

Stith Thompson - The Folktale - p 68-69

If the literary origin of The Lazy Boy appears not to be certain, there can be no doubt that the story of Open Sesame (Type 676) has been learned by those who tell it either from a copy of the *Arabian Nights* itself or eventually, perhaps through many intermediaries, from the same source. It seems likely that this tale has entered the oral tradition of nearly every European country since the time of Galland's translation of the *Thousand and One Nights* into French at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Whether the versions current in central Africa have come more directly from the Arabic versions of the work has not been determined, but seems probable.

The fact that the story is now an authentic part of the folklore of a good part of Europe, whatever its actual origin may have been, justifies its inclusion in the canon of oral folktales. It is known to almost everyone. The poor brother observes robbers entering a mountain and overhears the magic words "Open Sesame," which gives them admittance. He secures much gold from the mountain and takes it home. He borrows money scales from his rich brother and a piece of the money remains in the scale and thus betrays the secret. The rich brother tries to imitate, but forgets the formula for opening the mountain and is caught inside. Though the magic words vary as the tale passes from country to country, they always seem to be at least a reminiscence of the phrase "Open Sesame."