

THE LADY AND THE TIGER SHORT STORY pdf

1: The Lady, or the Tiger? Study Guide

Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady? The more we reflect upon this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart which leads us through devious mazes of passion, out of which it is difficult to find our way.

Plot summary[edit] The short story takes place in a land ruled by a semi-barbaric king. A person accused of a crime is brought into a public arena and must choose one of two doors. Both doors are heavily soundproofed to prevent the accused from hearing what is behind each one. If he chooses the door with the lady behind it, he is innocent and must immediately marry her, but if he chooses the door with the tiger behind it, he is deemed guilty and is immediately devoured by it. The king learns that his daughter has a lover, a handsome and brave youth who is of lower status than the princess, and has him imprisoned to await trial. By the time that day comes, the princess has used her influence to learn the positions of the lady and the tiger behind the two doors. She has also discovered that the lady is someone whom she hates, thinking her to be a rival for the affections of the accused. When he looks to the princess for help, she discreetly indicates the door on his right, which he opens. The outcome of this choice is not revealed. She contemplates the pros and cons of each option, though notably considering the lady more. Which came out of the opened door – the lady, or the tiger? An official tells them a second story, of a prince who had come to the kingdom to find a wife. Instead of allowing him to see any available ladies, the king had him immediately taken to guest quarters and summoned attendants to prepare him for a wedding to be held the next day. At noon on the following day, the prince was blindfolded and brought before a priest, where a marriage ceremony was performed and he could feel and hear a lady standing next to him. Once the ceremony was complete, the blindfold was removed and he turned to find 40 ladies standing before him, one of whom was his new bride. If he did not correctly identify her, the Discourager would execute him on the spot. The prince narrowed the possibilities down to two, one lady smiling and one frowning, and made the correct choice. The kingdom official tells the five travelers that once they figure out which lady the prince had married, he will tell them the outcome of "The Lady, or the Tiger? In addition to stretching out the story as long as possible to make it a play, at the end the choice was revealed to the audience – neither a lady or tiger, but an old hag. The Lady, or the Tiger? Like the story, the song ends without a conclusion. The last line reads, "The hall remains, it still contains a pair of doors, a choice. Behind one door, a muffled roar, behind the other, a voice. Batman has no hint and chooses the door that has the tiger.

2: The Lady, or the Tiger?, by Frank R. Stockton; The Lady, or the Tiger Page 1

The Lady, or the Tiger? by Frank Stockton. The Lady, or the Tiger? is one of our Favorite Fairy Tales, recommended for ages 13 to adult. It was first published in The Century in , firmly establishing the subtle art of the short story to captivate readers. This story's title has become an allegorical expression meaning an unsolvable problem.

In the very olden time there lived a semi-barbaric king, whose ideas, though somewhat polished and sharpened by the progressiveness of distant Latin neighbors, were still large, florid, and untrammelled, as became the half of him which was barbaric. He was a man of exuberant fancy, and, withal, of an authority so irresistible that, at his will, he turned his varied fancies into facts. He was greatly given to self-communing, and, when he and himself agreed upon anything, the thing was done. When every member of his domestic and political systems moved smoothly in its appointed course, his nature was bland and genial; but, whenever there was a little hitch, and some of his orbs got out of their orbits, he was blander and more genial still, for nothing pleased him so much as to make the crooked straight and crush down uneven places. Among the borrowed notions by which his barbarism had become semified was that of the public arena, in which, by exhibitions of manly and beastly valor, the minds of his subjects were refined and cultured. But even here the exuberant and barbaric fancy asserted itself. The arena of the king was built, not to give the people an opportunity of hearing the rhapsodies of dying gladiators, nor to enable them to view the inevitable conclusion of a conflict between religious opinions and hungry jaws, but for purposes far better adapted to widen and develop the mental energies of the people. This vast amphitheater, with its encircling galleries, its mysterious vaults, and its unseen passages, was an agent of poetic justice, in which crime was punished, or virtue rewarded, by the decrees of an impartial and incorruptible chance. Directly opposite him, on the other side of the enclosed space, were two doors, exactly alike and side by side. It was the duty and the privilege of the person on trial to walk directly to these doors and open one of them. He could open either door he pleased; he was subject to no guidance or influence but that of the aforementioned impartial and incorruptible chance. If he opened the one, there came out of it a hungry tiger, the fiercest and most cruel that could be procured, which immediately sprang upon him and tore him to pieces as a punishment for his guilt. The moment that the case of the criminal was thus decided, doleful iron bells were clanged, great wails went up from the hired mourners posted on the outer rim of the arena, and the vast audience, with bowed heads and downcast hearts, wended slowly their homeward way, mourning greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have merited so dire a fate. But, if the accused person opened the other door, there came forth from it a lady, the most suitable to his years and station that his majesty could select among his fair subjects, and to this lady he was immediately married, as a reward of his innocence. It mattered not that he might already possess a wife and family, or that his affections might be engaged upon an object of his own selection; the king allowed no such subordinate arrangements to interfere with his great scheme of retribution and reward. The exercises, as in the other instance, took place immediately, and in the arena. Another door opened beneath the king, and a priest, followed by a band of choristers, and dancing maidens blowing joyous airs on golden horns and treading an epithalamic measure, advanced to where the pair stood, side by side, and the wedding was promptly and cheerily solemnized. Then the gay brass bells rang forth their merry peals, the people shouted glad hurrahs, and the innocent man, preceded by children strewing flowers on his path, led his bride to his home. Its perfect fairness is obvious. The criminal could not know out of which door would come the lady; he opened either he pleased, without having the slightest idea whether, in the next instant, he was to be devoured or married. On some occasions the tiger came out of one door, and on some out of the other. The decisions of this tribunal were not only fair, they were positively determinate: The institution was a very popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days, they never knew whether they were to witness a bloody slaughter or a hilarious wedding. This element of uncertainty lent an interest to the occasion which it could not otherwise have attained. Thus, the masses were entertained and pleased, and the thinking part of the community could bring no charge of unfairness against this plan, for did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands? This semi-barbaric king had a daughter as blooming as his most florid fancies,

and with a soul as fervent and imperious as his own. As is usual in such cases, she was the apple of his eye, and was loved by him above all humanity. Among his courtiers was a young man of that fineness of blood and lowness of station common to the conventional heroes of romance who love royal maidens. This royal maiden was well satisfied with her lover, for he was handsome and brave to a degree unsurpassed in all this kingdom, and she loved him with an ardor that had enough of barbarism in it to make it exceedingly warm and strong. This love affair moved on happily for many months, until one day the king happened to discover its existence. He did not hesitate nor waver in regard to his duty in the premises. This, of course, was an especially important occasion, and his majesty, as well as all the people, was greatly interested in the workings and development of this trial. Never before had such a case occurred; never before had a subject dared to love the daughter of the king. In after years such things became commonplace enough, but then they were in no slight degree novel and startling. Of course, everybody knew that the deed with which the accused was charged had been done. He had loved the princess, and neither he, she, nor any one else, thought of denying the fact; but the king would not think of allowing any fact of this kind to interfere with the workings of the tribunal, in which he took such great delight and satisfaction. No matter how the affair turned out, the youth would be disposed of, and the king would take an aesthetic pleasure in watching the course of events, which would determine whether or not the young man had done wrong in allowing himself to love the princess. The appointed day arrived. From far and near the people gathered, and thronged the great galleries of the arena, and crowds, unable to gain admittance, massed themselves against its outside walls. The king and his court were in their places, opposite the twin doors, those fateful portals, so terrible in their similarity. The signal was given. A door beneath the royal party opened, and the lover of the princess walked into the arena. Tall, beautiful, fair, his appearance was greeted with a low hum of admiration and anxiety. Half the audience had not known so grand a youth had lived among them. No wonder the princess loved him! What a terrible thing for him to be there! As the youth advanced into the arena he turned, as the custom was, to bow to the king, but he did not think at all of that royal personage. His eyes were fixed upon the princess, who sat to the right of her father. Had it not been for the moiety of barbarism in her nature it is probable that lady would not have been there, but her intense and fervid soul would not allow her to be absent on an occasion in which she was so terribly interested. Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than any one who had ever before been interested in such a case, she had done what no other person had done - she had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. She knew in which of the two rooms, that lay behind those doors, stood the cage of the tiger, with its open front, and in which waited the lady. Through these thick doors, heavily curtained with skins on the inside, it was impossible that any noise or suggestion should come from within to the person who should approach to raise the latch of one of them. It was one of the fairest and loveliest of the damsels of the court who had been selected as the reward of the accused youth, should he be proved innocent of the crime of aspiring to one so far above him; and the princess hated her. Often had she seen, or imagined that she had seen, this fair creature throwing glances of admiration upon the person of her lover, and sometimes she thought these glances were perceived, and even returned. Now and then she had seen them talking together; it was but for a moment or two, but much can be said in a brief space; it may have been on most unimportant topics, but how could she know that? The girl was lovely, but she had dared to raise her eyes to the loved one of the princess; and, with all the intensity of the savage blood transmitted to her through long lines of wholly barbaric ancestors, she hated the woman who blushed and trembled behind that silent door. When her lover turned and looked at her, and his eye met hers as she sat there, paler and whiter than any one in the vast ocean of anxious faces about her, he saw, by that power of quick perception which is given to those whose souls are one, that she knew behind which door crouched the tiger, and behind which stood the lady. He had expected her to know it. He understood her nature, and his soul was assured that she would never rest until she had made plain to herself this thing, hidden to all other lookers-on, even to the king. The only hope for the youth in which there was any element of certainty was based upon the success of the princess in discovering this mystery; and the moment he looked upon her, he saw she had succeeded, as in his soul he knew she would succeed. Then it was that his quick and anxious glance asked the question: There was not an instant to be lost. The question was asked in a flash; it must be answered in another. She raised her hand, and made a slight,

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quick movement toward the right. No one but her lover saw her. Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena. He turned, and with a firm and rapid step he walked across the empty space. Every heart stopped beating, every breath was held, every eye was fixed immovably upon that man. Without the slightest hesitation, he went to the door on the right, and opened it. Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady? The more we reflect upon this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart which leads us through devious mazes of passion, out of which it is difficult to find our way. Think of it, fair reader, not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself, but upon that hot-blooded, semi-barbaric princess, her soul at a white heat beneath the combined fires of despair and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him? How often, in her waking hours and in her dreams, had she started in wild horror, and covered her face with her hands as she thought of her lover opening the door on the other side of which waited the cruel fangs of the tiger! But how much oftener had she seen him at the other door! How in her grievous reveries had she gnashed her teeth, and torn her hair, when she saw his start of rapturous delight as he opened the door of the lady! How her soul had burned in agony when she had seen him rush to meet that woman, with her flushing cheek and sparkling eye of triumph; when she had seen him lead her forth, his whole frame kindled with the joy of recovered life; when she had heard the glad shouts from the multitude, and the wild ringing of the happy bells; when she had seen the priest, with his joyous followers, advance to the couple, and make them man and wife before her very eyes; and when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the tremendous shouts of the hilarious multitude, in which her one despairing shriek was lost and drowned! Would it not be better for him to die at once, and go to wait for her in the blessed regions of semi-barbaric futurity? And yet, that awful tiger, those shrieks, that blood! Her decision had been indicated in an instant, but it had been made after days and nights of anguished deliberation. She had known she would be asked, she had decided what she would answer, and, without the slightest hesitation, she had moved her hand to the right. The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered, and it is not for me to presume to set myself up as the one person able to answer it. And so I leave it with all of you: Which came out of the opened door - the lady, or the tiger? If you liked this story, please share it with others:

3: Study Questions - The Lady Or The Tiger?

"The Lady, or the Tiger?" is a much-anthologized short story written by Frank R. Stockton for publication in the magazine The Century in "The Lady, or the Tiger?" has entered the English language as an allegorical expression, a shorthand indication or signifier, for a problem that is unsolvable.

The Lady, or the Tiger? It has two levels of meaning: Themes Determinism versus Free Will alternatively, Fate versus Choice Since the King presents an out-of-their control, no-win "choice" for the Young Man determinism , he and the Princess cannot pursue their love for each other free will. Barbarism versus Progressiveness - Stockton emphatically described the King as "semi-barbaric" in his self-serving desires and "exuberant fancy" for public spectacles of cruelty barbarism. Yet he has a "civilized" side in his commitment to administer justice in an impartial and incorruptible manner by chance, and "develop the mental energies of the people. We learn she has deliberated long and hard over both outcomes. Love it, set it free Covet versus True Love - If the reader is pulling for her civilized half, she might opt for the sentimental butterfly option: Either result is a tragic loss for her. Ironically, the courtier has absolute trust in her decision, whichever it may be. Stockton uses the literary device of suppressing the ending to create suspense for the reader, which creates more questions than answers. Just as the Princess deliberates on the "right" choice to guide her lover to his fate, the reader is left guessing, and wrestling with terrible outcomes particularly for the Princess. The problem described in his tale has become a literary expression meaning an unsolvable or impossible problem to solve. Stockton writes an allegory, two levels of meaning, in which the deeper level is represented by symbols. Half savage or uncivilized, brutal and cruel, the other half civilized or "not quite" barbaric. A member of a choir, or someone leading singing, used in the story to describe a "good" outcome: Each of two parts another reference to semi-barbaric: He was greatly given to self-communing; and, when he and himself agreed upon any thing, the thing was done. This vast amphitheatre, with its encircling galleries, its mysterious vaults, and its unseen passages, was an agent of poetic justice, in which crime was punished. Or virtue rewarded, by the decrees of an impartial and incorruptible chance. This royal maiden was well satisfied with her lover, for he was handsome and brave to a degree unsurpassed in all this kingdom; and she loved him with an ardor that had enough of barbarism in it to make it exceedingly warm and strong. No one but her lover saw her. She had lost him, but who should have him? How can someone be half cruel, brutal and uncivilized, and half not? Stockton begs the question: Explain why this situation poses an unsolvable problem. Explain both concepts as revealed in this tale. If he was a Romantic , might he die rather than lose his true love? Or, is he a Realist , settling for survival with a fair maiden? Sure beats being dead. Using the literary device of allegory, the story has two layers of meaning. Explain each layer and what the symbols represent. Have you ever had to make a "lady or the tiger? Think of a story, book, or movie in which the ending was withheld, leaving the reader or audience to determine the ending, or guessing what happens next.

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4: The Lady or the Tiger? by Frank R. Stockton

"The Lady or the Tiger?" is a short story by Frank Stockton that tells of an unusual punishment imposed by a semi-barbaric king in which the accused must choose between two doors. Behind one door is a maiden and behind the other is a tiger. The protagonist is the lover of the princess.

He takes great pleasure in making the crooked straight because he enjoys more than anything exerting his will heroicallyâ€”not only that, but he also enjoys the drama of conflict that he ultimately wins, which anticipates the pleasure he takes in his arena. Barbarically, however, the king staged not gladiatorial contests or Christian martyrdoms in his arena, but trials. The narrator is also being ironic in calling the arena an agent of poetic justice, for there is no such thing as justice determined by chance. When the day came, an audience would consequently assemble at the arena, into which would be released the subject on trial. The subject could open whichever door he pleased, unguided save by chance. The arena is massively entertaining, full of suspense. This is why the king only stages trials that interest him there, and why the people flock to witness the trials he stages. Of course, it is totally unjust: Why should the innocent have the same odds as someone guilty of meeting with a horrible fate? Notice that the respective aftermaths of the accused meeting with either the lady or the tiger are parallel: This emphasizes the ritualistic and theatrical quality of trial by arena, as do the hired mourners. LitChart as a printable PDF. This made the institution of the public arena very popular, both entertaining and pleasing. The spectacle outweighs the humanity. Active Themes Related Quotes with Explanations Now, the king had a daughter, the princess, as fanciful and passionate as her father. The young man was imprisoned for daring to love the princess; his trial was to be held in the public arena. Everyone, from the king to his subjects, was especially interested in this case, because none like it had ever occurred before. Although the barbaric element of passion in human nature gives rise to absurdities like the public arena, it also makes our love all the more strong, the story suggestsâ€”so perhaps passion is not in and of itself bad. Indeed, it is only when we have license to act however we want to under the influence of passion, as the king does, that problems arise. The king and his subjects anticipate this unusual trial because it is all the more dramatic, being unusual. The competent judges of the lady for the arena are ironically superfluous: Aesthetic pleasure is a pleasure taken in the perception of beautyâ€”the king witnesses trials as one would contemplate a work of art. A huge audience gathered to watch. The young man was released into the public arena, to the admiration and anxiety of the audienceâ€”they thought him a grand youth, and thought it terrible for him to be in the arena. The young man, as was customary, bowed to the king, but was looking all the while at the princess. Even though the audience recognizes how grand the youth is, they are so committed to the entertainment value of his trial that they do not rise to his defense. While the king has an aesthetic interest in the trial, the princess has a different kind of interest: Active Themes Related Quotes with Explanations So interested, in fact, was the princess, that â€” as no one before her ever had, not even the king â€” she had used gold and willpower to learn which door in the public arena held which fate. Yet it also suggests that people themselves are similarly unjust. After all, that the princess hates the lady deemed suitable for marriage to the young man makes her all the more biased and all the less trustworthy in terms of her ultimate decision about whether to save or doom him. This in turn casts some doubt on the idea of justice in general. And if you follow this logic, it is in fact difficult for anyone to be completely impartial, even in a less difficult situation than that in which the Princess finds herself. So what, then, is the possibility for justice anywhere? And is there, perhaps, a semi-barbarian in all of us? The young man had expected as much; his only hope was that the princess would succeed in discovering this information, and he knew in his soul that she would succeed, and she had. Because he loves her, the young man trusts the princess absolutely; but does he know her well enough to really trust her? For that matter, do we know the young man well enough to say which fate he would prefer, lady or tiger, or which would be better for him? The more we reflect on this question, the narrator says, the harder it is to answer. So we are left with the question: The Lady or the Tiger?. Retrieved November 14,

5: Short Story: "The Lady, or the Tiger?"™

INTROLIT / Stockton-1 The Lady, or the Tiger? Frank R. Stockton In the very olden time there lived a semi-barbaric king, whose ideas, though somewhat polished and.

The ending of the story is ambiguous. It is not entirely clear whether the princess chose the lady or the tiger. In this case, the author wants the reader to decide which outcome he or she thinks is more reasonable. This semi-barbaric king had a daughter as blooming as his most florid fancies, and with a soul as fervent and imperious as his own. Basically, the author is telling us that she is passionate and used to getting her own way. Now we just have to decide what she wanted. This royal maiden was well satisfied with her lover, for he was handsome and brave to a degree unsurpassed in all this kingdom, and she loved him with an ardor that had enough of barbarism in it to make it exceedingly warm and strong. Okay, so far, so good. It seems like she loves him because he is handsome and brave. However, this seems to be a fling. This is hot and heavy for a few months, but was it designed to last? We also know that the princess found out what was behind what door. Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than any one who had ever before been interested in such a case, she had done what no other person had done,--she had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. Does how she found the secret to the doors tell us what she would do with it? She is surely jealous. When she pictures him alive, it is not a happy thought. She imagines him with another woman. I think this man is doomed. Although the ending to the story is not given to us, I think it is clearly foreshadowed what happened here. She pointed to the door that had the tiger, and he thought it was the door that had the lady. He thought she would save him, and she sent him to his death. If she could not have him, no one else could have him. She was done with him anyway.

6: The Lady, or the Tiger? - Wikipedia

Elements of irony in the story "The Lady or the Tiger?" include that the story does not end and that the princess must choose the fate of her lover from two doors.

He placed his suspect in a Roman-like arena and had him choose to open one of either of two doors that would open into the arena. Behind one of the identical doors lurked a ferocious tiger that would leap out and devour the accused; behind the other door awaited a lovely maid who would, if her door was the one opened, come forth and be married at once to the opener. It mattered not that the man may be married or otherwise committed, for the whimsical king would have his justice. The fate was to be decided by chance alone, and no one who knew of the placement behind the doors was allowed to inform him which to elect. All of this was popular among the audience, and even their thinking members could not deny that it was a fair test. The public experienced pleasing suspense and an immediate resolution. Best of all, everyone knew that the accused person chose his own ending. The man, however, though of the court, was of low station; his temerity was therefore an offense against decorum and the king. Such a thing had never happened in the kingdom before. The young lover had to be put into the arena to choose a door, a lady or a tiger. However, the princess loved the young man; clearly and openly that was the case. She did not want to lose him to a ravenous tiger, but at the same time, could she bear to lose him to another woman in marriage? The king searched the kingdom for the most savage of tigers. He also searched for the most beautiful maiden in all his land. No matter which door the young man selected, he would have the best that could be offered. The public could hardly wait, and as for the king, he reasoned that chance would have its way, and in any event the young man would be disposed of. The princess achieved something no one had before: She knew which fate was behind each door. She worked hard to learn the secret, using the power of her will and gold to secure it. Moreover, the princess knew who the woman was, a lady who had directed amorous glances toward the young man at court, glances that she or so the princess fancied he had sometimes returned. In the arena on the fatal day, the young man looked at the princess, expecting her to know which door hid what fate. The princess made an immediate and definite motion toward the right-hand door, and this door her lover opened directly. Did the tiger or the lady come out of the doorway? The princess loved the young man, but she was also a barbarian and she was hot-blooded. She imagined the tiger in horror, but how much more often did she suffer at the thought of his joy at discovering the lady? In one fulfillment, she would be forced to see him torn to pieces before her very eyes; in the other, she would be forced to watch him marry and go off forever with a woman she hated. The story stops exactly at the point at which the young man opens the door. It does not tell his fate.

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7: Sample Lesson " StoryCode

Now, the VOA Special English program, AMERICAN STORIES. Long ago, in the very olden time, there lived a powerful king. Some of his ideas were progressive. But others caused people to suffer. One.

Plot - A semibarbaric king discovers his daughter is having an unlawful affair with a male suitor. The male suitor is soon arrested and forced to go to trial, a trial that consists of an arena with two doors. Behind one door is a tiger, set to maul the unlucky criminal; behind the other is a beautiful bride, set to euphemistically maul the lucky criminal. The princess, who loves the young criminal, knows behind which door awaits the tiger, points to the right, indicating which door the young man should choose. **Setting** - The story takes place a long time ago in a kingdom far, far away. **Characterization** - The king is semibarbaric. The young man is handsome. They are both stereotypes. The princess, on the other hand, is developed more deeply. We know she loves the prince. We know she is jealous of the bride to be, if chosen. We do not, however, know which door she has chosen for her lover. **Conflict** - A person v. The central conflict in the story is an internal conflict within the princess as she struggles between watching her lover in the arms of another or watching her lover get devoured by a tiger. **Resolution** - The story has no resolution. It is up to the reader to determine whether or not the young man lives or dies. There is also an element of Determinism vs. Free Will and whether or not, if left to their own desires, humans make the right decision. **Suspense** - Suspense is created through the use of foreshadowing, dangerous action, and pacing. The dangerous action is provided by the tiger. **Irony** - The ironic structure of the story--it has no end, for example--highlights the irony present in the story: The narrator is third person omniscient and knows the fate of the young man. The author does not.

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8: The Lady or the Tiger? Summary - www.enganchecubano.com

Complete summary of Francis Richard Stockton's The Lady or the Tiger?. eNotes plot summaries cover all the significant action of The Lady or the Tiger?.

The story sparked heated discussion, so Stockton expanded it and submitted it to *Century* magazine, where it was accepted and retitled by the editor. However, it is considered more whimsical and open-ended than most fairy tales. It involves a jealous princess, a vindictive king, and an ardent suitor—long the staple elements of fairy tales. In discussing romantic relationships, passion, self-interest, and reason, Stockton puts the princess at the center of a terrible conflict: Author Biography Stockton was one of the most famous American writers of the 19th and 20th centuries. Known for his fantastic settings, realistic characters, and sly humor, he has been compared to Mark Twain, Joel Chandler Harris, Edward Eggleston, and Bret Harte as an American humorist. Critically admired in his day, Stockton had many fans who were writers themselves, including Twain, Edmond Gosse, and Robert Louis Stevenson. In the twentieth century, Maurice Sendak, Edmund Wilson, and Gertrude Stein have admired and been influenced by his work. Stockton was born into a large family in Philadelphia in 1830. After he finished high school, he was apprenticed to a wood-engraver, a position arranged for him by his father. Stockton soon turned to writing, and his first short story was published in 1856. In 1857 he started editing and writing for a newspaper, the *Philadelphia Press and Post*, where he remained for twenty years. In 1877 he began editing a periodical for children, *St. Nicholas*. He also published stories, articles, and poetry in the magazine under his own name and under pseudonyms. Because his doctors told him not to avoid reading or writing, he dictated his stories to his family from then on. Despite ongoing health problems and the demands of publishers, Stockton continued to write and publish prolifically. By the end of his life he had published six collections of short stories, eight novels, and two collections of fairy tales. He died in 1902 in Washington D. C. For punishing criminals, he has built an arena featuring two doors. The criminal must choose his own fate by selecting one of the two closed doors. Behind one door is a hungry tiger that will eat the prisoner alive. Behind the other door is a beautiful lady, hand-picked by the king, who will be married to the accused on the spot. The people of the kingdom like this system of justice, because the uncertainty of the situation is very entertaining. The king has a beautiful daughter whom he adores. She secretly loves a young man who is a commoner. When the king discovers her illicit affair, he throws the young man in jail to await his judgment. He looks to her for guidance, because he suspects that she has learned which door conceals the lady, and which the tiger. Indeed, the princess does know the identity of the young lady behind the door. She has been jealous of her for some time, thinking that she has sought to steal her lover from her. The princess signals for him to choose the right-hand door. Without hesitation, he moves to open the right-hand door. Stockton does not reveal what waits behind that door; he leaves readers to come to their own answer. As the narrator of the story explains, the answer involves a study of the human heart which leads us through devious mazes of passion, out of which it is difficult to find our way.

Characters

Courtier The courtier is a young man whose love affair with the princess results in his imprisonment and trial. As part of the system of justice he has established in his land, the king sets up a system of choice for criminals. They must enter an arena and pick a door; the door may lead to their freedom or to a terrible death. She is beautiful, charming, and known to both the courtier and the princess. His punishment is to determine his own fate by selecting one of two doors in an arena. One leads to a hungry tiger, the other to a respectable young lady to whom he will be immediately wed should he open that door. She also knows that the hungry tiger will rip him apart if he chooses the other door. After days of anguish, the princess decides which door to indicate. It is left to the reader to ponder which fate she has chosen for her lover. Either he will be eaten by a hungry tiger or he will instantly marry a beautiful girl. Another company in London opened the play that same night at the Elephant and Castle Theatre. Neither production lasted long, though the American version was revived for a short time during the 1950s. The story was set in the space-age, and a separate minute discussion of the story by Clifton Fadiman was produced at the same time. Both short films are distributed on videotape by Britannica Films. Because the young man is allowed to make his own choice, all others are absolved of guilt. Whether or not his choice and its consequence are just never occurs to them.

Because the young man has chosen to fall in love with the princess, he must now face the consequence, which is to make another choice—one that means either life or death. The princess has made a major choice as well: She has agonized about her decision and imagined the consequences of both choices in vivid detail. Stockton leaves it to the reader to ponder which choice she makes for the young man, who trusts the princess completely. Betrayal The princess may betray the man in the arena because she is jealous of the young woman behind the door. Whether she will be loyal to her lover or betray him and send him to his death is the main conflict of the story, and one that is not resolved. Love and Passion Until the king discovers their affair, the young man and the princess love each other and are very happy—or so it seems. In reality, the princess is deeply jealous of a young female courtier she perceives as being attracted to the young man. This perception arouses her passionate hatred for the young woman. His love for her is unflinching, even though she may be sending him to his death. The narrator also relates that the king loves his daughter very much. But can this declaration be trusted? If the king truly loves his daughter, would he impose such a sentence on the man she loves? Style Point of View The story is told in third-person omniscient point of view. This means that the narrator knows the thoughts and actions of all the characters. And so I leave it with all of you. It has tiers upon tiers, galleries, and doors at and below ground level, with curtains round them so that no hint of what is behind them is revealed. If the tiger eats the prisoner, mourners await, and if the lady marries the prisoner, priests are ready to perform the marriage ceremony. The setting bears many similarities to the Coliseum in Rome, which was the scene of elaborate and bloody gladiatorial games for centuries. The obvious climax of the story should come after the lover opens the door indicated by the princess. What sort of practices would you consider barbaric? Are there instances in which it is okay to be barbaric? Compare a short story by the American writer O. In doing so, the story never reaches its climax and contains no resolution. Fairy Tale In order to highlight their timeless messages, fairy tales usually take place in an indeterminate time and place. Historical Context American Humorists in the Nineteenth Century Popular American literature in the decades preceding the twentieth century included plenty of adventure novels, like those of Robert Louis Stevenson, and humorous works, like the novels of Mark Twain, which often parodied the emerging American culture. Another popular form was the simple short story with a trick ending, like O. Stockton was considered a humorist, and his stories often combined elements of humor with the trick ending. In his time, Stockton was hailed as the equal of Mark Twain; in he came in fifth in a poll listing the best living American writers. He used humor for illustrative purposes: Writers often got their start in these magazines, or in newspapers, as Mark Twain did as a reporter. Magazines presented new stories every week or every month, and they often serialized novels, printing a chapter each issue to get readers hooked on the magazine. Such publications were important in a time before the establishment of public libraries or the proliferation of bookstores. Their paintings were known for their fairy-tale-like settings that were often influenced by literature—especially poetry—and music. Their paintings often depicted beautiful women in sweeping gowns, maidens courted by valiant knights, and damsels surrounded by overgrown English gardens. This artistic movement influenced writers as well. As the twentieth-century dawned, and as Stockton feared, his work became a relic of a fast-disappearing age. New tensions that eventually erupted into World War I brought about new styles of literature—especially modernism—and new styles of art, such as cubism and expressionism. The comical, slightly detached view of the world as exercised by Stockton, Twain, and other American humorists came to be seen as quaint and not relevant enough to people dealing with the tragedies of modern life. Thus, he missed much of the initial debate that swirled around his story. Animals are not protected from human exploitation. Their traveling show delights thousands across the United States. Tigers and other animals are protected as endangered species. Tigers are frequently raised in captivity and live in zoos or are trained as circus animals. Several breeds of tigers became extinct during the twentieth century. By , there are only twenty to thirty remaining South China tigers. Capital punishment is practiced throughout the world and in the United States, though public executions are not as common as they once were. However, some efforts to abolish the death penalty have succeeded. By the s, the state of Michigan and the countries of Venezuela and Portugal have outlawed capital punishment. Many states have reinstated the death penalty.

9: The Lady, or the Tiger?

Page 1 of 5. More Books. More by this Author. In the very olden time there lived a semi-barbaric king, whose ideas, though somewhat polished and sharpened by the progressiveness of distant Latin neighbors, were still large, florid, and untrammelled, as became the half of him which was barbaric.

It was first published in *The Century* in 1898, firmly establishing the subtle art of the short story to captivate readers. For teachers and students, enjoy our useful *The Lady, or the Tiger?* IN THE very olden time, there lived a semi-barbaric king, whose ideas, though somewhat polished and sharpened by the progressiveness of distant Latin neighbors, were still large, florid, and untrammelled, as became the half of him which was barbaric. He was a man of exuberant fancy, and, withal, of an authority so irresistible that, at his will, he turned his varied fancies into facts. He was greatly given to self-communing; and, when he and himself agreed upon any thing, the thing was done. When every member of his domestic and political systems moved smoothly in its appointed course, his nature was bland and genial; but whenever there was a little hitch, and some of his orbs got out of their orbits, he was blander and more genial still, for nothing pleased him so much as to make the crooked straight, and crush down uneven places. Among the borrowed notions by which his barbarism had become semified was that of the public arena, in which, by exhibitions of manly and beastly valor, the minds of his subjects were refined and cultured. But even here the exuberant and barbaric fancy asserted itself. The arena of the king was built, not to give the people an opportunity of hearing the rhapsodies of dying gladiators, nor to enable them to view the inevitable conclusion of a conflict between religious opinions and hungry jaws, but for purposes far better adapted to widen and develop the mental energies of the people. This vast amphitheatre, with its encircling galleries, its mysterious vaults, and its unseen passages, was an agent of poetic justice, in which crime was punished. Or virtue rewarded, by the decrees of an impartial and incorruptible chance. When all the people had assembled in the galleries, and the king, surrounded by his court, sat high up on his throne of royal state on one side of the arena, he gave a signal, a door beneath him opened, and the accused subject stepped out into the amphitheatre. Directly opposite him, on the other side of the enclosed space, were two doors, exactly alike and side by side. It was the duty and the privilege of the person on trial, to walk directly to these doors and open one of them. He could open either door he pleased: If he opened the one, there came out of it a hungry tiger, the fiercest and most cruel that could be procured, which immediately sprang upon him, and tore him to pieces, as a punishment for his guilt. The moment that the case of the criminal was thus decided, doleful iron bells were clanged, great wails went up from the hired mourners posted on the outer rim of the arena, and the vast audience, with bowed heads and downcast hearts, wended slowly their homeward way, mourning greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have merited so dire a fate. But, if the accused person opened the other door, there came forth from it a lady, the most suitable to his years and station that his majesty could select among his fair subjects; and to this lady he was immediately married, as a reward of his innocence. It mattered not that he might already possess a wife and family, or that his affections might be engaged upon an object of his own selection: The exercises, as in the other instance, took place immediately, and in the arena. Then the gay brass bells rang forth their merry peals, the people shouted glad hurrahs, and the innocent man, preceded by children strewing flowers on his path, led his bride to his home. Its perfect fairness is obvious. The criminal could not know out of which door would come the lady: On some occasions the tiger came out of one door, and on some out of the other. The decisions of this tribunal were not only fair, they were positively determinate: The institution was a very popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days, they never knew whether they were to witness a bloody slaughter or a hilarious wedding. This element of uncertainty lent an interest to the occasion which it could not otherwise have attained. Thus, the masses were entertained and pleased, and the thinking part of the community could bring no charge of unfairness against this plan; for did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands? This semi-barbaric king had a daughter as blooming as his most florid fancies, and with a soul as fervent and imperious as his own. As is usual in such cases, she was the apple of his eye, and was loved by him above all humanity. Among his courtiers was a young man of that

fineness of blood and lowness of station common to the conventional heroes of romance who love royal maidens. This royal maiden was well satisfied with her lover, for he was handsome and brave to a degree unsurpassed in all this kingdom; and she loved him with an ardor that had enough of barbarism in it to make it exceedingly warm and strong. This love affair moved on happily for many months, until one day the king happened to discover its existence. He did not hesitate nor waver in regard to his duty in the premises. This, of course, was an especially important occasion; and his majesty, as well as all the people, was greatly interested in the workings and development of this trial. Never before had such a case occurred; never before had a subject dared to love the daughter of a king. In after-years such things became commonplace enough; but then they were, in no slight degree, novel and startling. The tiger-cages of the kingdom were searched for the most savage and relentless beasts, from which the fiercest monster might be selected for the arena; and the ranks of maiden youth and beauty throughout the land were carefully surveyed by competent judges, in order that he, young man, might have a fitting bride in case fate did not determine for him a different destiny. Of course, everybody knew that the deed with which the accused was charged had been done. He had loved the princess, and neither he, she, nor any one else thought of denying the fact; but the king would not think of allowing any fact of this kind to interfere with the workings of the tribunal, in which he took such great delight and satisfaction. No matter how the affair turned out, the youth would be disposed of; and the king would take an aesthetic pleasure in watching the course of events, which would determine whether or not the young man had done wrong in allowing himself to love the princess. The appointed day arrived. From far and near the people gathered, and thronged the great galleries of the arena; and crowds, unable to gain admittance, massed themselves against its outside walls. The king and his court were in their places, opposite the twin doors,--those fateful portals, so terrible in their similarity. The signal was given. A door beneath the royal party opened, and the lover of the princess walked into the arena. Tall, beautiful, fair, his appearance was greeted with a low hum of admiration and anxiety. Half the audience had not known so grand a youth had lived among them. No wonder the princess loved him! What a terrible thing for him to be there! As the youth advanced into the arena, he turned, as the custom was, to bow to the king: Had it not been for the moiety of barbarism in her nature, it is probable that lady would not have been there; but her intense and fervid soul would not allow her to be absent on an occasion in which she was so terribly interested. Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than any one who had ever before been interested in such a case, she had done what no other person had done,--she had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. She knew in which of the two rooms, that lay behind those doors, stood the cage of the tiger, with its open front, and in which waited the lady. And not only did she know in which room stood the lady ready to emerge, all blushing and radiant, should her door be opened, but she knew who the lady was. It was one of the fairest and loveliest of the damsels of the court who had been selected as the reward of the accused youth, should he be proved innocent of the crime of aspiring to one so far above him; and the princess hated her. Often had she seen, or imagined that she had seen, this fair creature throwing glances of admiration upon the person of her lover, and sometimes she thought these glances were perceived and even returned. Now and then she had seen them talking together; it was but for a moment or two, but much can be said in a brief space; it may have been on most unimportant topics, but how could she know that? The girl was lovely, but she had dared to raise her eyes to the loved one of the princess; and, with all the intensity of the savage blood transmitted to her through long lines of wholly barbaric ancestors, she hated the woman who blushed and trembled behind that silent door. When her lover turned and looked at her, and his eye met hers as she sat there paler and whiter than any one in the vast ocean of anxious faces about her, he saw, by that power of quick perception which is given to those whose souls are one, that she knew behind which door crouched the tiger, and behind which stood the lady. He had expected her to know it. He understood her nature, and his soul was assured that she would never rest until she had made plain to herself this thing, hidden to all other lookers-on, even to the king. The only hope for the youth in which there was any element of certainty was based upon the success of the princess in discovering this mystery; and the moment he looked upon her, he saw she had succeeded, as in his soul he knew she would succeed. Then it was that his quick and anxious glance asked the question: There was not an instant to be lost. The question was asked in a Rash; it must be answered in another. Her right arm lay on the

cushioned parapet before her. She raised her hand, and made a slight, quick movement toward the right. No one but her lover saw her. Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena. Every heart stopped beating, every breath was held, every eye was fixed immovably upon that man. Without the slightest hesitation, he went to the door on the right, and opened it. Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady? The more we reflect upon this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart which leads us through devious mazes of passion, out of which it is difficult to find our way. Think of it, fair reader, not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself, but upon that hot-blooded, semi-barbaric princess, her soul at a white heat beneath the combined fires of despair and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him? How often, in her waking hours and in her dreams, had she started in wild horror, and covered her face with her hands, as she thought of her lover opening the door on the other side of which waited the cruel fangs of the tiger! But how much oftener had she seen him at the other door! How in her grievous reveries had she gnashed her teeth, and torn her hair, when she saw his start of rapturous delight as he opened the door of the lady! How her soul had burned in agony when she had seen him rush to meet that woman, with her flushing cheek and sparkling eye of triumph; when she had seen him lead her forth, his whole frame kindled with the joy of recovered life; when she had heard the glad shouts from the multitude, and the wild ringing of the happy bells; when she had seen the priest, with his joyous followers, advance to the couple, and make them man and wife before her very eyes; and when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the tremendous shouts of the hilarious multitude, in which her one despairing shriek was lost and drowned! Would it not be better for him to die at once, and go to wait for her in the blessed regions of semi-barbaric futurity? And yet, that awful tiger, those shrieks, that blood! Her decision had been indicated in an instant, but it had been made after days and nights of anguished deliberation. She had known she would be asked, she had decided what she would answer, and, without the slightest hesitation, she had moved her hand to the right. The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered, and it is not for me to presume to set myself up as the one person able to answer it. And so I leave it with all of you: Which came out of the opened door,—the lady, or the tiger? The Lady, or the Tiger? We offer a useful The Lady, or the Tiger? Get started by clicking the "Add" button. Add The Lady, or the Tiger? Return to the Frank Stockton Home Page, or. Read the next short story; The Magic Egg.

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