

LEGEND OF THE WHITE SNAKE

by Lysa Chen

CREATURE: *Lady White Snake* | **LEVEL(S):** 11-16

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Chinese legend of Lady White Snake, like a serpent shedding its skin, is a tale that's been renewed many times. At its core, it is a tale of a water snake granted magic and human form when a mortal man drops a god's gift of immortality into the river. It is a story of friendship in which the white snake saves a green snake's life and shares her powers. It is a story of jealousy in which a turtle spirit covets their immortality and plots against them. It is a story of selflessness in which the white snake sacrifices all—trapped in a pagoda for eternity—to save, from the turtle spirit, the same mortal man she's grown to love.

But in some retellings, it is a story of evil and good, Lady White Snake, an evil demon, and the turtle, a well-intentioned monk. Or it is a story of treachery, the green snake betraying her closest friend.

This adventure embodies the multi-faceted nature of the original legend transformed over centuries. The town's healer, Lady White, has been captured, and everyone in the village has a different story to tell. It's up to the characters to decide who they trust, what they believe, and what they're going to do about it. This 90-minute adventure is intended for a party of five level 11-16 characters.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The adventure is broken down into two parts, with one preface you must prepare:

- **PART 0.** Determine the “hidden truth” of this instance of the adventure. This will decide who the characters face at the end.

- **PART 1.** The adventurers arrive in the village of West Lake during the annual tea festival and swiftly discover something's awry: West Lake's healer is missing. Interrogating the villagers, the party hears many stories that don't add up.
- **PART 2.** The characters discover Lady White's prison. Do they free her to save an innocent or to slay a monster? And have they been followed by the true enemy all along? This adventure can have many endings.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

This adventure and locale can be dropped in during your party's wilderness travels, or perhaps your adventurers have heard rumors to lead them in this direction.

- **TEA FOR TWO... OR A PARTY OF FIVE.** The village of West Lake's tea festival is renowned for its charm and delicious brews. It's said the only way to experience these small-batch blends is to visit this annual event.
- **SECRETS OF IMMORTALITY AND POWER.** It's said the villagers of West Lake never age. It's said they never grow sick. If the rumors are true, there must be a way to acquire this power.

PART 0. SNAKE IN THE GRASS

There are many different “bad guys” in the different versions of Lady White Snake’s story. It’s time to determine yours. Roll 1d20 to decide which of the following main NPCs is the enemy of this adventure and the truth they cover up.

CHOOSE YOUR ENEMY

D20 HIDDEN TRUTH

1-5 Brother Two-Head Terrin: He’s secretly jealous of Lady White’s immortality and strength and hopes killing her will release the power for him to claim.

6-10 Lil Green: She acts sweet and shy, but truthfully, she’s always been jealous of Lady White’s status. If she can lure adventurers to Lady White’s prison, perhaps they can free her, and Lil Green can defeat her “sister” when she’s weak.

11-15 Xu Xian: His love for Lady White faded when he saw her true nature. Now all he wants is her power to heal, so his mysterious sickness goes away.

16-20 Lady White: She’s been nurturing the town until she can consume their souls all at once. If someone’s fool enough to free her, she can complete her plot.

PART 1. SPILL THE TEA .. FESTIVAL

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

The characters arrive at the lakeside village of West Lake as the annual tea festival is in full swing. Enjoying the festivities and chatting with townsfolk, the adventurers learn a pillar of the community has gone missing.

GENERAL FEATURES

West Lake is a small village along the edge of a lake by the same name. It is couched by mountains on all sides.

- **WEATHER.** Puffy white clouds dot the sky but do nothing to block the brilliant summer sun.
- **LIGHT.** It’s sunny, almost too sunny, as the light shimmers and bounces off the lake.
- **SMELLS AND SOUNDS.** The air is perfumed by a variety of tea blends and filled with the laughter and chatter of festival goers.

Rounding West Lake, you approach a village of brightly painted houses with clay-tiled roofs and paneled walls thrown open to welcome the breeze. Small docks protrude from the buildings into the water, while some buildings float entirely in the lake. Temporary stalls draped in patterned cloths add more color to the village and line the main street and a small bridge that connects two parts of the town. It is the West Lake tea festival! The breeze is perfumed with herbal, fruity, and tannic notes wafting from the stalls.

CHOOSE A PERSONALITY

D6 PERSONALITY QUIRK

- 1 Speaks only in whispers
- 2 Constantly touches their own hair
- 3 Calls everybody “darling”
- 4 Nervously laughs between sentences
- 5 Loves puns
- 6 Is SUPER SNOBBY about tea

CHOOSE A RUMOR

D6 RUMOR

- 1 There’s a cold going around. The town never used to get sick, but one of the apothecaries has gone missing and the other is too sick to work.
- 2 The tea festival just isn’t the same without Lady White’s medicinal teas.
- 3 If Lil Green asks you to try her teas, don’t. They’re awful.
- 4 You should have come to last year’s tea festival. I don’t know what was in Brother Terrin’s tea-infused wine, but I think I hallucinated someone turned into a big snake!
- 5 Have you been to the Four Winds Pagoda? Aside from the festival, it’s the only thing worth seeing in this town.
- 6 I think the Four Winds Pagoda is haunted! I heard strange noises coming from the top floor one night, but Brother Terrin chased me off for trespassing.

TALKING TO THE KEY NPCs

Your party should cross paths with at least one of these key NPCs. Interactions with the townsfolk are designed to direct the adventurers to these characters.

BROTHER TWO-HEAD TERRIN

Brother Two-Head Terrin can be found observing the tea festival from the bridge that divides the town. The Broken Bridge has several broken railings, but the stone floats in place as if the bridge were complete. If asked about Lady White, Brother Terrin hopes to direct adventurers to the Four Winds Pagoda to defeat her permanently. He can share the following information:

- Terrin mentions he always suspected Lady White was hiding something and up to no good. He is not upset she is missing.
- Terrin is a monk who honors the Four Winds and tends to the nearby Four Winds Pagoda.
- A year ago, before the tea festival, the Four Winds visited Terrin's dreams and revealed Lady White was not a human but a terrible demon sent to destroy West Lake. Terrin concocted a potion to reveal Lady White's true nature. He tricked her into drinking it at the tea festival, and sure enough, she transformed into a giant white snake.
- After the tea festival, the Four Winds captured Lady White and trapped her in the pagoda. He hears terrible hissing and rattling come from the pagoda at night. He fears the day she escapes.
- Believing the characters to be mighty adventurers, Terrin wants them to enter the pagoda and defeat the monster.
- A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals Terrin is hiding something. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check convinces him to share he is the one who lured Lady White to the pagoda, using Xu Xian as bait. He insists it was for the greater good.

ROLEPLAYING BROTHER TWO-HEAD TERRIN

Brother Two-Head Terrin is a male turtle with yellow and green skin, crimson dots on his cheeks, and, notably, two heads. He is a devout monk who tends to the grounds of the Four Winds Pagoda.

Terrin speaks slowly with one head starting each sentence and, after a long pause, the other head finishing it. He also has a habit of talking to himself out loud. Literally.

LIL GREEN

Lil Green can be found weaving her way through the tea festival crowds, trying to convince passersby to try her tea blends. If asked about Lady White, Lil hopes to direct adventurers to the Four Winds Pagoda to save the woman she considers her big sister. She can share the following information:

- Lil is suspicious of the characters at first, wondering who in the town put them up to this. Since the events of the last tea festival, many townsfolk have teased Lil, knowing she is close to Lady White.
- A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Lil the adventurers are not mean-spirited. Lil shares that rumors about last year's tea festival are true. Lady White did transform into a snake, but she is misunderstood. Lady White is not a monster in hiding; she is a river spirit who has chosen to live as a human.
- A successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Lil to divulge she was once a snake herself. A young man intended to slice her open, but Lady White transformed into a human and purchased the snake from him instead. She even shared her powers with Lil, allowing her to be a human, too.
- Lil knows Terrin was the one to reveal Lady White's secret to the town and suspects he has trapped her in the Four Winds Pagoda.
- Believing the characters to be mighty adventurers, Lil wants them to enter the pagoda and save Lady White.

ROLE-PLAYING LIL GREEN

Lil Green was once a green garden snake before Lady White shared her magical gifts, including the gift to transform into a human. She appears as a Shou woman in her twenties with olive skin and black hair.

Lil is fascinated by human mannerisms and sometimes can be caught staring at others and copying their motions. When confronted directly, she is nervous and shy, speaking her s's with a s-s-stutter.

XU XIAN

Xu Xian can be found in the shuttered town apothecary that he used to run with his wife. He's been sick since last year's tea festival, and although he once had powerful healing powers, he hasn't been able to cure himself. Xu is resigned to his fate and just wants the characters to leave him alone. However, if they mention Lady White, he springs to life, sending himself into a coughing fit, and asks what they've heard. He can share the following information:

- He fell in love with Lady White when they were apothecary apprentices. Although they both proved to be skilled healers, the mysteries of herbal medicines seemed to share their secrets with Lady White naturally... perhaps magically.
- He never questioned this until last year's tea festival. Brother Terrin insisted he and his wife try a special tea-infused wine. They drank the tea, and Lady White transformed into this monstrous snake-like creature. The creature fled.
- A successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Xu to share the rest of the story. Lady White returned to their home, in human form, but Xu Xian no longer felt safe. Brother Terrin convinced him Lady White was a danger, and Xu helped Terrin lure Lady White to the Four Winds Pagoda by pretending he was captured. Lady White was captured, and Xu hasn't seen her since.
- Xu has continued to grow sicker since that day and can no longer practice medicine. Unable to cure himself, he wonders if he is dying of a broken heart or a guilty conscience.
- Believing the characters to be mighty adventurers, Xu wishes for them to enter the pagoda and determine if he made the right choice.

ROLE-PLAYING XU XIAN

Xu Xian is a Shou man in his late fifties with black hair peppered with streaks of grey and an unkempt beard. Once the town's apothecary, along with his missing wife Lady White, Xu has fallen ill. He wears simple

linen robes often soaked with cold sweat.

Speaking is a struggle for Xu. He talks in short phrases and labored intakes of breath.

PART 2. SHEDDING TRUTHS & LIES

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

Whether directed by Brother Two-Head Terrin, Lil Green, Xu Xian, or all of the above, the characters find themselves at the Four Winds Pagoda.

GENERAL FEATURES

Four Winds Pagoda stands atop a plateau overlooking West Lake. A garden of fragrant white flowers and berried bushes surround the aged stone pagoda. The pagoda is 20 feet in diameter and 80 feet tall. Faded paint on the stone surface outside depicts false windows filled with fantastical creatures peering from inside. Crimson wooden doors, 10 feet wide and 15 feet tall, are set into the base.

- **Weather.** Sporadic gusts of wind swirl around the plateau, seemingly from all directions.
- **Light.** The sun shines just as brightly here. If the characters visit at night, the moon is full, the sky is clear, and the white flowers emanate a slight warm glow.

As characters enter the pagoda, read the following text:

The inside walls of the Four Winds Pagoda are painted in brilliant hues, yellow, red, blue, and green swirls outlined in gold on every inch of stone. Suspended 40 feet in the air is a large creature: half-snake, half-woman armored in pearlescent white scales, with gleaming scimitars that hang by her sides.

Lady White (a **marilith**) is trapped inside an invisible bubble-like prison. While trapped, she cannot harm those outside and cannot be harmed. Her goal is to convince the characters to help her escape through persuasion or trickery.

If the characters are hostile to Lady White, she taunts them. If they want to kill her, if they want to gain her power, they can only do that by freeing her first.

If the characters talk to Lady White to help her, she can share the following:

- Lady White used to be a simple river snake. When Xu Xian was a young boy, he was visited by one of the Four Winds, who gifted him a seed of immortality. Not understanding this gift, Xu Xian threw it into the river where Lady White ate it.
- Lady White always felt grateful to Xu Xian, and, after she transformed into a woman, they fell in love. Lady White dedicated her magic to supporting the apothecary and the town.
- Brother Terrin is simple-minded and doesn't understand her nature. Perhaps he even wants her immortality for himself. He tricked her into drinking a potion that revealed her true form to the town. Then he convinced Xu Xian to pretend to be captured, and in trying to save her husband, Lady White became trapped instead.
- She wants to be reunited with Xu Xian.

ROLE-PLAYING LADY WHITE

Lady White appears as a pale Shou woman in elegant robes, with a winding snake's tail where her legs would be. She speaks with a gentle, measured tone always, even when angry—especially when angry. Her movements are smooth and gliding, and when she swings her scimitars, it is like a whirling dervish of blades.

FREEING LADY WHITE

The only way to free Lady White is by shedding truths and lies. Each character must share with the group a deep truth about themselves they've never spoken before. If the characters have lied to each other, then only admitting that lie and sharing the truth will suffice.

Once the truths are spoken, the invisible barrier shimmers and disperses, and Lady White floats gently to the ground.

WHO DO THEY FACE?

If the characters attack Lady White, she defends herself. Otherwise, the ending depends on your results of *Part 0*:

- If you rolled Brother Two-Head Terrin (a **warlord**), he followed the adventurers to ensure they killed Lady White. If they do not, he attacks. Lady White, weakened, escapes to safety.

- If you rolled Lil Green (a marilith), she followed the adventurers hoping they'd free Lady White so Lil Green could attack. She gets one opportunity attack as Lady White tries to flee; if she hits, she knocks her unconscious and then attacks the party.
- If you rolled Xu Xian (an archdruid), he followed hoping the adventurers would extract the secret to Lady White's medicinal powers. He attacks, while Lady White escapes to safety.
- If you rolled Lady White (a **marilith**), she was a demon after all and attacks.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lysa Chen has designed *Dungeons & Dragons* adventures for Wizards of the Coast and the Adventurers League. With roots in event organizing for her local AL scene, Lysa's passion lies in growing and creating a more inclusive *D&D* community. She serves as a Community Manager for Dungeon Masters Guild and the Adventurers League and produces and hosts Behold Her, a podcast about women in the world of tabletop games. You can follow her on Twitter @mercyfuldm, or visit her website: lysachen.com.