**THE SNAKE AND THE MIRROR**

**By– *Vaikom Muhammad Basheer***

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Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, fondly known as Beypore Sultan, was an Indian independence activist and writer of Malayalam literature.

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[**Movies**](https://www.google.co.in/search?q=vaikom+muhammad+basheer+movies&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAOPgE-LUz9U3MM-qyMjTkshOttIvSM0vyEkFUkXF-XlWufllmanFi1jlyhIzs_NzFXJLMxJzcxNTFJISizNSU4sUIAoAB9SYz0gAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjMj7Lh6LHjAhVygUsFHcsyDb4Q6BMoADAqegQIDRAZ)**:**[Mathilukal](https://www.google.co.in/search?q=Mathilukal&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAOPgE-LUz9U3MM-qyMhT4gIxsw2KLC0MtSSyk630C1LzC3JSgVRRcX6eVW5-WWZq8SJWLt_EkozMnNLsxBwA6d7SekAAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjMj7Lh6LHjAhVygUsFHcsyDb4QmxMoATAqegQIDRAa), [Bhargavi Nilayam](https://www.google.co.in/search?q=Bhargavi+Nilayam&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAOPgE-LUz9U3MM-qyMhT4gIxLQwKDUvStSSyk630C1LzC3JSgVRRcX6eVW5-WWZq8SJWAaeMxKL0xLJMBb_MnMTKxFwA5hvoskYAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjMj7Lh6LHjAhVygUsFHcsyDb4QmxMoAjAqegQIDRAb), [Balyakalasakhi](https://www.google.co.in/search?q=Balyakalasakhi&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAOPgE-LUz9U3MM-qyMhT4gIx49PKkpKTtSSyk630C1LzC3JSgVRRcX6eVW5-WWZq8SJWPqfEnMrE7MScxOLE7IxMAMjEDgxEAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjMj7Lh6LHjAhVygUsFHcsyDb4QmxMoAzAqegQIDRAc),

**INTRODUCTION**

This is an interesting story. It is about a doctor’s encounter with a snake. The doctor lived in a small rented room full of rats. One night, he was reading a book. A kerosene lamp was burning on the table. There was also a large Mirror on the table. Suddenly something fell on the back of the chair. He turned to see what it was/He froze with fear when he saw that it was a big snake. The snake then coiled itself around the doctor’s left arm. The doctor prayed to God. Then the snake looked into the mirror on the table. Luckily, the snake liked its own image in the mirror. It wanted to have a closer look at its image. So it uncoiled itself from the arm and came on the table. The doctor at once got and ran out of the room. He spent the night at the house of one of his friends. The next morning he came back to his room. He was shocked to find that during the night some thief had taken away everything from his room.

### ****THEME****

The humorous anecdote revolves around the theme of human vanity and fears and how they affect people. The narrator is a homoeopath doctor who is struggling with his poverty and sluggish practice. Nonetheless, he is vain about his looks with or without his moustache and beard and has the ambition of looking more and more handsome. He also hopes to marry and lead a happy life. Sudden arrival of a snake on the scene turns him pale with fear, but somehow he manages to keep his calm. Meanwhile, attracted by the mirror, the snake decides to ignore him. The narrator takes this opportunity to make good his escape. The snake appears to be almost as vain as the doctor himself. An allied theme in the story is how crises make people turn to God for help.

### ****TITLE****

The story is appropriately titled “The Snake and the Mirror”, for it relates an incident in which a snake is so enamoured with its image in the mirror that it spares the life of the narrator. The entire action of the story revolves around the snake and the mirror. The main narrator, who is at the centre of the narrative until the snake appears, turns into a marginal element who is affected by the action instead of affecting it. He has to be thankful for the mirror that the snake spared his life. Had the snake bitten him, he would have surely died of fear and poison, for there was no medicine in his room for snake-bite.

### ****MESSAGE****

 The story conveys the message that one should never be proud of one’s beauty, strength or achievements. The fear of death makes a person realize how futile the worldly achievements are. It is faith in God and modesty in thoughts which make a person strong. The doctor in the story is cured of his arrogance after a close brush with death.

**SUMMARY**

 The narrator of the story is a doctor. He is telling this story to some of his friends. He tells the story of his encounter with a deadly snake. He is a homeopath. He says that he had just started his practice in those days when he was living in a rented room.

       It was a hot summer night. The time was about ten o’clock. He had just returned home after taking his meals at a restaurant. He lighted the kerosene lamp, as his house was not electrified. After some time, he opened the two windows in the room. Then he sat down on the chair and took out a book to read. Apart from the lamp, there was a large mirror on the table. In those days, the doctor bothered much about his looks, as he was a bachelor. He picked up a comb and parted his hair. He looked at his reflection in the mirror and smiled at his own image. There were rats in the room which constantly made noises.

The doctor got up, lit a beedi and paced up and down the room. He decided that he would marry. He thought that he would marry a woman doctor who had plenty of money and good medical practice. He decided that he would marry a fat lady so that she would not be able to run after him if he wanted to run away. He resumed his seat in the chair in front of the table. There were no more sounds of rats. Suddenly something fell on the back of his chair with a thud. He was horrified to see that there was a large snake on the back of the chair. Just then the snake came on his shoulder. Before the doctor could think and act, the snake coiled itself around his left arm. Its hood was spread and its head was hardly three or four inches from his face.

The doctor was turned to stone with fear. But his mind was active. He prayed to God to save him. It appeared as if God had heard his prayer. The snake turned its head and looked into the mirror. It appeared to like its own image. Then the snake unwound itself from the doctor’s arm and fell into his lap. From there the snake crept onto the table. It moved towards the mirror. Perhaps it wanted to see its image closely. Now the doctor acted quickly. Still holding his breath, he got up slowly from the chair. Then he ran out of the house. He went to the house of one of his friends and spent the night there. Next morning, he took his friend and one or two others to his room. He had decided to shift to some other house. He was shocked to find that there was nothing left in his room. Some thief had taken away most of his things. There was no sign of the snake either.