

## The Girl Who Married a Snake

Once upon a time, there lived a Brahmin with his wife in a village. Both of them were sad, as they had no children. Every day, they prayed in the hope, that one day they would be blessed with a child. Ultimately, they were blessed them with a child. The Brahmin's wife gave birth to a baby, but the child became a snake. Everyone was horrified and advised them to get rid of the snake as soon as possible.

The Brahmin's wife remained firm and refused to listen to anyone. She loved the snake as her son and didn't care that her infant was a snake. She brought up the snake with love and care. She fed him with the best food she could arrange for. She made a comfortable bed in a box for him to sleep in. The snake grew up and his mother loved him all the more. On one occasion, there was a wedding in the neighbourhood. The Brahmin's wife began to think of getting her son married. But what girl would marry a snake?

One day, when the Brahmin returned home, he found his wife in tears. He asked her, 'What happened? Why are you crying?' She didn't answer and kept on crying. The Brahmin asked again, 'Tell me what hurts you so much?' Finally, she said, 'I know you don't love my son. You are not taking any interest in our son. He is grown up. You don't even think to get him a bride.' The Brahmin was shocked to hear such words. He replied, 'Bride, for our son? Do you think any girl would marry a snake?'

The Brahmin's wife didn't respond, but she kept on crying. On seeing her crying like that, the Brahmin decided to go out in search of a bride for his son. He travelled to many places, but found no girl who was ready to marry a snake. At last, he arrived in a big city where one of his friends lived. As the Brahmin had not met him for a long time, they agreed to meet.

Both of the friends were happy to see each other and spent a good time altogether. During the conversation, the friend happened to ask the Brahmin that why he was traveling around the country. The Brahmin said, 'I am looking for a bride for my son.' The friend told him not to go any further and promised his daughter's hand in marriage. The Brahmin was worried and said, 'I think it would be better if you see my son before deciding this.'

His friend refused, saying that he knew him and his family, so it was not necessary to see the boy. He sent his daughter with the Brahmin in order to get

married to his son. The Brahmin's wife was happy to know this and quickly started making preparations for the marriage. When the villagers heard about this, they went to the girl and warned her not to marry the snake. The girl refused to listen to them and insisted that she had to keep her father's word.

Accordingly, the marriage between the snake and the girl took place. The girl started living with her husband, the snake. She was a devoted wife and looked after the snake like a good wife. The snake slept in his box at night. One night, when the girl was going to sleep, she saw a handsome young man in the room. She was frightened and was about to run for help. The young man stopped her and said, 'Don't fear. Didn't you recognise me? I am your husband.'

The girl didn't believe him. The young man proved himself by entering into the snake's skin and then came out of it once again as the young man. The girl was so happy to find her husband in a human form and fell at his feet. From that night onwards, every night the young man would come out of the snake's skin. He used to stay with his wife till daybreak and then would slip back into the snake's skin.

One night, the Brahmin heard voices from his daughter-in-law's room. He kept a watch and saw the snake turning into a young man. He rushed into the room, seized the snake's skin and threw it into the fire. The young man said, 'Dear Father, thank you very much. Due to a curse, I had to remain a snake until somebody, without asking me, destroyed the snake's body. Today, you have done it. Now, I am now free from the curse.' Thus, the young man never became a snake again and lived happily with his wife.