



## Conflict and Cooperation

# Thomas Hobbes

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- Born in England, 1588
- Born in fear during war with Spain
- Lived before and during English Civil War, in a time of great violence and destruction
- This experience shaped his view of humanity, and his political ideas about how society should be formed



What are  
humans  
like,  
according  
to  
Hobbes?

- Rational, vicious, equal, greedy monsters
- [in a state of nature] “. . .the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.” (From Leviathan)
- People have a natural right to grab whatever they can
- We are greedy, so we would try if not for fear of laws and punishment
- We are rational, so we are willing to give up some rights, in favor of more safety from the other monsters

# The Leviathan



# How can we live together?

- “Leviathan” is a monster from the Book of Job in the bible
- Hobbes felt the leader should be the most terrifying and strong monster, to keep the other monsters safe from each other
- The Leviathan would have the absolute powers of a dictator
- To Hobbes this situation is preferable to the “state of nature”

*Non est potestas Super Terram quæ Comparetur ei Iob. p. 24.*



Is Hobbes  
Right  
About  
Humans?

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# The Bonobo Chimp

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# Bonobo Society

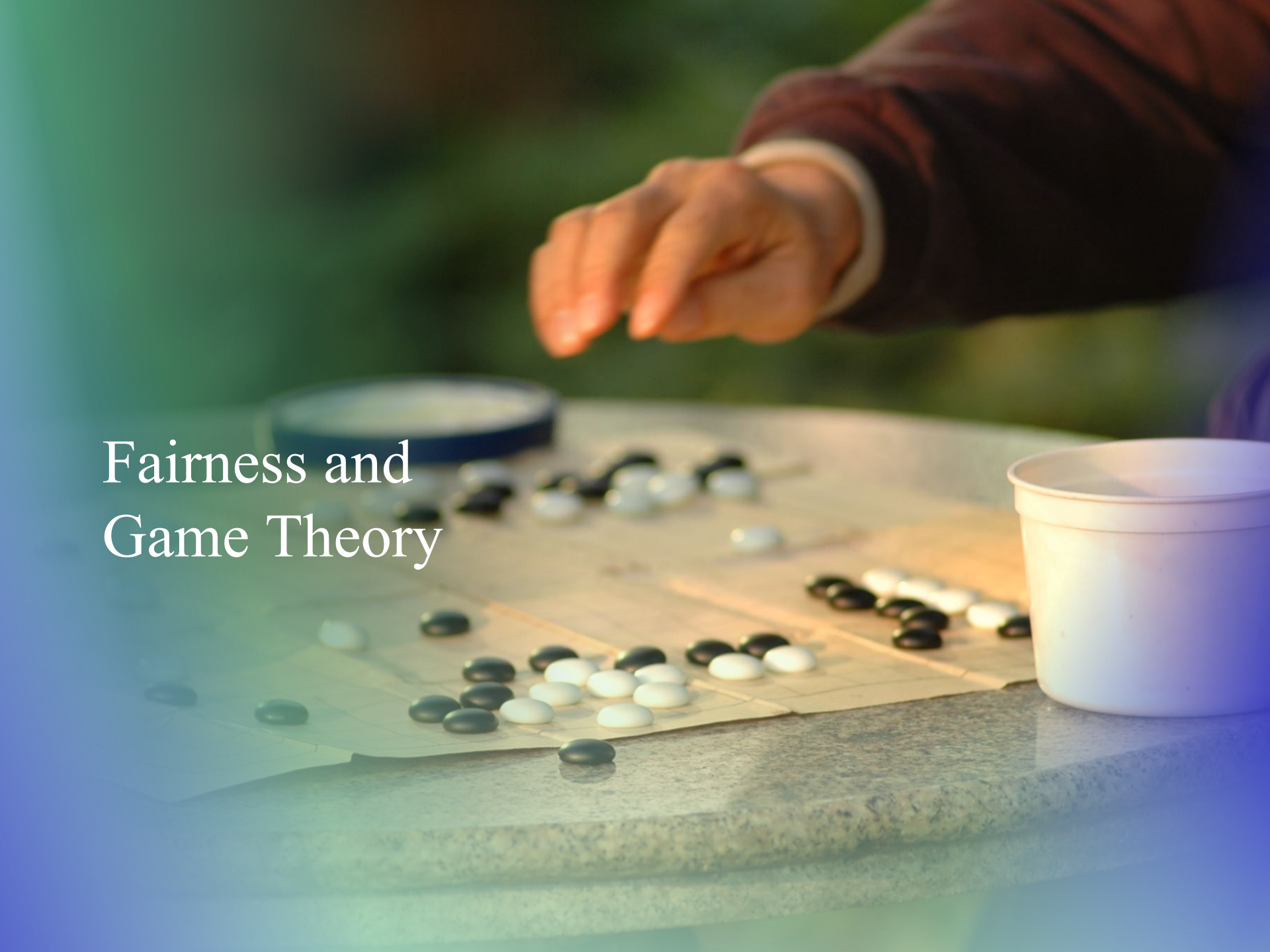
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- Live in dense forest, with plenty of food
- Do very little hunting
- Are far less in-group oriented than other apes
- Little inter- or intra- group violence
- Are wildly promiscuous
- Confrontations between different bonobo groups often turn into ape orgies



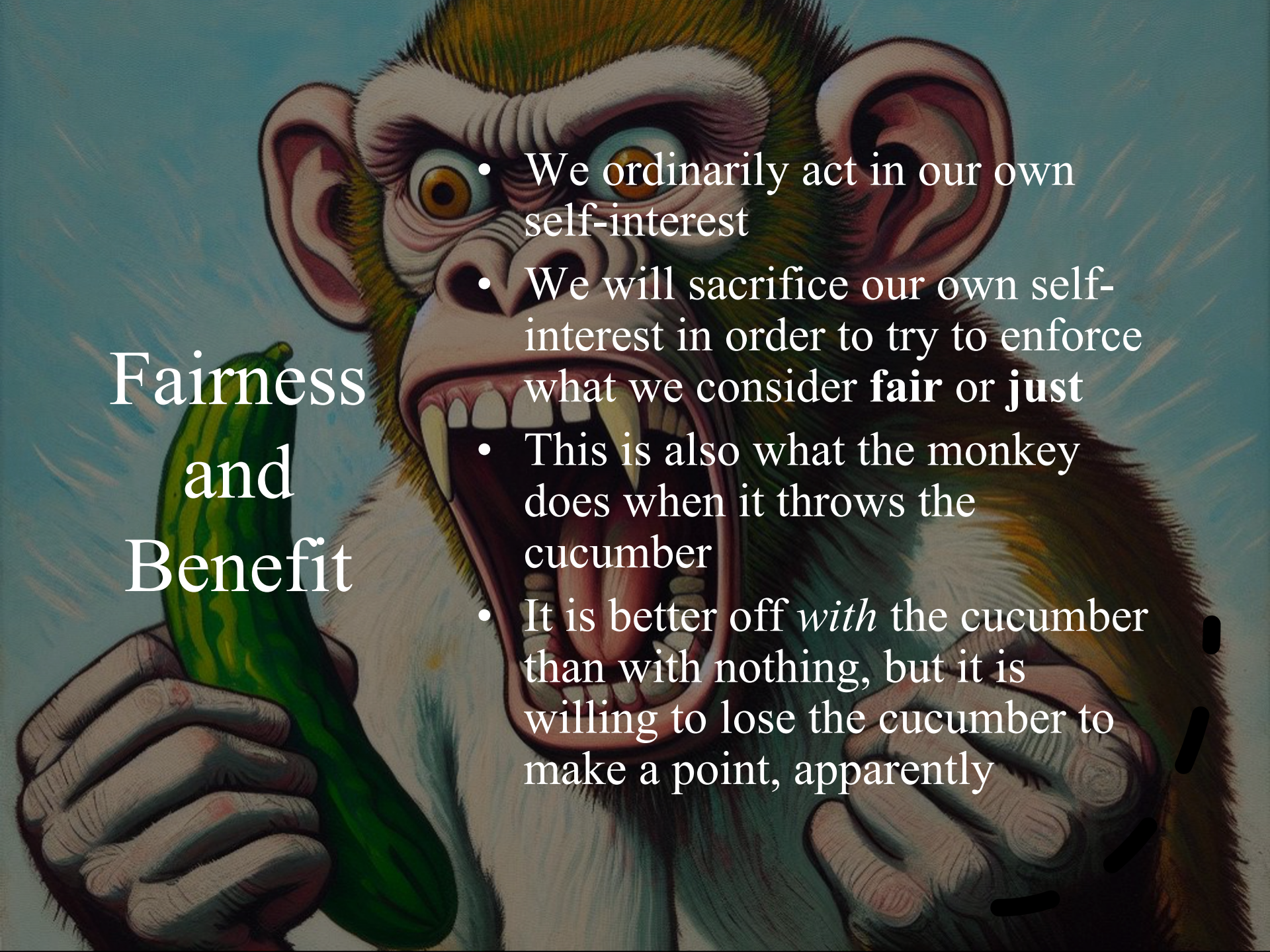
- “Bonobos have no deadly warfare, little hunting, no male dominance, and enormous amounts of sex.”
  - John Horgan

# Fairness and Game Theory



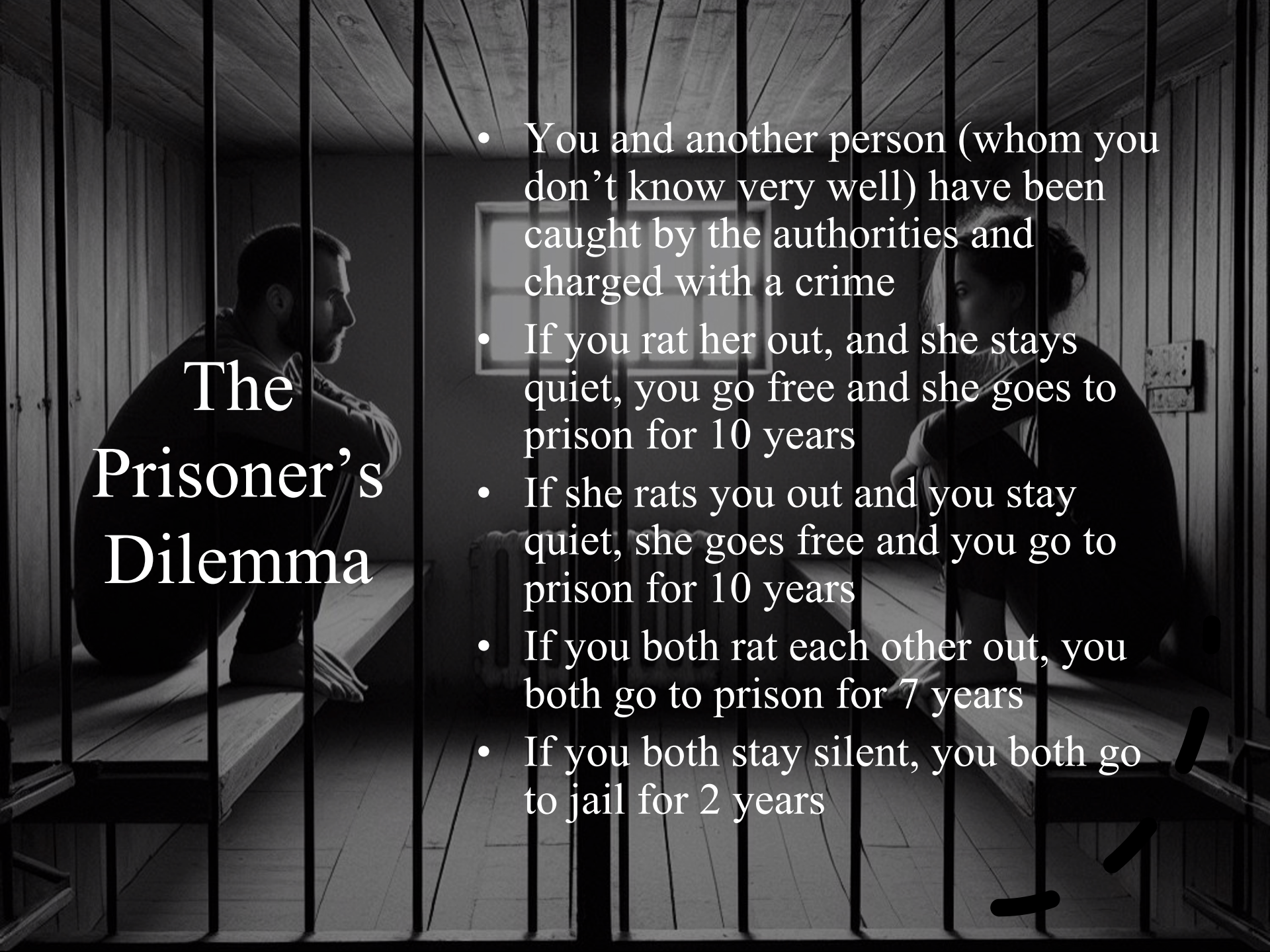
# Grapes





# Fairness and Benefit

- We ordinarily act in our own self-interest
- We will sacrifice our own self-interest in order to try to enforce what we consider **fair** or **just**
- This is also what the monkey does when it throws the cucumber
- It is better off *with* the cucumber than with nothing, but it is willing to lose the cucumber to make a point, apparently



# The Prisoner's Dilemma

- You and another person (whom you don't know very well) have been caught by the authorities and charged with a crime
- If you rat her out, and she stays quiet, you go free and she goes to prison for 10 years
- If she rats you out and you stay quiet, she goes free and you go to prison for 10 years
- If you both rat each other out, you both go to prison for 7 years
- If you both stay silent, you both go to jail for 2 years

What is the rationally self-interested thing to do?

Rat



# What's the best option for you?

| Chart!          | You Rat         | You don't rat    |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| She rats        | You get 7 years | You get 10 years |
| She doesn't rat | You go free     | You get 2 years  |

# The Ultimatum Game

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- You and a partner are given 10 dollars
- One person (A) decides how to split the money between the two of you, the other (B) either accepts or rejects the deal
- If the deal is rejected, no money is given



# What is the rationally self-interested thing to do?

- For person A, to keep as much money for herself as possible
- For person B, to accept any offer, as he would be better off with even one dollar than zero dollars

What do these experiments show  
us?