

Title: Captive in The Belly Of The Beast: An Examination of Female Voices In Storytelling
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Throughout history, women have used storytelling as a communication tool to keep themselves—and other females—safe. Cautionary tales and folktales had been a long-standing female oral tradition while doing mindless work like spinning thread and cooking; hence, sayings like “old wives tales” and “spinning tales” were born. Though collectors like the Grimm Brothers and Charles Perrault transcribed and published many of these traditionally female told stories into their own words using their own lens, the advice for women’s protection stayed embedded inside. Stories such as *The Thousand and One Nights* (850-900AD), *Little Red Riding Hood* (unknown), and *Beauty and The Beast* (1756) were originally used to bind women together; however, in order to fit societal norms and ideals, these stories were changed, thus devaluing the roles of their female protagonist and implicitly changing these stories of female empowerment and survival to submission and dependence. In *The Thousand and One Nights*, and other cautionary tales, a violent theme of women being endangered by a vicious husband—or being held captive by a beast—has given some historical light to the fear of arranged marriages and other anxieties of the female experience. Because female voices have been published through the male lens, it is important to examine the original historical significance of these tales in order to fully understand the strength of the female voice: as a tool of freedom, safety, and progression.

Works Cited

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