



INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT

SENIOR SECTION

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

CLASS IX



THE SNAKE AND THE MIRROR- V. M Basheer

Date:

SUMMARY

It's a story about a doctor, who had only recently commenced his practice. He lived in a small rented room which was an outhouse. It had two windows and a tiled roof. The tiles were supported by gables which rested on the beam and there was no electricity. The room was infested with rats.

On a hot summer night, he had his meals at the restaurant and returned home. He lighted the kerosene lamp, took off his coat and shirt and opened the two windows. He settled on the chair and took out a medical book to read. There was a large mirror on the table on which stood a lamp.

Since it was too hot to sleep, he had nothing better to do, he sat in front of the mirror, admiring himself, admiring his looks and smiles and planning what he should do to look more presentable. Gradually, his thoughts shifted from self-admiration to planning his marriage.

He thought that he would marry a rich doctor having a good practice and that he would choose a fat lady as his wife so that she would not be able to run and catch him.

He was engrossed in his day dreaming that he did not give much importance to the sudden silence. The rats had stopped scampering and there was a sound of something falling behind him. But he was slow to react.

By the time he turned round to have a look, a snake had wriggled over the back of the chair and landed on his shoulders and coiled round his left arm above the elbow. It was a dangerous cobra and its hood spread out hardly three inches from his face.

The doctor sat there like a stone statue, afraid to move lest the snake may strike. He thought of various medicines and if any was good enough to save him if the snake did bite him. In this moment of fear of death, he realized the presence of God. God had punished him for being too proud and arrogant. He realized that he was but a mere human, a poor man nothing to boast

about. The moment he accepted his true worth, God appeared, pleased and the snake left him of its own free will and sat on the table in front of the mirror.

The doctor got up silently and rushed out of the door. Next morning when he came back all his belongings had been pilfered but for his dirty vest was too dirty even for the thief.

The story clearly highlights the fact that one should not be proud of oneself because whatever he has, is a gift of God. Without his benign support you are nothing. The moment he realized this, the God recalled the snake who left without hurting him.

I. Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

A. ‘I didn’t jump. I didn’t tremble. I didn’t cry out. There was no time to do any such thing. The snake slithered around my shoulder and coiled around my left arm above the elbow. The hood was spread out and its head was hardly three or four inch from my face!’

- i. Why didn’t the author jump, tremble or cry?
- ii. Where was the snake coiled? How far was death?
- iii. Name the author? What was his profession?

B. ‘It seemed as if God appreciated that. The snake turned its head. It looked into the mirror and saw its reflection. I do not claim that it was the first snake that ever looked into the mirror. But it was certain that the snake was looking into the mirror.’

- i. What had God appreciated? Where did the snake move its head?
- ii. Why did the narrator call it the ‘first snake’?
- iii. Find a word in the passage that means ‘look at with pleasure and satisfaction’

II. Answer the following questions in 30-40 words.

- i. What type of a woman did the doctor in the story , want to get married to? Why?
- ii. How did the doctor show the presence of mind when he encountered the snake?
- iii. What are the similarities between the doctor and the snake?
- iv. Without the mirror, the story will lose its charm and reality. Justify

III. Answer the following question in 120-150 words.

- i.. Justify the title of the story ‘The Snake and The Mirror’.