The Lady, or the Tiger?
Author

- Frank R. Stockton
- 1834-1902

- Prolific writer in the United States whose popularity ranked second only to Mark Twain during his time.

- Stockton’s works include stories, novels, and nonfiction.
Author

• Frank R. Stockton, Continued

• His most lasting and famous work is “The Lady, or the Tiger?”

• The short story has been adapted in an operetta, a play, a movie, a recording, and even inspired the creation of the game show *Let’s Make a Deal.*
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 Lady, or the Tiger?” borrow on this idea, but instead of a physical test they are put to a mental one.
Literary Focus

Literary Focus
• Irony

• In almost all cases, a person would want the person they love to control their fate.
• “The Lady, or the Tiger?” tests this theory and makes the reader wonder if in this case the exact opposite is true.
Literary Focus

• Internal Conflict

• Internal Conflict #1: a life or death choice is a central conflict of the story

• Internal Conflict #2: picking feelings of loyalty or feelings of jealous are a central conflict of the story
Literary Focus

- **Ambiguity**

- The end of “The Lady, or the Tiger?” is left open-ended for the reader and can be interpreted many different ways.

- Often one’s own experiences will shape how they view ending of the story.
Themes and Focus

• Man’s Brutal Nature
  – Although described as partially refined, the king and his people are often ruled by their animalistic nature

• Love vs. Jealousy
  – The choice of whether to follow love or give into jealousy drives the suspense of the story
Themes and Focus

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• Loyalty vs. Selfishness
  – The reader’s thoughts on the ending will be shaped by their own thoughts on man’s tendency to follow loyalty or give into selfishness
Summary and Plot Overview

• A king enjoys putting his people at the mercy of their own hands:
  – The accused person must choose between two doors concealing either a tiger that will kill him or a woman who will marry him.
Summary and Plot Overview

The trial takes on added intrigue when the lover of the king’s daughter is brought into the area:

– Will he live another day and marry another woman, or will he be eaten by the tiger?
Character Analysis

• The King
  – Enjoys his own brand of justice—those who enter the arena choose their own fate

• The Princess
  – Falls in love for a man beneath her rank. Will she remain loyal to him or let her own jealousy prevail?

• The Suitor
  – Plays with fire by becoming involved with the princess. Should he trust that she will help him survive the arena?