Unit 5

Title: The Lady, or the Tiger?

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.5; W.9-10.1, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.9, SL.9-10.1; L.9-10.1, L.9-10.2, L.9-10.4

Teacher Instructions

**Preparing for Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

* Jealousy can cause people to act unjustly.
* Unconditional love is selfless.

Synopsis

“The Lady, or the Tiger?” by Frank R. Stockton is about a fairy tale king who edifies his subjects through public trials with verdicts that are determined by chance. The accused subject must choose to open one of two identical doors. Behind one door is the reward—a beautiful maiden to marry. Behind the other door lies the punishment—a ferocious tiger. When the princess’s lover is discovered and jailed, the trial takes on personal significance for the king and the princess. The young man’s hopes for survival rest with the princess. The author adds a layer of ambiguity to her action by revealing that the maiden behind the “door of innocence” is the princess’s rival.

1. Read the entire selection, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Tier II/academic vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire selection independently.
2. Teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along or students take turns reading aloud to each other. Depending on the text length and student need, the teacher may choose to read the full text or a passage aloud. For a particularly complex text, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions, continually returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text-dependent Questions** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| How does the author show that the king is semi-barbaric? With support from the text, explain in one sentence how he is barbaric, and in another sentence, how he is civilized, or progressive. |  The author shows that the king is barbaric by having “large, florid, and untrammeled” ideas. The king demonstrates his progressive side by his use of the public arena, in which “the minds of his subjects were refined and cultured.” |
| When the author states that the king “was greatly given to self-communing,” what does this say about the way he rules? | The author describes the king by saying, “When he and himself agreed upon any thing, the thing was done.” This shows that the king follows his own counsel, and does not rely on the democratic process. |
| Break sentence four of paragraph one into its individual parts (divided by commas and semi-colons). Explain what is being discussed in each part of the sentence and explain the purpose for the use of commas, semi-colons and conjunctions. How did this process help you to better understand the character of the king? | The author begins the sentence by explaining how the king is happy when all in his kingdom runs smoothly: *When every member of his domestic and political systems moved smoothly in its appointed course, his nature was bland and genial;* The semi-colon and the conjunction “but,” however, shows the contrast between the first part and second part of the sentence. In the second part of the sentence, the author uses a metaphor set off by commas to describe disorder in the kingdom: *but whenever there was a little hitch, and some of his orbs got out of their orbits,* The author then uses another comma to explain how this makes him even happier than he would be in the first instance: *he was blander and more genial still,*Then he uses another comma and the word “for,” which is a word of explanation, to explain, once again in figurative language, how he enjoys restoring order in his kingdom: *for nothing pleased him so much as to make the crooked straight, and crush down uneven places.* This also indicates that the king likes to be in control and to mete out quick and final justice.This process helps the reader understand that the king enjoys his position of power and especially enjoys exerting that power over others. |
| Drawing on the text, describe the king’s method of administering justice within the arena. | When the king “gave a signal, a door beneath him opened, and the accused subject stepped out into the amphitheater.” The accused “could open either door he pleased…If he opened the one, there came out of it a hungry tiger…as a punishment for his guilt…But, if the accused person opened the other door, there came forth from it a lady…and to this lady he was immediately married, as a reward of his innocence.” |
| What characteristics does the king’s daughter share with her father? | She is “as blooming as [the king’s] most florid fancies, and with a soul as fervent and imperious as his own.” |
| Describe the princess’s passion for her lover. What role does her barbarism play? | She 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.” Since it wasn’t acceptable for a princess to carry on with a subject, the excitement of doing wrong might also have appealed to her barbarous nature. |
| Why doesn’t the king approve of the youth’s love for his daughter? What clues from the text make this clear? | The author states that the youth was of “a lowness of station.” This indicates that he would not be a good match for a princess. He also states that “never before had a subject dared to love the daughter of a king.” Clearly, the fact that the king cast the youth in prison and scheduled him for a trial in the arena demonstrates that the king did not approve of the love affair. |
| According to the story, “No matter how the affair turned out, the youth would be disposed of.” What does this mean? Would justice have been administered fairly? Why or why not? | The king knew that whether the youth was killed by the tiger or married off to the maiden, his affair with the princess would be ended, thus solving the king’s problem. If you believe that the arena is “an agent of poetic justice, in which crime is punished, or virtue rewarded, by the decrees of an impartial and incorruptible chance,” then justice was administered fairly. However, if you believe that guilt or innocence should not be determined by chance, then this type of trial is definitely unjust. |
| Why do you think the young man trusts the princess to save his life? Drawing from the text, explain how he knows that she will guide him to choose the right door. | When the young man looked at the princess, 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.” Furthermore, “He had expected her to know it” because “He understood her nature, and his soul was assured that that she would never rest until she had made plain to herself this thing, hidden to all other lookers-on, even to the king.” Since he did not hesitate to choose the door she indicated to him, this shows that he trusted in her love completely to save his life. |
| The princess experiences many “grievous reveries” about the fate of her lover. How do you think these influenced her decision? | Although the princess often “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!…how much oftener had she seen him at the other door!” Since she spends more time agonizing over her lover’s potential reception of the other woman (“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!) It suggests that she might be more swayed by jealousy than by unconditional love.  |
| After careful consideration of the princess’s “hot-blooded, semi barbaric” nature, what do you think came out of the door, the lady or the tiger? Support your claim using evidence from the text. | Some students might say that they believe the tiger came out of the door because the author emphasizes the princess’s barbaric nature, and he dwells on her emotional rivalry, describing “her soul at a white heat beneath the combined fires of despair and jealousy.” Other students might argue that the maiden is behind the door, noting that the princess’s last thoughts before making her decision are about the “awful tiger, those shrieks, that blood!” |

Tier II/Academic Vocabulary

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|  | **These words require less time to learn**(They are concrete or describe an object/event/process/characteristic that is familiar to students) | **These words require more time to learn**(They are abstract, have multiple meanings, are a part of a word family, or are likely to appear again in future texts) |
| **Meaning can be learned from context** | progressivenessself-communingrhapsodiesidealismdolefulwendedgnashedanguished  | valoringraftedemanatedsubordinateportalsfuturitydeliberation  |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | genialfloridsolemnizedcourtiersardordeviousreveriesrapturouspresume | poetic justiceimpartial incorruptibleperception |

Culminating Writing Task

* Prompt

*At the end of the story, “The Lady, or the Tiger?” by Frank R. Stockton, the author cautions the reader to carefully consider the question of whether it was the lady or the tiger that came out of the arena door. Although he never explicitly answers the question himself, he does provide evidence for both positions. Choose the outcome that you believe is best supported by the text, and compose an argument that includes at least three textual references to support your claim using direct quotes and page numbers.*

* Teacher Instructions
1. Students identify their writing task from the prompt provided.
2. Students complete an evidence chart as a pre-writing activity. Teachers should remind students to use any relevant notes they compiled while reading and answering the text-dependent questions.

The evidence that follows supports the belief that the princess sent her lover to the tiger’s door and a brutal death.

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| ***Evidence******Quote or paraphrase******Possible examples follow)*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| “The semi barbaric king had a daughter as blooming as his most florid fancies, and a soul as fervent and imperious as his own.” | The fact that the princess is passionate and self-important suggests that she would not allow another woman to possess her lover. |
| “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 fervid soul would not allow her to be absent on an occasion in which she was so terribly interested.” | Due to the fact that this “lady” is half barbaric and thus, enjoys the barbaric display of the arena, part of her nature would like to see her lover eaten by the tiger. This fact is even more evident in the second half of the quote when Stockton explains that her fervid soul would not “allow” her to be absent. “ |
| “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 the silent door.” | There is no way that a woman with a nature such as the princess’s would allow a woman she hated to be married to the man she loved. |
| “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.” | Her passionate rage inflicted upon herself in her dreams could easily be redirected when she obtained the power to determine her lover’s destiny. The rage of her barbarism will prevail because it is combined with her earlier stated imperious nature. |
| “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?” | The princess asks this question of herself in response to the image of her lover’s marriage to the fair maiden she played over and over again in her mind. She has obviously determined that it would be better for him to die and wait for her in eternity than to allow him to fall into another’s arms.  |

The evidence that follows supports the belief that the princess saves her beloved and chooses the door with the maiden.

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| ***Evidence******Quote or paraphrase******Possible examples follow)*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| “It mattered not that he 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.” | And this is the situation the courtier found himself in, he was engaged in an unlawful affair with the princess, for he was deemed to be below her station.  |
| “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.” | This wild and self-important nature that the princess possesses, all the more suggests that she will let no one deprive her of her lover’s life.  |
| “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 exceptional man inspired her un-tethered passion, which in her position of princess was undoubtedly restrained by her power hungry, manipulative father.  |
| “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, not anyone else thought of denying the fact.” | The love was so great between the princess and her lover that no one would dare deny that such a love existed. |
| “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” | Though it is stated that the youth would be disposed of, in the case of the maiden’s door, the courtier would still be alive and the guilt of his death would not follow the princess. |
| “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!” | The princess’s lover was an exceptionally handsome man, who was admired by all. The princess would not be able to betray such a love.  |
| “Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than anyone 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.” | The princess is not willing to let anyone, other than herself, determine the events in her life. She used her power, influence, and money to determine what lay behind each door in order that she may be in control of her and her lover’s fate. |
| “But gold, and the power of a woman’s will, had brought the secret to the princess.” | The princess’s love for her soul mate was so great that she divined a way to save his life.  |
| “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.”‘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.”  | When two people share a love as deeply as the princess and her lover, their souls are intertwined and they can perceive all matters of the heart. Just as Adam said of Eve in Genesis 2:23, “this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” Though two separate people that are yet as one.  |
| “Without the slightest hesitation, he went to the door on the right, and opened it. “ | The princess’ lover knew the depth of love the princess felt for him, and thus did not hesitate to open the door that she had shrewdly discover in order to save his life.  |
| “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!” | The death of her lover haunted her dreams. What would be worse than watching one’s loved one being torn to shreds.  |
| “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.” | Knowing that their souls were stitched together as one, she knew that he would have discernment as to her knowledge of the doors. And as a garment ripped apart is useless, the princess knew that she could not betray the love of her soul. She immediately chose to spare his life and wait until they can once again be together in the “blessed regions of semi barbaric futurity” (pg. 304)  |

1. Once students have completed the evidence chart, they should look back at the writing prompt in order to remind themselves what kind of response they are writing (i.e. expository, analytical, argumentative) and think about the evidence they found. (Depending on the grade level, teachers may want to review students’ evidence charts in some way to ensure accuracy.) From here, students should develop a specific thesis statement. This could be done independently, with a partner, small group, or the entire class. Consider directing students to the following sites to learn more about thesis statements: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/ OR http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/ thesis\_statement.shtml.
2. Students compose a rough draft. With regard to grade level and student ability, teachers should decide how much scaffolding they will provide during this process (i.e. modeling, showing example pieces, sharing work as students go).
3. Students complete final draft.
* Sample Answer #1

The Jealous Princess

In Frank R. Stockton’s short story, “The Lady, or the Tiger” Stockton introduces the reader to a semi-barbaric princess whose lover, a courtier to the king, has been discovered and consequently subjected to an arbitrary judgment of his actions within an arena filled with spectators. The offender must choose between two doors: behind one, waits a terrible and vicious tiger; behind the other, stands a beautiful maiden to whom he will immediately be wed. After describing the situation and the princess’s nature in detail, Stockton leaves the decision up to the reader: does the princess direct her lover to his eventual death or does she allow him to marry a woman she hates? It should be clear to a careful reader that Stockton provides overwhelming evidence that, indeed, the princess has chosen the demise of her former lover and has directed him to be ripped to shreds by a ferocious tiger.

Most women, and for that matter most anyone, would cringe at the prospect of letting the love of their life fall into the hands of another. In fact, the courthouses in our country are filled every day with crimes of passion. Stockton’s princess is not a docile creature who would allow another pretty woman to prance through the kingdom with the princess’s lover on her arm. Stockton explains that “The semi-barbaric king had a daughter as blooming as his most florid fancies, and a soul as fervent and imperious as his own”. Consequently, a princess as passionate and as self-important as is described could not bear to live under these conditions.

Contrariwise, some would argue that the princess was so infatuated with her lover that she would let him marry the maiden rather than see him die a cruel death. This interpretation would be plausible if not for the countless descriptions of the princess as possessing a wild soul within. Stockton explains, “had it not been for the moiety of barbarism in her nature, it is probable that lady [the princess} would not have been there; but her intense fervid soul would not allow her to be absent on an occasion in which she was so terribly interested”. It is apparent from this description that this “lady” is no lady at all. She enjoys the barbaric display of the arena and has come to see her lover devoured by a tiger. It is the second half of the quote that makes this fact so clear; “her fervid soul would not allow her to be absent”. A lady would not be able to watch such barbarism, but this type of display is precisely what the princess craves.

Despite this craving for bloodshed, the princess did love the courtier and would no doubt have saved him if it were not for the addition of the most incorrigible complication: the maiden lurking behind the door to the left. “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 the silent door” (Holt, p. 302). How could a hate as deep as this be rewarded? To the contrary, the passion of the princess had been kindled and the fire of her rage would not be quenched until the end of these “grievous reveries” where she had “gnashed her teeth, and torn her hair” ends.

Finally, Stockton provides one final clue regarding the decision of the princess; and it is a clue directly from the mind of the princess. The princess reflects, “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?” This is her final thought on the matter, and thus she has sealed the coffin of her lover until they meet in their semi-barbaric eternity. The question is, is this eternity Heaven or Hell? Consider this! The princess committed a pre-meditated murder, a crime of passion: her soul burns with a “white heat”. This clue is as clear as Stockton’s, she sent her lover to the tiger. What is her just reward?

* Sample answer #2

The Door of the Maiden

In the short story, “The Lady, or the Tiger,” by Frank R. Stockton, there lived a semi-barbaric king who devised a way to both entertain himself and his people, while at the same time portioning out “poetic justice” to those accused of a crime. The system was simple. The accused party was paraded out into a crowded arena and told to choose between two doors. Behind one lurked a hungry tiger and behind the other a fair maiden to which the accused would be wed, if, by chance, he chose her door. Ironically, the king’s daughter was caught in an unlawful love affair and as a result, her lover would be tried within the arena. The princess made it her business to discover which lay behind each of the two doors and thus controlled the fate of her lover. So now the princess must choose between permitting her lover to be wed to another woman or barbarously being torn to shreds by a tiger. However, at the end of the short story, the author leaves the reader with no resolution. Instead, Stockton poses the question to the reader: “Which came out of the opened door—the lady, or the tiger?” Though there is evidence that the princess will be jealous if her lover is summarily wed to the maiden, it would be more accurate to come to the realization that no human with the love and passion felt by the princess for her lover could pronounce upon the same a vicious sentence of death.

 In this short story, Stockton introduces us to a wildly passionate and self-important princess who would never allow another to decide her fate, even her own father. “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”. This princess was so determined to follow her own path in life and make her own decisions that she unlawfully engaged in an affair with a man below her station, and when he was sentenced to face the judgment of chance within the arena, she subverted her father’s laws in order to determine, to some degree, her own future. The story’s narrator tells the reader the following:

Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than anyone who had ever before been interested in such a case, [the princess] 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”.

The princess would not allow her father or chance to decide her lover’s fate. The decision would be hers and hers alone, though she had to choose between two unsavory choices. For the sake of her lover, a courtier to the king, she undoubtedly chose to spare his life.

It is this great love for the king’s courtier that allows the princess to truly live and sparks a flame in her soul where she and her lover have stitched an eternal bond. Stockton describes the princess as being “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”. And when a pair has such a deep connection as the princess and her lover, they often share a bond so deep that they know each other’s thoughts and feelings. The princess’s lover “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”. If two people have such a close connection, how can one arbitrarily seek to tear and rip at the threads that bind them? The result is the death of both parties, if not in flesh, then within the soul. So when the princess bought the secret of the doors for the price of gold, the princess’s lover understood such matters of the heart; and when she directed him to the right, “without the slightest hesitation, he went to the door on the right, and opened it” knowing that his life was not in jeopardy.

It is with no doubt that the princess in this story would be jealous and troubled by the marriage between her lover and the fair maiden. However, the pain of knowing that she would be responsible for sending her lover to his brutal and vicious death at the jaws of a hungry tiger would be unbearable. Stockton describes “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!” Contrast this with the possibility of seeing her lover, alive within the kingdom, sharing glances and possibly even dances. So, just as a garment ripped apart is useless, the princess knew that she could not betray the love of her soul. She immediately chose to spare his life and wait until they would once again be together in the “blessed regions of semi barbaric futurity”.

Additional Tasks

* *In the story, if an accused person opened the door with a maiden behind it, he would immediately marry her whether or not he already had a girlfriend, wife, and/or family. Apart from whether or not this is a just reward for the man, what about the women involved? How just is it to break up a family or force a woman into marriage?*

Answer: Based on their own opinions, students might say that it’s unfair/unjust to destroy families or break up romances using the king’s form of justice. Using the text, a woman is referred to as “an object of his own selection.” This implies that a woman is not seen as an equal to a man and may not be offered the same rights in society. This makes sense, considering that the author, Frank R. Stockton, wrote this story in the 1880’s. Women in America and England were not given the right to vote until the 1920’s, and were thus considered “second class citizens” in the eyes of the male society. However, this information is not necessary to answer the question as to whether or not the king’s decree is just; the answer is that it absolutely is not! There is no equity for women in this text.

* *In the story, the tiger is described as the most savage and relentless of beasts. In your opinion and using evidence from the text, explain which character is most like the tiger in his/her savage nature?*

Answer: **If the student chooses the king, the following is a possible answer:** In relation to others within their species, the king is the most savage. Tigers are naturally savage and eat meat, man, or beast to survive. However, man is held to a higher standard. Men are supposed to be kind, just and fair minded. The king, however, calls justice “incorruptible chance.” Consequently, logic and fairness play no role in the king’s judicial system. Also, the king took pleasure in making “the crooked straight, and crush[ing] down the uneven places.” A kind man would not take pleasure in another man’s suffering. In summary, compared to others in its species, the king is the most savage.

**If the student chooses the Princess, the following is a possible answer:**  The princess is without a doubt the most savage of all. To begin, the author describes the princess as having “a soul as fervent and imperious as [the king’s] own”. Since both the king and the princess are described as semi-barbaric, this suggests an uncivilized nature within each. The princess, however, carries on an affair with one of the king’s courtiers behind her father’s back. This act, in itself, is selfish and barbaric. Additionally, when the affair is discovered, and the princess’s lover is sentenced to judgment in the amphitheater, the princess writhes with hate when she discovers the identity of the maiden who will become her lover’s betrothed. When thinking of the maiden, the princess “with all the intensity of the savage blood transmitted to her through long lines of wholly barbaric ancestors, … hated the woman who blushed and trembled behind that silent door”. The author, I believe, explains the extent of her savage nature when he says that the princess is a “hot blooded, semi-barbaric princess, her soul at a white heat beneath the combined fires of despair and jealousy”. A woman such as this would not allow her lover to be loved by another and thus would do what only a savage could do: send her lover to his death at the tiger’s door.