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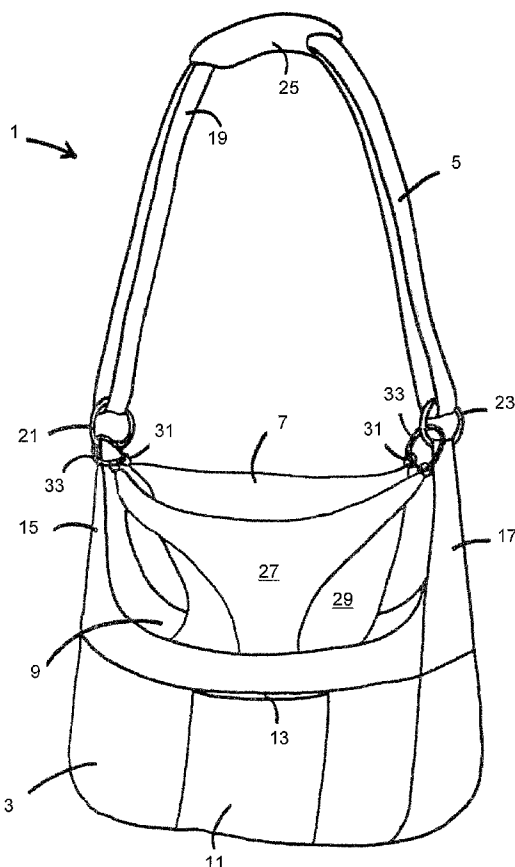
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(54) Title: CARRYING BAG



(57) Abstract: A carrying bag comprises: an enclosure having an opening and an interior volume for containing items to be carried; a shoulder strap connected at both ends to the enclosure; and a harness for receiving and supporting an infant in a substantially upright posture, wherein a base portion of the harness is attached to the enclosure and an upper portion of the harness is detachably attachable to the shoulder strap, such that the harness can be selectively deployed. The harness comprises first and second webs which, when attached to the shoulder strap, define an opening for receiving the infant. When the webs are not attached to the shoulder strap, they may be stowed in a web stowage compartment or may alternatively constitute a flap cover for the enclosure.

WO 2007/096582 A2

Carrying Bag

This invention relates to a carrying bag. In particular, this invention relates to a carrying bag of the type having an enclosure for containing items to be carried and
5 a shoulder strap connected at both ends to the enclosure.

Carrying bags of the type to which the invention relates are particularly convenient for containing and transporting personal effects. They range in size from smaller bags designed primarily as fashion accessories to larger bags designed more for
10 their practical carrying capacities. In all cases, the aesthetics of the bags are important to a user, and new bags are frequently purchased based solely on a desire for a new design.

Carrying bags integrated with other devices are known. In particular, it is known to
15 integrate a carrying bag with an infant carrier. Such arrangements tend to be designed primarily as infant carriers, with the carrying bag being provided as an additional feature. Usually, in such arrangements, the bag is simply an enclosure attached to a side of the infant carrier. Consequently, the aesthetics of these arrangements are not given much priority.

20 According to the invention, there is provided a carrying bag comprising: an enclosure having an opening and an interior volume for containing items to be carried; a shoulder strap connected at both ends to the enclosure; and a harness for receiving and supporting an infant in a substantially upright posture, wherein an
25 upper portion of the harness is detachably attachable to the shoulder strap, such that the harness can be selectively deployed.

The inventor has recognised a need for a carrying bag integrated with an infant carrier, but which functions primarily as a carrying bag. The carrying bag of the
30 invention has substantially the same appearance as a conventional carrying bag, and therefore has improved aesthetics.

The infant carrying functionality, in part, employs features of a conventional carrying bag. For example, in use, an upper portion of the harness is attached to the shoulder strap. In this way, the aesthetic impact of the infant carrying functionality is minimised.

5

The infant carrying functionality of the carrying bag is selectively deployable, and is therefore particularly suited to situations where this functionality is required only occasionally.

10 By “substantially upright posture”, it is meant that the torso of the infant has a substantially upright configuration when the carrying bag is suspended from the shoulder strap. The infant carrying functionality is therefore particularly suited to infants that can sit unaided, i.e. over about six months old.

15 The base portion of the harness is preferably attached to the enclosure, and preferably permanently.

The harness preferably comprises a first web for supporting the infant, wherein a first edge of the first web constitutes the base portion of the harness attached to the enclosure, and wherein a second edge of the first web, which second edge
20 opposes the first edges and constitutes the upper portion of the harness, is detachably attachable at both ends to the shoulder strap. When the first web is attached to the shoulder strap, the enclosure, the shoulder strap and the first web may together define a pair of openings for receiving the legs of the infant.

25

In preferred embodiments, the first web has a substantially triangular shape, with the first edge being at an apex of the triangle and being shorter than the second edge.

30 The harness preferably further comprises a second web, wherein a first edge of the second web further constitutes the base portion of the harness attached to the enclosure, and wherein a second edge of the second web, which second edge

opposes the first edge and further constitutes the upper portion of the harness, is detachably attachable at both ends to the shoulder strap.

5 When the first and second webs are attached to the shoulder strap, the second edges of the webs may together define an opening for receiving the infant. The webs may then define surfaces for supporting the front and rear of the torso of the infant. A size of the first and second webs, and the way in which they are attachable to the shoulder strap, determines the amount of support that is provided.

10

The second web preferably has a substantially rectangular shape. One or both of the first and second webs may be formed as a continuous sheet or as a number of straps. The materials of the webs may be selected to aesthetically match the enclosure and/or may be selected for their handle (for example, where they are for
15 contact with the infant).

The first and second webs are preferably detachably attachable to the shoulder strap by mechanical connectors. A large number of connectors are be suitable, and they should ideally provide a safe and secure connection, while being
20 convenient to disconnect when required. A particularly preferred connector arrangement comprises a ring attached to each of the shoulder strap and the first and second webs, and another ring having a spring clip for engagement with each of the other rings.

25 When detached from the shoulder strap, one or both of the first and second webs may constitutes a flap cover for the enclosure. In this configuration, the infant carrying functionality of the carrying bag is disguised by webs having the appearance of a conventional flap cover.

30 Alternatively, or in addition, the enclosure may comprise at least one web stowage compartment. When detached from the shoulder strap, one or both of the first and second webs are then stowable in the at least one web stowage compartment.

The at least one web stowage compartment is preferably separate from a main stowage compartment.

The shoulder strap may comprise a pair of straps, each strap being connected at both ends to the enclosure. The pair of straps may be coupled together at an intermediate portion of the shoulder strap, such that the straps define a pair of openings for receiving the arms of a user, for balancing the carried weight across both shoulders and the back of the user. Thus, the bag may be carried conventionally over one shoulder or may be carried over both shoulders.

The pair of straps may be provided as a single looped strap. The coupling at the intermediate portion may be by means of a padded sleeve. The padding may then contact the shoulder of the user when the bag is carried conventionally over one shoulder.

The shoulder strap may, at least in part, be extended from the enclosure. For example, the shoulder strap may comprise a pair of end portions, extended directly from the fabric of the enclosure, and a looped strap attached to both ends of the portions.

A preferred embodiment of the invention will now be described, purely by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a front view of a carrying bag according to the invention, in a first configuration;

Figure 2 is a rear view of the carrying bag shown in Figure 1, in the first configuration;

Figure 3 is a front view of the carrying bag shown in Figure 1, in a second configuration;

Figure 4 is a rear view of the carrying bag shown in Figure 1, in the second configuration; and

Figure 5 is a view of a portion of the carrying bag shown in Figure 1, showing an alternative configuration.

The invention provides a carrying bag of the type having an enclosure for containing items to be carried and a shoulder strap connected at both ends to the enclosure. The carrying bag has a harness for receiving and supporting an infant in a substantially upright posture. A base portion of the harness is attached to the enclosure. An upper portion of the harness is detachably attachable to the shoulder strap, so that the harness can be selectively deployed.

Referring to Figures 1 and 2, a carrying bag 1 according to the invention essentially comprises an enclosure 3, a shoulder strap 5 attached to the enclosure 3 at both ends, and a harness 7 for receiving and supporting an infant.

The enclosure 3 is formed from a plurality of fabric, leather or plastic panels sewn together along seams, as is conventional. It will be appreciated that a large number of different designs for the enclosure 3 are possible, only one of which is shown in the Figures.

The panels define an opening 9 through which personal effects may be inserted into the enclosure 3. The enclosure 3 has a main stowage compartment, which is subdivided into a number of sub-compartments (not shown) for organising the personal effects. The enclosure also has a web stowage compartment 11, which is provided on an outside surface of the main stowage compartment, and has its own opening 13. The web stowage compartments 11 is much smaller than the main stowage compartment. The web stowage compartment 11 will be described in more detail below.

The shoulder strap 5 provides a carrying means for the carrying bag 1, and is intended for placement over one or both shoulders of the user, as will be described in more detail below.

The shoulder strap 5 comprises end portions 15, 17, which are extended out of the enclosure 3 at opposite ends thereof. The shoulder strap 5 also comprises an intermediate portion 19, in the form of a looped strap, which connects the end

portions 15, 17 together. The intermediate portion 19 is connected to the end portions 15, 17 by metal rings 21, 23.

5 The shoulder strap 5 also comprises a padded sleeve 25, which couples the opposite sides of the intermediate portion 19 together.

10 The harness 7 for receiving and supporting the infant comprises first and second webs 27, 29. The first web 27 is almost triangular in shape, with an apex of the triangle having been replaced by a short, straight edge. The second web 29 is substantially rectangular in shape. The webs 27, 29 are formed of the same fabric material as the enclosure 3.

15 The short edge of the first web 27 and a longer edge of the second web 29 are attached to an upper surface of the enclosure 3, in between the end portions 15, 17 of the shoulder strap 5, with the first web 27 being located on a side of the web stowage compartment 11.

20 The free (unattached) edges of the webs 27, 29 are provided with metal rings 31 at each end. Thus each web 27, 29 is provided metal rings 31 at each free corner.

In the configuration shown in Figures 1 and 2, the webs 27, 29 are arranged so that the harness 7 is deployed. In particular, the metal rings 31 of the webs 27, 29 are connected to the metal rings 21, 23 of the shoulder strap 5. The metal rings 21, 23, 31 are securely connected together by metal rings 33 having a spring loaded element that can be opened to pass the other rings 21, 23, 31 through. The metal rings 33 enable the harness 7 to be selectively deployed, simply by allowing the metal rings 21, 23, 31 to be connected/disconnected.

30 In the configuration shown in Figure 1, the free edges of the webs 27, 29 together define an opening for receiving the infant. Meanwhile, the enclosure 3, the shoulder strap 5 and the first web 27 together define a pair of openings for the legs of the infant.

In use, the shoulder strap 5 of the carrying bag 1 is placed on a shoulder of a user, either across the user's body (over the user's head) or on one side of the user's body. With the webs 27, 29 in the configuration shown in Figures 1 and 2, an infant is then received into the opening defined by the free edges of the webs 27, 29, with the legs of the infant at the same time being received into the openings defined by the enclosure 3, the shoulder strap 5 and the first web 27.

Once in place, the infant is comfortably supported on both sides by the webs 27, 29. The openings for the legs ensure that the infant is comfortably and securely positioned. The carried weight is balanced across the two end portions 15, 17 of the shoulder strap 5.

While carrying the infant in the harness 7, personal effects stored in the enclosure 3 can still be accessed, since both webs 27, 29 are attached on one side of the enclosure opening 9.

Figures 3 and 4 show the carrying bag 1 shown in Figures 1 and 2, but in a different configuration. As shown in the Figures, the metal rings 21, 23, 31 have been disconnected, so that the webs 27, 29 are not attached to the shoulder strap 5.

Instead, the first web 27 has been tucked into the web stowage compartment 11. The second web 29 has been placed over the enclosure opening 9, and provides a flap cover for the opening. To obtain access to the opening 9, the user simply lifts second web 29.

In the configuration shown in Figures 3 and 4, the harness 7 is not deployed, and the main components of the harness 7 are either concealed (the first web 27) or are providing an alternative function (the second web 29). In this configuration, the carrying bag 1 functions only as a carrying bag, and is not aesthetically compromised by the harness 7.

The invention therefore provides a carrying bag 1 in which a harness for carrying an infant can be quickly and conveniently deployed. In the undeployed configuration, the bag is not aesthetically compromised. The deployed configuration has only a minor affect on the aesthetics of the bag.

5

Figure 5 shows an alternative configuration of the shoulder strap 5 of the carrying bag 1 shown in Figure 1 to 4.

As described above, the shoulder strap 5 of the carrying bag 1 comprises an intermediate portion 19 in the form of a looped strap. The looped strap is coupled in the middle by a padded sleeve 25. In normal use, the looped strap is placed over the user's shoulder, with the padded sleeve 25 enhancing comfort when the carried weight is heavy.

As an alternative, shown in Figure 5, the looped strap may be separated on either side of the padded sleeve 25, so that the looped strap forms a figure "8" configuration, with two openings. The user's arms may then be received into the openings, with the padded sleeve 25 behind the user's upper back, and the enclosure 3 and the harness 7 against the user's chest.

20

Thus, with the alternative configuration, the carried weight can be balanced across both of the user's shoulders and back. This is particularly advantageous when carrying an infant, when the carried weight may be heavy or prolonged. When an infant is not being carried, and the carried weight is light, the configuration shown in Figures 1 to 4 may be more appropriate.

25

A single preferred embodiment of the invention has been described above in detail. It will be apparent to the skilled person that various changes and modifications may be made to the above embodiment without departing from the invention.

30

For example, the embodiment described above has an enclosure and a shoulder strap having a particular shape and configuration. However, the skilled person will

understand that the shape and configuration of these aspects of carrying bags vary widely, and a large variety of designs are suitable. The shoulder strap described above has a fixed length, but an adjustable length strap may be provided by means of a buckle.

5

In the embodiment described above, the harness comprises two webs for supporting an infant. However, in other embodiments, the harness may comprise only the first web, or only the first of the two webs may be deployed, with the user providing additional support for the infant.

10

In some embodiments, both of the webs may be stowed in the web stowage compartment. In other embodiments, both of the webs may provide a flap cover for the enclosure opening.

15 The web or webs that constitute the flap cover may be provided with fasteners to securely cover the opening. Alternatively, the opening may be provided with a separate secure closure, such as a zip fastener.

20 In the embodiment described above, the upper portion of the harness is detachably attachable to the shoulder strap and the lower portion of the harness is permanently attached to the enclosure by stitching. However, in other embodiments, the lower portion of the harness may be attached to the enclosure in such a way that it is also detachably attachable.

25 Various connectors are suitable for connecting the upper edges of the harness to the shoulder strap.

30 In the configuration shown in Figure 5, a padded sleeve is employed for comfort and/or for aiding the formation of the strap in a figure "8". However, the sleeve is not essential and the figure "8" may instead be formed simply by crossing over the looped strap.

A number of further adaptations may be made to the carrying bag to make it suitable for use with very young infants, for example having an age of less than six months.

- 5 Firstly, a separately deployable extension to the harness may be provided for supporting the head of the infant. This harness extension may be formed of a web of material which is detachably attachable to the bag and the shoulder strap at a location above that at which the main harness is attached. As an alternative to attachment to the shoulder strap, the harness extension may simply be worn
10 around the user's neck. When not in use, the harness extension may be completely detached or concealed in a pocket formed in the main enclosure.

- Secondly, means for adjusting the size of the openings for receiving the infant's legs may be provided. This means may comprise mechanical connectors, for
15 example, buttons, provided around the edges of the enclosure, the shoulder strap and/or the main harness which together define the leg openings.

Claims

1. A carrying bag comprising:
an enclosure having an opening and an interior volume for containing items
5 to be carried;
a shoulder strap connected at both ends to the enclosure; and
a harness for receiving and supporting an infant in a substantially upright posture,
wherein an upper portion of the harness is detachably attachable to the
10 shoulder strap, such that the harness can be selectively deployed.
2. A carrying bag according to claim 1, wherein a base portion of the harness is attached to the enclosure.
- 15 3. A carrying bag according to claim 2, wherein the harness comprises a first web for supporting the infant, wherein a first edge of the first web constitutes the base portion of the harness attached to the enclosure, and wherein a second edge of the first web, which second edge opposes the first edge and constitutes the upper portion of the harness, is detachably attachable at both ends to the shoulder
20 strap.
4. A carrying bag according to claim 3, wherein, when the first web is attached to the shoulder strap, the enclosure, the shoulder strap and the first web together define a pair of openings for receiving the legs of the infant.
- 25 5. A carrying bag according to claim 3 or 4, wherein the first web has a substantially triangular shape.
6. A carrying bag according to any of claims 3 to 5, wherein the harness
30 further comprises a second web, wherein a first edge of the second web further constitutes the base portion of the harness attached to the enclosure, and wherein a second edge of the second web, which second edge opposes the first edge and

further constitutes the upper portion of the harness, is detachably attachable at both ends to the shoulder strap.

7. A carrying bag according to claim 6, wherein, when the first and second webs are attached to the shoulder strap, the second edges of the webs together define an opening for receiving the infant.

8. A carrying bag according to claim 6 or 7, wherein, when the first and second webs are attached to the shoulder strap, the webs define surfaces for supporting the front and rear of the infant.

9. A carrying bag according to any of claims 6 to 8, wherein the second web has a substantially rectangular shape.

10. A carrying bag according to any of claims 3 to 9, wherein the first and second webs are detachably attachable to the shoulder strap by mechanical connectors.

11. A carrying bag according to claim 10, wherein the mechanical connectors comprise a ring attached to each of the shoulder strap and the first and second webs, and another ring having a spring clip for engagement with each of the other rings.

12. A carrying bag according to any of claims 3 to 11, wherein, when detached from the shoulder strap, one or both of the first and second webs constitutes a flap cover for the enclosure.

13. A carrying bag according to any of claims 3 to 12, wherein the enclosure comprises at least one web stowage compartment, wherein, when detached from the shoulder strap, one or both of the first and second webs are stowable in the at least one web stowage compartment.

14. A carrying bag according to claim 13, wherein the at least one web stowage compartment is separate from a main stowage compartment.

5 15. A carrying bag according to any preceding claim, wherein a length of the shoulder strap is adjustable.

10 16. A carrying bag according to any preceding claim, wherein the shoulder strap comprises a pair of straps, each strap being connected at both ends to the enclosure, and wherein the pair of straps are coupled together at an intermediate portion of the shoulder strap, such that the straps define a pair of openings for receiving the arms of a user, for balancing the carried weight across both shoulders and the back of the user.

15 17. A carrying bag according to claim 16, wherein the pair of straps are provided as a single looped strap.

20 18. A carrying bag as claimed in claim 16 or 17, wherein the pair of straps are coupled at the intermediate portion by a padded sleeve for contacting the shoulder of the user when the carried weight is carried on one shoulder.

19. A carrying bag according to any preceding claim, wherein the shoulder strap is, at least in part, extended from the enclosure.

25 20. A carrying bag according to any preceding claim, further comprising a selectively deployable harness extension for supporting the head of an infant.

21. A carrying bag according to any preceding claim, further comprising means for adjusting the size of openings for receiving the legs of the infant.

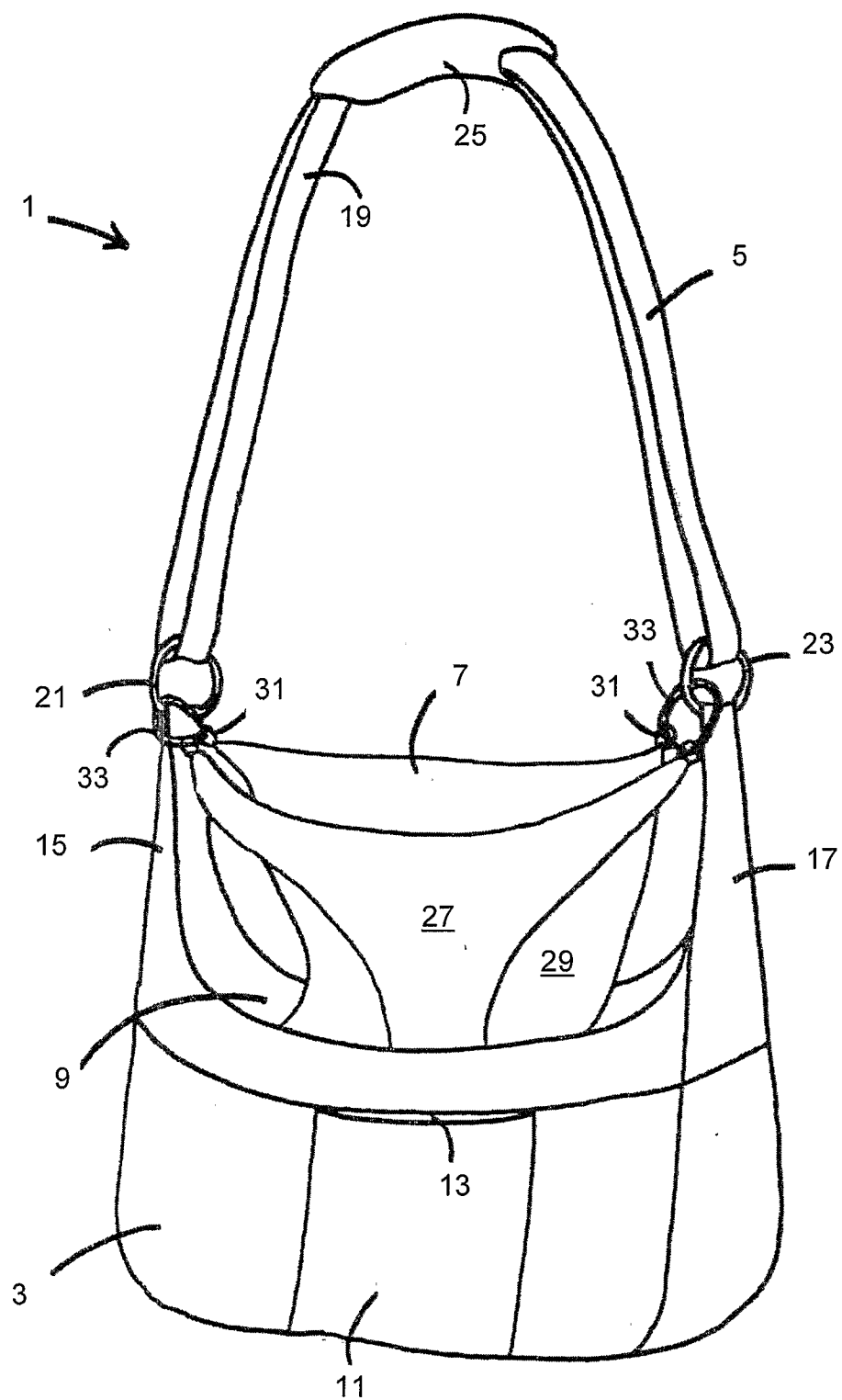


Fig. 1

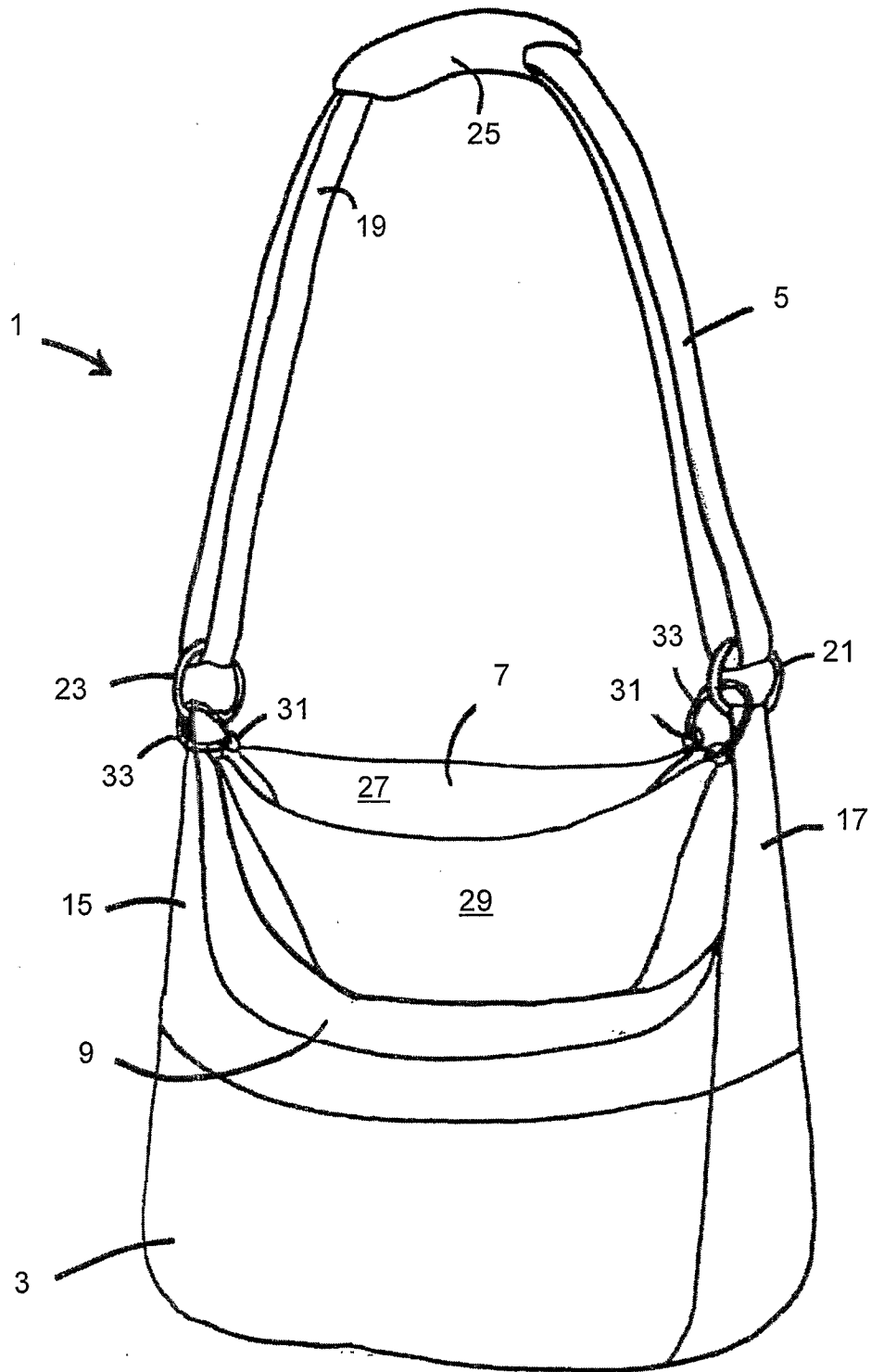


Fig. 2

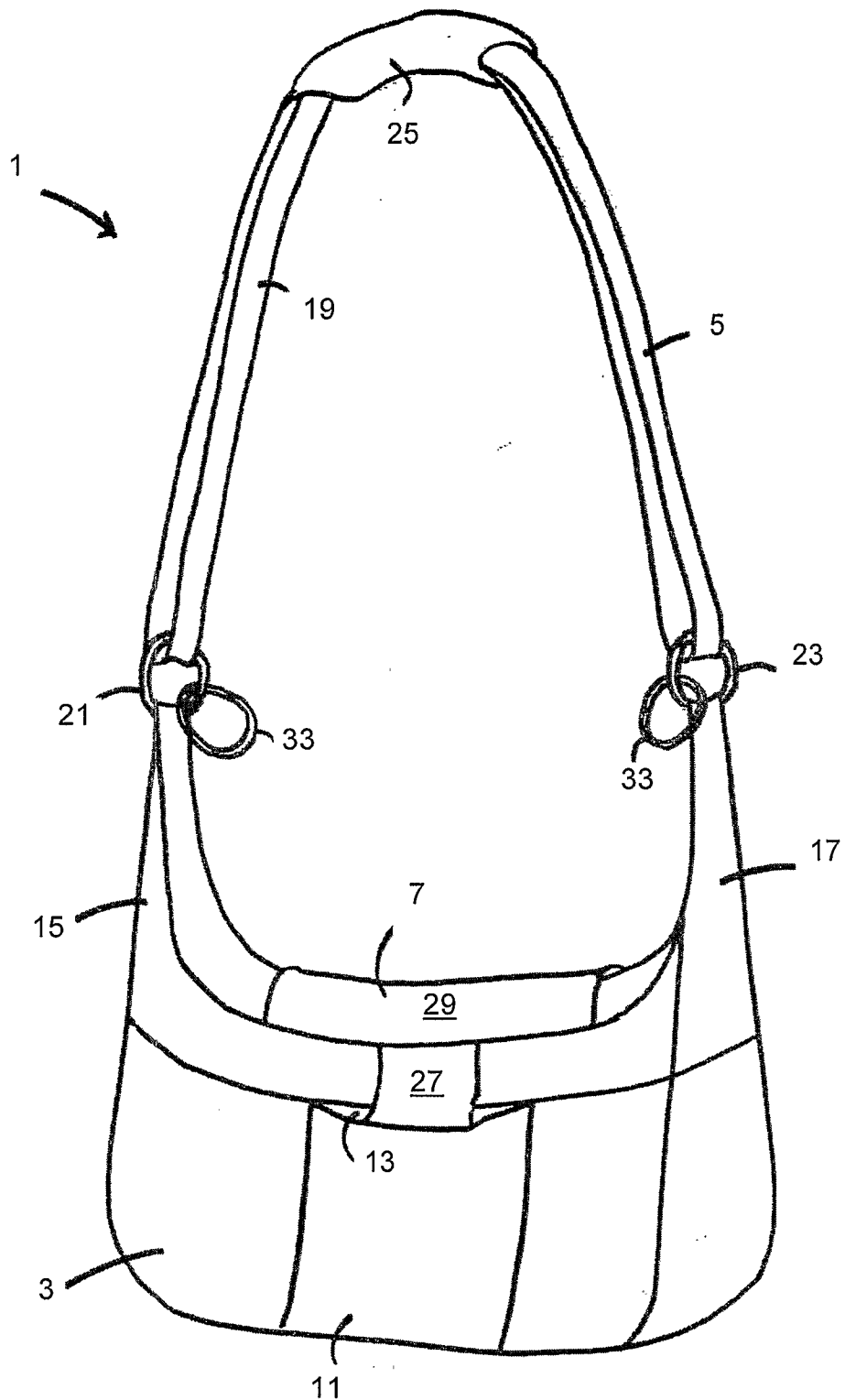


Fig. 3

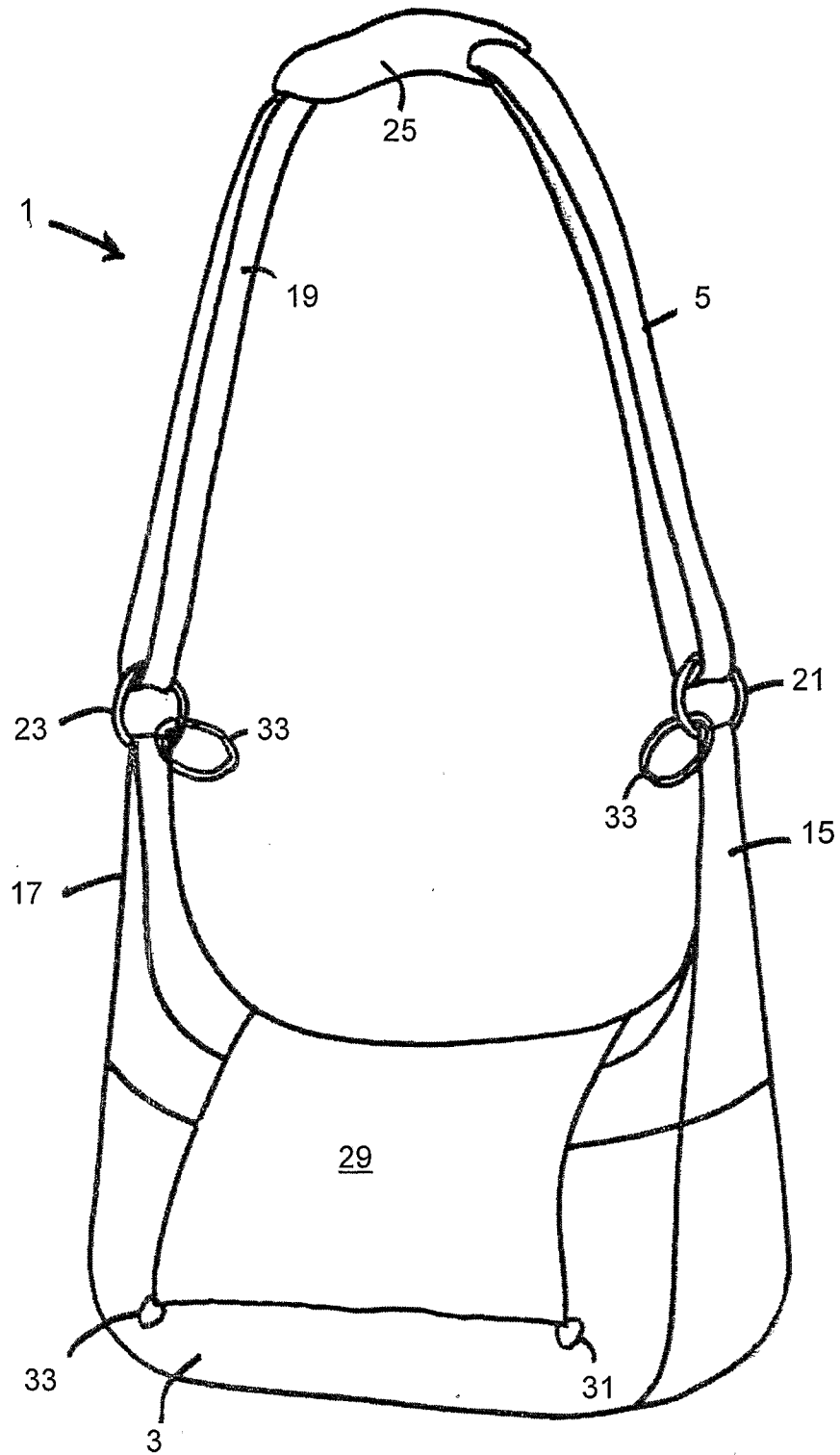


Fig. 4

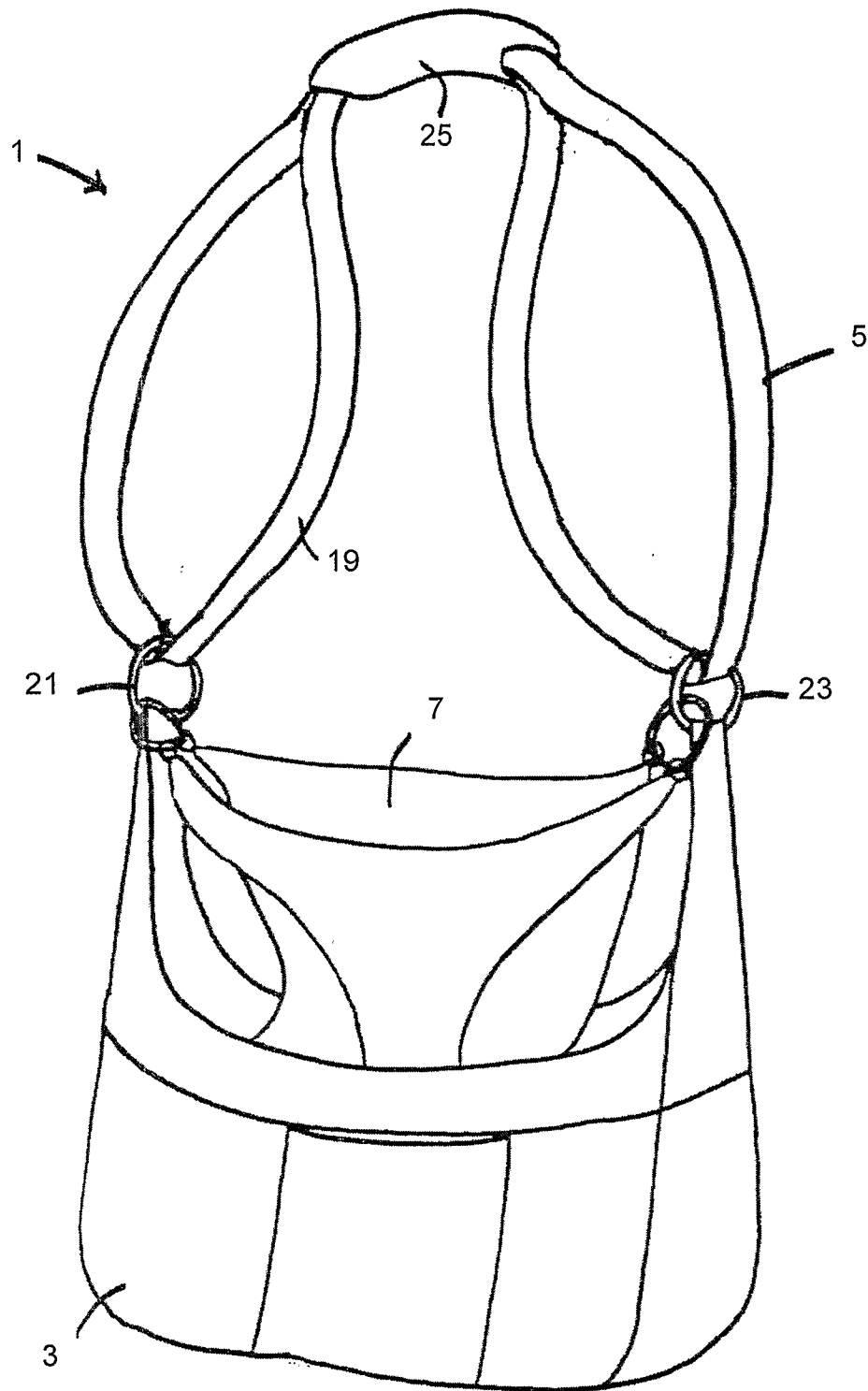


Fig. 5