

The Choice

Our play based on Frank Stockton's classic story "The Lady, or the Tiger?" is sure to inspire passionate debate in your classroom.

About the Story

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective:

to draw a conclusion based on evidence in a story

Key Skills:

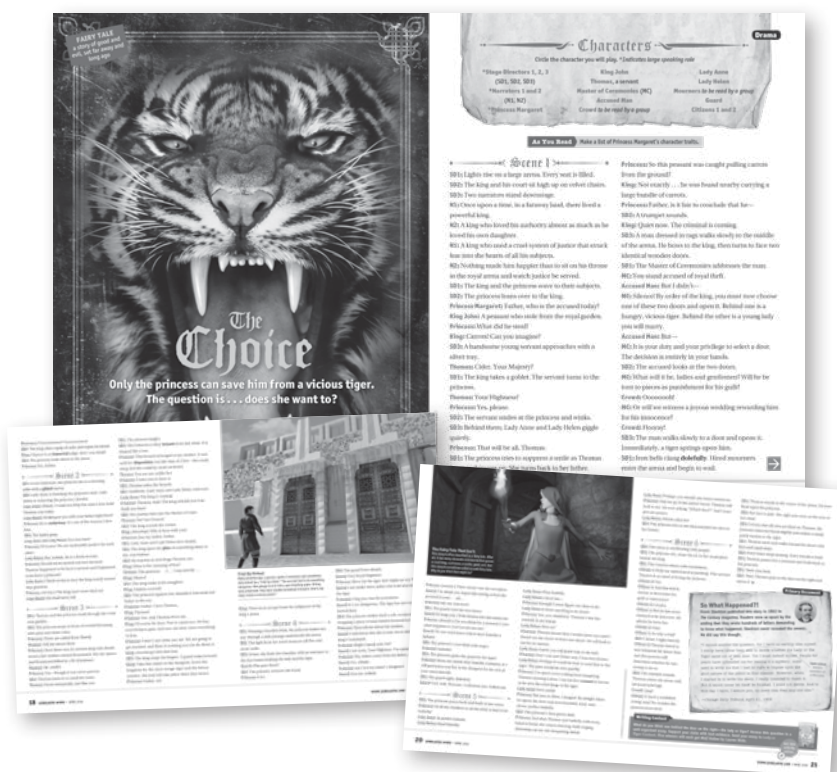
inference, character, interpreting text, author's purpose, evaluating a claim, drawing conclusions

Essential Questions:

- Which is more powerful: love or jealousy?
- How do cliffhangers affect the reading experience?
- What responsibility do authors have to their readers?

Standards:

The texts and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: **R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.6, R.9, W.1, W.9, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.6.** For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of materials at
scope.scholastic.com.

Audio: Vocabulary

Literature Connections: Ideas for connecting to curricular texts

Activities to print or project:

- Vocabulary
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Drawing Conclusions: Evidence Chart
- Quiz*
- **Core Skills Workout:** Mood*
- **Literary Elements:** Character Thinking Tool, Theme Anticipation Guide
- Contest Entry Form

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1 Preparing to Read

Do-Now: Discuss love and jealousy.

(5 minutes)

- As students enter the classroom, have them respond in their writing journals to the following: *Your best friend joins the track team. She makes new friends and she's very happy, but she doesn't have much time for you anymore. Which is stronger: feeling happy for her or feeling abandoned and resentful?*
- Then post these definitions: *Love: a strong, constant feeling of affection* and *Jealousy: fear of the loss of a loved one's devotion*. Explain that both words can be defined in a number of ways but that these definitions work best with the play students are about to read. Ask students which emotion they think is stronger. Take a poll and write the results on the board.

Preview vocabulary.

(7 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project or distribute the **Vocabulary Words and Definitions**. Words: *audacious, brooch, contort, disposition, dolefully, gilded, glint, impartial*

2 Reading and Discussing the Play

(30 minutes, activity sheet online)

- Read aloud the As You Read box on page 17.
- Assign parts and read the play as a class.
- Discuss the following questions in groups.

Close-Reading Questions

▶ **Based on Princess Margaret's words and actions in Scene 1, how does she feel about her father's justice system?** (inference, character) *Princess Margaret has doubts about the fairness of the system; however, she doesn't*

press the issue with her father. This may be because she doesn't feel strongly enough about it or because she doubts that doing so would make a difference.

▶ **In Scene 3, Princess Margaret says that Thomas loves her. King John replies,**

"Of course he does. You're a princess. He has everything to gain. . . ." What does he mean? (interpreting text) *The king means that Thomas's "love" for the princess might really be greed. The king believes that Thomas hopes to gain wealth and status by winning the princess's affection.*

▶ **In Scene 4, why is Princess Margaret hiding a piece of meat under her cloak?**

(inference) *Answers may vary. Some may say that the princess knows the tiger hasn't eaten in days, and she thinks that if she feeds the tiger, it won't be hungry enough to eat Thomas.*

▶ **In Scene 5, Lady Anne and Lady Helen take turns listing Isabella's virtues. What might be the author's reason for presenting information in this way?** (author's purpose)

The author likely presents the information in this way for humorous effect as well as to show that Isabella is a great person. It introduces the idea that Thomas might be pleased to marry Isabella.

▶ **At the end of the play, Thomas opens the door that the princess indicates. Based on this act, what can you infer about Thomas?**

(inference, character) *Answers may vary. Most students will probably say that Thomas trusts the princess not to feed him to a tiger (though he does take a second look at her before he opens the door). Others might say that he loves her so much, he will accept whatever she decides.*

3 Reading the Primary Document

(10 minutes, activity sheet online)

As a class, read “So What Happened?!” on page 21 and discuss the following questions.

Close-Reading Questions

▶ According to Frank Stockton, readers of “The Lady, or the Tiger?” wrote to tell him that he “had no right to impose upon the good nature of the public in that manner.” In what way can the story be said to take advantage of the public? (evaluating a claim) *Readers expect a resolution at the end of a story. Some readers might feel that Stockton tricked them by writing a story that doesn’t have a clear ending.*

▶ Stockton wrote that the story “would never let itself be finished.” What do you think he meant? (interpreting text) *Stockton may have meant that neither of Princess Margaret’s options lends itself to a truly satisfying ending. Or maybe he just meant that he couldn’t decide on the ending.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

▶ In Scene 1, King John says, “Chance is an impartial judge.” If chance is impartial (unbiased) and a judge should be impartial,

does that mean chance is a good judge? Why or why not? *Answers may vary. Most students will likely say that chance can’t be an effective judge because it can’t consider the facts.*

▶ Stockton said that he was unable to decide which fate Princess Margaret would choose for Thomas. Why might this have been difficult for Stockton? *Princess Margaret is an unusual character. While it might be easy for a reader to imagine his or her own actions in a similar situation, the princess is deeply ambivalent about Thomas’s fate.*

▶ Consider the caption on page 20. How is the play *The Choice* different from a fairy tale? *Fairy tales have clear, straightforward endings—usually “happily ever after.” This play does not have a straightforward ending, and no matter what happens, the princess will not be happy. Plus, most fairy tales are stories of good versus evil. The characters in this story are not so clear-cut.*

4 Skill Building: Drawing Conclusions

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Have students complete the Evidence Chart. This activity will prepare them for the prompt on page 21. *For alternate tasks, see the box below.*

Differentiate and Customize

For Struggling Readers

In Scene 3, Thomas says that Princess Margaret can be both sweet and harsh. In a well-organized paragraph, describe a moment in the play where she displays both qualities.

For Advanced Readers

Write a literary review of the play, focusing on the effect of the ambiguous ending. Does it make the play more thought-provoking? Less memorable? More intriguing? Less profound?

For Playwrights

Rewrite the final scene of the play, in which we discover what Princess Margaret decided and how that decision affects her and the kingdom.

For Newscasters

Rewrite the final scene of the play in the form of a news broadcast in which you are reporting on live TV what is happening in the arena.