

The Snake Son

This story teaches you not to judge people. It doesn't matter what you look like on the outside; it's what's on the inside that counts. In this story, Snake Son was a snake, but his everyone else in his family was human. You could tell that he felt judged by his parents because he was a snake. The person that told this story wanted people to know that looks are not all that important in today's society. We should try to love each other as best we can without judging the people that are different from us. This story was told to Kao Vang by Kao's father, Steven Vang. It was told to Steven Vang when he was twenty years old by his Laotian teacher.

There once lived a happy, loving king and queen who had everything they wished for, but they had no children. No matter how much they wished or how much they prayed, they still did not have a child. For a long period of time the King and Queen went to Shao, a god, and prayed.

One evening the Queen dreamt of two stars. One star was awfully bright and the other star was rather dim. When she woke up, there were two stars that were falling from the sky. These two stars fell into the Queen's mouth, and the Queen swallowed them.

As the months went by, the Queen's stomach got larger and larger. Almost a year after she had swallowed the stars, she gave birth to two sons. The oldest son was a snake, and he was named Snake Son. The younger son was a human, and he was named Tou Ger.

Months turned into years and both of the boys were growing. Snake Son did nothing around the house. He would not help out at all, so the King and Queen decided to put Snake Son in a cave. However, they would send people out to serve him because he was the eldest prince. So, their Snake Son lived, in a cave.

As for Tou Ger, he went to school and had a fine education. When the King felt it was time for the princes to wed, he discussed the matter of marriage with the Queen. In their tradition the eldest son would always wed first, but since Snake Son was a snake, they decided to find a bride for Tou Ger first. They also decided they would give the throne to Tou Ger.

After Tou Ger finished school, the King and Queen set out to find a bride for him. They searched far and wide and found a suitable wife for him.

After the wedding, Tou Ger went on a journey to find work, and he left his wife at home. The King and Queen took care of Tou Ger's wife, and they did not let her leave the palace walls.

One sunny afternoon Tou Ger's wife decided to walk around the garden in the back yard. Snake Son was there, and he swallowed her whole. The King and Queen saw Snake Son swallowing Tou Ger's wife and ran out to him. But, Snake Son saw them coming, and he ran off to the mountains.

Later that week, Tou Ger came home. The King told him what had happened. The King also said that he should go after his wife. Tou Ger was devastated. He took a rifle and declared to his parents that he was going to kill his brother. The King and Queen did not want to allow this, but since Snake Son had eaten Tou Ger's wife, they let him do it. Tou Ger set out on foot to kill his brother in the mountains.

When Tou Ger got to the mountains, he found Snake Son asleep. When Snake Son heard his brother coming he stood up. Tou Ger asked, "Why did you eat my wife?" Tou Ger had his rifle ready.

Snake Son replied, "You are younger than I. Why did mom and dad let you marry first and give you the throne? I know that I am a snake, but I am older and the tradition is for the oldest son to marry first. I am the oldest. I am not happy, and that is why I ate your wife!"

They argued for a long time and then Tou Ger said, "No more questions! I'm going to kill you Snake Son!"

Tou Ger aimed the rifle at Snake Son's head and shot. He missed two times. Then, Snake Son swallowed Tou Ger just like he had swallowed Tou Ger's wife.

It was dark, so Snake Son decided to go home to the Palace. The King and Queen were waiting for Tou Ger to come home, but it was Snake Son who appeared through the doors.

"Where is your brother Tou Ger, Snake Son?" asked the King.

"I ate him," Snake Son replied. "I ate his wife first because I was the oldest. Why did you not get me a bride first? Why did you not give me the throne? Tou Ger came to me in the mountains. When he saw me he wanted to kill me, so I ate him. You are my parents and you did not go by the traditions. I am going back to my cave. Each day you will have to bring me a young lady; if you do not I will eat both of you!"

The King was very scared, and he feared what might happen. He called to his old wise man. The King explained the situation to the wise man. The King told him about Snake Son and how Snake Son only wanted to eat young ladies. If they did not bring young ladies to Snake Son, he would kill them.

The wise man went back home. He did not know what to do, or who to send first. The wise man had only a fifteen-year-old daughter. She was all he had because his wife had died. The wise man's daughter made dinner that night, but the wise man would not eat. His daughter asked him what was wrong. The wise man explained the story of Snake Son to her. He told her that he had to give her up to Snake Son, but she was all he had. If he were to get other girls from the village, the parents would yell at him to send his own daughter instead of theirs. If he refused to do this task, the King would kill him, and his daughter would be an orphan.

After the wise man told his daughter the story, she became excited. She had a plan. She would be willing to be the first for Snake Son to eat. The plan was that she was to wear three layers of clothing. Before the snake could eat her, he would have to shed all three of his skins and she would shed her three layers of clothing. After Snake Son had shed his layers of skin, he would not be able to eat her. The wise man was relieved to hear this plan, and he thought it would work.

The next day both the wise man and his daughter went to the mountains. When they got there the wise man left her. Then, Snake Son got ready to eat his dinner, but the girl asked for him to shed his skin. So, Snake Son shed his first layer, and the wise man's daughter took off a layer of clothing. She then asked him to shed another layer of skin, so he did, and she took off another layer of clothing. Then the girl asked for him to shed his last skin, but he could not.

The girl grabbed a stick and hit Snake Son's tail; it turned into Tou Ger's wife. Then she hit Snake Son's body, and it turned into Tou Ger. Last, she hit Snake Son's head, and he became a handsome young man.

The girl and Snake Son fell in love. When they finally went back to the palace, the King and Queen were very happy to have all of their family back. They threw a grand party to honor the two sons. The wise man's daughter and Snake Son were married, and the kingdom lived happily ever after.