



This text is from *The Usborne Book of Myths and Legends* by Anna Milbourne, Heather Amery and Gillian Doherty.

A Bag Full of Stories

For thousands of years, all around the world, people have been telling stories. Often, they weren't written down, but told aloud, passed along from person to person. You might come across similar stories from opposite sides of the world. However they travel, stories have a life of their own...

"Oh, please tell me another story. Please," begged Lom, even though his eyelids were heavy with sleep.

"No, it's late. You must go to bed now," said Lom's old servant. Reluctantly, Lom snuggled down, with the story he had just heard whirling around in his head.

Every night since he was a small boy, the old servant had told Lom wonderful stories – about powerful gods and goddesses, terrifying dragons and monsters, and all kinds of cunning animals. Lom would hang on to his every word, and wish and wish that each story would never come to an end.

Lom often boasted to his friends about the stories the old servant told him.

"You just wouldn't believe how good they are," he'd say.

"Won't you tell them to us?" they asked again and again. "They sound so exciting."

But Lom refused. "They're *my* stories," he said, "and I won't tell them to anyone."

Sometimes, though, when Lom was by himself, he would whisper the stories into a bag. Now, this might seem like a very strange thing to do, but Lom did like to tell stories; he was just too selfish to share them with his friends.

The years passed and Lom grew into a handsome young man.

The time came for him to marry.

The night before the wedding, the old servant was waiting for Lom in his room when he thought he heard whispering. It seemed to be coming from a bag hanging on the door.

"It's not fair. He's getting married in the morning," muttered a voice. "Think of all the fun he'll be having while we're all squashed in this smelly old bag."

"He should set us free," grumbled another voice. "Surely everybody knows stories need to be told. It's not right to keep us all to himself."

"No, it's not fair to treat us like this," said a third. "We should teach him a lesson."

"What sort of lesson?" came a whole chorus of excited voices from inside the bag.

