The Lady, or the Tiger?

Frank R. Stockton
Meet Frank R. Stockton (1834-1902)

• At the height of his success, Frank R. Stockton was considered a major literary figure in the United States, second in importance only to Mark Twain.

• Stockton’s body of work fills twenty-three volumes and includes stories, novels, and nonfiction.

• Yet today, this writer is known primarily for his story, “The Lady, or the Tiger?”

• The story created a stir at the time it was published, as well as afterward; it was later turned into an operetta, a play, a movie, and a recording.
A literary plot has five elements:

- Exposition
- Rising Action
- Climax
- Falling Action
- Resolution
Dramatic Plot Structure

**Exposition**  During a plot’s exposition, the author gives background information about the story and introduces the story’s characters and setting. The exposition also introduces the main conflict.

**Rising Action**  Rising action is the series of events that lead up to the climax, or most dramatic moment, of the story.

**Climax**  The climax is a story’s most dramatic and revealing moment. It usually comes near the end of a story and satisfies the reader’s curiosity about what happens.
Dramatic Plot Structure

- **Falling Action**  The falling action follows the climax and describes the results of the climax.

- **Resolution**  The resolution, or *denouement*, comes at the end of the falling action.

- “The Lady, or the Tiger?” has a trick ending—readers must supply the resolution.
The Lady, or The Tiger? — Frank Stockton

Setting

- Place
- Time
- Characters
- Situation

- Olden times
- Semi-barbaric kingdom
- King, princess, young man

King has put daughter’s unsuitable lover on trial. The princess’s struggle between love and jealousy governs the outcome.
Dramatic Plot Structure

Conflict

Most plots develop around a conflict, or struggle between two or more forces in a story.

External conflict is the battle between a character and an outside force—nature, society, fate, or another character.

Internal conflict is the battle within the mind of a character who is torn between different courses of action.
Connecting to the Story

Quick Writes # 4  in Tab 4
Discuss a time in your life in which you were “caught between a rock and a hard place” and had a dilemma or quandary, in which you needed to make a choice between two courses of action and neither seemed quite right. What decision did you finally make and tell why you chose “the lesser of two evils.” Narrate this situation as if you are telling a friend about the situation.
The Lady, or The Tiger? — Frank Stockton

Connecting to the Story

Would you trust your life to a friend?

Before you read the story, think about the following questions:

• Which is a stronger emotion — love or jealousy?
• How completely can one person ever know and understand another?
During the Middle Ages in England, guilt or innocence was decided through a practice known as an ordeal. An accused person was physically tested, and the outcome determined guilt or innocence. The accusers believed that supernatural forces controlled what happened. For instance, in the ordeal by water, the accused person was tied up and thrown into deep water. A person who floated was thought to be guilty; a person who sank was considered innocent. Unfortunately, those who sank often drowned before they could be hauled back up.

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Matters of Life and Death

As you read this story, notice how the characters value life and death in different ways.
impartial  adj. not favoring one side more than another; fair; An honest judge is impartial.

emanate  verb. to come forth; We never heard any sound emanate from that room.

dire  adj. dreadful; terrible; Breaking certain rules can have dire consequences.
**The Lady, or The Tiger?**—Frank Stockton

**Vocabulary**

**fervent** *adj.* having or showing great intensity of feeling; passionate; *The coach was a fervent believer in practicing every day in order to improve.*

**novel** *adj.* new and unusual; *Since that older method seldom works, try a more novel approach.*

**Vocabulary Tip: Multiple-Meaning Words** Many words have more than one meaning. Use context to help determine a word’s correct meaning.

Now it’s time to read the story!
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Vocabulary

**imperious** *adj.* domineering and overbearing; *The coach used an imperious philosophy to coach the team.*

**presume** *verb.* to assume or take for granted; *Students should not presume that they can sit in the teacher’s chair behind their desk.*

**Vocabulary Tip: Multiple-Meaning Words** Many words have more than one meaning. Use context to help determine a word’s correct meaning.

Now it’s time to read the story!
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In your Quick Writes Section as #5 Entry, Continue the Story as you think it should end. Begin with “She moved her hand to the right” and then........
Why do the king’s subjects enjoy the life-or-death trial?

The uncertainty is exciting.

The Lady, or The Tiger?—Frank Stockton

Why does a life-or-death trial appeal to the king?

The king enjoys putting people at the mercy of a heartless and whimsical fate and uses this cruel spectacle to teach his subjects a lesson.

Why do the king’s subjects enjoy the life-or-death trial?

The uncertainty is exciting.
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Recall and Interpret

(a) In the kingdom described in the story, what happens when a person is accused of a crime? (b) Why do the members of the community support this method?

(a) The accused person must choose between two doors concealing either a tiger that will kill him or a woman who will marry him. Chance governs his choice. (b) They find the trials exciting and entertaining, as well as fair, since the accused made the choice.
Recall and Interpret

(a) What is the young man's crime?
(b) Why are his actions considered criminal?

(a) Loving the king’s daughter
(b) His low position in society made him an unworthy suitor.
Recall and Interpret

(a) What does the princess do when the young man is in the arena? (b) What motive does she have for sending him to his death, and what motive does she have for saving his life?

(a) Gesture toward the right (b) Jealousy; true, unselfish love
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- **Analyze and Evaluate**

  Why do you think the story ends with a question instead of an answer?

  To invite readers to ponder the conflict between love and jealousy.
Connect

In what ways is the king’s justice similar to flipping a coin to decide an important question?

In both cases, chance alone determines the outcome.
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Why is the princess's internal conflict so central to the story? Her decision governs if the young man lives or dies. Your view of her will affect your choice of resolution.

What conflicts does the young man have? Are his conflicts internal or external? Support your answers with details from the story.

External: which door to open – possibly facing the tiger

Internal: whether to believe the princess

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LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary Element: Conflict

Define 2nd Person Point of View and find the first 5 words that begin the Point of View in the text.

When the author speaks directly to the reader. “Think of it, fair reader.”

Define Hyperbole and find an example of it in the text. Hint: towards the end.

Hyperbole is extreme exaggeration. “Every heart stopped beating, every breath was held…”
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LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary Element: Conflict

How is the princess in this story different than the "typical" fairy tale princess?

She is different in that she is jealous and not allowed to have her prince charming.

When does the climax of the story occur?

The climax occurs when she moves her hand to the right and the young man opens the door.
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LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary Element: Conflict

Through inference, which door do you think the princess leads the youth to? State your claim and use evidence from the text for support. This should be a paragraph answer 5-7 sentences.

What is the theme or lesson of the story?

Jealousy is not compatible with love and often will destroy love.