

Literary Analysis – Step 3 Example – *The Lady, or the Tiger?*

Yes, you have to read the story again! This time you will be making notes on the details of the story.

This story is only a few pages long so start by reading just a few paragraphs. You will know that a scene has ended when either the setting changes, or the action 'quiets' momentarily.

In our story, read the first 3 paragraphs – up to line 31. What has happened? Nothing, right? The fact that we are 'before the action' makes this scene a Prologue. The Narrative, or the story itself, doesn't begin until line 100. Read that far. Now make notes about what you learned in the prologue. Mostly we learn about the setting [olden days and King's castle and the Public Arena] and about one of our major characters, the King.

Read lines 100-121. This scene [Scene #1] sets up the action that is to follow. This is the Exposition. We learn about the Basic Problem – the love affair between the Princess and the Young Man who was unacceptable as a husband for her. Now note the details from the Exposition and you can fill in the three Exposition Boxes on the Plot Mountain.

Continue through the story. This particular work has a very important Epilogue as well, doesn't it? In fact, it could well be said that the whole point of the story was to lead up to that final...discussion.

Here is a Scene Outline that includes the most important points. Take a look at it, and adjust yours if you see something you missed.

Prologue– Opening Descriptions (1-99)

- Semi-barbaric king
 - Opinionated (5) and uses his power to suit himself (10)
- Public Arena
 - Amphitheater (28) to show the people the King's justice (30)
- King's justice (32-79)
 - Two doors, accused either eaten by tiger or married
 - No way to avoid one or the other
- Nobody could dispute its fairness (80-99)

Scene 1 –Exposition



- The King's Daughter (100-110)
 - Just as semi-barbaric as he is
 - Beautiful
 - King loves her deeply
- Poor Young Man (103-108)
 - Loves her and is loved by her
- This is NOT to be allowed (110-121)
 - Young Man arrested
 - Trial in the Arena scheduled

Scene 2 – Preparations for the Trial

- Fiercest tiger found (122)
- Most beautiful girl found (124)
- King was pleased that the Young Man would be disposed of (134)

Scene 3 – Day of the Trial

- Too many people to fit inside (139)
- King and Court there (142)
- Young Man enters and turns to bow to the King – a tradition (151)
- He looks at the Princess (153)
- She would not be there except for the strength of her character and her deep interest in the outcome (158)

Scene 4 – the Princess

- Since the Young Man was arrested she had thought about nothing but the trial (158)
- She was smart and strong enough to have found out which door (165)
- She knew which Lady was chosen (175)
 - Hated her for having shown some small interest in the Young Man (180)

Scene 5 – the Choice

- Young Man is the only one to see her gesture to the right
 - Silent exchange between them (204-211)
- Young Man goes immediately to the right door and opens it (212-216)
 - He was sure she had done just what she did, found out which door was which

Scene 6 – Which was it?

- Was it the Lady or the Tiger (215)
- Study of the human heart (220)
- She could not have him but who should (225)
 - The tiger – horrible (230)



- The Lady – she would despair (245)
- Better for him to die and wait for her in the hereafter? (247)
- BUT the tiger would be so bloody! (248)
- She had agonized, then finally chosen and given him the gesture (253)

Epilog (254-257)

- Reader must decide how it turns out

The final task is to put the scene numbers on then plot graph itself. You can put the "P"rologue and the "E"pilogue on the appropriate spots. But now which scene is the climax? Remember it is the moment of the protagonist's decision or decisive action. But WHO is our protagonist? We have three characters, total, in this story: King, Princess, and Young Man. Whose story is this, really? Who makes the climactic decision?

In this story it is the Princess whose actions and ultimate decision are the focus. Her loving father, the King, is our antagonist to the extent we have one because it is he who set up our Basic Problem. That makes scene 5, where she gestures to the right, the climax.

Before finally graphing the scenes, consider that scene 6 is actually a flashback. AFTER the Princess gestures to the right Stockton tells us about her inner conflict as she struggles to choose death or marriage to another woman for the man she loved so passionately. You can see that the conflict of the story is related to the Basic Problem, of course, but it is an inner conflict for the Princess.

The completed Plot Mountain shows the scenes in order.



