didn't want to offend her suitors and risk angering his neighboring city-states.

"I'll think about it," he said. "Come back tomorrow."

The next day, he summoned the three suitors and the princess to his throne room.

"Each of you is a perfectly worthy suitor for my daughter's hand," he said. "Therefore, to make the correct decision I have determined that the three of you must venture into the world for one year and a day. Whoever returns with the most wondrous item will win my daughter's hand in marriage."

The princess was glad for the one-year extension and the king was equally glad to postpone the matter.

The three princes set out together. After traveling for one week they came to a well that was located before a fork in the road, beyond which the road branched into three separate paths.

"Obviously, this is where we should part," stated the first prince.

"Don't you think we know that?" said the second prince, wiping his dirty hands on his cloak.

"Listen carefully," the first prince continued. "One week before we return to the palace, let's all meet at this well to compare what we found."

"I only hope the maidens don't slow me down by falling in love with me," said the third prince, throwing back his hair. "It's such a nuisance."

And so the three princes went their separate ways. When the time came to return to the well, each one followed his separate path that led back to the well.

"You look a little the worse for wear," said the first prince to the second. "I'm fine," said the second prince, blowing his nose onto his sleeve. "What did you find?"

"Only a crystal ball," said the first prince, as nonchalantly as he could, "that shows anything you want to see that's happening anywhere in the world."

The other two were impressed (and a bit worried). Said the first prince to the second, "What wondrous item did you find?"

From under his cloak the second prince unrolled a carpet. "A flying carpet. People who sits on it can be transported anywhere in the world they wish to go in minutes."

"If they don't mind sitting next to you," another prince murmured, holding his nose. And now it was the third prince's turn to show what he had brought.

"This vial," said the third prince, "holds a magical healing ointment. One dab of it will restore the health of anyone, no matter how sick. And they say if it's rubbed with true love, can even restore youth."

"Speaking of health," said the second prince to the first, "since you have a crystal ball, let's take a look at our princess and see how she fares."

The first prince waved his hands over the crystal ball; its cloudiness disappeared and was replaced with an image of the princess lying in her bed, still as death. Her father and the court physicians hovered over her. "Isn't there anything you can do?" said the king. "Sire, we have done everything," said the head court physician. "I'm sorry, but she has very little time left."

The three princes leapt up, alarmed. "Alas!" cried the third prince. "My ointment would heal her, but we're too far from the palace - we'll never get there in time!"

"Quick, everyone on my magic carpet," said the second prince. "We'll get there in a flash!"

Indeed, moments later the three princes were standing in the very room they had viewed through the crystal ball only minutes before. Everyone was so distraught they didn't notice the three princes had suddenly appeared in the room. Without a word, the third prince stepped up to the princess' bed and with his finger touched a dab of ointment on her forehead and set the ointment by her bedstand. She blinked and seconds later opened her eyes. Then she moved her head, and sat up. "I feel better," she said.

"It's a miracle!" cried the father, and he embraced his daughter.

Later that night, the three princes appeared before the king. "Your majesty," said the first prince, "each of us may have located a magical item. But there is no doubt that my crystal ball is the most wondrous item of all. Without it, none of us would have known the princess was sick in the first place. I submit that mine is the most wondrous item and therefore I deserve the hand of the princess."

"With all due respect," said the second prince, stepping forward, "While it was informative to learn that the princess was sick, had we had not been able to travel a week's journey in a blink of an eye on my flying carpet, that knowledge would have done us no good. I submit that mine is the most wondrous item and therefore I deserve the hand of the princess."

"Good sire," said the third prince. "While it may have been useful to learn the princess was sick and was helpful to arrive here as quickly as we did, had we not had my magical ointment, all that knowledge and all that quickness would have been in vain. I submit that mine is the most wondrous item and therefore I deserve the hand of the princess."

The king was perplexed. Each of the princes made a good argument. And since the question was so close, no matter which prince he selected, he was sure to raise the ire of the other two and their neighboring city-states.

"I'll think about it," he said, "Come back tomorrow."

That night, the king summoned his viziers to ask their advice. "Sire," said his head vizier, "there is a wise old man who lives amongst us who hails from very far away, a distant country called Russia. He is well known for his sage advice, and if we allow him to make the decision, the communities of the princes who aren't chosen will get angry at a country far away, and not at us."

"Excellent thought," said the king. "Summon him to court tomorrow."

The next day when the three princes arrived to hear which of them would be selected, at court stood a very old man. He hobbled on his cane and spoke in a whisper. The three princes repeated why they thought they deserved the hand of the princess.

"As far as I'm concerned," asserted the king, "each of these fine young men has an equal claim to my daughter's hand. And so," he turned to his guest, "I am interested. You come from a faraway land. What is your opinion?"

The old man coughed and cleared his throat. "Your Majesty, first allow me to say that it is an honor to be in your court." He raised a shaky hand toward the princes. "There's no doubt that each of you brought a wondrous item that saved the life of the princess. But in my country, when it comes to marriage, there are those who say that the young woman, whose happiness is at stake, should have a say in the matter. And so I would ask our royal highness." He turned to her. "Princess, whom do you wish to marry?"

The princess was silent a moment. She raised her head and faced the three princes. "Each of you saved my life and for that I will always be grateful. Yet this old man is the only one," she said, looking at the Russian, "who understands that the choice is one that should be mine to make. And so, father, if you please," and here the princess stepped toward the old man, "I choose him."

Gasps of shock throughout the court. Some ladies fainted and were carried out. The king blustered, "But, but�you can't!" The princess picked up the magic ointment, took the old Russian's hand, and with a dab of the ointment rubbed the back of his hand. Instantly a haze surrounded him. When she removed her hand, incredibly, the old man had straightened up to become tall and dark, with the lines of an earnest young man chiseled on his cheeks. Restored to the strength and handsome stature of his youth, he smiled at the princess.

"Each of you will have large tracts of land to rule," the king quickly said to the three princes. "We will never forget what you did for our royal family." The three princes, of course, still had in their possession the magical items of the crystal ball, the flying carpet, and the vial of healing ointment, and it wasn't long before they attracted lovely princesses from neighboring lands to marry.

And so they all lived happily ever after, as may you.

## http://www.fairytales247.com/catalog/saudi-arabia-folktales/skazka-the-three-princes-675/

**Senegal (Africa)**

**Origin**

**How the Moon and the Sun Came to Dwell in the Sky**

<http://www.mikelockett.com/stories.php?action=view&id=93>

Once upon the earth, there were three entities, the Moon, the Sun, and Water.  One day Moon went to visit with his friend, Water.

Water said, "Why is it, my friend that so often you have come to visit with me and my people, but, never once, have you invited us to your home?"

This troubled Moon, even when he returned home.  Moon went home and discussed it with his wife (who was the sun).  Moon asked, "Why is it that so often I have visited with our friend, the Water, but never once, have we invited him here?"

She said, "It is because, our home is so humble and so small.  Our home is not large enough to hold Water and all of his family.  We must build a new home, large enough to accommodate all of our friends."

And so, they set about to build a fine and magnificent home, large enough to hold Water and all of his family.

When the new home was finished, Moon traveled back to visit Water once again.  This time, Moon extended an invitation to his home.

Water accepted the invitation and traveled the long distance to visit the home of the Moon and the Sun.

"May I come in?" Water asked when he arrived.

Moon said, "Yes!"

Water flowed in the door of the home with all of his plants and all of his fishes, and all of his family, until it reached the height, of a man's knees.

Water said again, "May I continue to come in?"

Moon again said, "Yes."

Water continued to flow in the door with all of his plants, and all of his fishes, and all of his people, until it reached the height, of a man's waist.

Again, Water asked, "May I continue to come in?"

And again Moon said, "Yes!"

Water flowed through door with all of his plants, and all of his fishes, and all of his people, until it reached the height, of a man's head.

Still the water flowed!  The water flowed, until it reached the roof of the house.  The Water flowed, and the Water flowed, until it pushed Moon and Sun up through the roof of the house.

Moon and Sun Up got pushed into the first heaven, up into the second heaven, up into the third and highest of heavens.  And that is where they remain today.

And that is how the Moon and the Sun came to dwell in the sky and watchdown on the Water of the earth as it flows below them.

**Serbia (Europe)**

**Dragons, Fortune**

**The Wonderful Hair**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/sfs/>

THERE was a man who was very poor, but so well supplied with children that he was utterly unable to maintain them, and one morning more than once prepared to kill them, in order not to see their misery in dying from hunger, but his wife prevented him. One night a child came to him in his sleep, and said to him: 'Man! I see that you are making up your mind to destroy and to kill your poor little children, and I know that you are distressed thereat; but in the morning you will find under your pillow a mirror, a red kerchief, and an embroidered pocket-handkerchief; take all three secretly and tell nobody; then go to such a hill; by it you will find a stream; go along it till you come to its fountain-head; there you will find a damsel as bright as the sun, with her hair hanging down over her back, and without a scrap of clothing. Be on your guard, that the ferocious she-dragon do not coil round you; do not converse with her if she speaks; for if you converse with her, she will poison you, and turn you into a fish, or something else, and will then devour you; but if she bids you examine her head, examine it, and as you turn over her hair, look, and you will find one hair as red as blood; pull it out and run back again; then, if she suspects and begins to run after you, throw her first the embroidered pocket-handkerchief, then the kerchief, and, lastly, the mirror; then she will find occupation for herself. And sell that hair to some rich man; but don't let them cheat you, for that hair is worth countless wealth; and you will thus enrich yourself and maintain your children.'

When the poor man awoke, he found everything under his pillow, just as the child had told him in his sleep; and then he went to the hill. When there, he found the stream, went on and on alongside of it, till he came to the fountain-head. Having looked about him to see where the damsel was, he espied her above a piece of water, like sunbeams threaded on a needle, and she was embroidering at a frame on stuff, the threads of which were young men's hair. As soon as he saw her, he made a reverence to her, and she stood on her feet and questioned him: 'Whence are you, unknown young man?' But he held his tongue. She questioned him again: 'Who are you? Why have you come?' and much else of all sorts; but he was as mute as a stone, making signs with his hands, as if he were deaf and wanted help. Then she told him to sit down on her skirt. He did not wait for any more orders, but sat down, and she bent down her head to him, that he might examine it. Turning over the hair of her head, as if to examine it, he was not long in finding that red hair, and separated it from the other hair, pulled it out, jumped off her skirt and ran away back as he best could. She noticed it, and ran at his heels full speed after him. He looked round, and seeing that she was about to overtake him, threw, as he was told, the embroidered pocket-handkerchief on the way, and when she saw the pocket-handkerchief, she stooped and began to overhaul it in every direction, admiring the embroidery, till he had got a good way off. Then the damsel placed the pocket-handkerchief in her bosom, and ran after him again. When he saw that she was about to overtake him, he threw the red kerchief, and she again occupied herself, admiring and gazing, till the poor man had again got a good way off. Then the damsel became exasperated, and threw both the pocket-handkerchief and the kerchief on the way, and ran after him in pursuit. Again, when he saw that she was about to overtake him, he threw the mirror. When the damsel came to the mirror, the like of which she had never seen before, she lifted it up, and when she saw herself in it, not knowing that it was herself, but thinking that it was somebody else, she, as it were, fell in love with herself in the mirror, and the man got so far off that she was no longer able to overtake him. When she saw that she could not catch him, she turned back, and the man reached his home safe and sound. After arriving at his home, he showed his wife the hair, and told her all that had happened to him, but she began to jeer and laugh at him. But he paid no attention to her, and went to a town to sell the hair. A crowd of all sorts of people and merchants collected round him; one offered a sequin, another two, and so on, higher and higher, till they came to a hundred gold sequins. Just then the emperor heard of the hair, summoned the man into his presence, and said to him that he would give him a thousand sequins for it, and he sold it to him. What was the hair? The emperor split it in two from top to bottom, and found registered in it in writing many remarkable things, which had happened in the olden time since the beginning of the world. 'Thus the man became rich and lived on with his wife and children. And that child, that came to him in his sleep, was an angel sent by the Lord God, whose will it was to aid the poor man, and to reveal secrets which had not been revealed till then.

Seychelles

**Sierra Leone**

**Origin**

**How the World was Created from a Drop of Milk**

<http://www.evb.lacsq.org/documents/english-documents/children-of-the-world/?eID=dam_frontend_push&docID=56449>

In the beginning, there was an enormous drop of milk. This is how Doondari descended and he created stone. Stone created iron and iron created fire. Fire created water and water created air. Then Doodari came down a second time and he took the five elements. With them he formed man, but man was proud so Doondari created blindness and blindness overcame man. But when blindness became too proud, Doondari created sleep and sleep overcame blindness. But when sleep became too proud Doondari created boredom and boredom overcame sleep. But when boredom became too proud Doondari created death, and death overcame boredom. But when death became too proud, Doondari descended for the third time and he came in the guise of Gueno, the Eternal and Gueno overcame death.

**Singapore (Asia)**

**Origin**

**Badang and the Singapore Stone**

<http://remembersingapore.wordpress.com/2012/06/29/singapore-legends-and-myths/>

According to local Malay folklore, Badang began as a poor fisherman who plied his trade at mouth of the Singapore River. One day he caught a genie in his fishing net, and in return of his release, the genie granted Badang’s wish to be the strongest man alive.

Impressed with Badang’s enormous strength, the Rajah of Singapura appointed him as the imperial warrior. Soon, other kingdoms heard of Badang’s fame and sent their warriors to challenge him. The king of India, in particular, sent his kingdom’s strongest man Wadi Bijaya to Singapura for a duel. In the last contest, Badang beat Wadi Bijaya by lifting a huge rock and throwing it towards the Singapore River.

Ancient inscriptions were added to the rock, probably to commemorate Badang’s achievements but centuries later in 1843, the British colonial government blasted it to pieces. Known as the Singapore Stone, only a fragment remains, and is now kept in the Singapore History Museum.

Sint Maarten

**Slovakia (Europe)**

**Humour**

**The Story that never Ends**

<http://www.worldoftales.com/European_folktales/Czechoslovak_folktale_15.html>

*(To be told very seriously*)

Once upon a time there was a shepherd who had a great flock of sheep. He used to pasture them in a meadow on the other side of a brook. One day the sun had already set before he started home. Recent rains had swollen the brook so that he and the sheep had to cross on a little footbridge. The bridge was so narrow that the sheep had to pass over one by one.

Now we’ll wait until he drives them all over. Then I’ll go on with my story.

(*When the children grow impatient and beg for a continuation of the story, they are told that there are many sheep and that up to this time only a few have crossed. A little later when their impatience again breaks out, they are told that the sheep are still crossing. And so on indefinitely. In conclusion:*)

In fact there were so many sheep that when morning came they were still crossing, and then it was time for the shepherd to turn around and drive them back again to pasture!

**Slovenia (Europe)**

**Origin**

**Kurent and the Great Flood**

<http://earthenchivalry.wordpress.com/tag/slovenian-folk-tales/>

Ancient Slovenes believed, that in the beginning reigned a golden age, when bread grew on trees and the wheat ears were half a fathom long. In this happy beginning people were good. Yet advancing time brought with it corruption and evil, so the gods decided to make an end of the world.

It started to rain heavily and the water rose high covering the earth. All the people drowned, except four. Folklore is silent concerning how three of those survivors managed to survive, but how the fourth was saved a tale is told.

He was stood on a high hill, and upon it was a vine which reached even further into the sky. As the rain poured and the water rose even to the peak of his high hill, the man grasped the vine and began to climb.

Kurent, a god, highly revered by the ancient Slavs, saw him and was most pleased, that the man sought help through one of the plants which was sacred unto Kurent. Thus he took pity and saved the poor fellow.

As the water began to recede and the earth became drier, the rescued man promised Kurent that he and his descendants would always value the two plants, sacred to him, these being the vine and the buckwheat, and that they would be forever pleased to eat their produce.

The rescued man took in one hand the vine, in the other the buckwheat stalk and went on his way in a bid to find a place to settle.

On the banks of the Adriatic Sea he stopped. From the vine that he carried, he cut a switch and planted it into the ground. And to this day they have very good wine in Prosek.

He also sowed the buckwheat. His sons spread throughout Kranjska and to this day Kranjci for the greater part live on buckwheat and value wine, and with gratitutude remember Kurent, their old benefactor.

Solomon Islands

**Somolia (Africa)**

**Animals**

**The Sheep and the Goat**

<http://hooyo.web.free.fr/E_tale_16.html>

Once upon a time a goat and a sheep lived together in a lovely house. One day they left their house to eat some grass. When the goat returned, she saw a snake coming out of the house. The snake stopped by the door of the house. It was waiting to eat anything that tried to enter the house.

The goat ran to the sheep, and said, "I saw a snake come out of our house. What will we do ?"

The sheep said, "Show me the snake !" They both saw the snake in front of their house, waiting to eat them. They ran away as fast as they could. They came to the monkey's house which was on a banana farm. They asked the monkey for water, milk, and a place to sleep. The monkey asked, "What happened to you ?"

They answered, "There is a dangerous snake in our house." The monkey felt so sorry for them that he gave them food and water. Then he took them to a nice house made of banana leaves. They thanked the monkey, and they slept.

When they woke up, the monkey said, "I'll let you live in this house with me. We should all stick together, and help each other." The goat and the sheep were happy. They became friends with the monkey, and ever since then, they were strong friends. Together they were safe against any enemy.

Lesson : There is safety in numbers, even when it means very different kinds of people getting along together.

**South Africa (Africa)**

**Trickster, Animals**

**Cloud-Eating**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/afr/saft/sft27.htm>

JACKAL and Hyena were together, it is said, when a white cloud rose. Jackal descended upon it, and ate of the cloud as if it were fat.

When he wanted to come down, he said to Hyena, "My sister, as I am going to divide with thee, catch me well." So she caught him, and broke his fall. Then she also went up and ate there, high up on the top of the cloud.

When she was satisfied, she said, "My greyish brother, now catch me. well." The greyish rogue said to his friend, "My sister, I shall catch thee well. Come therefore down."

He held up his hands, and she came down from the cloud, and when she was near, Jackal cried out (painfully jumping to one side), "My sister, do not take it ill. Oh me! Oh me! A thorn has pricked me and sticks in me. "Thus she fell down from above, and was sadly hurt.

Since that day, it is said that Hyena's hind feet have been shorter and smaller than the front ones.

**Spain (Europe)**

**Royalty**

**The Magic Mirror**

<http://www.worldoftales.com/European_folktales/Romanic_folktale_4.html>

It was proclaimed throughout the kingdom of Granada that the king had decided on marrying. The news was first told to the court barber, then to the night watchmen, and, in the third place, to the oldest woman in the city of Granada.

The barber told all his customers, who again told all their friends. The night watchmen in crying the hour proclaimed the news in a loud voice, so that all the maidens were kept awake by thinking of the news, and by day they were being constantly reminded by all the old dueñas that the king had resolved to marry.

After the news had become somewhat stale, the question was asked, “Who is the king going to marry?” To which the barber made reply, that probably “he would marry a woman.”

“A woman!” exclaimed his hearers. “Why, what else could he marry?”

“Not all women are worthy the name,” answered the barber. “Some more resemble the unbaptized, of whom I say, *abernuncio*.”

“But what mean you, good friend?” demanded his customers. “Is not the king to find a woman for wife in our land of Spain?”

“He would,” replied the barber, “with greater ease find the reverse; but to find a woman worthy to be his wife I shall have great trouble.”

“What, *you?*” exclaimed all of them. “What have you got to do with providing the king with a wife?”

“I am under royal licence, remember,” said he of the razor; “for I am the only man in the kingdom permitted to rub the royal features. I am the possessor of the magic mirror also, into which if any woman not being thoroughly good shall look, the blemishes on her character will appear as so many spots on its surface.”

“Is this one of the conditions?” asked all.

“This is the sole condition,” replied the barber, placing his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat and looking very wise.

“But is there no limit as to age?” they again inquired.

“Any woman from eighteen years upwards is eligible,” said the possessor of the mirror.

“Then you will have every woman in Granada claiming the right to be queen!” all exclaimed.

“But, first of all, they will have to justify their claim, for I will not take any woman at her word. No; she will have to gaze into the mirror with me by her side,” continued the barber.

The sole condition imposed on those who desired to become Queen of Granada was made known, and was much ridiculed, as may naturally be supposed; but, strange to say, no woman applied to the barber to have a look into the mirror.

Days and weeks went by, but the king was no nearer getting a wife. Some generous ladies would try and prevail on their lady friends to make the trial, but none seemed ambitious of the honour.

The king, be it known, was a very handsome man, and was beloved by all his subjects for his many virtues; therefore it was surprising that none of the lovely ladies who attended court should try to become his wife.

Many excuses and explanations were given. Some were already engaged to be married, others professed themselves too proud to enter the barber’s shop, while others assured their friends that they had resolved on remaining single.

The latter seem to have been cleverer in their excuses, for it was soon observable that no man in Granada would marry, assigning as a reason for this that until the king was suited they would not think of marrying; though the real cause may have been due to the objection of the ladies to look into the mirror.

The fathers of families were much annoyed at the apparent want of female ambition in their daughters, while the mothers were strangely silent on the matter.

Every morning the king would ask the barber if any young lady had ventured on looking into the mirror; but the answer was always the same—that many watched his shop to see if others went there, but none had ventured in.

“Ah, Granada, Granada!” exclaimed the king; “hast thou no daughter to offer thy king? In this Alhambra did my predecessors enjoy the company of their wives; and am I to be denied this natural comfort?”

“Royal master,” said the barber, “in those days the magic mirror was unknown and not so much required. Men then only studied the arts, but now is science added to their studies.”

“You mean, then,” asked the king, “that an increase in knowledge has done no good?”

“I mean more than that,” continued the barber; “I mean that people are worse than they used to be.”

“‘God is great!’ is what these walls proclaim; to know is to be wise,” urged the king.

“Not always, sir,” said the barber; “for the majority of men and women in the present know too much and are not too wise, although some deem them wise for being cunning. There is as great a distance between wisdom and cunning as there is between the heavens and the earth.”

“Barber,” shouted the king, “thou shalt get me a wife bright as the day, pure as dew, and good as gold—one who shall not be afraid to look into thy magic mirror!”

“Sir,” replied the barber, “the only magic about my mirror is that which the evil consciences of the ladies of Granada conjure up. The simple shepherdess on the mountain side would brave the magic power of any mirror, strong in the consciousness of innocence; but would you marry such a lowly one?”

“Such a woman is worthy to be a queen, for she is a pearl without price,” answered the king. “Go, bid her come here; and, in the presence of my assembled court, let the gentle shepherdess look into the mirror, after thou hast told her of the danger of so doing.”

The barber was not long in bringing the shepherdess to court with him; and it having been proclaimed throughout the city that the trial was going to be made, the principal hall was soon filled with all the grand ladies and knights of the king’s household.

When the shepherdess entered the royal presence she felt very shy at being surrounded by so much grandeur; but she knew enough about her own sex to understand that they inwardly considered her not quite so ugly as they audibly expressed her to be.

The king was very much pleased with her appearance, and received her very kindly, telling her that if she desired to be his wife she would have to gaze into the magic mirror, and if she had done aught which was not consistent with her maidenly character, the mirror would show as many stains on its surface as there might be blemishes on her heart.

“Sir,” replied the maiden, “we are all sinners in the sight of God, they say; but I am a poor shepherdess, and surrounded by my flock. I have known what it is to be loved, for, when the sheep have perceived danger, they have come to me for protection. The wild flowers have been my only ornament, the sky almost my only roof, and God my truest and best friend. Therefore, I fear not to look into that magic mirror; for although I have no ambition to become queen, yet am I not lacking in that pride which is born of the desire to be good.”

Saying which, she walked up to the mirror and gazed into it, blushing slightly, perhaps at the sight of her own beauty, which before she had only seen portrayed in the still brook.

The court ladies surrounded her; and when they saw that the magic mirror showed no stains on its surface, they snatched it from her, and exclaimed—

“There is no magic in it—a cheat has been put on us!”

But the king said—

“No, ladies; you have only yourselves to thank. Had you been as innocent as this shepherdess, who is going to be my queen, you would not have dreaded looking into the mirror.”

After the marriage the barber was heard to say, that as the magic mirror had now lost its virtue, who could tell but what this charm might be restored to Granada?

**Sri Lanka (Asia)**

**Royalty**

**Sinhabahu**

<http://www.srilankatailormade.com/why-sri-lanka/sri-lanka-unique/folk-tales-of-sri-lanka/>

Long ago in the land of Vanga in India, the King of Vanga had a beautiful daughter whom fortunetellers believed would one day be kidnapped by a lion. One day as she was riding in a carriage near Lala country, a lion attacked and kidnapped the princess, taking her away to a cave which he blocked with a huge rock. Years went by and all efforts to find the princess failed. She eventually accepted her life with the Lion and a few years later gave birth to twins, a son, Sinhabahu, who had hands that resembled the paws of a lion, and a daughter, Sinhasivali.

As they grew older, Sinhabahu asked his mother why they were kept in the cave like prisoners and his mother told him what had happened to her so many years earlier. Saddened by her fate, Sinhabahu was determined to break the cave entrance. One day when the Lion had gone out to hunt, Sinhabahu pushed away the rock and escaped with his mother and sister. The King of Lala country was elated to see the long lost princess return. However when the Lion returned, he was outraged to find his family missing and set out to find them, attacking villages and scaring the people of Lala as he went. The King of Lala country asked Sinhabahu to stop the Lion. The encounter did not go well and Sinhabahu accidentally pierced his own father’s heart with a bow, killing him.

For his heroic deed, the King of Lala country built a city for Sinhabahu, named it Sinhapura, and crowned him King of the city. Years later, Sinhabahu married and had a son named Vijaya. Prince Vijaya was a mischievous young man with an unsuitable group of friends. People often complained to Sinhabahu about his son’s behaviour and the trouble they caused them leaving Sinhabahu no choice but to banish Prince Vijaya from Sinhapura. The Prince and seven hundred of his friends were given a ship and asked to leave. After sailing for several days they landed in Lanka.  
When Prince Vijaya reached the island of Lanka, they met a female devil named Kuveni, with whom after a bad start they made friends with. Prince Vijaya and Kuveni later got married and they had a son and a daughter. Years later Prince Vijaya was able to subdue all the devils in the country with Kuveni help. He became the King of Lanka and gave up his early playful life, became very responsible and ruled the country justly.

**Sudan (Africa)**

**Cleverness**

**The Wise Bird**

<http://tlevsfolktales.blogspot.com/2013/04/sudan.html>

One day a bird was walking in the forest looking for food and drink.  After eating, it was very thirsty.  The bird was trying to find water.  As the bird was searching, he saw a jug of water.  there was not a lot of water in the jug, so his beak could not reach it.  The bird was very intelligent so it put stones in the water to bring water to the top of the jug.  He was then able to drink and went home happily.  The story of the wise bird shows that in life some people give up easily but others struggle and work hard and at the end are successful.

**Suriname (South America)**

**Cleverness**

**Anansi Toree**

<http://www.suriname.nu/302ges/archi56.html>

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**Swaziland (Africa)**

**Animals**

**The Tale of the Tale**

A long time ago, when tails were being distributed, the rock rabbit's friends, the hares, said to him "Let's go and get our tails!" The rock rabbit was a lazy animal and said "Ahh, I can't be bothered to go, please bring me one."

So, the rock rabbit's friends all went off to get their tails. When they returned, the rock rabbit said "Where's my tail?". His friends replied "They ran out of tails, there were no more tails left!"

So the rock rabbit never got his tail, and had noone to blame but himself, hence the proverb:

"imbila yeswela umsila ngekulayetela"

which loosely translates to "if you don't do things for yourself, you might get nothing!"

**Sweden (Europe)**

**Humorous feats of Strength, classic heros**

**Starkad and Bale**

Starkad, the hero of the legends, the bravest warrior in the army of the North, had fallen into disgrace with the king because of a certain princess, so he wandered up into Norland, and settled down at Rude in Tuna, where he was known as the Thrall of the Alders or the Red Fellow.

In Balbo, nine miles from Rude, dwelt another hero, Bale, a good friend and companion-at-arms of Starkad.

One morning Starkad climbed the Klefberg in Tuna, and called over to Bale: "Bale in Balbo, are you awake?"

"Red Fellow!" answered Bale, nine miles away, "the sun and I wake together! But how goes it with you?"

"None too well. I eat salmon morning, noon and night. Come over with a bit of meat!"

"I'll come!" Bale called back, and in a few hours time he was down in Tuna with an elk under each arm.

The following morning Bale in Balbo stood on a hill in Borgsjo and called: "Red Fellow! Are you awake?"

"The sun and I wake together!" answered Starkad. "And how goes it with you?"

"Alas, I have nothing to eat but meat! Elk in the morning, elk at noon and elk at night. Come over and bring a fish-tail along with you!"

"I'm coming!" called out Starkad, and in a short time he had joined his friend with a barrel of salmon under each arm.

In this fashion the two friends provided themselves with all the game to be found in the woods and in the water, and spread terror and destruction throughout the countryside. But one evening, when they were just returning to the sea from an excursion, a black cloud came up, and a tempest broke. They hurried along as fast as they could; but got no further than Vattjom, where a flash of lightning struck Starkad and flung him to the ground. His friend and companion-at-arms buried him beneath a stone cairn, about which he set five rocks: two at his feet, two at his shoulders, and one at his head; and that grave, measuring twenty ells in length, may still be seen near the river.

**Switzerland (Europe)**

**Magic**

**The Wonderful Little Pouch**

<http://zeluna.net/swiss-fairytales.html#THE_DWARF_IN_SEARCH_OF_LODGING>

AT NOON one day a young peasant sat by the side of a wood, and, sighing, prayed to God to give him a morsel of food. A Dwarf suddenly emerged from the wood, and told him that his prayer should be fulfilled. He then gave him the pouch that he had on his side, with the assurance that he would always find in it wherewithal to satisfy his thirst and hunger, charging him at the same time not to consume it all and to share with any one who asked him for food. The Dwarf vanished, and the peasant put his hand into the pouch to make trial of it, and there he found a cake of new bread, a cheese, and a bottle of wine, on which he made a hearty meal. He then saw that the pouch swelled up as before, and looking in be found that it was again full of bread, cheese, and wine. He now felt sure of his food, and he lived on in an idle luxurious way, without doing any work. One day, as he was gorging himself there came up to him a feeble old man, who prayed him to give him a morsel to eat. He refused in a brutal, churlish tone, when instantly the bread and cheese broke, and scattered out of his hands, and pouch and all vanished.

**Syria (Asia)**

**Humor**

**The Three Spinners**

<http://www.wildriverreview.com/AIRMAIL/Letter-from-Damascus/The-Three-Spinners/Muna-Imady>

Once upon a time there lived three sisters who were very poor. Their father and mother had died, leaving them only the little house they lived in. To earn money, they spun wool into yarn and then sold it in the market.

One day, the oldest sister said, “How I wish I could eat a roasted sheep stuffed with spicy rice and almonds!”

The middle sister closed her eyes and drew a long breath and said, “How lovely the stuffed roasted sheep would taste with green onions!”

The younger sister added enthusiastically, “It would taste even better with some red radishes!”

The three sisters laughed and decided to save their money to buy a sheep and cook it stuffed with spicy rice and almonds.

Time passed, the three sisters worked hard spinning the yarn into thread and dreaming of their roasted stuffed sheep.

As they spun they sang joyfully:

How very tasty and how very nice

Is roasted sheep stuffed with almonds and rice!

Green onions and radishes would also be nice

With the sheep stuffed with almonds and spicy rice!

Finally, the three sisters saved enough money to fulfill their dream. They went down to the market, bought a sheep and cooked it with rice and almonds. They set the roasted sheep on a large tray decorated with almonds and pistachios.

Then the three sisters happily sat down to eat, but the older sister suddenly called out, “Oh my God, we have forgotten to get green onions!”

Then the youngest sister said, “We have forgotten to get red radishes!”

The three sisters ran out of their house towards the nearby fields. They were in such a rush that they forgot to close the door of their house. As they ran they sang joyfully:

How very tasty and how very nice

Is roasted sheep stuffed with almonds and rice!

Green onions and radishes would also be nice

With the sheep stuffed with almonds and spicy

rice!

As they ran through their neighborhood towards the fields, the garbage man saw them. He patiently waited for them to disappear, then slipped into their house and carried out the tray of roasted sheep to his poor old mother.

They both hadn’t tasted meat for such a long time that they ate everything on the tray.

When the three sisters reached their house, they couldn’t believe their bad luck. They cried and screamed and hit each other with the green onions and red radishes.

Their sorrow and grief was so deep that they died shortly after their roasted stuffed sheep had been stolen.

***The moral of the story:****Even though you might think you are poor, there are people in this world who are poorer than you. Share the little you have and God will bless you*

**Taiwan (Asia)**

**Dragons**

**The Legend of Sun-Moon Lake**

<http://www.taiwandc.org/folk-sun.htm>

Once upon a time, a native tribe called Shao lived in the mountains near the central part of Taiwan. The people planted corn, taro, and rice on their farmlands. Sometimes they would go fishing and hunting. They lived a peaceful and carefree life.

On a sunny morning while the Shao people were working diligently, they heard a huge sound. "Boom!" and the land shook violently. "Oh no! The sun is gone," everyone cried fearfully. They could not believe that the bright, shiny sun had disappeared before their eyes. They could not do anything else except help each other find his/her way home in the midst of darkness.

Fortunately, the moon came out at night. Everyone could see again in the moonlight and was able to do some work. Suddenly, another huge sound was heard. "Boom!" The houses were almost knocked down by this huge sound. "Oh no! The moon is also gone. What are we going to do?!" everyone cried desperately. Everyone was so frightened, and no one knew what had caused this incident.

Starting from that day, the sky did not have the sun or the moon. Darkness covered the entire world. The crops in the fields gradually wilted; the fish hid in deep water; the flowers were not blooming; and the animals seemed lifeless. People kept asking, "How can we live a life without sunlight? Without sunlight, nothing grows."

A young couple, DaJianGe and ShuiSheJie, depended on growing corn for a living. Since the sun had disappeared, the crops had wilted; the corn did not have golden kernels anymore. One day, ShuiSheJie told her husband, "If the sun does not come out immediately, everyone in the village is going to die from hunger. We need to think of a plan." DaJianGe nodded his head and said, "The sun and the moon must have fallen into a deep valley. Let us go and search for them."

On the second day, both of them started toward the deep forest and were determined to find the sun and the moon. Each of them held a torch and started the journey bravely. They climbed and crossed numerous mountains, rivers, and forests. They also used countless torches but they could not find any sign of the sun and the moon. The whole world was still in darkness.

Finally, the couple arrived at a big mountain top. ShuiSheJie saw a dim light in front of her.

She pointed to a lake opposite the mountain and said to DaJianGe, "Look! There is a shiny light on top of that lake. I bet the sun and the moon are in that lake."

DaJianGe cried excitedly, "Yes! Yes! That must be the sun and the moon. Ha...Ha....We've found them." They ran towards the lake and discovered two fierce dragons playing with the two fire balls which were the sun and the moon.

"No wonder the sun and the moon disappeared. These two dragons stole the sun and the moon to be their playthings," cried both of them. DaJianGe and ShuiSheJie were really mad. They wanted to take the sun and the moon back from the dragons but were afraid of them. The couple sat on a big rock to think of a plan. However, they could not come up with any ideas.

Suddenly, white smoke came out from under the rock that they were sitting on. DaJianGe used his strength to push the rock away. They discovered a long, deep, and narrow underground passageway. The smoke was coming from the passageway. DaJianGe said, "There is someone living beyond the passageway. Let us go check and see."

They cautiously stepped down the passageway. As the curvy passageway got deeper, the atmosphere got damper and darker. After a while, they came upon red light emitted by a fire.

The smoke got thicker. The young couple realized that they were in a kitchen; an old white haired woman was standing in the kitchen and cooking.

ShuiSheJie asked softly, "Old lady, how are you?"

The old woman was surprised. She raised her head and found two young people standing in front of her. She put down her cooking pot and said, "Ah! Where did you come from? I've not seen humans for a long time."

The old lady also said, "Many years ago when I was working in the field, the dragons captured me and brought me here. They would not let me leave this place. They also forced me to cook them meals."

The young couple told the old lady the whole story of finding the sun and the moon. The old lady shook her head and said, " Both dragons are cruel and fierce. You two cannot defeat them."

"No matter what, we are going to take the sun and the moon from the dragons," said the couple with determination.

"I know," the old lady said, "I have heard someone mention before that the dragons fear the golden scissors and the golden ax which are hidden under Ali Mountain. If you throw both items into the lake, the scissors and the ax will kill the dragons immediately. Then, you can bring back the sun and the moon."

DaJianGe said confidently, "We will find the golden ax and the golden scissors. After we kill the dragons, we'll come and save you."

DaJianGe and ShuiSheJie left the old lady and started toward Ali Mountain.

When they arrived at the foot of Ali Mountain, DaJianGe and ShuiSheJie found two strong wooden sticks and started digging. They dug day and night. They wouldn't stop until they found the golden scissors and ax.

After many days, Ali Mountain looked like a big hole. Suddenly, two shiny golden things jumped out from the ground.

"That must be the golden scissors and the golden ax !" the couple yelled.

They picked up the scissors and ax immediately and proceeded toward the lake. When they arrived at the lake, the dragons were playing with their "Fire Balls." ShuiSheJie threw the golden scissors, which flew straight toward the first dragon and cut its body into many sections.

Blood sprung out like spring water. DaJianGe hurriedly threw the golden ax toward the other dragon. The dragon let out two horrible screams and its head was cut off.

The lake was dyed by the dragons' blood. The sun and the moon floated on the shiny red lake.

After killing the dragons, the young couple saved the old lady. However, DaJianGe and Shui SheJie faced a major problem: how were they going to send the sun and the moon back into the sky? They were very puzzled.

At this time, the old lady said. "I heard that if one ate the dragon's eyeballs, one would become very tall and very strong. After you two eat the dragon's eyeballs, you will have the strength to send the sun the moon back to the sky.

The young couple immediately dived into the lake to search for and remove the dragon's eyeballs. After they ate the eyeballs, DaJianGe and ShuiSheJie began to grow. Their heights increased inch by inch. When they got out of the water and stood on the shore, they were like two mountains.

Together, the young couple held the sun and threw it into the sky with a strong force. The sun stayed in midair for awhile, then fell back down. They threw the sun once more but it fell back again. The situation with the moon was the same. The old lady yelled at the bottom of their feet, "Children, there are two big palm trees next to the lake. Use those trees to hold the sun and the moon up."

Each of the giants bent down and grabbed a tree. They put the sun on top of the palm tree and began holding it up slowly. Slowly the sun was raised higher and higher. After a day of hard work, the shiny red sun began to function normally in the sky. They also used the same method with the moon.

When the world regained its light, the plants began to bloom and the people started to smile again. When the sun gradually finished its course, the moon started its own course in the sky.

As for DaJianGe and ShuiSheJie, they were afraid that the dragons might return; therefore, they stood guard beside the lake. After many years, their huge bodies eventually became two mountains. Those mountains are now called DaJian Shan and ShuiShe Shan. The lake is now called "SunMoon Lake".

To show their gratitude to the young couple, the people of Cao Zu dedicated an annual dance to the brave DaJianGe and ShuiSheJie. This dance is now called "The Holding Ball Dance." In this dance, people throw a beautiful and colorful ball into the air and then try to use a bamboo stick to hold it; this dance symbolizes the brave actions of the young couple who saved the world.

**Tajikistan (Asia)**

**Animals**

**The Falcon Flute**

<http://chinesefolktales.blogspot.com/2008/11/hawk-whistle-tajik.html>

This story comes to us from a long time ago, when the Tajiks of the Pamirs, like virtually everyone else's ancestors, were in servitude to cruel feudal overlords.  
  
Long, long ago, people and falcons lived together.  
  
At that time, Tajik people would hunt with falcons. Just about every household had at least one falcon; it was not uncommon for a family to have two, three or even five falcons. Just as hunters today still go out with hunting dogs, so did the ancestors of the Tajiks take their falcons out into the fields to hunt. Then, at night, back home in their compounds, huts, or manors, Tajiks would sleep securely as their falconss watched over them and their property. Falcons were indispensable to the lives of the Tajiks, and together they lived inseparably, much, I suppose, like, as the Han Chinese say, "the lips and teeth."  
  
In centuries past, the feudal masters of the Pamir meadowlands enslaved local Tajik families, expecting Tajik hunters to catch for them choice animals for their larders. Now these lords owned thousands of herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, while the Tajiks of that era had nothing, nothing but their huts, their falcons and each other. Any game these Tajik hunters caught had to be turned over to the master.  
  
Now in those long ago days, in the Dapuda'er Valley of the Pamirs, there lived a hunter named Wafa, who came from a long line of famed hunters. Like just about everybody else there, he was enslaved to his masters, the cattle and sheep lords, and had to wear rags and old carpeting for clothes and be content to eat bones with meager bits of mutton attached. That was the way things were.  
  
One day Wafa's grandfather had the great fortune to catch an antelope, something he had never done before in forty years of hunting. Think how he must have felt! "My biggest stroke of luck in years and years!" he kept muttering to himself. He had to keep pinching himself as he and his family quietly celebrated.  
  
However, what to do?  
  
By law, he was supposed to turn over any carcass from a hunt to his master, who would take it all and not share even the smallest morsel with the family of the hunter who had bagged it. Or, he could keep the antelope just for his family or himself. Of course to do that would mean holding back from his master. If he did this and was found out, he would have to suffer dearly.  
  
"No," he said, "we're going to keep the carcass. I caught it, so I have decided to keep it."  
  
Well, just as the ancients said, that "one can't wrap fire in paper," the news of the old man's antelope got out and found its way to the master, the feudal lord of the Pamir Tajiks, cattle and sheep. The old grandfather was taken away by the master's thugs, his antelope carcass seized. The ruffians, using a rawhide whip, whipped the old man over and over. The grandfather said not a word. He returned home, tall, proud but broken inside, and fell ill. Within a few days, he died.  
  
This did not dishearten Wafa's father. Out hunting for his master, he killed a brown bear, and, out of defiance, decided to keep the bear for his own family. In time he too was discovered. This time, the master's men tied him up, dipped clumps of sheep's wool in a vat of butter, and then placed the wool on the man. They then set him on fire, torching him, burning him alive . . .  
  
Now only Wafa was left, or, rather, Wafa and his one hundred year old falcon. The falcon had belonged to his grandfather; upon his grandfather's death, it became his father's; when his father died, the falcon was passed on to him. This falcon was old, to be sure, but it was as sharp-eyed and formidable as it had ever been. It could spot the smallest sparrow hiding in the brush 100li away; it's claws and beak could rip the fur off a black bear. For these reasons, Wafa's falcon was known as "the king of all hunting falcons." Indeed, everybody just called the falcon "the King." With this falcon, Wafa caught much choice game, all of which he had to hand over to his master.  
  
One day, Wafa was in a secluded valley, overcome by resentment and hatred for the feudal nobles who enslaved him and his fellow Tajiks. Wafa turned to the sky and, before his falcon as a witness, sang a song of defiance:  
  
Tajik slaves!You are like the shooting stars that fall out of the night!You exist just as food for lice,Fighting and dying without allowing even your eyes to close.Fierce slaves!With ice water for blood,Like the mighty icy peak of the Mushi-tage,Tajik slaves,Will you always have to be shooting stars that fall out of the night!?  
  
He went home without a day's catch. From then on, he caught less and less game; all of his hunting spirit had left him. In time he no longer took the King out with him to hunt. He just stopped hunting, and that meant he no longer turned over the best of his catch to his master.  
  
The master, of course, noticed that Wafa was not turning over his intended portions. Wafa was told he would have to hand over the King to the master.  
  
Having received the news, he turned to the King and cried: "Oh, Tajik slaves! Will you always have to be shooting stars that fall out of the night?"  
  
"Wafa, O my friend, Wafa," said the King, "listen to me. Kill me as quickly as possible. From the bones in my wing, create a flute. Play that flute, and your wishes shall come true!"  
  
Wafa was frightened out of his wits to hear the King speak.  
  
Then, the old falcon spoke again.  
  
"Quickly! Don't waste time! Kill me and use my wing bone to make a flute! Hurry! Before they come!"  
  
Wafa was nearly out of his mind with grief but did what the King had asked. Soon he was left with a very thick wing bone perfect for a flute.  
  
Not long after, the master's ruffians showed up and demanded that the old falcon be handed over to them. Wafa looked at them and just pointed to a pile of feathers by his hut. They looked and saw what Wafa had done and reported back to the master.  
  
"What!" screamed the master. "Bring him out to the courtyard, and I'll beat him to death myself!"  
  
Wafa was dragged to the master's compound and there, in the courtyard, he was stripped to the waist and told to await the master, who he was told, had something in store for him.  
  
While awaiting the master, Wafa took out his flute. "I'm dead," he thought. "Might as well have at least a little freedom to play this flute before he kills me."  
  
The master opened the door and left his house. Just as he did so, the noonday sky grew darker and darker. The master and his men looked up to the heavens. At first they thought the same thing--a sudden approaching storm. No. The sky had grown black with thousands of descending falcons.  
  
Down the falcons came, driven by the music from Wafa's flute. They swooped down and pecked the slave master and his thugs, cutting and slashing their necks and backs.  
  
"Are you doing this, Wafa?" screamed the master in terror and pain. "Are you making them do this to me?"  
  
Wafa just nodded and continued to play the flute.  
  
"Oh, for the love . . . make them stop! Make them stop!"  
  
"And if I do?" Wafa asked.  
  
"I'll give you whatever you want! Anything!"  
  
"Grant to the each Tajik household of the Dapuda'er Valley ten sheep, ten heads of cattle and ten camels!"  
  
"Yes! Yes! Whatever you say! Just get these accursed falcons off me!"  
  
Wafa stopped playing that particular tune. He then played something else, and the falcons flew away, disappearing into the sky.  
  
The master then, as he had promised, gave the sheep, cattle and camels to the Tajik families of the valley. For the first time in their history, these Tajiks could now breed their own animals and feed themselves with more than their overlords' scraps. Did the master have a change of heart? No, he did not. He was as glad to give the Tajiks animals as a hungry wolf is to give up a freshly killed rabbit. He thought about what he could do.  
  
After he discovered the falcon flute was made of the wing bone from the King, he issued a proclamation: "Whoever kills a falcon and fashions a falcon flute from the wing bone will be granted a reward."  
  
Sadly, a large number of falcons were killed for their bones, and these bones, now made into flutes, were turned over to the master of the Pamirs. Now, suddenly, their "friends" and "partners," the local hunters, turned on them and killed them.  
  
The damage had been done.  
  
Those that were killed fled the huts of the Tajiks, never to return. Since this time, for this reason, falcons roost away from people, deep in the mountains on trees by the creeks.  
  
The call for falcon bones ended; the bond between the hunters of the Pamirs and the falcons had been broken.  
  
Shortly after, not surprisingly, the slave master took back all the cattle, sheep and camels he had given to the people. The people, now too late, realized how they had been so cruelly tricked. However, falcon flutes still appeared; the people still used them but for music now, not to summon falcons. It is said that all Tajiks remember the sacrifice of the falcons whenever they play these flutes.  
  
And so this sad and unforgettable story has come down to us

**Explanation Story, Animals**

**Tanzania (Africa)**

**The Kites and Crows**

<http://www.worldoftales.com/African_folktales/African_Folktale_42.html>

One day Koongoo′roo, sultan of the crows, sent a letter to Mway′way, sultan of the kites, containing these few words: “I want you folks to be my soldiers.”

To this brief message Mwayway at once wrote this short reply: “I should say not.”

Thereupon, thinking to scare Mwayway, the sultan of the crows sent him word, “If you refuse to obey me I’ll make war upon you.”

To which the sultan of the kites replied, “That suits me; let us fight, and if you beat us we will obey you, but if we are victors you shall be our servants.”

So they gathered their forces and engaged in a great battle, and in a little while it became evident that the crows were being badly beaten.

As it appeared certain that, if something were not done pretty quickly, they would all be killed, one old crow, named Jeeoo′see, suddenly proposed that they should fly away.

Directly the suggestion was made it was acted upon, and the crows left their homes and flew far away, where they set up another town. So, when the kites entered the place, they found no one there, and they took up their residence in Crowtown.

One day, when the crows had gathered in council, Koongooroo stood up and said: “My people, do as I command you, and all will be well. Pluck out some of my feathers and throw me into the town of the kites; then come back and stay here until you hear from me.”

Without argument or questioning the crows obeyed their sultan’s command.

Koongooroo had lain in the street but a short time, when some passing kites saw him and inquired threateningly, “What are you doing here in our town?”

With many a moan he replied, “My companions have beaten me and turned me out of their town because I advised them to obey Mwayway, sultan of the kites.”

When they heard this they picked him up and took him before the sultan, to whom they said, “We found this fellow lying in the street, and he attributes his involuntary presence in our town to so singular a circumstance that we thought you should hear his story.”

Koongooroo was then bidden to repeat his statement, which he did, adding the remark that, much as he had suffered, he still held to his opinion that Mwayway was his rightful sultan.

This, of course, made a very favorable impression, and the sultan said, “You have more sense than all the rest of your tribe put together; I guess you can stay here and live with us.”

So Koongooroo, expressing much gratitude, settled down, apparently, to spend the remainder of his life with the kites.

One day his neighbors took him to church with them, and when they returned home they asked him, “Who have the best kind of religion, the kites or the crows?”

To which crafty old Koongooroo replied, with great enthusiasm, “Oh, the kites, by long odds!”

This answer tickled the kites like anything, and Koongooroo was looked upon as a bird of remarkable discernment.

When almost another week had passed, the sultan of the crows slipped away in the night, went to his own town, and called his people together.

“To-morrow,” said he, “is the great annual religious festival of the kites, and they will all go to church in the morning. Go, now, and get some wood and some fire, and wait near their town until I call you; then come quickly and set fire to the church.”

Then he hurried back to Mwayway’s town.

The crows were very busy indeed all that night, and by dawn they had an abundance of wood and fire at hand, and were lying in wait near the town of their victorious enemies.

So in the morning every kite went to church. There was not one person left at home except old Koongooroo.

When his neighbors called for him they found him lying down. “Why!” they exclaimed with surprise, “are you not going to church to-day?”

“Oh,” said he, “I wish I could; but my stomach aches so badly I can’t move!” And he groaned dreadfully.

“Ah, poor fellow!” said they; “you will be better in bed;” and they left him to himself.

As soon as everybody was out of sight he flew swiftly to his soldiers and cried, “Come on; they’re all in the church.”

Then they all crept quickly but quietly to the church, and while some piled wood about the door, others applied fire.

The wood caught readily, and the fire was burning fiercely before the kites were aware of their danger; but when the church began to fill with smoke, and tongues of flame shot through the cracks, they tried to escape through the windows. The greater part of them, however, were suffocated, or, having their wings singed, could not fly away, and so were burned to death, among them their sultan, Mwayway; and Koongooroo and his crows got their old town back again.

From that day to this the kites fly away from the crows.

**Thailand (Asia)**

**Cleverness**

**The Story of Makatho**

<http://www.chickynet.com/thailand/blogs/1/105/fascinating-folktales-of-thailan>

*This story dates back to the time of the Sukhothai Period.*

There was a young man named Makatho. He was a son of the Mon merchant who lived in Kohwan Village in the city of Mortama, a city in the present Myanmar. When he reached the age of 15 years old his father died so he had to continue his father’s business. One day he led his sales team comprising of 30 men carrying goods on their shoulders to be sold in the city of Sukhothai, a former capital of Thailand. On arriving at Matewa, one of his men suddenly felt sick. Out of sympathy, Makatho helped the man by carrying the goods on his shoulder. When he reached the top of the hill, there was heavy rain and a thunderstorm. A thunderbolt suddenly struck his stick used to carry the goods on his shoulder breaking it into pieces,but surprisingly he did not get hurt. Even though he changed the sticks three times, a thunderbolt struck it again and again. When he looked towards the west, in a flash of lightning there appeared perhaps a castle or a palace.

To know more about the strange occurrences, he went to see a fortune-teller and asked him to forecast what he saw. But the fortune-teller set a condition that he had to bring a huge sum of money equivalent to the heap which was to be as high as his head and then he would make a forecast for him. Though Makatho had a small amount of money equivalent to only a few baht, he was intelligent enough to place all the money he had on the termite hill and told the fortune-teller to look at it. The fortune-teller thought that this man was very intelligent. He thus made a prediction that Makatho was a man of great merit and he would be promoted to a high position in the direction of the west.

Upon arriving at Sukhothai City, he sold all the goods and told his men to return home while he remained in the city. He then went to seek shelter with the mahout of Phra Ruang who was the King of Sukhothai. By nature Makatho was an industrious man so he helped the mahout looking after the elephants day and night. In turn the mahout was very kind to him. When he received his own salary from the king, he would share it with Makatho every time.

One day King Ruang came to see his elephants in the pen. While looking at the elephants from the raised platform, he saw Makatho sweeping the floor of the pen. The king then asked the mahout who that man was. After being informed of the truth, the king showed his kindness to him and instructed the mahout to take good care of Makatho. While looking at the elephants, the king released the areca-nut from his mouth and spat the saliva on the ground so strongly that dust floated in the air. A money cowrie shell suddenly emerged from the ground. The king told Makatho to pick it up. Makatho paid respect to the king and then picked up the money cowrie shell.

Makatho was very happy, though the money was just a small amount. He thought that it was very valuable to him as it was given to him by the king. So to make it more valuable, he went to buy lettuce seeds from the market. The seller did not know how to sell them as the amount of money was too small to count in exchange for the lettuce seeds. So Makatho told the seller a way out. He then raised his finger to touch the saliva from his mouth and then touched on the lettuce seeds.

“Alright! I just wanted this much. Nothing more,” said Makatho.

The seller smiled and praised him for his intelligence, and thought that this man would surely become a great person in the future.

After getting the lettuce seeds, Makatho prepared the soil and planted the seeds nearby. He used the elephant’s dung as fertilizer to nourish the vegetable.

One day King Ruang again came to see his elephants. Makatho picked up a lettuce in a hurry and presented it to the king. To his surprise, the king asked where he got it from. Makatho told him the story. The king was very pleased and thought that this son of the Mon was very industrious and intelligent. Thus he was promoted to work in the royal kitchen. Makatho worked hard as usual. The king was very pleased with his performance, so he appointed him in the position of Khun Wang whose duty was to take care of the capital. Makatho worked hard and took his assignment seriously. The king treated him as his own son. Everybody showed him great respect.

Later Makatho asked permission to visit his home village. Since he was a good man, all people liked him and gave him due respect. The ruler of Mortama City named Alimamang was jealous of him and planned to eliminate him. However, Makatho knew about the plot, so he decided to get rid of Alimamang first and was then chosen as the new ruler. After his appointment, Makatho rebuilt the city of Mortama and sent offerings to King Ruang and informed him of the situation. To his pleasure, King Ruang gave Makatho a new royal name as Phra Chao Fa Rua or the King of the Leaking Sky. He expanded his territories far and wide.

**Timor-Leste (Asia)**

**Origin Story**

**The Crocodile Story**

<http://www.etan.org/timor/croc.htm>

Many years ago a small crocodile lived in a swamp in a far away place. He dreamed of becoming a big crocodile but as food was scarce, he became weak and grew sadder and sadder.

He left for the open sea, to find food and realise his dream, but the day became increasingly hot and he was still far from the seashore. The little crocodile - rapidly drying out and now in desperation - lay down to die.

A small boy took pity on the stranded crocodile and carried him to the sea. The crocodile, instantly revived, was grateful. “Little boy”, he said, “you have saved my life. If I can ever help you in any way, please call me. I will be at your command…”

A few years later, the boy called the crocodile, who was now big and strong. “Brother Crocodile”, he said, “I too have a dream. I want to see the world”.

“Climb on my back,” said the crocodile, “and tell me, which way do you want to go?”

“Follow the sun”, said the boy.

The crocodile set off for the east, and they traveled the oceans for years, until one day the crocodile said to the boy, “Brother, we have been travelling for a long time. But now the time has come for me to die. In memory of your kindness, I will turn myself into a beautiful island, where you and your children can live until the sun sinks in the sea.”

As the crocodile died, he grew and grew, and his ridged back became the mountains and his scales the hills of Timor.

Now when the people of East Timor swim in the ocean, they enter the water saying “Don’t eat me crocodile, I am your relative”.

**Togo (Africa)**

**Animals**

**The Great Hole**

<http://wws.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=82>

Long ago, the chief of the Moba tribe gathered together 300 of his best hunters. It had rained very little that year, and the dry season was fast approaching. But the chief was not worried. He knew of a place where his men could fish, hunt, and collect water for the coming months.

"In the sacred forest of Doong," he said to the hunters, "cross over the mountain to the river below. Where the mountains turn west, the river plunges over a cliff and into a great hole that has no bottom. The hole is connected to the ocean. Because it has no bottom, it never goes dry."

The next day, the hunters journeyed to the sacred forest. As the chief had advised, they crossed a mountain and turned west. But as they approached the great hole, the skies turned dark. Suddenly, great torrents of rain poured down upon them.

Pulled by the storm's intense grip, the hunters fell down into the riverbed. Water rushed upon them from every side. All of the hunters were swept into the great hole—all, except one.

The lone survivor ran back to the village to tell the chief what had happened. Upon hearing the news, the chief was overcome with sorrow.

"I must go to the great hole to honor the spirits of our men," he declared. And as dawn broke the next morning, the chief set out.

The chief rode his camel into the sacred forest of Doong, crossing the mountain to the river below. Steering his camel to a rock on top of a waterfall, he got off his camel and looked down at the great hole below.

While the chief was gazing into the water, he felt a tap on his shoulder. The chief turned, slowly and hesitantly. He had seen no one in the forest all morning.

A beautiful woman dressed in a shimmering white cloth stood before him. In her hands, she held a gourd of water flavored with ground millet. Kneeling before the chief, she offered him the gourd and smiled. The chief thanked her, took a sip of the sweet water, and spilled what remained on the rocks.

As quickly as she had appeared, the woman vanished.

The chief then spoke in a sacred language, telling the spirits of the river about the brave deeds of the hunters who had died. As he spoke, the animals of the forest gathered around him. One by one, they came to tell the chief that they were sorry for his loss. The birds came first, then the lions, antelope, and elephants.

From deep down in the hole where the men had died, the animals of the water—the fish, crocodiles, and snakes—rose to the surface. They were moved by the chief's words.

All at once, the animals disappeared back into the air, forest, and water, and the chief turned to leave. But as he climbed back on his camel, he noticed that the hoof prints of the camel were embedded in the soft, young rock, as were the knee prints of the woman who had knelt before him with the gourd of water. The stain from the water he had spilled on the rocks also remained.

If you go to Doong today, you will find those imprints and that stain. And when the chief of the Moba tribe stands before the great hole, all the animals come again, just as before, to show that they have not forgotten.

**Tonga (Oceania)**

**Origin Story**

**How ‘Eua Island Got its Name**

<http://www.eua-island-tonga.com/HowEuaislandgotitsName.html>

Long ago in Tonga there lived a chief called Sinilau. Sinilau had heard of a beautiful woman called Hina living on a far away island called Samoa and decided to go and find her. So of f he went in his canoe.

When he got to Samoa and saw Hina they fell in love and brought her back to Tonga with him.As you can image the Samoans weren't to happy about this and gave chase. So in an effort to evade them Sinilau hid Hina in a cave on the east side of Tonga and put a giant rat in charge of guarding her in case the Samoans found her, and set out himself to get warriors to stop the Samoans.

When Sinilau returned to the cave he found Hina was gone and the rat had a octopus arm in his mouth. Sinilau was angry and said to the rat “what has happened to Hina”. The rat told Sinilau that a giant octopus had come and that he had tried to fight the octopus but had lost the battle and the octopus had stolen Hina away.

Sinilau and the rat ran down to the beach, looking for Hina and as there gaze was drawn to the ocean Sinilau saw the head of the octopus and Hina's head floating away out in the distance. Sinilau cry out “ulu eua” (two heads). Ulu means *heads*and eua means *two*.

so this is how 'Eua got it's name. The cave Hina was hid in is still in Tonga on a beach called Oholie beach, they still call it the Hina cave to this day.

**Trinidad and Tobago (North America)**

**Ghost**

**LaDiablesse**

<http://www.tntisland.com/folklore.html>

La Diablesse (Lajables), the Devil Woman, roames at night. She has eyes like burning coals and a face resembling that of a corpse, but hides it under a beautiful wide-brimmed hat and a veil over her face. She is dressed exquisitely in a blouse with puffy sleeves and long, petticoated, skirts. She has one cloven foot, which she tries to hide under her long skirts. She turns up at village dances, where she is immediately disliked by the women present, but she utterly charms the men and then asks one of them to take her home. He follows her, totally under her spell. She leads him deep into the woods and then suddenly she disappears. Unable to find his way home, the poor fellow stumbles around in the dark wood until he either falls into a ravine or a river to his death or gets attacked by wild hogs.   
  
Old people talk: If you feel you may encounter a La Diablesse on your way home, take off all your clothes, turn them inside out and put them on again, and this will surely protect you from a La Diablesse.

**Tunisia (Africa)**

**Animals**

**What King Solomon Learned from Beasts**

<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/41444298?uid=3739976&uid=2&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21103122230281>

King Solomon, the wisest of men, knew the languages of beasts and often conversed with them. His philosophy, which may at times seem cynical to some of us, perhaps owes as much to what he thus learned from beasts as to what he learned from observing men.

Among his other writings, King Solomon left to posterity a manuscript in which he taught us the languages of beasts. Unfortunately, this priceless work was lost beneath the ruins of the Temple of Jerusalem at the time of its destruction. The few who had been privileged to study this book, the only one of its kind, have piously handed down to us some of its contents by word of mouth, from generation to generation through the centuries. Colorful fables illustrate many of the more scientific elements of this ancient tradition.

Cat and dog, clean and unclean: If your dog touches your food, let him take it: his mouth is unclean. If your cat touches your food, share it with him: his mouth is clean.

The Flounder: Moses stretched out his arm over the sea and the Lord turned back the waters with a great wind from the East. He dried the sea and the waters were parted. This is what is written in the Torah. While the Lord was thus dividing for our forefathers the waters of the sea, some of its fish were split in two halves, and thus became flounders.

Talismans: In order to protect your family and your goods from the wiles of the Evil Eye, you should hang on your wall, by the entrance to your home, one of the following talismans, which have all been tested and proven: The bone of the brow of an ox, with both of its horns, in order to pierce the eyes of all those who wish you ill or are envious of you, the tail of a tuna-fish, two egg-shells, the tusk of a wild boar, a horse-shoe, or else, better still, a sea-horse, or a starfish. In order that your new home bring you luck, before your own feet or those of any of your family cross its threshold, raise the stone of your doorstep and bury beneath it, very deep, a fish that bears scales, preferably a sea-bream. After that, you can put your doorstep back where it belongs and cement it securely.

**Turkey (Asia)**

**Trickster**

**The Wicked Girl**

<http://www.aaronshep.com/stories/052.html>

There was once a merchant who set out with his wife on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Their daughter, though, they left at home, with an Arab slave girl to keep her company.

One evening quite late, the merchant’s daughter and the Arab girl were singing and laughing and dancing about in the upstairs apartment. By accident, the Arab girl knocked over the oil lamp, leaving the young ladies in darkness.

“What should we do?” said the merchant’s daughter. “It’s too late to rouse the servants.”

“I’ll go out and find a light,” said the Arab girl.

“But we’re locked in!” said the merchant’s daughter.

“The window’s open,” said the Arab girl.

So they knotted some bed sheets together and lowered them from the window. Then the Arab girl took a basket and climbed down.

She walked down the street till she came to a restaurant still open. The customers had all gone, but a handsome young man was in the kitchen, cleaning up and preparing for the next day. On the table were dishes piled high with kebabs, dolma, pilaf, and baklava.

“May I come in?” said the Arab girl prettily.

The young man, who owned the restaurant, cast an eye on the lovely young lady. “Please sit down!” he said.

As the two of them chatted, the young man moved closer and closer to the Arab girl. She was almost in reach when she asked him, “What’s in those huge crocks?”

“One has olive oil, one has clarified butter, and one has honey.”

“Honey?” she said. “What’s that?”

“Surely you’ve had honey before!”

“Never! Please give me a taste.”

So the young man took off the lid and leaned into the crock to spoon some out. The Arab girl came up behind and lifted his feet, so he slid head first into the honey. Then she quickly loaded her basket with dishes of food, grabbed an oil lamp, and ran off.

The young man came out of the honey dripping and sputtering. “Ooh, that Arab girl! If I ever catch her, I’ll drink her blood!”

The next night, the Arab girl was again dancing about with the merchant’s daughter, but she was wondering about the restaurant owner. So she knocked over the lamp a second time.

“I’ll have to go out again,” she said.

They lowered the bed sheets, and the Arab girl climbed down with her basket. When she reached the restaurant, she again found the young man alone.

“How dare you come back!” he demanded. “Do you know what I’ll do to you now?”

“Kiss me?” she asked.

“Well, well!” said the young man, with a smile. “What a fine idea!” He came close to embrace her.

“Not yet,” she said. “First we must eat and drink.”

So they ate and drank, and the Arab girl kept pouring him more and more wine, and he kept drinking it, till his head dropped down and rested on the table. She found some rope, tied him up, and gagged him. Then she took more dishes of food and a lamp and ran off.

His customers found him the next morning and set him free. “Ooh, that Arab girl! If I ever catch her, I’ll drink her blood!”

Later that same day, the young man disguised himself as an old flower peddler, with ragged clothes and a long white beard. Then he walked up and down the streets, calling, “Roses for sale! Roses for sale!”

When he came by the merchant’s house, he spotted the Arab girl looking out the upstairs window. “I have her now!” he muttered.

Meanwhile, the Arab girl was telling the merchant’s daughter, “There’s that handsome restaurant owner. I wonder what he’s up to.” She called down to him, “We would like some roses.”

“Then please come to the door,” said the young man, in an old man’s voice.

“We’re locked in,” she said. “But you can climb to the window.”

She lowered the bed sheets, and the young man started up. He was just a few feet away when the Arab girl took a knife and sliced through the top sheet. Roses flew everywhere as the young man tumbled to the ground.

While a crowd gathered around him, the young man painfully struggled to his feet. “Ooh, that Arab girl! If I ever catch her, I’ll drink her blood!”

Not long after that, the merchant returned with his wife from their pilgrimage. To thank the Arab slave girl for keeping his daughter good company, he asked, “What would you like as a gift?”

“A doll made of rubber,” she told him. “It should be just my height and look just like me and wear clothes just like mine. And when you shake it, it should say, ‘Yes, yes.’” So the merchant had the doll made and gave it to her.

A few days later, the merchant spoke again to the Arab girl. “I’ve received a note from a man who does not name himself. He wishes to buy you for an incredibly high price. But if you object, I’ll refuse him.”

“I don’t mind,” she said, smiling.

The next morning, a messenger came with a carriage and drove the Arab girl to a house a few streets away. She and her belongings were left alone in a room upstairs.

The Arab girl took her doll and stood it in the middle of the room. She poured red sherbet into its hollow center, filling it with the sweet fruit drink. Then she hid in a closet.

Before long, the door flew open. There stood the young restaurant owner, a dagger in his hand. He glared at the doll. “You wicked girl! I’ve caught you at last!”

Gripping it by the shoulder, he demanded, “Do you remember how you pushed me into the honey?” He shook it back and forth.

“Yes, yes,” said the doll.

“And do you remember how you tied me up and gagged me?”

“Yes, yes.”

“And do you remember how you made me fall to the street?”

“Yes, yes.”

“You admit everything! Then prepare to die, for now I will drink your blood!”

He plunged the dagger into the doll, and red liquid spurted out. As the doll fell over, he caught a few drops in his cupped hand, and raised them greedily to his lips.

“But what’s this? Her blood is so sweet! And if her blood is this sweet, how much sweeter must be the rest of her! What have I done? I have killed the sweetest woman in the world! Oh, if only I could bring her back to life, I would free her and marry her! But it’s too late. All I can do now is end my own life!” He raised the dagger above his chest.

“Hey, dummy! I’m right here!”

The young man stared at the Arab girl.

“Darling!” he cried.

“Dearest!” she answered.

And they lived happily ever after.

**Turkmenistan (Asia)**

**Humor**

**Nasreddin Hodja**

<http://u.cs.biu.ac.il/~schiff/Net/t52.jpg> <http://u.cs.biu.ac.il/~schiff/Net/>

One of Hodja’s friends wanted to borrow his donkey for a day to go to the mill but Hodja told him that it wasn’t there that day. Just as he finished his sentence the donkey started braying in the shed. “Apparently your donkey is in the shed. I am disappointed in you. You won’t let an old friend like me borrow even your donkey,” his neighbor complained. Hodja raised his voice and said, “You are a strange man! You don’t believe an old, respectable man like me but you go ahead and believe a donkey!”

**Tuvalu (Oceania)**

**Animals**

**How the Camel Lost its Good Looks and Sweet Temper**

<http://www.fotuva.org/misc/camel.html>

They say that long, long ago the Camel used to be one of the most handsome animals. He had a long fluffy tail and nice and mighty horns.

All the animals in the forest and the steppe were envious of the Camel. Many of them wanted to have the kind of tail that the Camel had, or the kind of horns he had.

The Camel knew of this and said proudly: *``You won't find the kind of tail I have, or the horns, anywhere else in the world!''*

But it would have been better if he had not boasted.

Once he came up to the river to have a drink of water and there met a Maral. *``I'm invited to a party. Will you lend me your horns, just for a while?''* asked the Maral.

The Camel lent him his horns.

Later on that very day the Camel met a Horse.

*``I'm invited to a party,''* said the Horse, *``will you lend me your tail?'*'

The Camel agreed and stayed on the bank of the river.

The Maral and the Horse ran off. All day long the Camel was drinking water and looking up the road while waiting for them.

But there was no sign either of the Maral, or of the Horse.

The Maral had deceived the Camel and skipped over to the taiga. He stayed there for ever and never went out into the open steppe. He got accustomed to the horns as if they were his.

The Horse never gave back the borrowed tail and when he comes across the Camel, he gets frightened and runs away.

That is how the Camel lost his good looks and sweet temper.

**Uganda (Africa)**

**Cleverness**

**The King of the Snakes**

<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/baskerville/king/king.html#I>

THERE is a beautiful village near the Great Lake, called Kalungu. The houses nestle into the banana gardens, and there are sunny little courtyards with lemon and guava trees and pawpaw-trees heavy with fruit. The little boys who herd the goats on the hill-sides have no fear, for everything is peaceful and happy.

But once upon a time Kalungu was a very sorrowful place, for a big snake called Sesota lived on the hill-side and came down every day to the village and caught people and ate them.

Every day this happened, until the people ran away to other villages, and Kalungu was left desolate and empty.

The King heard of this, and he asked in the Council what could be done to kill Sesota, and one chief said one thing and another chief said another, but no one was found brave enough to go to Kalungu and kill the great snake.

Then a poor peasant man, called Waswa, came to the Council and said: "Sirs, I will kill Sesota"; and they offered him spears and big hunting knives, but he refused them all and said: "Give me a large water-pot and some blue beads and some brass and ivory bracelets and a ring, and I will go and kill Sesota."

So they gave him all he asked, and he set out on his journey, his little son carrying the water-pot with the other things inside it; and as he walked he played this tune on his reed pipe:

Sesota, Sesota, King of the Snakes,  
  Beautiful presents I bring.  
The King of Uganda has sent me to-day  
  With bracelets and beads and a ring.

As he neared Kalungu the old snake on the hillside heard him corning, and because snakes are very fond of music he listened gladly and sang back:

I am Sesota, the King of the Snakes;  
  Two bold intruders I see.  
But if they bring me the gifts of a King  
  They will be welcomed by me.

So Waswa and his little son entered the village and sat down in the courtyard of a deserted house, and the child put down the water-pot and then hid in the house, and Waswa played his pipe, all the time the same tune.

Very soon he heard the great snake rustling down the hill-side and along the village road till it came to the courtyard where Waswa sat; he never stopped playing until the snake went up to the water-pot and looked in to see his presents. Then Waswa sang this song:

Sesota, Sesota, King of the Snakes,  
  Enter this water-pot here.  
The King of Uganda has sent you a bed  
  On which you shall sleep for a year.

When the great snake heard this song he got into the water-pot and coiled himself round and settled down to sleep, and Waswa played very softly over and over again:

*Sesota, Sesota, Sesota, Sesota, Sesota, Sesota, Sesota.*

When he saw that the great snake was sound asleep he called softly to his son, and the child came very quietly and put the lid on the water-pot and tied it tightly down, and they picked it up and went on their way back to the capital, and Waswa played all the way on his pipe and sang this song:

Sesota, Sesota, King of the Snakes,  
  Sleeps on the bed of a King.  
Beat all the drums, play all the harps,  
  Dance and make merry and sing.

And every village they came to the people ran out after them, singing and dancing and beating drums and playing harps because the great snake who had eaten so many people had been caught, and the crowd increased more and more until they arrived in the capital, and the King and his chiefs came out of the Council House, and there was great rejoicing.

And the King commanded the people to make a bonfire, and they burnt Sesota the great snake.

Then the King said to Waswa: "I will give you the village of Kalungu, and you shall be chief of that place, you and your children after you, and they shall be called 'Wakalungu.'" And his little boy, who had carried the water-pot, was chief after him, and his grandchildren live in Kalungu to-day, and if you go there you will see them, and perhaps they will tell you about Sesota

**Ukraine (Europe)**

**Animals**

**The Sparrow and the Bush**

<http://www.worldoftales.com/European_folktales/Ukrainian_folktale_9.html>

A sparrow once flew down upon a bush and said, “Little bush, give good little sparrow a swing.”––“I won’t!” said the little bush. Then the sparrow was angry, and went to the goat and said, “Goat, goat, nibble bush, bush won’t give good little sparrow a swing.”––“I won’t!” said the goat.––Then the sparrow went to the wolf and said, “Wolf, wolf, eat goat, goat won’t nibble bush, bush won’t give good little sparrow a swing.”––“I won’t!” said the wolf.––Then the sparrow went to the people and said, “Good people, kill wolf, wolf won’t eat goat, goat won’t nibble bush, bush won’t give good little sparrow a swing.”––“We won’t!” said the people.––Then the sparrow went to the Tartars and said, “Tartars, Tartars, slay people, people won’t kill wolf, wolf won’t eat goat, goat won’t nibble bush, bush won’t give good little sparrow a swing.”––But the Tartars said, “We won’t slay the people!” and the people said, “We won’t kill the wolf!” and the wolf said, “I won’t eat the goat!” and the goat said, “I won’t nibble the bush!” and the bush said, “I won’t give the good little sparrow a swing.”––“Go!” said the bush, “to the fire, for the Tartars won’t slay the people, and the people won’t kill the wolf, and the wolf won’t eat the goat, and the goat won’t nibble the bush, and the bush won’t give the dear little sparrow a swing.”––But the fire also said, “I won’t!” (they were all alike)––“go to the water,” said he.––So the sparrow went to the water and said, “Come water, quench fire, fire won’t burn Tartars, Tartars won’t slay people, people won’t kill wolf, wolf won’t eat goat, goat won’t nibble bush, bush won’t give good little sparrow a swing.”––But the water also said, “I won’t!” So the sparrow went to the ox and said, “Ox, ox, drink water, water won’t quench fire, fire won’t burn Tartars, Tartars won’t slay people, people won’t kill wolf, wolf won’t eat goat, goat won’t nibble bush, bush won’t give little sparrow a swing.”––“I won’t!” said the ox.––Then the sparrow went to the pole-axe and said, “Pole-axe, pole-axe, strike ox, ox won’t drink water, water won’t quench fire, fire won’t burn Tartars, Tartars won’t slay people, people won’t kill wolf, wolf won’t eat goat, goat won’t nibble bush, bush won’t give little sparrow a swing.”––“I won’t!” said the pole-axe.––So the sparrow went to the worms and said, “Worms, worms, gnaw pole-axe, pole-axe won’t strike ox, ox won’t drink water, water won’t quench fire, fire won’t burn Tartars, Tartars won’t slay people, people won’t kill wolf, wolf won’t eat goat, goat won’t nibble bush, bush won’t give little sparrow a swing.”––“We won’t!” said the worms.––Then the sparrow went to the hen and said, “Hen, hen, peck worms, worms won’t gnaw pole-axe, pole-axe won’t strike ox, ox won’t drink water, water won’t quench fire, fire won’t burn Tartars, Tartars won’t slay people, people won’t kill wolf, wolf won’t eat goat, goat won’t nibble bush, bush won’t give little sparrow a swing.”––“I won’t!” said the hen, “but go to the sparrow-hawk, he ought to give the first push, or why is he called the Pusher!”––So the sparrow went to the sparrow-hawk and said, “Come, pusher, seize hen, hen won’t peck worms, worms won’t gnaw pole-axe, pole-axe won’t strike ox, ox won’t drink water, water won’t quench fire, fire won’t burn Tartars, Tartars won’t slay people, people won’t kill wolf, wolf won’t eat goat, goat won’t nibble bush, bush won’t give little sparrow a swing.”

Then the sparrow-hawk began to seize the hen, the hen began to peck the worms, the worms began to gnaw the pole-axe, the pole-axe began to hit the ox, the ox began to drink the water, the water began to quench the fire, the fire began to burn the Tartars, the Tartars began to slay the people, the people began to kill the wolf, the wolf began to eat the goat, the goat began to nibble the bush, and the bush cried out:

|  |
| --- |
| “*Swing away, swing away, swi-i-i-i-ing! Little daddy sparrow, have your fli-i-i-ing!*” |

**United Arab Emirates**

**Cleverness**

**Juhha’s Wonders**

<http://susangaer.com/studentprojects/juhha.htm>

Once upon a time, there was a very small villagein Baghdad. Its population is very small. In this village everybody kneweach other and knew every little or big problems that went on in the village.In this small village there was a bakery, which was popular for its deliciousbread. One day a poor old man was walking in the street passing the bakeryand he stopped to smell the scent of the bread which was spreading outof the bakery.

Suddenly, the baker caught the old man and shoutedat him demanding the price of the bread's smell?!!? He nearly took himto the police.

A very famous wise man named Juhha heard the bakershouting. So, he went to him and asked about the problem. Juhha stood calmlylistening to the baker and he thought of a solution.

After a few minutes Juhha's eyes glittered andan amused smile was on his face. He asked the baker "How much money doyou want?" The baker and poor man were astonished, but the baker answered"3 dinar". Juhha took the money out of his wallet and putted it in hispocket and shook the money. "Did you hear the sound of the money?" Juhhaasked. "Yes I did", the baker replied, and with a big smile Juhha said"Well then, this is the price of your bread's scent!

**United Kingdom (Europe)**

**Trickster**

**The Pied Piper**

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/eng/meft/meft02.htm>

Newtown, or Franchville, as 't was called of old, is a sleepy little town, as you all may know, upon the Solent shore. Sleepy as it is now, it was once noisy enough, and what made the noise was—rats. The place was so infested with them as to be scarce worth living in. There wasn't a barn or a corn-rick, a store-room or a cupboard, but they ate their way into it. Not a cheese but they gnawed it hollow, not a sugar puncheon but they cleared out. Why the very mead and beer in the barrels was not safe from them. They'd gnaw a hole in the top of the tun, and down would go one master rat's tail, and when he brought it up round would crowd all the friends and cousins, and each would have a suck at the tail.

Had they stopped here it might have been borne. But the squeaking and shrieking, the hurrying and scurrying, so that you could neither hear yourself speak nor get a wink of good honest sleep the live-long night! Not to mention that, Mamma must needs sit up, and keep watch and ward over baby's cradle, or there'd have been a big ugly rat running across the poor little fellow's face, and doing who knows what mischief.

Why didn't the good people of the town have cats? Well they did, and there was a fair stand-up fight, but in the end the rats were too many, and the pussies were regularly driven from the field. Poison, I hear you say? Why, they poisoned so many that it fairly bred a plague. Ratcatchers! Why there wasn't a ratcatcher from John o' Groat's house to the Land's End that hadn't tried his luck. But do what they might, cats or poison, terrier or traps, there seemed to be more rats than ever, and every day a fresh rat was cocking his tail or pricking his whiskers.

The Mayor and the town council were at their wits' end. As they were sitting one day in the town hall racking their poor brains, and bewailing their hard fate, who should run in but the town beadle. "Please your Honour," says he, "here is a very queer fellow come to town. I don't rightly know what to make of him." "Show him in," said the Mayor, and in he stepped. A queer fellow, truly. For there wasn't a colour of the rainbow but you might find it in some corner of his dress, and he was tall and thin, and had keen piercing eyes.

"I'm called the Pied Piper," he began. "And pray what might you be willing to pay me, if I rid you of every single rat in Franchville?"

Well, much as they feared the rats, they feared parting with their money more, and fain would they have higgled and haggled. But the Piper was not a man to stand nonsense, and the upshot was that fifty pounds were promised him (and it meant a lot of money in those old days) as soon as not a rat was left to squeak or scurry in Franchville.

Out of the hall stepped the Piper, and as he stepped he laid his pipe to his lips and a shrill keen tune sounded through street and house. And as each note pierced the air you might have seen a strange sight. For out of every hole the rats came tumbling. There were none too old and none too young, none too big and none too little to crowd at the Piper's heels and with eager feet and upturned noses to patter after him as he paced the streets. Nor was the Piper unmindful of the little toddling ones, for every fifty yards he'd stop and give an extra flourish on his pipe just to give them time to keep up with the older and stronger of the band.

Up Silver Street he went, and down Gold Street, and at the end of Gold Street is the harbour and the broad Solent beyond. And as he paced along, slowly and gravely, the townsfolk flocked to door and window, and many a blessing they called down upon his head.

As for getting near him there were too many rats. And now that he was at the water's edge he stepped into a boat, and not a rat, as he shoved off into deep water, piping shrilly all the while, but followed him, plashing, paddling, and wagging their tails with delight. On and on he played and played until the tide went down, and each master rat sank deeper and deeper in the slimy ooze of the harbour, until every mother's son of them was dead and smothered.

The tide rose again, and the Piper stepped on shore, but never a rat followed. You may fancy the townsfolk had been throwing up their caps and hurrahing and stopping up rat holes and setting the church bells a-ringing. But when the Piper stepped ashore and not so much as a single squeak was to be heard, the Mayor and the Council, and the townsfolk generally, began to hum and to ha and to shake their heads.

For the town money chest had been sadly emptied of late, and where was the fifty pounds to come from? Such an easy job, too! Just getting into a boat and playing a pipe! Why the Mayor himself could have done that if only he had thought of it.

So he hummed and ha'ad and at last, "Come, my good man," said he, "you see what poor folk we are; how can we manage to pay you fifty pounds? Will you not take twenty? When all is said and done, 't will be good pay for the trouble you've taken."

"Fifty pounds was what I bargained for," said the piper shortly; "and if I were you I'd pay it quickly. For I can pipe many kinds of tunes, as folk sometimes find to their cost."

"Would you threaten us, you strolling vagabond?" shrieked the Mayor, and at the same time he winked to the Council; "the rats are all dead and drowned," muttered he; and so "You may do your worst, my good man," and with that he turned short upon his heel.

"Very well," said the Piper, and he smiled a quiet smile. With that he laid his pipe to his lips afresh, but now there came forth no shrill notes, as it were, of scraping and gnawing, and squeaking and scurrying, but the tune was joyous and resonant, full of happy laughter and merry play. And as he paced down the streets the elders mocked, but from school-room and play-room, from nursery and workshop, not a child but ran out with eager glee and shout following gaily at the Piper's call. Dancing, laughing, joining hands and tripping feet, the bright throng moved along up Gold Street and down Silver Street, and beyond Silver Street lay the cool green forest full of old oaks and wide-spreading beeches. In and out among the oak-trees you might catch glimpses of the Piper's many-coloured coat. You might hear the laughter of the children break and fade and die away as deeper and deeper into the lone green wood the stranger went and the children followed.

All the while, the elders watched and waited. They mocked no longer now. And watch and wait as they might, never did they set their eyes again upon the Piper in his parti-coloured coat. Never were their hearts gladdened by the song and dance of the children issuing forth from amongst the ancient oaks of the forest.

**United States of America (North America)**

**Humorous, Animals**

**Babe the Blue Ox**

<http://americanfolklore.net/folklore/2010/07/babe_the_blue_ox.html>

Well now, one winter it was so cold that all the geese flew backward and all the fish moved south and even the snow turned blue. Late at night, it got so frigid that all spoken words froze solid afore they could be heard. People had to wait until sunup to find out what folks were talking about the night before.

Paul Bunyan went out walking in the woods one day during that Winter of the Blue Snow. He was knee-deep in blue snow when he heard a funny sound between a bleat and a snort. Looking down, he saw a teeny-tiny baby blue ox jest a hopping about in the snow and snorting with rage on account of he was too short to see over the drifts.

Paul Bunyan laughed when he saw the spunky little critter and took the little blue mite home with him. He warmed the little ox up by the fire and the little fellow fluffed up and dried out, but he remained as blue as the snow that had stained him in the first place. So Paul named him Babe the Blue Ox.

Well, any creature raised in Paul Bunyan's camp tended to grow to massive proportions, and Babe was no exception. Folks that stared at him for five minutes could see him growing right before their eyes. He grew so big that 42 axe handles plus a plug of tobacco could fit between his eyes and it took a murder of crows a whole day to fly from one horn to the other. The laundryman used his horns to hang up all the camp laundry, which would dry lickety-split because of all the wind blowing around at that height.

Whenever he got an itch, Babe the Blue Ox had to find a cliff to rub against, 'cause whenever he tried to rub against a tree it fell over and begged for mercy. To whet his appetite, Babe would chew up thirty bales of hay, wire and all. It took six men with picaroons to get all the wire out of Babe's teeth after his morning snack. Right after that he'd eat a ton of grain for lunch and then come pestering around the cook - Sourdough Sam - begging for another snack.

Babe the Blue Ox was a great help around Paul Bunyan's logging camp. He could pull anything that had two ends, so Paul often used him to straighten out the pesky, twisted logging roads. By the time Babe had pulled the twists and kinks out of all the roads leading to the lumber camp, there was twenty miles of extra road left flopping about with nowhere to go. So Paul rolled them up and used them to lay a new road into new timberland.

Paul also used Babe the Blue Ox to pull the heavy tank wagon which was used to coat the newly-straightened lumber roads with ice in the winter, until one day the tank sprang a leak that trickled south and became the Mississippi River. After that, Babe stuck to hauling logs. Only he hated working in the summertime, so Paul had to paint the logging roads white after the spring thaw so that Babe would keep working through the summer.

One summer, as Babe the Blue Ox was hauling a load of logs down the white-washed road and dreaming of the days when the winter would feel cold again and the logs would slide easier on the "ice", he glanced over the top of the mountain and caught a glimpse of a pretty yeller calf grazing in a field. Well, he twisted out of his harness lickety-split and stepped over the mountain to introduce himself. It was love at first sight, and Paul had to abandon his load and buy Bessie the Yeller Cow from the farmer before Babe would do any more hauling.

Bessie the Yeller Cow grew to the massive, yet dainty proportions that were suitable for the mate of Babe the Blue Ox. She had long yellow eyelashes that tickled the lumberjacks standing on the other end of camp each time she blinked. She produced all the dairy products for the lumber camp. Each day, Sourdough Sam made enough butter from her cream to grease the giant pancake griddle and sometimes there was enough left over to butter the toast!

The only bone of contention between Bessie and Babe was the weather. Babe loved the ice and snow and Bessie loved warm summer days. One winter, Bessie grew so thin and pale that Paul Bunyan asked his clerk Johnny Inkslinger to make her a pair of green goggles so she would think it was summer. After that, Bessie grew happy and fat again, and produced so much butter that Paul Bunyan used the leftovers to grease the whitewashed lumber roads in summer. With the roads so slick all year round, hauling logs became much easier for Babe the Blue Ox, and so Babe eventually came to like summer almost as much as Bessie.

**Uruguay (South America)**

**Animals**

**The Girl & the Puma**

<http://www.storiestogrowby.com/stories/girl_puma_argentina.html>

 Five hundred years ago when the Spanish entered South America, Native American tribes often fought back against the invaders. One way tribes could put pressure on the Spanish was to surround their settlements. This is what happened in the early 1500's when Maldonado, a Spanish girl, was 15 years old.   
  
                    Hostile Native Americans of the Querandí tribe had encircled the Spanish settlement where Maldonado lived. Before long, their food supplies were depleted. The people faced starvation. They begged their captain to allow them to take their chances and leave the settlement in search of food - but this the captain would not allow.  
  
                    Famished, Maldonado escaped the settlement and fled into the jungle. As night fell, she heard with alarm the calls of wild animals. Where could she safely sleep for the night? But there was one call that drew her closer. It was a cry of pain. She followed the sound to a cave where she found a puma that had just given birth.  
  
                    Maldonado helped the mother puma clean the cubs. Later, she watched the babies while the mother went out to hunt. And so days went by.  
  
                    One day, while Maldonado was gathering food and the mother puma was inside the cave with her cubs, the girl was surprised by Querandí warriors. They captured her and brought her to their village. Fearing the worst, Maldonado braced herself for the death she felt certain was to come.  
  
                    But the Querandís were kind to the girl. They taught her tasks to help in their village, and she gladly took part.  
  
                    One day, a band of Spaniards attacked the Querandí village. Recognizing a Spanish girl, they grabbed Maldonado and forced her to return home.  
  
                    The Spanish captain was furious that she had disobeyed him by escaping to the jungle. To make an example of her, he commanded that she be tied to a tree and left there for wild animals to devour.   
  
                    After several days, the sad villagers ventured where Maldonado had been tied to the tree, fearing the worst. Much to their surprise they found her still tied to the tree and very much alive. Much more surprised were they to learn that it was a mother puma who had fed and protected the girl all that time.

**Notes to the story:**   
The story is a **legend.** History tells us that Maldonado's Spanish settlement was abandoned in 1540 and moved to modern-day Paraguay. Forty years later, the site was re-founded 40 years as Buenos Aires. It's also interesting to note there's a city in Uruguay (across the Río de la Plata, or in English, the Plata River) named Maldonado in honor of the heroine of this tale.

**Uzbekistan (Asia)**

**Royalty**

**The Khan’s Robes**

<http://wws.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=83>

A long time ago, in the city of Margolon, there lived a khan who was very vain. Each day at noon a trumpet blew, and the khan emerged from his palace to show off his newest robe. The khan's attendants ordered the citizens of Margolon to line up along the street to admire him as he passed by. If the khan noticed someone in the crowd who did not "ooh" and "aah" to his satisfaction, he exploded in anger.

"Do you not notice that the emeralds in this robe draw attention to my eyes?" the khan once bellowed to a farmer who was not marveling at the sight.

"Forgive me, your highness. I am preoccupied. My young son has taken ill."

"You bore me!" the khan declared angrily. Then, turning to his attendant, he ordered, "Take him to the stockades!"

The khan was especially cruel to the palace weavers. Each morning he demanded that they make a new robe for him from the very finest of fabrics, and each day he demanded that it be more beautiful than the day before. He was not easily pleased. If a weaver created a robe that did not suit the khan's taste, the weaver was promptly beaten and executed. For this reason, very few weavers remained in Margolon. Those who had not been killed had run away.

One day, a weaver, unaware of the khan's reputation, arrived in Margolon. As the citizens of Margolon lined the streets for the khan's noon parade, the weaver watched.

"Who are you?" the khan asked, noticing a new face in the crowd.

"A weaver," the man replied.

"What do you think of my robe?" asked the khan.

"Well, the cut is fine, but the fabric is somewhat common," the weaver answered honestly.

"Tomorrow morning you shall bring me a robe made of a fabric that no eye has ever seen. If you fail in your task, I shall order my soldiers to cut off your head," said the khan calmly. He then turned on his heels, and marched back to the palace.

The poor weaver was unprepared for such a reception. As he climbed back on his donkey, his hands trembled. How could he weave a fabric that no eye had even seen?

The weaver rode his donkey along the bank of the river. Suddenly, dark clouds covered the sky. The wind began to blow, and rain fell in great torrents, matching the overwhelming flood of sorrow in the weaver's heart.

But as quickly as the rain began, it stopped. A vivid rainbow appeared in the sky spreading its arch across the river. As the moisture cleared from the weaver's eyes, he caught sight of the rippling reflection of the rainbow in the water. It created the most beautiful pattern he had ever seen.

The rest of the day and all through the night the weaver worked. He wove and sewed, and he sewed and wove, until finally the robe was finished. As dawn broke, the weaver made his way to the palace and presented the new robe to the khan.

"This is the most beautiful robe I have ever seen!" the khan exclaimed. The servants and subjects in the palace agreed.

"Your life shall be saved," the khan announced to the weaver. "But hear this: If you ever make a fabric as beautiful as this for anyone else anywhere in this land, I will have your head cut off."

Then he issued a decree that only the royal family could wear clothing from the weaver's new fabric, which became known as the khan's atlas.

The khan was so enamored of how elegant he looked in the atlas that he extended his noon parade from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. When he was not out in the street, he was admiring himself in a mirror.

One day, just when the people's patience for the khan had all but ended, a strange thing happened.

The khan turned into a peacock.

No one knew how it happened. No one knew who did it. And no one asked. They were all too busy celebrating.

**Vanuatu (Oceania)**

**Origin, Animals**

**How the First Coconut Came to Efate**

<http://wws.peacecorps.gov/wws/stories/stories.cfm?psid=71>

Long ago, deep in the darkest forest of Efate, there lived an enormous serpent. One day, the time had come for the serpent to give birth. No sooner had she crawled inside a cave than she began to give birth. As she finished, the exhausted serpent drifted off to sleep.

Suddenly she awoke to the sound of human cries. Frightened, she turned to make sure that her newborns were safe and discovered, much to her surprise, that a human baby girl was nestled at her side.

From that day, the serpent nursed the baby girl as lovingly as any human mother could. Each morning, the serpent would gather berries for her daughter to eat and would comb her daughter's long black hair with her tongue. She taught her daughter how to swim like a fish, how to speak the language of the trees, and how to hug the Earth tight enough to hear its voice.

But the mother knew that the time would come when her daughter would have to leave. On the girl's nineteenth birthday, the serpent wept in sorrow; she realized that she could delay the moment no longer. Calling her daughter to her side, she said, "My beloved daughter, outside the walls of this dark forest there is a land of light. There, you will find humans who look like you. They will claim you as their own. You must live with them and learn their ways. Be kind to them. But if they ask you who and where your mother is, promise me that you will not tell them of me. If you do, it will hurt us both." Through her tears, the girl promised never to betray her mother.

The serpent then led her daughter to the edge of the forest. Although the girl was reluctant to leave her mother, she was curious about the world that her mother spoke of so mysteriously. As the serpent disappeared back into the darkness, the girl stepped forward into the sunlight.

After walking a few miles, the girl came upon a village. She marveled at the grass huts and stared shyly at the young girls, who were carrying baskets of taro and yams. While she was admiring the girls' brightly colored skirts, she felt someone touch her shoulder. Turning to see who it was, she drew in her breath. There before her was the most beautiful human she could ever have imagined. He was like her, but different. The two gazed longingly into each other's eyes. In an instant, they were in love. The man brought the girl to the chief of the village and asked that a marriage ceremony be performed. Before the day was over, the man and the serpent's daughter were husband and wife.

The two lived very happily together. Although the man was at first puzzled that his wife did not know how to weave mats or roast pigs, the girl was so charming and beautiful that he quickly dismissed any suspicions. Very soon, the girl forgot the life she had left behind.

Years passed, and one day the serpent's daughter gave birth to a healthy baby boy. Although she was delighted by her new son, she started to remember her own mother and longed to see her once more.

"What's wrong?" the husband asked, when he found his wife weeping one morning. Forgetting the promise that she had made long ago, she told him of her mother. She did not mention, however, that her mother was a serpent.

"We will visit your mother," her husband said. "She should be given the news of her grandson. I will gather my brothers, and together we will call upon her." Eager to see her mother again, the girl agreed.

The day of the visit arrived. Together with her husband and his brothers, the serpent's daughter journeyed to the forest. As the men cleared a trail ahead of her, she lingered behind, waving to the trees and calling to the birds she had known as a child. When they came closer to her mother's cave, the serpent's daughter began to worry. How would her husband and his brothers react to the sight of her mother, an enormous serpent? She ran up ahead, telling her husband that she needed to speak to her mother alone. Before opening the cave door, she asked that he and his brothers wait outside.

The serpent's mother was filled with pure delight upon seeing her daughter. Sliding down from her bed, she licked her daughter with her tongue. The girl, too, was overjoyed. How could she have been separated from her for so long?

"Well, my daughter, you have kept your word," said the serpent mother. Only then did the daughter remember the promise that she had made long ago to her mother. She burst into tears.

Seeing her daughter's face, the serpent mother realized that her daughter had forgotten her promise. And she knew the fate that lay before her, "When I am dead, take my head with you," she said. "Bury it in a good place. Remember to water the ground where you bury it."

The daughter, terrified by these words, searched for a place to hide her mother. But the mother refused, saying, "No. Lead me out of this cave."

When the serpent appeared at the door of the cave, the men were shocked. Fearing her size, they rushed at her, stabbing her with their sharp spears.

As the serpent lay dead, they gathered around her to take a closer look. The serpent's daughter asked her husband to cut off her mother's head and give it to her.

That evening, the girl buried the head outside her hut. Every day she watered it with her tears, remembering the love her mother had shown her. Soon, she noticed a sprout shooting out of the ground. By this time, her small son was walking. Calling him to her side, she asked her son to promise to always nurse the plant properly and lovingly. The small boy agreed.

Years went by and finally the tree bore a fruit which had both water and flesh. The fruit of the tree was as delicious as its leaves were useful. They called it the coconut.

And this, my friends, is how the first coconut tree came to Efate.

**Venezuela (South America)**

**Ghosts**

**The Whistler**

<http://isabellasart.blogspot.com/2010/04/tell-me-story-el-silbon-whistler.html>

There once was a man who killed his father. There are at least two main versions of how this came to happen. One says that the man had a beautiful wife and one day he came home to find his father behaving abusively towards her. The man exploded in rage and killed his father. Another version has it that the man was very spoiled, and one day he started craving deer heart and liver for supper. His father went out hunting so that his son could have his meal as requested, but he had no luck in finding deer. As it was becoming late and the father had not returned home, the son decided to go fetch him over at the hunting grounds. Once there, seeing his father as-of-yet empty handed, he burst into anger and killed him. Then he extracted the heart and liver from him, and took them home to his mother so she could prepare them for his dinner. The meat was too hard and wouldn't soften no matter how long she cooked it, so she started to suspect that these were in fact her husband's innards, and so cursed her own son for killing his father.  
  
Independently of which "murder version" is told, the story always becomes consistent when it arrives to the point of punishment. The man's brother, hearing the news of his father being murdered by his own kin, set out to hunt and find the man, and when he did, he punished him with a whip until all his body was covered in wounds. Then, he sprayed burning flakes of red hot peppers onto his open wounds, and lastly, he unleashed a great, vicious dog and ordered it to go after the man and hunt him down.  
  
Now the man is forever doomed to wander the vast rural plains of the midwest, carrying on his back a large sack full of bones - some say his father's bones; some say they're the bones of his victims. He prefers to haunt cruel, un loyal men who cheat on their wives or treat them badly, but it has been said that he also attacks drunks when they're fast asleep.  
  
Sometimes The Whistler ventures into homes at night, and lays open his sack over the floor and starts counting the bones it carries. it is said that if nobody hears him counting, or if nobody notices his presence, then the next day one of the inhabitants of the house will die.  
  
The image of The Whistler is a terrifying one. He is said to be disproportionately skinny and tall, about 6 meters in height, towering over the tree tops with his sack of bones slung over his back. The vicious dog still chases him, and bites his heels over and over again, until the end of time. He wears a tattered white suit and a wide-brimmed hat of the kind used in the Venezuelan plains (wider than an American cowboy hat, but not as wide as a Mexican sombrero). Very few have seen him and lived to tell about it.  
  
In fact, the most distinct sign of the presence of The Whistler is... his eerie whistling. He whistles while we haunts the plains at night, a simple yet bone-chilling sound consisting of the seven notes, in order: do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti... whistled rather slowly and extending a bit each note at the end. It is said that when the whistling is heard to be close, The Whistler is in fact far away, and there is nothing to fear. But if the whistling seems to come from afar, then it means that The Whistler is near. Some people barely notice this seemingly long-distant whistling, and when they do, it is usually too late.  
  
However, as with many ghosts and creatures of this kind, there are ways of being saved from their evil intentions. if someone happens to encounter The Whistler, it might be a good idea to remember him what happened: his horrid crime, his punishment, his eternal curse. Other people prefer to have a whip around the house, or carry some hot peppers, or even have a dog around, as it is said that these are the three things The Whistler fears the most.

**Vietnam (Asia)**

**Magic**

**The Hundred Knot Bamboo**

<http://english.cautrucqc.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=196:the-hundred-knot-bamboo-cay-tre-trm-t&catid=33:vietnamese-folktale-and-vietnamese-fairy-tale-book&Itemid=71>

There was a rich devious landowner who used all kind of tricks to exploit his servants and laborers. He had a beautiful nubile daughter . Khoai lived as a servant in this household from the time he was a young boy. He had to work very hard. He is now in his late teens. The landowner was afraid that Khoai will leave the household and thus he would lose a very hard working helper. So, one day he called Khoai and told him:

“If you stayed in the household and work hard day and night, I will give you my daughter in marriage.”

Khoai believed the landowner and was very happy. He redoubled his efforts to win the heart of the landowner. Three years have passed. The daughter is now grown. In the region, there is this very wealthy village chief, who eyed the daughter for his son. So, the village chief came and ask for the hand of the daughter. The landowner agreed and set out to prepare for the wedding.

When Khoai realized that he has been taken advantage of, he was mad and went to the landowner to complain. He asked the landowner:

“You have promised your daughter to me. Why are you going back on your promise now?”

The landowner did not like to be addressed in such a manner. He was going to beat him, but taking another look at the young man, he dared not. He told him instead:

“My son, you are mistaken! My daughter is now of age and the preparation for the wedding that I am undertaking now is actually for you. However, if you want the wedding to take place, you must accomplish the following task. You need to find a bamboo with one hundred knots. Then you will need to cut it up into chopsticks for the wedding feast. That is my condition for giving you my daughter’s hand in marriage.”

Khoai again believed him and went up the forest in search of the bamboo with 100 knots. He searched for days on end and went from one end of the jungle to the other without success. In despair he sat down in the jungle and wept in despair.

Suddenly he saw an old cheery man with all white hair but with rosy complexion. The old man approached him and asked:

“Son, why are you so sad?’.

Khoai told him his story. The old man told him:

“Go and cut 100 stems of bamboo and bring them back here”.

Khoai went out and brought back the bamboo that the old man asked. The old man then gave the command

**“Stick together! Stick together”**

The bamboo sticks that were lying here and there on the ground immediately came together all in a row to make a bamboo with 100 knots. Khoai was filled with joy. He wanted to thank the old man, but he has disappeared. He realized that he has met Buddha. He set out to bring the bamboo back. But there was no way for him to load this long bamboo on his shoulder. He kept on running into other trees. He sat down again in despair and wept. Immediately he saw the old man reappear. Buddha asked him:

“Why do you weep?”

He explained his situation. Buddha pointed at the bamboo and said

**“Unstick! Unstick!”**

and the bamboo came apart in 100 stems. And Buddha disappeared. Khoai tied up the 100 bamboo stems and proceeded to take them home.

When he arrived home, he found the two families preparing to feast in the courtyard. The village chief family has come for the wedding. Khoai was really mad and ran to the landowner to ask for an explanation. The landowner told him

“I asked you to get me a bamboo with 100 knots, not 100 stems of bamboo!”

Both family stopped their feasts and laughed derisively at Khoai, and joked about his naivety. Khoai told the landowner that he has the bamboo and the courtyard and the landowner should come out and examine it. As the landowner approached the pile of bamboo, Khoai said in a low voice **“stick together! stick together!”**. Immediately the bamboo stems came together and the landowner was also stuck at the end of the bamboo. The landowner tried to pull himself away but failed. The future in-laws came to his rescue. Khoai waited until the village chief has touched the landowner before he said **“stick together! stick together!**“. Immediately the village chief became stuck to the landowner. The same fate happened to the village chief’s son. The more they tried to pull away, the harder and more painful they became stuck. Both families were now in panic. Nobody dared to pull the three men away any longer nor joked about Khoai. They lined up and asked him to pardon the 3 men stuck at the end of the bamboo.

Khoai had the landowner promise his daughter to him and the village chief has to agree not to seek vengeance. Then Khoai said **“unstick! unstick!”** and they all became free.

The village chief and his party quickly left the festivities. And Khoai moved into the bridegroom chair and the celebration continued!

**Western Sahara (Africa)**

**Origin**

**Tale of Tafaka**

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/africa/explore/sahara/sahara_folklore_lo.html>

**One day, Binta and her two friends were returning to camp with their goats when they spotted a tafaka, an unusually beautiful lizard, sunning itself on a rock. The tafaka was heavily pregnant. Taking pity on the lizard, Binta offered to help with the birth. A few weeks later, a stranger appeared at Binta’s tent and told her that Tafaka was ready to give birth and had summoned her. Binta did not know anyone called Tafaka, but she followed the stranger. Instantly, the two arrived at a luxurious tent. Inside was a very beautiful, pregnant woman. Binta did not recognize her. It was, in fact, a djinn that had shown itself as the pregnant lizard sunning itself on a rock. Binta helped care for Tafaka and stayed with the djinns for 40 days, learning much about their powers. When she returned to her camp, word spread about her adventures. One day a handsome young man appeared at Binta’s tent looking for a wife. For a bride, Binta knew there could be no human more beautiful than a djinn. She summoned one to be the stranger’s wife, and peace was declared between man and djinn. That is why, to this day, the women of Aïr are as lovely as fairies, with hair as long and black as crow’s wings. They are all the children of djinns.**

**Yemen (Asia)**

**Trickster**

**The Man and the Wolf**

<http://leverettfolktales.blogspot.com/2012/06/man-and-wolf.html>

Once there was a man who grazed sheep; he wanted to joke with his friend, then he called to the, "Help, help, help, he-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-lp, the wolf came!!!" After that his friends ran fast to him, but they found him laughing.  Then they asked him, "What happened?" and he said, "Nothing, I am just joking."  He did it two more times, but one day the wolf came for real; he wanted to eat the sheep; then the man called his friends, "Help, help. please, someone help me!!!"  But his friends thought he was joking.  Then nobody helped him, and then, the wolf ate the sheep.

**Zambia (Africa)**

**Animals**

**Mutupa the Lion and Kalulu the Rabbit Go Hunting**

<http://www.zimbio.com/Zambia/articles/eAK2GuCuV9m/Story+Zambian+Village+enjoy>

A long, long time ago, it is said that once lion the king caught Kalulu the rabbit and was about to eat him. Why does your mouth water so when you look at me? Asked Kalulu the rabbit.

Are you you not meat? Lion the king asked in surprise.

“But I’m too small and so thin”, Kalulu the rabbit said. After you have finished eating me you will still be hungry. Why don’t we go hunting together for something better, larger and fat?”

“You go hunting with me? Lion the king laughed, ha ha ha ha, hoo , ho ho ho ho.

What could such a ridiculous animal as you catch?

“Let us go to the village where men live”, Kalulu the rabbit said. If we do not find something fatter than I, then you may eat me”.

So Lion the king and Kalulu the rabbit went together and prowled around the edged of the village where men lived and on the outskirts Lion the king captured a fat young bull. Kalulu the rabbit also hunted, but found nothing but a mangy donkey who was rolling on its back in the dust of the trail.

As the drove and took their catch home, the rabbit looked with envy at the Lion the king’s fat bull and said, Ah , lion , what bad luck you have had!”

“How?” Lion the king said in surprise.

“Your poor bull is so thin and under nourished. You’d have been better of eating me.”

“ Everyone knows that when you strike a fat animal he gives out steam.” Kalulu the rabbit said.

Lion the king did not know about that, but replied, yes, everyone knows that.

He picked up a stick and struck his bull across the back, but there was no steam coming out of the bull.

He struck again, still there was no steam, see, he is fat, lion the king said without conviction.

**Zimbabwe (Africa)**

**Animals, Humorous**

**The Guinea Fowl Child**

<http://www.victoriafalls-guide.net/guinea-fowl.html>

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Pitipiti should have been a very happy woman. She was married to a rich man who had many cattle. But after years of marriage, she was still unable to give him the many children which a man like him deserved. She went to see many people in the hope that they would be able to solve her problem; but to no avail.

Day after day, she watched as her husband’s love for her faded away before her very eyes. She was very sad the day that her husband married a new wife so that he could at last have children. But she was also happy for him when she learned that his new wife had given him a child, and then another.

Each time she learned that the new wife had given birth, she went to offer the newborn a gift; yet she was refused each time. The new wife would tell her, “My husband wasted too many years with you. In just a short time, I have already given him children. Go away since no one wants your gifts!”

Pitipiti was saddened to see that her husband’s love for her that once used to shine in his eyes was slowly replaced by pride for his children. Yet, she continued to work her fields and live life the best she could in her solitude.

A few months later, while she was working in her fields she heard some screeching from the bushes. She approached to see what it was and found a guinea fowl at the top of a branch. He looked at her and cackled, “I am really lonely. So will you make me your child?” Pitipiti responded that she could not have a guinea fowl for a child because everyone would mock her. But he didn’t give up and continued to ask her if she would make him her child just at night so that nobody would know.

After a little thought she decided that if she kept him as a child at nights it would give her company and someone to care for so she agreed. The guinea fowl promised that he would come late at night and he would leave the house early in the morning so that no one saw him.

That night, when she returned home she started to prepare her meal when she heard the screeching of the guinea fowl at the window. She let him in and they enjoyed their meal before going to bed. They lived very happy together like a mother and child would.

Very often though the new wife would pass and jeer at Pitipiti mocking her while she worked in her fields. “What a waste that our husband gave you so much land to work. You have no one to feed but yourself.” Then she would laugh and go to her own fields to work. Pitipiti would just ignore her comments; but the guinea fowl could not support that someone spoke to his mother like that.

So, he flew to the bushes just near the new wife’s fields and began to sing this song:   
Come and eat my friends there is lots of grain  
Come and eat my friends, eat all of this woman’s grain

The new wife simply thought that it was a bird like all the others singing in the bush. One by one though, the guinea fowls started to arrive. Soon her fields were filled with guinea fowls that had heard the song and come to fill their bellies.

In a panic the new wife started to scream at them and kill the guinea fowl one after the other including Pitipiti’s son. She immediately prepared them for dinner.

Her husband was pleased to see that his wife had prepared so many birds for dinner and thanked her for being such a good woman. They feasted to their hearts content and sat at the table talking.

Just as they finished the last bite of the meal, they heard the song of the guinea fowl. Looking around to see where it was coming from, they discovered that the singing came from their own stomachs. They got so scared that they grabbed the knives from the table and cut stabbed at the birds. The birds flew out of the holes and left the couple dead on the floor. They then returned to the field to eat the remaining grain.

When Pitipiti learned what had happened, she was happy that she would no longer have to endure the insults of the new wife. She also got to keep all of her husband’s cattle and his land.

Once people heard what happened, there were many men who wanted to marry Pitipiti. After all, she had a very intelligent and interesting son.