



# **The Legend of White Snake, Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai (The Butterfly Lovers) (Love Stories and Tragedies from Chinese Classic Operas)**

*Adaptation by Zhao Qingge*

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The Legend of White Snake In the southwestern Sichuan Province, on the majestic Emei mountain lies a white snake that has cultivated the Tao and has transformed itself into a stunning maiden. Calling herself Bai Suzhen, the maiden adopts a protégée named Greenie, a green snake also turned maiden. On a whim, the two beauties decide to take in the sights of the West Lake in Hangzhou and there encounter a hapless pharmaceutical clerk named Xu Xian. Suzhen immediately falls for Xian's innocent charms and seduces him. With her supernatural powers, Suzhen creates a luxurious home created out of a dilapidated shack and offers Xian stolen silver ingots. Xian cannot believe his luck and marries Suzhen immediately. Suzhen's plan backfires, however, when Xian is arrested for raiding the county treasury. Suzhen then uses her charms to extricate her husband from the jail, and opens an herbal medical emporium, which soon becomes legendary in the province. However, when the evil monk Fa Hai hears the news of Suzhen's medical miracles, he persuades Xian to tell him about Suzhen's real identity. From then on, the battle between Suzhen and Fa Hai begins. On the day of the Dragon Boat races, Xian, as instructed by Fa Hai, coaxes Suzhen to drink realgar wine, a fearful poison for the snake. Will Fa Hai's plan work? Will Xian see her in true snake form? Before the story can end, Suzhen has to battle the powerful Fa Hai and raise her supernatural allies in a spectacular fight never before waged on earth.

Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai (The Butterfly Lovers) The beautiful and cherished Zhu Yingtai is the only daughter of an elderly and wealthy couple in the Zhujia Village in the county of Shangyu. Although Yingtai lacks for nothing in her well-appointed courtyard house, she cannot stand the fact that her brothers are allowed to study while she cannot step outside the house. An idea suddenly strikes her, and Yingtai, with cunning and determination, beseeches her parents to let her disguise herself as a young man to study under a famous tutor in Hangzhou. When her parents begrudgingly grant her wish, Yingtai is overjoyed. On the way to Hangzhou in male disguise, Yingtai nearly gives her secret away when she meets the handsome scholar Liang Shanbo, also on his way to Hangzhou. The two pledge to be blood brothers, and compete with each other to be the better student. Before long, Yingtai falls in love with Shanbo, but Shanbo has no idea that Yingtai is a girl. The tragedy begins when Yingtai is called back home by her parents, only to discover that she has been betrothed to someone else. How will Yingtai divulge the truth to Shanbo? Will Shanbo return her love? Can she convince her parents to let her marry the poor scholar Shanbo rather than the son of the wealthy and powerful Governor Ma?

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