

‘Hungry’
By Liam Gilbert
Word Count - 549
Casey Library Short Story Competition
“A day in the life”
Category 12-15 years

Salem flicked his tongue out and in again. The air tasted of salt. His stomach was empty and rumbling. It was a very windy day but the sun made up for that. Salem had to have sun to be able to function properly. The feel of it on his skin gave him energy. He could hear lots of birds singing but he wasn't very fond of birds. For one thing they didn't taste nice and secondly, he didn't like trees. Trees were the only things that Salem was scared of. Well, not the trees themselves. It was the tallness that bothered him. He hated heights. Salem's best friend loved heights though. He'd wind his way up trees as fast as lightning. He could even jump from tree to tree, which gave Salem the heebie-jeebies!

Slithering along, happy to be safely on the ground, Salem then sensed exactly what he'd been waiting for - the ground vibrating under him and the boom, boom, boom of footsteps. Salem knew from experience that it was a male because the human treaded too heavily for it to be a female. The sound was heading straight towards him. Salem knew it was his big chance, so he slid into a bush waiting to attack. The man came into view. His massive shadow looming over Salem's hideout. He was bigger than expected but that didn't bother Salem because it meant he would fill up fast. He was very hungry. His last catch, a deer, was two week ago.

As the man came closer, Salem made sure he had some venom on his fangs ready to strike. Suddenly, Salem slithered out from his hiding spot, rearing up with his fangs bared. The man stopped dead and did not move a muscle. This was something that the humans told each other to do in the event of sighting someone like him but it didn't fool Salem. It just gave him an added advantage. He lowered his head and stopped hissing. Salem slithered in an S shape, past the man pretending not to notice him. At just the right moment, Salem struck. He dug his fangs into the human's fleshy thigh. "Aaaaah! What a feeling of satisfaction!" he thought as he felt the man's muscles

tense up, paralysed by his venom. With a horrifying scream the body crashed to the ground, the heart slowly thumping to a stop.

Salem tugged his fangs out of the dead body and watched blood begin to ooze out of the two holes he had made. He couldn't help but be a little sympathetic for the man. "Stop thinking silly thoughts," Salem hissed to himself sternly. "You're going to die of hunger if you don't eat anything."

Salem slithered over the body, planning the best approach to his meal. The man's jumper felt rough against his scales as he moved across his prey. Opening his mouth wide he found that it wasn't big enough to fit the body in. This guy was an enormous mouthful. With a distinct click of his jawbones separating, he opened wide, wrapping the end of his tail around the man's waist. Salem lifted the body head first into his mouth. "Why bother climbing trees," he thought to himself when you can find a better prize on the ground!"