

# English 12

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## Learning Guides 7 & 8: Short Fiction

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### What you will hand in:

- Attendance at the plot seminar, OR your highlighted copy of "The White Knight" by Eric Nicol. (8 marks)
- Questions on "The White Knight" by Eric Nicol. (15 marks)
- Formal paragraph on "The Lady or the Tiger" by Frank Stockton (marked out of 6, 18 marks)
- Character Terms Crossword (2 points for completion)
- Paragraph on the Character of Hester from "The Rocking Horse Winner" by D.H. Lawrence
- Point form answers on "The Rocking Horse Winner" by D.H. Lawrence (20 marks)
- Compare and Contrast Essay (marked out of 6, 40 marks)
- Unit Test

### Terms you should know:

#### Plot Terms

anti-climax	dilemma	internal conflict	surprise ending
catastrophe	external conflict	plot	suspense
climax	falling action	prologue	tragedy
conflict	flashback	resolution	
dénouement	foreshadowing	rising action	
dialogue	indeterminate ending	setting	

#### Character Terms

antagonist	characterization	flat character	round character
caricature	direct presentation	hero	static character
character	dynamic character	indirect presentation	stereotype
character foil	epiphany	protagonist	stock character

#### Narration and Diction

archaic language	first person point of view	narrator	slang
colloquial language	formal language	objective point of view	third person point of view
colloquialism	informal language	omniscient point of view	tone
connotation	limited point of view	point of view	voice
denotation	narration	point of view	
diction	narrative	point of view	

#### Style

# English 12

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active voice	form	objective (language tone etc.)	style
analogy	graphic text	parallelism	stylistic technique
atmosphere	interior monologue	passive voice	subjective (language tone etc.)
bias	irony	pathos	theme
comic relief	jargon	sarcasm	tone
dialect	juxtaposition	stream of consciousness	voice
dramatic irony	mood		wit
emotional appeal			
<b>Types of texts</b>			
allegory	diary	legend	propaganda
autobiography	fable	mystery	proverb
biography	fantasy	myth	satire
comedy	genre	parody	

## Activity 1: Looking at Plot in “The White Knight” by Eric Nicol

Every narrative needs to have conflict. Whether this is dramatic and obvious, or subtle, the conflict creates a sense of *dramatic tension* in the reader: we want to know what will happen next. This conflict comes in several forms, and may be obvious and exciting, or gradual and relaxing. The conflict has a most intense or exciting point, and this is called the climax of the story.

For our first activity, we are going to read a special kind of story called an allegory. An allegory is a story that has two levels. The first level is the literal level. It has a plot and characters, conflict climax and resolution. The other level is a symbolic level, where the story has a deeper meaning that relates to all people. Many fairy tales are allegories, and the earliest dramatic productions in English were religious allegories where the main character often had a name like “Everyman”, and other characters had self-explanatory names like “Kindness” or “Temptation”.

1. Read “The White Knight” by Eric Nichol

### Plot terms

2. Working on your own or with a partner, highlight the following on your copy of “The White Knight”. For rising action and falling action, simply draw a line beside the paragraphs that fall into each section. Make sure you colour code a legend of your terms, so that you and I both know what each colour refers to:
  - a. the exposition
  - b. the initiating incident (This is the first thing that happens that sets the lot in motion)
  - c. the first two complicating incidents (these are other things that happen in the rising action)
  - d. label a crisis
  - e. label the climax
  - f. label the rising action (For rising and falling action, you will need to use a bracket to show that it is more than one thing, or if you can't draw brackets, just make a continuous line beside all of the paragraphs that are part of the rising action)

- g. label the falling action
- h. label the resolution. What kind of resolution is this?

### **Understanding the meaning of “The White Knight”**

Of course, the plot is what attracts readers and keeps them interested in finishing the story, but the meaning behind the story is always the most important part. Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Explain why this story is an allegory.
2. What features of this story create the impression of a fairy tale?
3. How is suspense created in the story?
4. Describe the setting at the beginning of the story. Why is the name of the forest significant?
5. As the White Knight travelled in search of the Black Knight, what THREE signs of his presence did the White Knight notice?
6. As the White Knight rode “deeper and deeper into the forest of Life”, what was he “forced” to do? Why do you think the author used the word “forced”?
7. Explain why the knights in the forest were of “varying shades of whiteness”. What does the author mean by the phrase “others were tattletale gray”? What do these shades represent?
8. Explain, fully, the climax of the story.
  - a. What shocking information about himself does our White Knight discover?
  - b. How does this information change him? Give proof from the story.
9. The White Knight’s new coat is a “cheerful motley.” What does this symbolize about its wearer?
10. Based on the story, where does the author suggest Black Knights originate?
11. As the White Knight kills the young knight he hears the words “is evil then triumphant?” Choose one of the following questions to answer in a few sentences.
  - a. According to this story, is evil triumphant? Provide proof.
  - b. Are the majority of people in society white or black knights, or does life force us to be slightly gray? Explain your answer.

### **Activity 2: Narration, Diction and style in “The Lady or the Tiger” by Frank Stockton**

The reason that we are looking at “The Lady or the Tiger” by Frank Stockton for narration, diction and style is that the story was originally meant to be listened to, rather than to be read silently by readers themselves. Stockton was trying to create a sense that the story was not something he had just written to perform on stage, but was instead a very old story, perhaps something almost Biblical. If you can, listen to a recording of this story. It is available from Audible.com, which you can access through the school library. You should have read the story before you continue to read through this guide, but don’t worry about the meaning of every single word. Many of the words are very unusual, or even made up, and Stockton put these difficult to understand words in deliberately, to create an effect.

## Indeterminate Ending

An "indeterminate ending" is an ending where the reader is left "hanging", but this isn't just the writer being somewhat lazy. In any good story, indeterminate or not, the story must be logical, and there are clues as to what actually happens in the end. What do you think happened at the end of this story?

Look at the clues. Notice how much time is spent by the author in a description of the princess worrying about her lover's death (a sentence ending in "futuraity") versus how much time is spent imaging what life will be like if he marries the other girl. Notice also his description of the princess's personality and temperament.

## Diction

There are three main levels of diction:

1. **colloquial** diction (fairly low), which is the way we talk, and may use slang and contractions. Complete sentences are optional, and little stress is placed on grammar.
2. **formal** diction (this story) is the highest level. The vocabulary is appropriate for an educated audience, and may include unusual and polysyllabic words. Complex sentences structures may be used, including inverted sentence structures and compound sentences. Strict attention is placed on the rules of grammar and syntax. Contractions ('don't', 'can't' and other words that are made up of two words and an apostrophe) are not allowed in true formal diction. This is used for academic papers, among other things.
3. **middle** diction falls somewhere in the middle, and is the most common level of diction in writing.

"The Lady or the Tiger" is definitely an example of formal diction. Here it is used for effect, to make the story seem old, almost Biblical. It gives the story a sense of authority.

## Questions on "The Lady or the Tiger" by Frank Stockton

Choose ONE of the questions below, and answer in a formal paragraph. Be sure to include F.A.T. in your answer, and INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE INTEGRATED QUOTE in your answer.

1. How does the author describe the king? Why is the personality of the king important to the story?
2. 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? Why is this system of "justice" ironic?
3. 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.

### Activity 3: Character and Theme in “The Rocking Horse Winner” by D.H. Lawrence

“The Rocking Horse Winner” by D.H. Lawrence is another story set within the framework of a fairy tale. This was written by an accomplished writer and intended for adults, and it fits into the category of “magic realism”. In magic realism, there are elements of magic, but there can either “explained” or that can be accepted as symbolic, rather than literal.

#### Character Crossword and Paragraph

Make sure that you remember the terms used to discuss character in fiction. We will go over these in class. If you miss this class, make sure you complete the Character Terms Crossword and hand it in.

Answer the question below in a formal paragraph. Be sure to include F.A.T. in your answer, and INCLUDE AT LEAST ONE INTEGRATED QUOTE in your answer.

1. Characterize the mother fully. How does she differ from the stepmothers in fairy tales like “Cinderella” and “Hansel and Gretel”? How does the boy's mistake about *filthy lucre* clarify her thinking and her motivations? Why had her love for her husband turned to dust? Why is she “unlucky”?

#### Notes on “The Rocking Horse Winner”

Read the story, and answer the following questions in point form. For each point you make, provide either a quote or an example from the story to support your answer. Notice that some of these are multi-part questions. Be sure that you answer all parts.

1. In the phrasing of its beginning (“There was a woman . . .”), its simple style, its direct characterization, and its use of the wish-motif -- especially that of the wish which is granted only on conditions that destroy the benefits of the wish (think of the story of King Midas), this story has the qualities of a fairy tale. Its differences, however -- in characterization, setting, and ending -- are especially significant. What do they tell us about the purpose of the story?
2. It is ironic that the boy's attempt to stop the whispers should only increase them. Is this a plausible (believable) irony? Why? What does it tell us about the theme of the story? Why is it ironic that the whispers should be especially audible at Christmas time? What irony is contained in the boy's last speech?
3. In what way is the boy's furious riding on the rocking horse an appropriate symbol for materialistic pursuits? How many persons in the story are affected (or infected) by materialism? What does the story have to say about materialism?

## Activity 4: Compare and Contrast Essay

"Genre" is a term used to describe a particular type of literature that is similar in a number of respects. For example, all science fiction is set in the future (or an alternate reality) and involves technology not available in today's world. All romance involves love.

**Allegory:** An allegory is a story that can be read on a literal level or a metaphorical level, in which many or all of the elements represent something else. Religious writers use allegory to teach the precepts of their faith; ethical writers use it to instill morals in their readers; satirists use it to explain their political or social points of view. Often the characters and places have names that are obvious clues, such as "Everyman", "Vanity Fair", and "Paradise City". For example, "The White Knight" is an example of an allegory.

**Fable:** Fables are fiction in the sense that they did not really happen, and are meant to entertain people. They are moral tales, sometimes with animal characters that represent people, and may have elements of allegory. Fables are short, and they usually have no more than two or three characters. (e.g. The "Hare and the Tortoise") "The Lady or the Tiger" is an example of a fable.

**Fairy Tales:** A fairy tale is a fictional story that may feature folkloric characters (such as fairies, goblins, elves, trolls, witches, giants, and talking animals) and enchantments, often involving a far-fetched sequence of events. There is usually a happy, "fairy tale" ending (a happy ending) or "fairy tale romance," though not all fairy tales end happily. "The Rocking Horse Winner" is in the format of a fairy tale, but because of its setting and tone, it is more accurately called "magic realism."

**Parable:** A parable is a brief, succinct story, in prose or verse, designed to teach universal truth or answer a universal question. It is usually used to teach a moral or religious lesson. It differs from a fable because it is realistic. A parable uses human characters while a fable uses animals, plants, inanimate objects, and forces of nature as characters. "The Prodigal Son" and "The Man, the boy and the Horse" are parables.

## Compare and Contrast Essay

We have read at least three stories "The White Knight", "The Lady or the Tiger", and "The Rocking Horse Winner" that take advantage of a fairy tale, fable, or allegory format. Referring to at least TWO of these stories, explain how each story uses a particular format, and how it contributes to its theme. Explain which is the most successful in using this format to develop a theme.

## Activity 5: Complete the unit test

This test has questions on the short stories covered in this learning guide, and also has a section from a past provincial exam.

## The White Knight

by Eric Nichol



- 1 Once upon a time there was a knight who lived in a little castle on the edge of the forest of Life. One day this knight looked in the mirror and saw that he was a White Knight.
- 2 "Lo!" he cried. "I am a White Knight and therefore represent good. I am the champion of virtue and honour and justice, and I must ride into the forest and slay the Black Knight, who is evil."
- 3 So the White Knight mounted his snow-white horse and rode into the forest to find the Black Knight and slay him in single combat.
- 4 Many miles he rode the first day, without so much as a glimpse of the Black Knight. The second day he rode even farther, still without sighting the ebony armour of mischief. Day after day he rode, deeper and deeper into the forest of Life, searching thicket and gully and even the treetops. The Black Knight was nowhere to be seen.
- 5 Yet the White Knight found many signs of the Black Knight's presence. Again and again he passed a village in which the Black Knight had struck -- a baker's shop robbed, a horse stolen, an innkeeper's daughter ravished. But always he just missed catching the doer of these deeds.
- 6 At last the White Knight had spent all his gold in the cause of his search. He was tired and hungry. Feeling his strength ebbing, he was forced to steal some buns from a bakeshop. His horse went lame, so that he was forced to replace it, silently and by darkness, with another white horse in some body's stable. And when he stumbled, faint and exhausted, into an inn, the innkeeper's daughter gave him her bed, and because he was the White Knight in shining armour, she gave him her love, and when he was strong enough to leave the inn she cried bitterly because she could not understand that he had to go and find the Black Knight and slay him.
- 7 Through many months, under hot sun, over frosty paths, the White Knight pressed on his search, yet all the knights he met in the forest were, like himself, fairly white. They were knights of varying shades of whiteness, depending on how long they, too, had been hunting the Black Knight.
- 8 Some were sparkling white. These had just started hunting that day and irritated the White Knight by innocently asking directions to the nearest Black Knight.
- 9 Others were tattle-tale grey. And still others were so grubby, horse and rider, that the mirror in their castle would never have recognized them.
- 10 Yet the White Knight was shocked the day a knight of gleaming whiteness confronted him suddenly in the forest and with a wild whoop thundered towards him with levelled lance. The White Knight barely had time to draw his sword and, ducking under the deadly steel, plunge it into the attacker's breast.
- 11 The White Knight dismounted and kneeled beside his mortally wounded assailant, whose visor had fallen back to reveal blond curls and a youthful face. He heard the words, whispered in anguish: "Is evil then triumphant?" And holding the dead knight in his arms he saw that beside the bright armour of the youth his own, besmirched by the long quest, looked black in the darkness of the forest.
- 12 His heart heavy with horror and grief, the White Knight who was white no more buried the boy, then slowly stripped off his own soiled mail, turned his grimy horse free to the forest, and stood naked and alone in the quiet dusk.

- 13 Before him lay a path which he slowly took, which led him to his castle on the edge of the forest. He went into the castle and closed the door behind him. He went to the mirror and saw that it no more gave back the White Knight, but only a middle-aged, naked man, a man who had stolen and ravished and killed in pursuit of evil.
- 14 Thereafter when he walked abroad from his castle he wore a coat of simple colours, a cheerful motley, and never looked for more than he could see. And his hair grew slowly white, as did his fine, full beard, and the people all around called him the Good White Knight.

### About the Author: Eric Nichol

Eric Patrick Nicol (December 28, 1919 – February 2, 2011) was a Canadian writer, best known as a long-time humour columnist for the Vancouver, British Columbia newspaper The Province. He also published over 40 books, both original works and compilations of his humour columns, and won the Stephen Leacock Memorial Medal for Humour three times.

### The lady, or the tiger?

by Frank Stockton



- 1 In the very olden time there lived a semi-barbaric king, whose ideas, though somewhat polished and sharpened by the progressiveness of distant Latin neighbours, 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.
- 2 Among the borrowed notions by which his barbarism had become semified was that of the public arena, in which, by exhibitions of manly and bestly valour, the minds of his subjects were refined and cultured.
- 3 But even here the exuberant and barbaric fancy asserted itself. The arena of the king was built, not to give the people an opportunity of hearing the rhapsodies of dying gladiators, nor to enable them to view the inevitable conclusion of a conflict between religious opinions and hungry jaws, but for purposes far better adapted to widen and develop the mental energies of the people. This vast amphitheatre, 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.
- 4 When a subject was accused of a crime of sufficient importance to interest the king, public notice was given that on an appointed day the fate of the accused person would be decided in the king's

arena -- a structure which well deserved its name; for, although its form and plan were borrowed from afar, its purpose emanated solely from the brain of this man, who, every barleycorn a king, knew no tradition to which he owed more allegiance than pleased his fancy, and who ingrafted on every adopted form of human thought and action the rich growth of his barbaric idealism.

- 5 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 amphitheatre. 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. 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. The moment that the case of the criminal was thus decided, doleful iron bells were clanged, great wails went up from the hired mourners posted on the outer rim of the arena, and the vast audience, with bowed heads and downcast hearts, wended slowly their homeward way, mourning greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have merited so dire a fate.
- 6 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. Another door opened beneath the king, and a priest, followed by a band of choristers, and dancing maidens blowing joyous airs on golden horns and treading an epithalamic measure, advanced to where the pair stood, side by side; and the wedding was promptly and cheerily solemnized. Then the gay brass bells rang forth their merry peals, the people shouted glad hurrahs, and the innocent man, preceded by children strewing flowers on his path, led his bride to his home.
- 7 This was the king's semi-barbaric method of administering justice. Its perfect fairness is obvious. The criminal could not know out of which door would come the lady: he opened either he pleased, with out 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 decisions of this tribunal were not only fair, they were positively determinate: 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.
- 8 The institution was a very popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days they never knew whether they were to witness a bloody slaughter or a hilarious wedding. This element of uncertainty lent an interest to the occasion which it could not otherwise have attained. Thus the masses were entertained and pleased, and the thinking part of the community could bring no charge of unfairness against this plan; for did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands?
- 9 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 ardour 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 a king. In after-years such things became commonplace enough; but then they were, in no slight degree, novel and startling.

- 10 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; and the king would take an aesthetic pleasure in watching the course of events, which would determine whether or not the young man had done wrong in allowing himself to love the princess.
- 11 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.
- 12 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!
- 13 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. 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 and fervid soul would not allow her to be absent on an occasion in which she was so terribly interested. From the moment that the decree had gone forth, that her lover should decide his fate in the king's arena, she had thought of nothing, night or day, but this great event and the various subjects connected with it. Possessed of more power, influence, and force of character than any one 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. Through these thick doors, heavily curtained with skins on the inside, it was impossible that any noise or suggestion should come from within to the person who should approach to raise the latch of one of them; but gold, and the power of a woman's will, had brought the secret to the princess.
- 14 And not only did she know in which room stood the lady ready to emerge, all blushing and radiant, should her door be opened, but she knew who the lady was. It was one of the fairest and loveliest of the damsels of the court who had been selected as the reward of the accused youth, should he be proved innocent of the crime of aspiring to one so far above him; and the princess hated her. Often

had she seen, or imagined that she had seen, this fair creature throwing glances of admiration upon the person of her lover, and sometimes she thought these glances were perceived and even returned. Now and then she had seen them talking together; it was but for a moment or two, but much can be said in a brief space; it may have been on most unimportant topics, but how could she know that? 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 that silent door. When her lover turned and looked at her, and his eye met hers as she sat there paler and whiter than any one in the vast ocean of anxious faces about her, 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.

- 15 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.
- 16 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.
- 17 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 on the right, and opened it.
- 18 Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady?
- 19 The more we reflect upon this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart which leads us through devious mazes of passion, out of which it is difficult to find our way. Think of it, fair reader, not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself, but upon that hot-blooded, semi-barbaric princess, her soul at a white heat beneath the combined fires of despair and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him?
- 20 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!
- 21 But how much oftener had she seen him at the other door! 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! How her soul had burned in agony when she had seen him rush to meet that woman, with her flushing cheek and sparkling eye of triumph; when she had seen him lead her forth, his whole frame kindled with the joy of recovered life; when she had heard the glad shouts from the multitude, and the wild ringing of the happy bells; when she had seen the priest, with his joyous followers, advance to the couple, and make them man and wife before her very eyes; and when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the tremendous shouts of the hilarious multitude, in which her one despairing shriek was lost and drowned!
- 22 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?

- 23 And yet, that awful tiger, those shrieks, that blood!
- 24 Her decision had been indicated in an instant, but it had been made after days and nights of anguished deliberation. 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.
- 25 The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered, and it is not for me to presume to set myself up as the one person able to answer it. And so I leave it with all of you: Which came out of the opened door-the lady, or the tiger?

Frank Stockton (1834-1902)

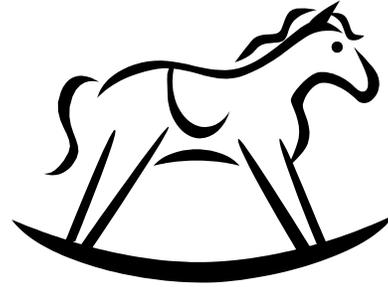
American humorist, novelist and storyteller, Frank Stockton first published "The Lady, or the Tiger?" in 1882. The story has appeared in so many collections that it has become a classic of its kind. Variations of the same idea have been written since, but none are better than Stockton's.



## The Rocking Horse Winner

by D.H. Lawrence (1835 – 1930)

There was a woman who was beautiful, who started the advantages, yet she had no luck. She married for love, love turned to dust. She had bonny children, yet she felt had been thrust upon her, and she could not love them. looked at her coldly, as if they were finding fault with her.



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hurriedly she felt she must cover up some fault in herself. Yet what it was that she must cover up she never knew. Nevertheless, when her children were present, she always felt the centre of her heart go hard. This troubled her, and in her manner she was all the more gentle and anxious for her children, as if she loved them very much. Only she herself knew that at the centre of her heart was a hard little place that could not feel love, no, not for anybody. Everybody else said of her: "She is such a good mother. She adores her children." Only she herself, and her children themselves, knew it was not so. They read it in each other's eyes.

There were a boy and two little girls. They lived in a pleasant house, with a garden, and they had discreet servants, and felt themselves superior to anyone in the neighbourhood.

Although they lived in style, they felt always an anxiety in the house. There was never enough money. The mother had a small income, and the father had a small income, but not nearly enough for the social position which they had to keep up. The father went into town to some office. But though he had good prospects, these prospects never materialised. There was always the grinding sense of the shortage of money, though the style was always kept up.

At last the mother said: "I will see if I can't make something." But she did not know where to begin. She racked her brains, and tried this thing and the other, but could not find anything successful. The failure made deep lines come into her face. Her children were growing up, they would have to go to school. There must be more money, there must be more money. The father, who was always very handsome and expensive in his tastes, seemed as if he never would be able to do anything worth doing. And the mother, who had a great belief in herself, did not succeed any better, and her tastes were just as expensive.

And so the house came to be haunted by the unspoken phrase: There must be more money! There must be more money! The children could hear it all the time though nobody said it aloud. They heard it at Christmas, when the expensive and splendid toys filled the nursery. Behind the shining modern rocking-horse, behind the smart doll's house, a voice would start whispering: "There must be more money! There must be more money!" And the children would stop playing, to listen for a moment. They would look into each other's eyes, to see if they had all heard. And each one saw in the eyes of the other two that they too had heard. "There must be more money! There must be more money!"

It came whispering from the springs of the still-swaying rocking-horse, and even the horse, bending his wooden, champing head, heard it. The big doll, sitting so pink and smirking in her new pram, could hear it quite plainly, and seemed to be smirking all the more self-consciously because of it. The

foolish puppy, too, that took the place of the teddy-bear, he was looking so extraordinarily foolish for no other reason but that he heard the secret whisper all over the house: "There must be more money!"

Yet nobody ever said it aloud. The whisper was everywhere, and therefore no one spoke it. Just as no one ever says: "We are breathing!" in spite of the fact that breath is coming and going all the time.

"Mother," said the boy Paul one day, "why don't we keep a car of our own? Why do we always use uncle's, or else a taxi?"

"Because we're the poor members of the family," said the mother.

"But why are we, mother?"

"Well - I suppose," she said slowly and bitterly, "it's because your father has no luck."

The boy was silent for some time.

"Is luck money, mother?" he asked, rather timidly.

"No, Paul. Not quite. It's what causes you to have money."

"Oh!" said Paul vaguely. "I thought when Uncle Oscar said filthy lucker, it meant money."

"Filthy lucre does mean money," said the mother. "But it's lucre, not luck."

"Oh!" said the boy. "Then what is luck, mother?"

"It's what causes you to have money. If you're lucky you have money. That's why it's better to be born lucky than rich. If you're rich, you may lose your money. But if you're lucky, you will always get more money."

"Oh! Will you? And is father not lucky?"

"Very unlucky, I should say," she said bitterly.

The boy watched her with unsure eyes.

"Why?" he asked.

"I don't know. Nobody ever knows why one person is lucky and another unlucky."

"Don't they? Nobody at all? Does nobody know?"

"Perhaps God. But He never tells."

"He ought to, then. And aren't you lucky either, mother?"

"I can't be, it I married an unlucky husband."

"But by yourself, aren't you?"

"I used to think I was, before I married. Now I think I am very unlucky indeed."

"Why?"

"Well - never mind! Perhaps I'm not really," she said.

The child looked at her to see if she meant it. But he saw, by the lines of her mouth, that she was only trying to hide something from him.

"Well, anyhow," he said stoutly, "I'm a lucky person."

"Why?" said his mother, with a sudden laugh.

He stared at her. He didn't even know why he had said it.

"God told me," he asserted, brazening it out.

"I hope He did, dear!", she said, again with a laugh, but rather bitter.

"He did, mother!"

"Excellent!" said the mother, using one of her husband's exclamations.

The boy saw she did not believe him; or rather, that she paid no attention to his assertion. This angered him somewhere, and made him want to compel her attention.

He went off by himself, vaguely, in a childish way, seeking for the clue to 'luck'. Absorbed, taking no heed of other people, he went about with a sort of stealth, seeking inwardly for luck. He wanted luck, he wanted it, he wanted it. When the two girls were playing dolls in the nursery, he would sit on his big rocking-horse, charging madly into space, with a frenzy that made the little girls peer at him uneasily. Wildly the horse careered, the waving dark hair of the boy tossed, his eyes had a strange glare in them. The little girls dared not speak to him.

When he had ridden to the end of his mad little journey, he climbed down and stood in front of his rocking-horse, staring fixedly into its lowered face. Its red mouth was slightly open, its big eye was wide and glassy-bright.

"Now!" he would silently command the snorting steed. "Now take me to where there is luck! Now take me!"

And he would slash the horse on the neck with the little whip he had asked Uncle Oscar for. He knew the horse could take him to where there was luck, if only he forced it. So he would mount again and start on his furious ride, hoping at last to get there.

"You'll break your horse, Paul!" said the nurse.

"He's always riding like that! I wish he'd leave off!" said his elder sister Joan.

But he only glared down on them in silence. Nurse gave him up. She could make nothing of him. Anyhow, he was growing beyond her.

One day his mother and his Uncle Oscar came in when he was on one of his furious rides. He did not speak to them.

"Hallo, you young jockey! Riding a winner?" said his uncle.

"Aren't you growing too big for a rocking-horse? You're not a very little boy any longer, you know," said his mother.

But Paul only gave a blue glare from his big, rather close-set eyes. He would speak to nobody when he was in full tilt. His mother watched him with an anxious expression on her face.

At last he suddenly stopped forcing his horse into the mechanical gallop and slid down.

"Well, I got there!" he announced fiercely, his blue eyes still flaring, and his sturdy long legs straddling apart.

"Where did you get to?" asked his mother.

"Where I wanted to go," he flared back at her.

"That's right, son!" said Uncle Oscar. "Don't you stop till you get there. What's the horse's name?"

"He doesn't have a name," said the boy.

"Get's on without all right?" asked the uncle.

"Well, he has different names. He was called Sansovino last week."

"Sansovino, eh? Won the Ascot. How did you know this name?"

"He always talks about horse-races with Bassett," said Joan.

The uncle was delighted to find that his small nephew was posted with all the racing news. Bassett, the young gardener, who had been wounded in the left foot in the war and had got his present job through Oscar Cresswell, whose batman he had been, was a perfect blade of the 'turf'. He lived in the racing events, and the small boy lived with him.

Oscar Cresswell got it all from Bassett.

"Master Paul comes and asks me, so I can't do more than tell him, sir," said Bassett, his face terribly serious, as if he were speaking of religious matters.

"And does he ever put anything on a horse he fancies?"

"Well - I don't want to give him away - he's a young sport, a fine sport, sir. Would you mind asking him himself? He sort of takes a pleasure in it, and perhaps he'd feel I was giving him away, sir, if you don't mind.

Bassett was serious as a church.

The uncle went back to his nephew and took him off for a ride in the car.

"Say, Paul, old man, do you ever put anything on a horse?" the uncle asked.

The boy watched the handsome man closely.

"Why, do you think I oughtn't to?" he parried.

"Not a bit of it! I thought perhaps you might give me a tip for the Lincoln."

The car sped on into the country, going down to Uncle Oscar's place in Hampshire.

"Honour bright?" said the nephew.

"Honour bright, son!" said the uncle.

"Well, then, Daffodil."

"Daffodil! I doubt it, sonny. What about Mirza?"

"I only know the winner," said the boy. "That's Daffodil."

"Daffodil, eh?"

There was a pause. Daffodil was an obscure horse comparatively.

"Uncle!"

"Yes, son?"

"You won't let it go any further, will you? I promised Bassett."

"Bassett be damned, old man! What's he got to do with it?"

"We're partners. We've been partners from the first. Uncle, he lent me my first five shillings, which I lost. I promised him, honour bright, it was only between me and him; only you gave me that ten-shilling note I started winning with, so I thought you were lucky. You won't let it go any further, will you?"

The boy gazed at his uncle from those big, hot, blue eyes, set rather close together. The uncle stirred and laughed uneasily.

"Right you are, son! I'll keep your tip private. How much are you putting on him?"

"All except twenty pounds," said the boy. "I keep that in reserve."

The uncle thought it a good joke.

"You keep twenty pounds in reserve, do you, you young romancer? What are you betting, then?"

"I'm betting three hundred," said the boy gravely. "But it's between you and me, Uncle Oscar! Honour bright?"

"It's between you and me all right, you young Nat Gould," he said, laughing. "But where's your three hundred?"

"Bassett keeps it for me. We're partner's."

"You are, are you! And what is Bassett putting on Daffodil?"

"He won't go quite as high as I do, I expect. Perhaps he'll go a hundred and fifty."

"What, pennies?" laughed the uncle.

"Pounds," said the child, with a surprised look at his uncle. "Bassett keeps a bigger reserve than I do."

Between wonder and amusement Uncle Oscar was silent. He pursued the matter no further, but he determined to take his nephew with him to the Lincoln races.

"Now, son," he said, "I'm putting twenty on Mirza, and I'll put five on for you on any horse you fancy. What's your pick?"

"Daffodil, uncle."

"No, not the fiver on Daffodil!"

"I should if it was my own fiver," said the child.

"Good! Good! Right you are! A fiver for me and a fiver for you on Daffodil."

The child had never been to a race-meeting before, and his eyes were blue fire. He pursed his mouth tight and watched. A Frenchman just in front had put his money on Lancelot. Wild with excitement, he flayed his arms up and down, yelling "Lancelot!, Lancelot!" in his French accent.

Daffodil came in first, Lancelot second, Mirza third. The child, flushed and with eyes blazing, was curiously serene. His uncle brought him four five-pound notes, four to one.

"What am I to do with these?" he cried, waving them before the boy's eyes.

"I suppose we'll talk to Bassett," said the boy. "I expect I have fifteen hundred now; and twenty in reserve; and this twenty."

His uncle studied him for some moments.

"Look here, son!" he said. "You're not serious about Bassett and that fifteen hundred, are you?"

"Yes, I am. But it's between you and me, uncle. Honour bright?"

"Honour bright all right, son! But I must talk to Bassett."

"If you'd like to be a partner, uncle, with Bassett and me, we could all be partners. Only, you'd have to promise, honour bright, uncle, not to let it go beyond us three. Bassett and I are lucky, and you must be lucky, because it was your ten shillings I started winning with ..."

Uncle Oscar took both Bassett and Paul into Richmond Park for an afternoon, and there they talked.

"It's like this, you see, sir," Bassett said. "Master Paul would get me talking about racing events, spinning yarns, you know, sir. And he was always keen on knowing if I'd made or if I'd lost. It's about a year since, now, that I put five shillings on Blush of Dawn for him: and we lost. Then the luck turned, with that ten shillings he had from you: that we put on Singhalese. And since that time, it's been pretty steady, all things considering. What do you say, Master Paul?"

"We're all right when we're sure," said Paul. "It's when we're not quite sure that we go down."

"Oh, but we're careful then," said Bassett.

"But when are you sure?" smiled Uncle Oscar.

"It's Master Paul, sir," said Bassett in a secret, religious voice. "It's as if he had it from heaven. Like Daffodil, now, for the Lincoln. That was as sure as eggs."

"Did you put anything on Daffodil?" asked Oscar Cresswell.

"Yes, sir, I made my bit."

"And my nephew?"

Bassett was obstinately silent, looking at Paul.

"I made twelve hundred, didn't I, Bassett? I told uncle I was putting three hundred on Daffodil."

"That's right," said Bassett, nodding.

"But where's the money?" asked the uncle.

"I keep it safe locked up, sir. Master Paul he can have it any minute he likes to ask for it."

"What, fifteen hundred pounds?"

"And twenty! And forty, that is, with the twenty he made on the course."

"It's amazing!" said the uncle.

"If Master Paul offers you to be partners, sir, I would, if I were you: if you'll excuse me," said Bassett.

Oscar Cresswell thought about it.

"I'll see the money," he said.

They drove home again, and, sure enough, Bassett came round to the garden-house with fifteen hundred pounds in notes. The twenty pounds reserve was left with Joe Glee, in the Turf Commission deposit.

"You see, it's all right, uncle, when I'm sure! Then we go strong, for all we're worth, don't we, Bassett?"

"We do that, Master Paul."

"And when are you sure?" said the uncle, laughing.

"Oh, well, sometimes I'm absolutely sure, like about Daffodil," said the boy; "and sometimes I have an idea; and sometimes I haven't even an idea, have I, Bassett? Then we're careful, because we mostly go down."

"You do, do you! And when you're sure, like about Daffodil, what makes you sure, sonny?"

"Oh, well, I don't know," said the boy uneasily. "I'm sure, you know, uncle; that's all."

"It's as if he had it from heaven, sir," Bassett reiterated.

"I should say so!" said the uncle.

But he became a partner. And when the Leger was coming on Paul was 'sure' about Lively Spark, which was a quite inconsiderable horse. The boy insisted on putting a thousand on the horse, Bassett went for five hundred, and Oscar Cresswell two hundred. Lively Spark came in first, and the betting had been ten to one against him. Paul had made ten thousand.

"You see," he said. "I was absolutely sure of him."

Even Oscar Cresswell had cleared two thousand.

"Look here, son," he said, "this sort of thing makes me nervous."

"It needn't, uncle! Perhaps I shan't be sure again for a long time."

"But what are you going to do with your money?" asked the uncle.

"Of course," said the boy, "I started it for mother. She said she had no luck, because father is unlucky, so I thought if I was lucky, it might stop whispering."

"What might stop whispering?"

"Our house. I hate our house for whispering."

"What does it whisper?"

"Why - why" - the boy fidgeted - "why, I don't know. But it's always short of money, you know, uncle."

"I know it, son, I know it."

"You know people send mother writs, don't you, uncle?"

"I'm afraid I do," said the uncle.

"And then the house whispers, like people laughing at you behind your back. It's awful, that is! I thought if I was lucky -"

"You might stop it," added the uncle.

The boy watched him with big blue eyes, that had an uncanny cold fire in them, and he said never a word.

"Well, then!" said the uncle. "What are we doing?"

"I shouldn't like mother to know I was lucky," said the boy.

"Why not, son?"

"She'd stop me."

"I don't think she would."

"Oh!" - and the boy writhed in an odd way - "I don't want her to know, uncle."

"All right, son! We'll manage it without her knowing."

They managed it very easily. Paul, at the other's suggestion, handed over five thousand pounds to his uncle, who deposited it with the family lawyer, who was then to inform Paul's mother that a relative had put five thousand pounds into his hands, which sum was to be paid out a thousand pounds at a time, on the mother's birthday, for the next five years.

"So she'll have a birthday present of a thousand pounds for five successive years," said Uncle Oscar. "I hope it won't make it all the harder for her later."

Paul's mother had her birthday in November. The house had been 'whispering' worse than ever lately, and, even in spite of his luck, Paul could not bear up against it. He was very anxious to see the effect of the birthday letter, telling his mother about the thousand pounds.

When there were no visitors, Paul now took his meals with his parents, as he was beyond the nursery control. His mother went into town nearly every day. She had discovered that she had an odd knack of sketching furs and dress materials, so she worked secretly in the studio of a friend who was the chief 'artist' for the leading drapers. She drew the figures of ladies in furs and ladies in silk and sequins for the newspaper advertisements. This young woman artist earned several thousand pounds a year, but Paul's mother only made several hundreds, and she was again dissatisfied. She so wanted to be first in something, and she did not succeed, even in making sketches for drapery advertisements.

She was down to breakfast on the morning of her birthday. Paul watched her face as she read her letters. He knew the lawyer's letter. As his mother read it, her face hardened and became more expressionless. Then a cold, determined look came on her mouth. She hid the letter under the pile of others, and said not a word about it.

"Didn't you have anything nice in the post for your birthday, mother?" said Paul.

"Quite moderately nice," she said, her voice cold and hard and absent.

She went away to town without saying more.

But in the afternoon Uncle Oscar appeared. He said Paul's mother had had a long interview with the lawyer, asking if the whole five thousand could not be advanced at once, as she was in debt.

"What do you think, uncle?" said the boy.

"I leave it to you, son."

"Oh, let her have it, then! We can get some more with the other," said the boy.

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, laddie!" said Uncle Oscar.

"But I'm sure to know for the Grand National; or the Lincolnshire; or else the Derby. I'm sure to know for one of them," said Paul.

So Uncle Oscar signed the agreement, and Paul's mother touched the whole five thousand. Then something very curious happened. The voices in the house suddenly went mad, like a chorus of frogs on a spring evening. There were certain new furnishings, and Paul had a tutor. He was really going to Eton, his father's school, in the following autumn. There were flowers in the winter, and a blossoming of the luxury Paul's mother had been used to. And yet the voices in the house, behind the sprays of mimosa and almond-blossom, and from under the piles of iridescent cushions, simply trilled and screamed in a sort of ecstasy: "There must be more money! Oh-h-h; there must be more money. Oh, now, now-w! Now-w-w - there must be more money! - more than ever! More than ever!"

It frightened Paul terribly. He studied away at his Latin and Greek with his tutor. But his intense hours were spent with Bassett. The Grand National had gone by: he had not 'known', and had lost a hundred pounds. Summer was at hand. He was in agony for the Lincoln. But even for the Lincoln he

didn't 'know', and he lost fifty pounds. He became wild-eyed and strange, as if something were going to explode in him.

"Let it alone, son! Don't you bother about it!" urged Uncle Oscar. But it was as if the boy couldn't really hear what his uncle was saying.

"I've got to know for the Derby! I've got to know for the Derby!" the child reiterated, his big blue eyes blazing with a sort of madness.

His mother noticed how overwrought he was.

"You'd better go to the seaside. Wouldn't you like to go now to the seaside, instead of waiting? I think you'd better," she said, looking down at him anxiously, her heart curiously heavy because of him.

But the child lifted his uncanny blue eyes.

"I couldn't possibly go before the Derby, mother!" he said. "I couldn't possibly!"

"Why not?" she said, her voice becoming heavy when she was opposed. "Why not? You can still go from the seaside to see the Derby with your Uncle Oscar, if that that's what you wish. No need for you to wait here. Besides, I think you care too much about these races. It's a bad sign. My family has been a gambling family, and you won't know till you grow up how much damage it has done. But it has done damage. I shall have to send Bassett away, and ask Uncle Oscar not to talk racing to you, unless you promise to be reasonable about it: go away to the seaside and forget it. You're all nerves!"

"I'll do what you like, mother, so long as you don't send me away till after the Derby," the boy said.

"Send you away from where? Just from this house?"

"Yes," he said, gazing at her.

"Why, you curious child, what makes you care about this house so much, suddenly? I never knew you loved it."

He gazed at her without speaking. He had a secret within a secret, something he had not divulged, even to Bassett or to his Uncle Oscar.

But his mother, after standing undecided and a little bit sullen for some moments, said: "Very well, then! Don't go to the seaside till after the Derby, if you don't wish it. But promise me you won't think so much about horse-racing and events as you call them!"

"Oh no," said the boy casually. "I won't think much about them, mother. You needn't worry. I wouldn't worry, mother, if I were you."

"If you were me and I were you," said his mother, "I wonder what we should do!"

"But you know you needn't worry, mother, don't you?" the boy repeated.

"I should be awfully glad to know it," she said wearily.

"Oh, well, you can, you know. I mean, you ought to know you needn't worry," he insisted.

"Ought I? Then I'll see about it," she said.

Paul's secret of secrets was his wooden horse, that which had no name. Since he was emancipated from a nurse and a nursery-governess, he had had his rocking-horse removed to his own bedroom at the top of the house.

"Surely you're too big for a rocking-horse!" his mother had remonstrated.

"Well, you see, mother, till I can have a real horse, I like to have some sort of animal about," had been his quaint answer.

"Do you feel he keeps you company?" she laughed.

"Oh yes! He's very good, he always keeps me company, when I'm there," said Paul.

So the horse, rather shabby, stood in an arrested prance in the boy's bedroom.

The Derby was drawing near, and the boy grew more and more tense. He hardly heard what was spoken to him, he was very frail, and his eyes were really uncanny. His mother had sudden strange seizures of uneasiness about him. Sometimes, for half an hour, she would feel a sudden anxiety about him that was almost anguish. She wanted to rush to him at once, and know he was safe.

Two nights before the Derby, she was at a big party in town, when one of her rushes of anxiety about her boy, her first-born, gripped her heart till she could hardly speak. She fought with the feeling, might and main, for she believed in common sense. But it was too strong. She had to leave the dance and go downstairs to telephone to the country. The children's nursery-governess was terribly surprised and startled at being rung up in the night.

"Are the children all right, Miss Wilmot?"

"Oh yes, they are quite all right."

"Master Paul? Is he all right?"

"He went to bed as right as a trivet. Shall I run up and look at him?"

"No," said Paul's mother reluctantly. "No! Don't trouble. It's all right. Don't sit up. We shall be home fairly soon." She did not want her son's privacy intruded upon.

"Very good," said the governess.

It was about one o'clock when Paul's mother and father drove up to their house. All was still. Paul's mother went to her room and slipped off her white fur cloak. She had told her maid not to wait up for her. She heard her husband downstairs, mixing a whisky and soda.

And then, because of the strange anxiety at her heart, she stole upstairs to her son's room. Noiselessly she went along the upper corridor. Was there a faint noise? What was it?

She stood, with arrested muscles, outside his door, listening. There was a strange, heavy, and yet not loud noise. Her heart stood still. It was a soundless noise, yet rushing and powerful. Something huge, in violent, hushed motion. What was it? What in God's name was it? She ought to know. She felt that she knew the noise. She knew what it was.

Yet she could not place it. She couldn't say what it was. And on and on it went, like a madness.

Softly, frozen with anxiety and fear, she turned the door-handle.

The room was dark. Yet in the space near the window, she heard and saw something plunging to and fro. She gazed in fear and amazement.

Then suddenly she switched on the light, and saw her son, in his green pyjamas, madly surging on the rocking-horse. The blaze of light suddenly lit him up, as he urged the wooden horse, and lit her up, as she stood, blonde, in her dress of pale green and crystal, in the doorway.

"Paul!" she cried. "Whatever are you doing?"

"It's Malabar!" he screamed in a powerful, strange voice. "It's Malabar!"

His eyes blazed at her for one strange and senseless second, as he ceased urging his wooden horse. Then he fell with a crash to the ground, and she, all her tormented motherhood flooding upon her, rushed to gather him up.

But he was unconscious, and unconscious he remained, with some brain-fever. He talked and tossed, and his mother sat stonily by his side.

"Malabar! It's Malabar! Bassett, Bassett, I know! It's Malabar!"

So the child cried, trying to get up and urge the rocking-horse that gave him his inspiration.

"What does he mean by Malabar?" asked the heart-frozen mother.

"I don't know," said the father stonily.

"What does he mean by Malabar?" she asked her brother Oscar.

"It's one of the horses running for the Derby," was the answer.

And, in spite of himself, Oscar Cresswell spoke to Bassett, and himself put a thousand on Malabar: at fourteen to one.

The third day of the illness was critical: they were waiting for a change. The boy, with his rather long, curly hair, was tossing ceaselessly on the pillow. He neither slept nor regained consciousness, and his eyes were like blue stones. His mother sat, feeling her heart had gone, turned actually into a stone.

In the evening Oscar Cresswell did not come, but Bassett sent a message, saying could he come up for one moment, just one moment? Paul's mother was very angry at the intrusion, but on second thoughts she agreed. The boy was the same. Perhaps Bassett might bring him to consciousness.

The gardener, a shortish fellow with a little brown moustache and sharp little brown eyes, tiptoed into the room, touched his imaginary cap to Paul's mother, and stole to the bedside, staring with glittering, smallish eyes at the tossing, dying child.

"Master Paul!" he whispered. "Master Paul! Malabar came in first all right, a clean win. I did as you told me. You've made over seventy thousand pounds, you have; you've got over eighty thousand. Malabar came in all right, Master Paul."

"Malabar! Malabar! Did I say Malabar, mother? Did I say Malabar? Do you think I'm lucky, mother? I knew Malabar, didn't I? Over eighty thousand pounds! I call that lucky, don't you, mother? Over eighty thousand pounds! I knew, didn't I know I knew? Malabar came in all right. If I ride my horse till I'm sure, then I tell you, Bassett, you can go as high as you like. Did you go for all you were worth, Bassett?"

"I went a thousand on it, Master Paul."

"I never told you, mother, that if I can ride my horse, and get there, then I'm absolutely sure - oh, absolutely! Mother, did I ever tell you? I am lucky!"

"No, you never did," said his mother.

But the boy died in the night.

And even as he lay dead, his mother heard her brother's voice saying to her, "My God, Hester, you're eighty-odd thousand to the good, and a poor devil of a son to the bad. But, poor devil, poor devil, he's best gone out of a life where he rides his rocking-horse to find a winner."