

The Lady or The Tiger, by Frank R. Stockton, published by Rebecca Saady Bingham, Rebecca Press, 2016. The original story was written in 1882 and published in 'The Century' magazine. Stockton was an American writer, who was very popular during the last decades of the 19th century. Some things in life are deemed 'unsolvable'. The expression; 'the lady or the tiger' is such a thing and is more properly known as an allegorical expression.

As I opened the book, I was captivated by the rich illustrations prior to reading the story and quickly saw that there was a 'Publisher's Note' before the actual colophon. The information is certainly very interesting and I thought it would be a good idea to share it as part of the review.

Rebecca actually began this project 28 years prior to her actual publication. The metal type was set ready for printing but as often happens in life, things intercede. The 45 pounds of type sat in the garage unused for all those years. Things move along and in Rebecca's case her husband Reid encouraged her to attend an MBS Conclave and the spark to publish was rekindled. Neale Albert introduced Rebecca to Leonard Seastone who printed *The Lady Or The Tiger*, using a Vandercook hand press. Robert M. Place provided the illustrations that add that vibrant touch to the story and Wesley Carpenter utilized his binding skills to make the tome a finished project. Rebecca's press name is Rebecca Press and it has published 32 books since 1980.



Front cover, Regular Edition



The actual story takes place in a kingdom ruled by a somewhat barbaric king. The king was one who believed that certain justification in 'trial by ordeal' for those accused of a crime. The 'ordeal' was a public event where the accused would be brought to an arena to make a choice between 'two doors'. Behind one door would be a lady chosen by the king to be appropriate for the accused and if this door was selected the accused would

be considered ‘innocent’. Needless to say the tiger was behind the other door, selection of this door would solidify the ultimate punishment for the guilty person. The king learns that his daughter has a ‘lover’; the king has the man brought to the arena for a ‘trial by ordeal’. Here lies the ‘unsolvable facet’ of the *The Lady Or The Tiger*. Should the lover of the princess perish with the tiger or spend his life with the lady rather than the princess.

The narrator of the story does not answer the question. Which door that was selected is not revealed. The princess has learned just what is behind each door. She must examine her ‘heart’ and her decision on how to direct the accused to either fate, neither of which is a good outcome for the princess. The text of the story concludes with; ‘Which came out of the door, the lady or the tiger? Certainly, ‘food for thought’ as one of those parts of life that we all have all faced over time, if not yesterday, maybe today, or even tomorrow.

The Lady Or The Tiger, I learned from the prospectus, includes full-color illustrations by Robert Place, a world renowned tarot scholar as well as illustrator. The illustrations in the tome were especially done for the book in the style of his tarot cards. The book incorporates two different printing processes: letterpress text from metal type and full-color digital illustrations. The book is 53 pages typeset in a monotype Goudy 38 Light with Lombardic Initials. The regular edition is bound with a printed book cloth material carrying an illustration of the ‘lady’. The endpapers, both



Image of front and rear endpapers



front and rear are printed images of the ‘two doors’. The total edition contains 201 copies, 150 are numbered. There is a deluxe edition as well, containing 26 lettered copies, (A-Z). The remaining ‘out of series’ copies are reserved for special use. The book is 2¹/₄" x 2⁷/₈" and is provided with a printed cardboard slipcase (regular edition), \$139.

The deluxe edition is bound in black leather. The blind-stamped leather doublures on both inside covers have ‘doors’ that open. Edges are gilded and gauffered. The slipcase is leather and a

special folder contains a 'set of cards' with the book illustrations as well as additional artwork not included with the text of the book. The deluxe edition is \$805.



*left and right, front and rear cover, standard edition
center, deluxe edition with slipcase box*

As a 'flashback' to our standard miniature book reference volume, there is an interesting comment [1999] included by Bradbury about Rebecca and the work she has done. Quoting from a newspaper reporter, Elizabeth Lazarus, "She loves having control over the complete process, from the choice of subject to book design to the materials used." In closing, it is exciting to see Rebecca return to the realm of miniature book

publishing and bringing forth all of her thoughts and skills that make such a wonderful book as the *The Lady Or The Tiger* for us all to enjoy. 📖

Contact information: Rebecca Bingham
E-mail: serous39202@mypacks.net

FRONTISPIECE: *(continued)* **By Sherry Mayo**

responsible for the projects. Therefore, he spent long days away from home at the remote sites. This schedule did not leave much family time for any of the dads. However, each home and the neighborhood in which it resided did bring certain adventures for a young boy.

At a home in central NJ, one dreary day, Pete discovered an odd maroon colored cabinet with a dome style top and gold trim in the far corner of a basement area that adjoined the area designated as the children's playroom. It had an "L" shaped handle protruding from its side and two cabinet doors on its front. Behind the doors, Pete found