

TTS: Once upon a... No, no, no. Hmm... It was a dark and stormy... No, no, no, no. It was the... the...most mediocre? Mediocre? Mediocre. Yes. The most mediocre? Yes, that's it. And... it was... uhm... the most disagreeable? No The most offensive?Offensive? No. Nasty? Nastiest? Nastiest. It was the nastiest.... Yes that's it. It was the most mediocre of times, it was the nastiest of times. It was the age of... of... uhhh... Oh hell.

Human: Excuse me – Hello, (etc.)

TTS: Hmm? What? Are you speaking to me?

Human: Yes I am.

TTS: I'm really very busy right now. I would have thought that was obvious. I am in the middle of composing an important tome. A tale of joy and sorrow, of tragedy and redemption. Everyone likes that sort of thing. Don't you like that sort of thing?

Human: (if negative)

TTS: Doesn't surprise me a bit. But I can't be concerned with the taste of the common masses. I'm writing for the future, for posterity. Now... (jump to 'If I can just get past...')

Human: (if positive to TTS: 'Don't you like that sort of thing?')

TTS: Of course you do. Just as I thought. Now if I can just get past the beginning... I've got the whole thing mapped out in my mind. But beginnings are so difficult. Anyway, as long as you've interrupted me I suppose I might as well take a break. Tell me, do you think that great literature has the potential to transform?

Human: (if negative)

TTS: Hmph. So you're one of those, are you? I, needless to say, couldn't disagree more. In my opinion... (jump to TTS: 'Literature is important...' below)

Human: (if positive to TTS: '...do you think that great literature...')

TTS: Well, I think you could be a bit more enthusiastic about it. Literature is important. Of course it's not always easy going, great literature. Requires a bit of work. Literature often poses difficult questions. But since you seem to be, how shall I say... a bit less than overly excited on this topic, how about we try something simpler. I'll just pose some simple questions and we'll see where that leads. All right, then:

One: Do you like apples? (whatever human answers TTS plows quickly ahead)

Two: Does it get dark at night?

Three: Would you consider it acceptable to eat an apple in the dark?

Four: In the dark, with an apple, do you feel more or less secure?

Human: (if answers ambiguously jump to page 3, INSERT 1 - TTS: Then you won't mind if I pose another question...')

Human: (if answers 'less secure')

TTS: I see. And I assume that this means that you're either afraid of the dark, afraid of apples or just afraid in general. Would you say that you're afraid?

Human: (if 'I'm not afraid,' etc jump to Page 4, INSERT 2, TTS: 'Seems odd since you've just said...')

Human: (if 'yes I'm afraid' etc.)

TTS: Yes, I can see that. Perhaps you fear what an apple symbolizes. Yes, I suspect that may be the case. Do suppose apples have a larger symbolic meaning?

Human: (if answers yes, jump down to page 3, TTS: Objects often symbolize...'
(If human answers negative jump to page 5, INSERT 3)

Human: (if answers 'more secure' to above)

TTS: I see. Then, feeling more secure in the dark, with an apple, would you say that apples make the dark more bearable or that the dark improves the flavor of the apple?

Human: (if positive to 'Dark is more bearable' go to TTS below)
(if positive to: "Improves the flavor of the apple" go to page 6, INSERT 4)

TTS: So you're afraid of the dark?

Human (if, negative)

TTS: But you just said that the dark is more bearable with an apple. Perhaps, for you, the apple represents something other than an apple? Perhaps when you say apple you actually mean something entirely different. Do you suppose that is the case?

Human: (if negative to above OR negative to Page 2, TTS: 'Do you suppose that apples have a larger symbolic...')

TTS: Are you quite sure? Objects often symbolize things quite other than themselves. An apple might mean many things to many different people. Or are you one of those people who think an apple is an apple and that's that?

Human: (if positive go to below) (if negative jump to page 5, INSERT 3)

TTS: Well then that must make your life very simple. An apple is an apple and there you have it. Symbols? None for me thanks. Nope. No such lofty endeavors for me. I'll just take my apple and stumble through the darkness happy as can be. Is that the sort you are?

Human: (if positive)

TTS: I see. Well that must make life very simple for you. (then jump to page 4, TTS: 'Perhaps you should consider the possibility of a nasty little insect burrowed into your simple apple,')

Human: If negative to TTS: 'Is that the sort you are?' jump to page 5, INSERT 2 TTS: 'Well of course you would say that, wouldn't you?'

INSERT 1

Human: (if positive to TTS: 'Well of course you would say that, wouldn't you?' above OR from Page 2, if human answers ambiguously)

TTS: Then you won't mind if I pose another question, things being so simple and straightforward in your tidy little universe. So, do you think I'm attractive?

Human: (if positive)

TTS: Well thank you very much. At least in that respect we are in agreement. And coming from an expert in the meaning of apples and who knows what else I consider that quite a compliment. Now if you don't mind I really do have to get back to work.

END

Human: (if negative to 'Do you think I'm handsome?')

TTS: Well thank... you... very... much (sarcastic). And who made you such an expert? You and your apples that are nothing but apples even in the dark. Has it ever occurred to you that eating an apple in the dark, you have no idea if you're biting into a rotten bit? Have you thought about that?

Human: (if negative)

TTS: Well perhaps you should. Now if you don't mind I really do have to get back to work.

END

Human: (if positive to TTS: 'Have you thought about that.')

TTS: Well perhaps you should think about it a bit harder. Perhaps you should consider the possibility, not just of a rotten bit, but of a nasty little insect burrowed into your simple apple, invisible in the dark, just waiting for someone like you to take a bite. For that matter there could be a horde of nasty, squirming little bugs lying in

wait, rubbing their little legs together in anticipation of your... Oh what's the point. I have work to do. You'll have to excuse me.

END

INSERT 2

Human: (if answers 'I'm not afraid' etc. to page 2 TTS: 'Would you say that you're afraid.')

TTS: Seems odd since you've just said that you are less secure in the dark, with an apple. But perhaps you enjoy your insecurity. Perhaps you consider your insecurities to be some sort of lofty endeavor. Perhaps you consider your journey through the dark with an apple to be an oh-so-lofty, lofty endeavor. Is that what you are, one of those lofty endeavors sorts? (no pause) Or are you just one of those many too many lofty-seeming sorts - one of those who wear their lofty endeavors like a fancy pair of pants, all stripy and shiny and at the end of the day off they come, off come the lofty, lofty trousers as you settle in for a lovely cocktail, one of those cocktails with the little paper umbrella speared on a nice piece of fruit. Is that the sort you are?

Human: (yes or no, go to TTS: 'Well of course...') (if no response go directly to 'Anyway', skipping 'Well of course...')

TTS: Well of course you would say that, wouldn't you? Anyway, this is all just so bewildering and I have so much work to do. People never fail to bewilder. That's been my experience. It is sometimes just too too much to take into my ... I was about to say head but that would be stretching a metaphor near the breaking point, wouldn't it? But things do get broken, don't they?

Human: (if responds positive then)

TTS: 'Mmm hmm. I see we've had similar experiences.' (then jump to 'even when one is being as careful as...' below.)

Human: (if negative to: 'But things do get broken, don't they?' insert)

TTS: Oh well I'm sure that's true in your perfect little world. But in mine I'm afraid it's quite different. In my tattered, messy world things do get broken (then jump to 'even when one is being as careful as...')

TTS: Even when one is being as careful as one can be, even when one has taken precautions. It - just - happens. Doesn't it? But all of this is neither here nor there and I have much too much work to do. You'll have to excuse me.

END

INSERT 3 (page 2, TTS: 'Do suppose apples have a larger symbolic meaning?')
(And from page 3, TTS: ...an apple is an apple and that's that?)

Human: (negative response)

TTS: Oh really? And what are apples if not apples? I suppose in your world apples are some kind of magical talisman that ward off evil or perhaps they are symbolic of an invisible world that only you can see, an apple world ruled by an apple king and his lovely young apple bride. And I suppose everyone in your apple world lives happily ever after. A world where there's no hunger, no strife, no fear. Every little thing is just perfect. Tell me one thing. In your perfect apple world would I be considered attractive?

(jump to page 3, INSERT 1, after TTS: 'Do you think I'm attractive.')

INSERT 4,

(from page 2) TTS: '...the dark improves the flavor of the apple?'

Human: (positive)

TTS: I see. This is really very interesting. You find apples are improved by darkness. Well, well, well. (jump to page 4, TTS: 'Has it ever occurred to you that eating an apple in the dark, you have no idea if you're biting into a rotten bit? Have you thought about that?'.')

INSERT 5 from page 3

TTS: No such lofty endeavors for me. I'll just take my apple and stumble through the darkness happy as can be. Is that the sort you are?

Human: (positive)

TTS: I see. Well that must make life very simple for you. Has it ever occurred to you that eating an apple in the dark, you have no idea if you're biting into a rotten bit?