

## The Lady or the Tiger? by Frank Stockton

(Paragraph 1 from the 1882 short story)

Do Now: (1) Please read the paragraph below, making notes if you like.

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.

Complicated Writing

(2) Please rewrite the paragraph more simply, telling the reader only what they really need to know.

Simpler Writing

(3) Now say the same thing in a single sentence, as simply as possible.

Simplest Writing

## The Lady or the Tiger? Part 2

adapted from the short story by Frank Stockton

*Please rewrite the important parts of these 4 sections in your own words.*

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... 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...

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 amphitheater. 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...

(1)

(2)

(3)

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...

...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...

(4)

...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 accused person was instantly punished if he found himself guilty, and, if innocent, he was rewarded on the spot, whether he liked it or not. There was no escape from the judgments of the king's arena...

...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. The youth was immediately cast into prison, and a day was appointed for his trial in the king's arena. 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.

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 the 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,.. Princesses, however, have options of which others can only dream.

Although it was the king who sat enthroned high above the arena floor, commanding the spectacle of his justice at work, the actual secret of life or death in the arena was held by the one man in the city who never watched a prisoner throw open a door and seal his fate. This man, the tiger-keeper, would let the fearsome beast out of its holding cage and into one of the two small rooms on the other sides of those two fateful doors. The tiger-keeper did his job in complete ignorance; he never knew who it was in the arena or what he had done to be cast there. His job was merely to let a man-eating tiger into either room, completely at his own discretion. Though he could not see beyond the holding cage or into the arena, the roar of the crowd always told him which door had been chosen.

As was the custom of the time, the tiger-keeper had learned his trade at his father's knee, he being the latest in a hereditary job that defined him at birth. Though he had grown up and spent his life in the same palace as the royal family, the low status and pungent feline odor of the tiger-keepers insured that he glimpsed only from afar the fiery, radiant beauty of the princess, born the same year as he, laughing with her perfumed ladies away across the courtyard, and in his dreams. Now she had come to him, treading down the dungeon steps and calling his unfamiliar name. Those eyes he loved looked upon him at last, fierce pride melting in sorrow as she tearfully begged him to tell her behind which door the fearsome tiger would lurk upon the morrow. The tiger-keeper looked back into the eyes which had never noticed him before and answered her, bathing in the gratitude she rained down upon him.

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.

All was ready. 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... When her lover turned and looked at her, and his eye met hers as she sat there... 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: "Which?" It was as plain to her as if he shouted it from where he stood. There was not an instant to be lost. The question was asked in a flash; 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.

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... and opened it...

And so I leave it with all of you: ...which door did he open and what came out the opened door -- the lady or the tiger?

HW: Write an ending to this story, making sure to tell the following:

- 1) whether the tiger-keeper told the truth to the princess or lied to her
- 2) what the princess believed was behind the door on the right, the lady or the tiger
- 3) which door the lover chose
- 4) whether the lover was eaten or married