



A COLLECTION OF
STORIES
FROM
WEST AFRICA

Compiled and Illustrated by
David A. Naff



**THE EASY WAY IS NOT
ALWAYS BEST**



Copyrights and Creative Commons license

The license used here makes 7 important provisions.

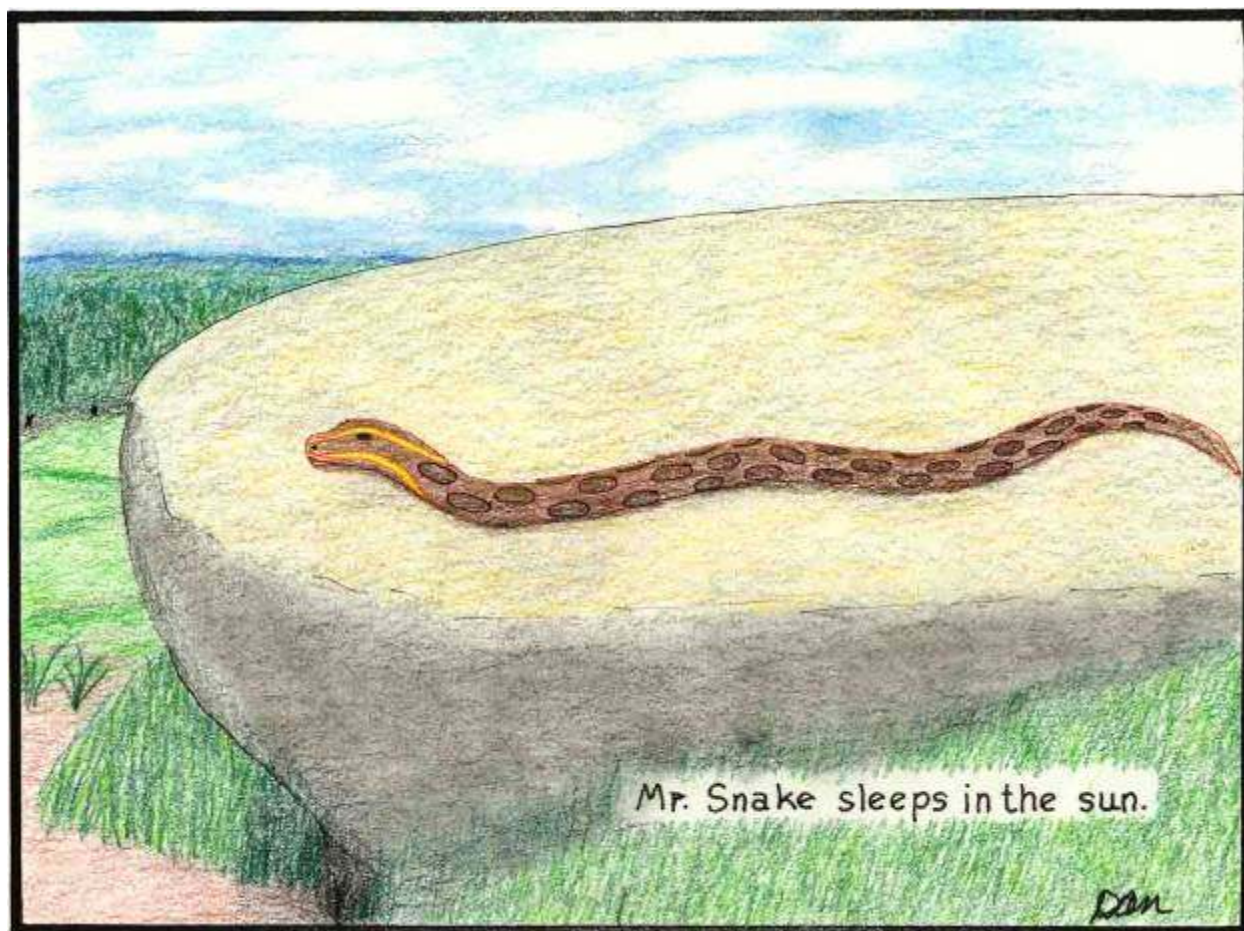
You are free, indeed encouraged, to do the following:

- Copy, print, distribute, display, and teach from Spark materials in any way you wish.
- Make changes for your own use and for distribution to others.
- Make any sort of non-commercial copies, ministry copies, or personal copies, from any Spark material, without further notice.

Under the following conditions:

- You properly cite the original authors of the material you find here. Pages on www.vernacularmedia.org without a clear authorship should be cited to vernacularmedia.org on your copies.
- You must retain the BY-NC-SA license on your copies of materials copied from www.vernacularmedia.org. (You must not trample the commons.)
- You must not change the license. (You must not steal from the commons.)
- You must ask for permission for use of Spark materials outside of this list. (You need permission to take work out of the commons.)

By Spark Team



THE EASY WAY IS NOT ALWAYS BEST

Mr. Snake was lazy and got himself into big trouble.

The snake family always seemed to have a hard time to find enough food to fill their stomachs. No matter how hard Mrs. Snake tried, the food just did not go far enough.

As for Mr. Snake he lay on the big rock on the hillside near the Man's village. He was warm and comfortable in the sun and just a little bit hungry; just enough to enjoy a good dinner. And he knew where he would soon find his dinner.

Mrs. Snake came out of the hole under the rock followed by several baby snakes. "Come, Papa, let us go into the bush to find food." they called to Mr. Snake.

"Not now, I am too comfortable here in the warm sun," Papa Snake answered. "I will soon find something to eat."

"You will not find any food by lying there in the sun and doing nothing," Mrs. Snake retorted.

Mr. Snake chuckled to himself, "Ha! That is what you think."

Mrs. Snake and the baby snakes went on out into the bush. Mr. Snake lay there in the sun. He was almost asleep.

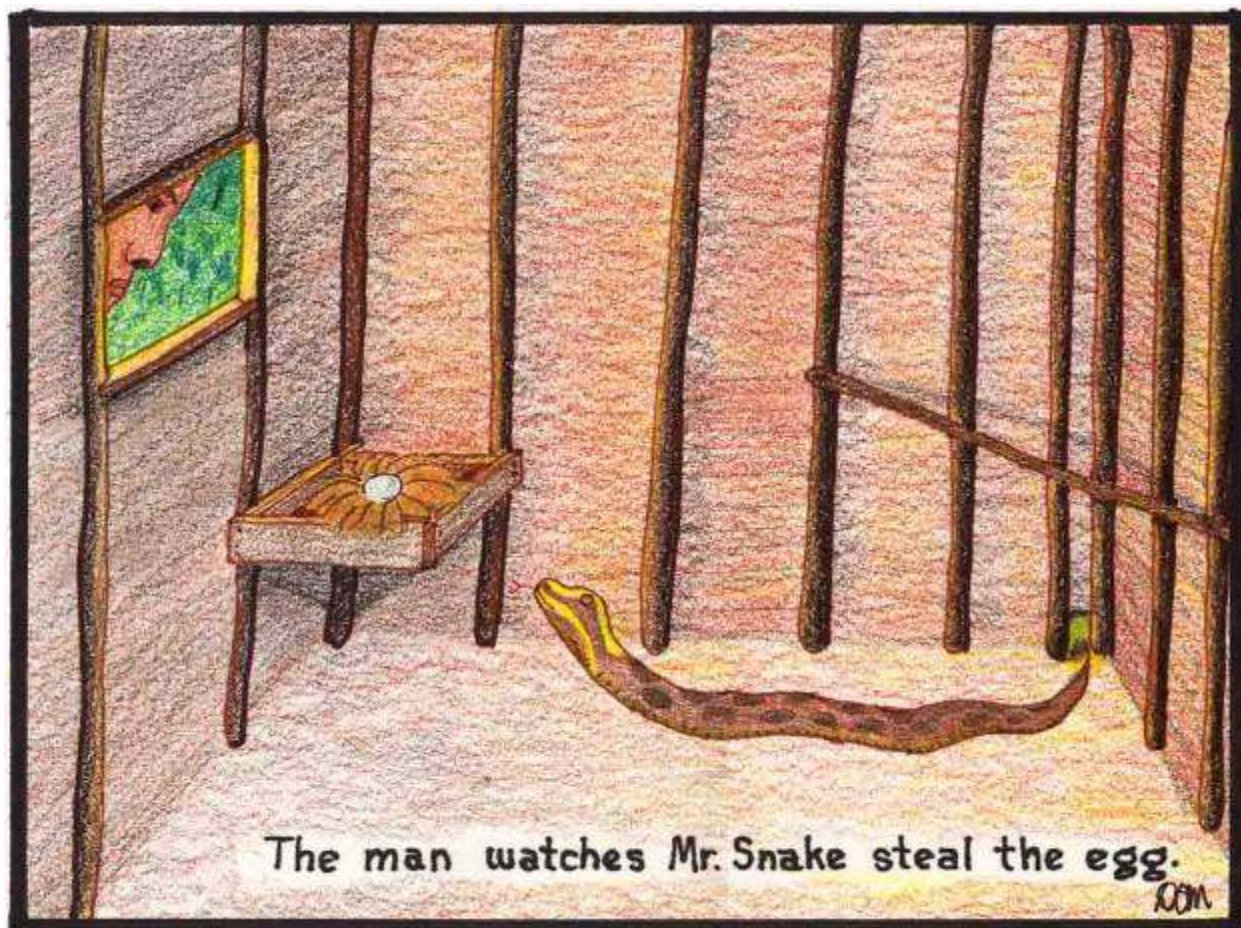
In the village lived Mrs. Hen. She was sitting on her nest in the little house where she lived. Presently she stood up. There in the nest was a warm new white egg. She pushed at it with her beak. Yes, the egg seemed to be all right. She stepped to the edge of the nest and began to sing.

"Cluck cluck cluuuck! I laid an egg! Cluck Cluuuck. Cluck Cluck Cluuuk."

"Aha!" Mr. Snake said, suddenly wide awake. "Mrs. Hen has prepared my dinner."

Mr. Snake slid off the stone and quietly glided through the bushes until he was behind the house where Mrs. Hen lived. He slid through a small hole between two planks that was just wide enough to let him go through. He slithered right over to Mrs. Hen's nest. There lay a nice fresh warm egg that Mrs. Hen had just laid. Mr. Snake opened his mouth wide and swallowed the egg.

Down from the nest went Mr. Snake, over to the gap between the planks in the wall. He tried to crawl through, but the



space was too small for Mr. Snake and the egg. Mr. Snake twisted and turned and then the egg broke inside him and he went on through.

"Ahhh!" said Mr. Snake as the warm sweet goodness of the egg flowed through his insides. "There is nothing better than a nice warm egg for dinner. Thank you, Mrs. Hen."

Mr. Snake had just left the hen house when Mr. Man came in to get the egg Mrs. Hen had laid. There was no egg! "That is strange." he said. "Always when Mrs. Hen sings I come and find a nice warm egg, but the last few days there have been no eggs. Is Mrs. Hen cheating, I wonder?"

When Mrs. Snake and the babies returned from hunting, Mr. Snake was still lying contentedly in the sun. Again the next

day Mr. Snake did not go along with his family to find food. Day by day he refused to help them find food and yet he did not get any thinner.

"I think that you are doing something dangerous," Mrs. Snake warned. "The easy way is not always the safe way. I think that you are eating eggs over at Mrs. Hen's house. You had better stay away from there. Remember that Man says, 'Never stop beating a snake as long as it still moves. One of these days Mr. Man will catch you and you will never come home again.'"

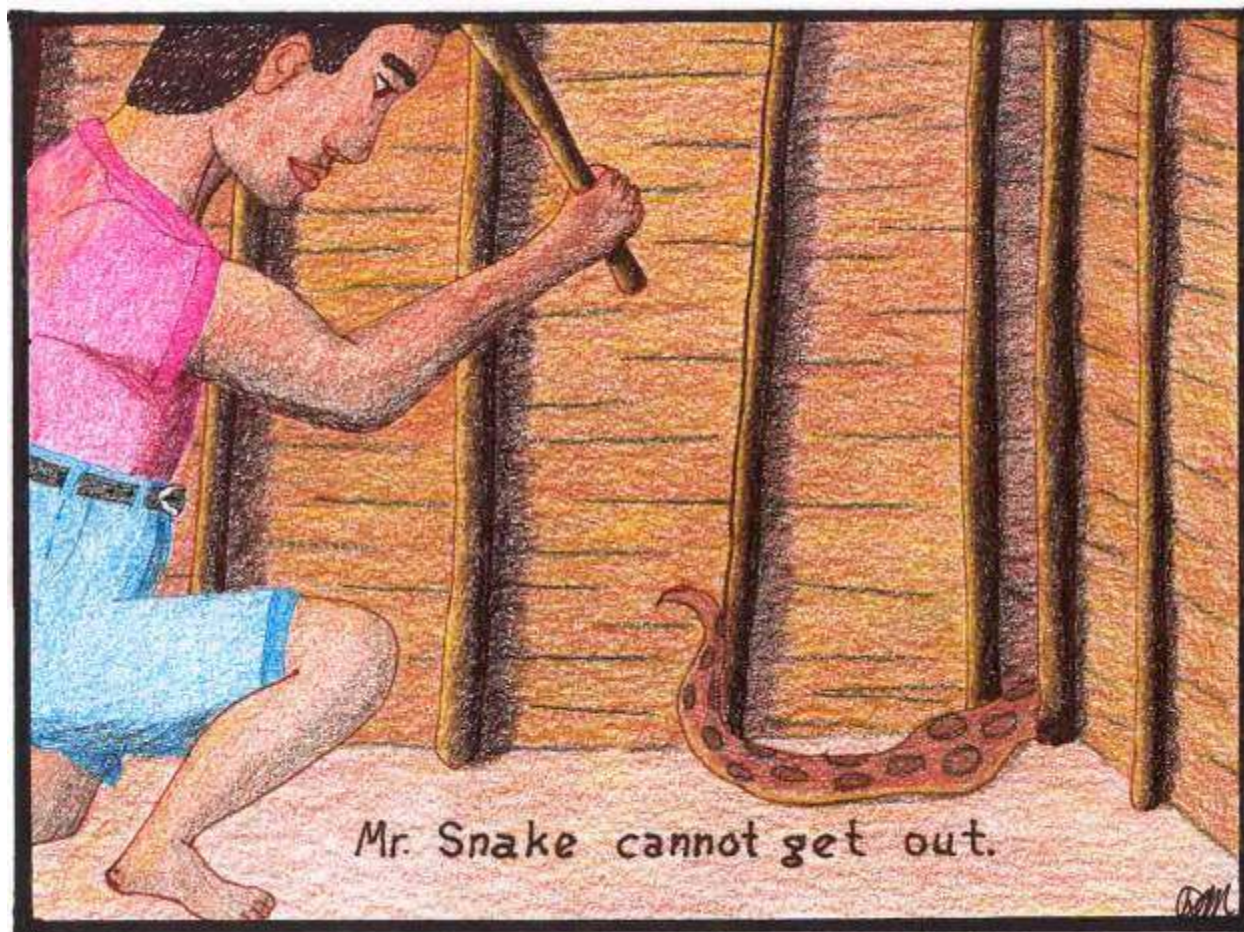
"Oh now, woman, be quiet!" Mr. Snake answered. "I have been eating the eggs Mrs. Hen lays for me for more than a week now and nothing bad has happened."

"Oh please leave this egg business," begged Mrs. Snake. "You will get into big trouble if you don't."

The next day Mr. Man was up early. When he saw Mrs. Hen go into the hen house, he went near so he could watch. Mrs. Hen sat on the nest for a while. When she stood up there was a nice fresh egg in the nest. "Cluck Cluck Cluuuck. I laid an egg," Mrs. Hen sang. She jumped down from the nest, and ran out the door singing happily.

As the man watched closely, in through the small hole came Mr. Snake. Up to the nest he slithered, mouth open wide. In went the egg. Mr. Snake closed his mouth and down went the egg into his stomach. Mr. Snake went to the hole. The egg was too big to go through but he turned and twisted and the egg broke. Away went Mr. Snake to sleep in the sun on the rock up on the hillside.

"Heh ho," thought Mr. Man, "So, Mr. Snake is eating my eggs. Well! I will get him!"



Next morning Mrs. Snake begged Mr. Snake to go with her to find food for the family.

"I beg you, come and help us to find food and leave Mrs. Hen's eggs alone. You can hunt so much better than I. I am sure that we can catch plenty of food for the whole family if you will help us."

Mr. Snake only laughed, "Go ahead. Work hard for those few crumbs of food. I will have another egg. Ha Ha Ha."

Early that day the man went to his friend and got an egg. He boiled the egg for several minutes. As soon as it was good and hard he took it out of the hot water, carefully dried it, wrapped it up in a piece of banana leaf to keep it warm and so it

would not burn his fingers. Then he went to watch Mrs. Hen. When Mrs. Hen had laid her egg, the man quickly replaced it with the warm freshly boiled egg. Then he stepped back out of sight and watched. Mrs. Hen was singing out in the yard.

In came Mr. Snake. He went right up to the nest and swallowed the egg.

"Oh! That is hot! Mrs. Hen must have a fever. Whew!"

Then away went Mr. Snake to the little hole in the wall. He started through the hole in the wall but, as usual, it was too small to let him and the egg go through. He turned and he twisted. He twisted and he turned. He wiggled this way and that. "Wow!" he remarked to himself, "Mrs. Hen sure laid an egg with a thick shell this time." He pushed and he wriggled, he turned and he twisted, but the hard boiled egg would not break. Mr. Snake was stuck!

Then suddenly, "Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!" Man was beating Mr. Snake with a big stick.

"Now I have you, you thief!"

He beat Mr. Snake again and again, for the people say, 'You never stop beating a snake as long as it can move.' He grabbed Mr. Snake's tail and pulled him out of the hole in the wall. He beat Mr. Snake's head. He beat him all over until no part of Mr. Snake could move, for Mr. Snake was dead.

Later that evening when Mrs. Snake and her babies came in from hunting food they saw Dog carrying Mr. Snake in his mouth.

She sadly shook her head and said to the children, "Remember, my dears, the easy way is not always the best."



God's way may sometimes seem to be the hard way, but only He knows what is best in the end.

Mr. Snake thought he was being wise and clever but his wrong choice led to his death.

Romans 1:22 says, "Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools." How true of Mr. Snake!!

© 2002 David A. Naff
All rights reserved.

Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®.
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission
of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.