

Stor E Telling
Karen Chace © 2002
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Most storytellers, and you can count me among them, are addicted to the tangible feel of a good book in their hands. While many libraries are capable of fulfilling our needs, time, distance and accessibility are not always in our favor, but there is a solution. Look no further than your home computer. From fairytales to fables, Anansi to King Arthur, we can roam the world of folktales and cultures without ever leaving our homes.

Of course the World Wide Web will never replace the rich aesthetics and wonderful scent of an old library brimming with books, but the two can make a wonderful marriage. The Internet has placed a virtual storyfest at our fingertips and can bring Kipling, Perrault, Lang and Aesop right to your door with Grimm, Anderson and Jacobs fast on their heels.

Listed below are a handful of links which are available on the Internet but there is so much more. I hope these offerings will give you a glimpse into what you can find with a few strokes of the keys!

Fairy Tales and Fables

A favorite of mine. It is astounding how much information and stories are at this site, not to mention that it is just plain beautiful to look at! In addition to folktales and fairytales there are complete books, as well as a whole section on Celtic Folklore and another devoted to Mythology. From Jacobs to Grimm, Perrault to Lang, Anderson to De La Fontaine, the list goes on and on.

[Fairy Tales and Fables](http://www.belinus.co.uk/fairytales/Homeextra.htm) <http://www.belinus.co.uk/fairytales/Homeextra.htm>

Mythic Crossroads: Myths and Legends

A wide variety of links including Aesops fables, Myths of Gods and Goddesses, Arthurian Legends, including Egyptian, Greek Norse and many book sources.

[Mythic Crossroads](http://www.mythiccrossroads.com/site_map.htm) http://www.mythiccrossroads.com/site_map.htm

Myths and Legends

These links are organized by region and language group from around the world. From Burmese to Vietnamese, the Caribbean to Oceania. It also offers essays, dictionaries, archives and encyclopedias.

[Myths and Legends](http://pubpages.unh.edu/~cbsiren/myth.html) <http://pubpages.unh.edu/~cbsiren/myth.html>

MYTHING LINKS'

An Annotated & Illustrated Collection of Worldwide Links to Mythologies, Fairy Tales & Folklore, Sacred Arts & Traditions. Fairies and dragons, creation stories and star lore, there is more information here than you could ever hope to digest.

[MYTH*ING LINKS'](http://www.mythinglinks.org/home.html) <http://www.mythinglinks.org/home.html>

MythSearch.com

"A site dedicated to making your search for myths, legends, folklore, and religions both past and present easier and more enjoyable. From stories of the Greek Gods and the mysterious religion of the Celts, this site tries to give a fair and unbiased listing of sites." There is also information on proverbs, blessings, holidays, festivals, centaurs, birds, mermaids, fairies and much more.

[MythSearch.com](http://www.mythsearch.com/index.html) <http://www.mythsearch.com/index.html>

Tell Me a Story

A terrific site with very unique stories from around the world, adapted by Amy Friedman and Jillian Gilliland. They have been adding new folktales since 1997 and also sell artwork to compliment the stories.

[Tell Me a Story](http://www.uexpress.com/tellmeastory) <http://www.uexpress.com/tellmeastory>

The Encyclopedia of Hotcâk (Winnebago) Mythology

The most comprehensive site I have found on Native American folktales. "The encyclopædic account of Hotcâk mythology, legend, and folklore is the outgrowth of a project begun many years ago under the auspices of Prof. John Ingham of the University of Minnesota Anthropology Department." The site is currently maintained and updated regularly by Mr. Richard Dieterle. There is an extensive index of stories by subject matter, myths, maps, and legends.

[Hotcâk Table of Contents](http://hotcakencyclopedia.com/) <http://hotcakencyclopedia.com/>

Myths and Legends for American Indian Youth

An extensive list of Native American tales from various tribes that "represent large themes of human existence: where we came from, how we should live, reconciliation to the tragedies of life. There are smaller stories: teaching, humorous, answering "Why?" questions about natural phenomena and behavior."

[Myths and Legends for American Indian Youth](http://www.kstrom.net/isk/stories/myths.html) <http://www.kstrom.net/isk/stories/myths.html>

Just So Stories by Rudyard Kipling

Complete texts of twelve pourquoi stories written by Rudyard Kipling and published in 1902.

[Just So Stories](http://www.boop.org/jan/justso/) <http://www.boop.org/jan/justso/>

The Electronic Text Center - University of Virginia Library

Browse by culture: English, French, German, Spanish, Latin, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Apache, Greek, Hebrew, Tibetan, Icelandic, Italian and Portuguese. You will never run out of

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stories to read. "Holdings include approximately 51,000 on- and off-line humanities texts in twelve languages, with more than 350,000 related images (book illustrations, covers, manuscripts, newspaper pages, page images of Special Collections books, museum objects, etc.)" [Electronic Text Center -- University of Virginia Library](http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/) <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/>

Stories to Tell to Children: Fifty-One Stories With Some Suggestions for Telling

This is the electronic text of Sara Cone Bryants' book, offered through the University of Virginia Library website. The book, while published in 1915, still offers some wonderful advice for beginning tellers. Stories are categorized for appropriate age groups up to fifth grade.

[How to Tell Stories to Children, and Some Stories to Tell](http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/BryTell.html)

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/BryTell.html>

Tales of the Punjab: Told by the People

"Would you like to know how these stories are told? Come with me, and you shall see. There! take my hand and do not be afraid, for Prince Hassan's carpet is beneath your feet. So now!—'Hey presto! Abracadabra!' Here we are in a Punjabi village." And so it begins...a wonderful collection of Eastern Indian tales with notes to the stories.

[Tales of the Punjab](http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/steel/punjab/punjab.html) <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/steel/punjab/punjab.html>

Sky Tales: Sun, Moon & Stars

Lots of links, some stories and a good bibliography for sun, moon and star stories. Also offers a section on resources for teachers.

[Sky Tales: Sun, Moon & Stars](http://nuevaschool.org/~debbie/library/cur/sci/sky.html) <http://nuevaschool.org/~debbie/library/cur/sci/sky.html>

The AFRO-American Almanac

"An on-line presentation of the African in America. A historical perspective of a nation, its people, and its cultural evolution." A terrific site for those interested in Afro-American culture. Not only is there an extensive list of folktales there is also biographical and historical information, as well as excerpts from literary works.

[AFRO-AMERICAN ALMANAC](http://www.toptags.com/aama/tales/tales.htm) <http://www.toptags.com/aama/tales/tales.htm>

Zen Stories

Over fifty stories in the Zen traditon."This web site is a collection of stories from the Orient, mostly Zen and Taoist tales. Think of these tales as conversation pieces, as handy tools that you can lift out of your pocket to help you and others talk, think, and laugh about the wondrous and mysterious details of this thing we call life."

[Zen Stories to Tell Your Neighbors](http://www.rider.edu/users/suler/zenstory/zenstory.html) <http://www.rider.edu/users/suler/zenstory/zenstory.html>

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Oral Tradition - Utah State University: Educational Resources

The information on Oral Tradition is provided by Professor David Sidwell of Utah State University. There are five separate sections, complete with examples and further reading resources.

- The Significance of Oral History
- How To Collect Oral Histories
- Telling Effect Live Stories
- Telling Stories From Our Live
- Making A Life-Map
- Educational Resources

[Oral Traditions](http://www.usu.edu/oralhist/edu.html) <http://www.usu.edu/oralhist/edu.html>

Teaching with Folklore Index

A great number of links to myths, fables, legends and lesson plans. Teaching with Folklore is meant as an entry point for busy teachers who wish to use folklore Internet resources with their class. The resources are aimed mainly at elementary grades one to six. [Teaching with Folklore Index](http://www.qesn.meq.gouv.qc.ca/folklore/index.htm) <http://www.qesn.meq.gouv.qc.ca/folklore/index.htm>

Book Closeouts

And for the bibliophile in all of us, a bargain book site. These are new books, not used, at 50% - 90% off the list price. There is a search engine to help you find books either by category, title, author, publisher or ISBN number. Their service is efficient and fast. You may not always find exactly the book that you need but I guarantee you will find many that you want.

[BookCloseOuts.com](http://www.bookcloseouts.com/bc/home.asp) <http://www.bookcloseouts.com/bc/home.asp>

And to round out our trip to the web, a tellable folktale for all to enjoy!

The Four Puppets - A Burmese Folktale

<http://www.zine5.com/folk63.htm>

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."

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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, gazing 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.

Karen Chace is a professional storyteller in Massachusetts. She has also developed an interactive CD-ROM, Researching Stories on the Internet: A Webliography of Storytelling Resources. To view the CD and index go to <http://www.story-lovers.com>. For purchasing information you can contact Karen at Storybug@aol.com

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