



Sabian Mysteries



Facilitator Exercises

Who's Fault?

In groups of three or more, after reading the story, without consultation, rank the characters, 1 - 6, in the order of their responsibility for the death of the Baroness. Next, work with the other members of your group and decide upon a group rank for each of the 6 characters. All members of the group **must agree** upon the ranking.

If the group size is above 8, it is possible to divide into three groups or more. Then a second stage of the exercise is for each group to elect a spokesperson to present their decision to the whole group, and then seek to find consensus for the larger group.

Baroness

Once upon a time, in the land of cream and honey, there lived a Baron and Baroness. They lived in a large, well-constructed castle that was located on an island in the middle of a wide, fast-flowing river. A drawbridge connected the island to the mainland at the river's narrowest point. Rumour had it that the Baron also kept alligators in the river to prevent swimmers from reaching his island. One morning it became necessary for the Baron to visit the outlying districts. As he prepared for his departure, the jealous Baron warned his beautiful wife, "Do not leave the castle while I am away. If you do, I will severely punish you upon my return."

As, the hours of the morning passed, the pretty Baroness grew lonely. Despite her husband's warning, she decided to go see her lover who lived nearby. "Surely my husband will not return before sunrise," thought the Baroness. So she ordered the servants to lower the drawbridge and to leave it down until she returned. After spending several pleasant hours with her lover, the Baroness returned to the drawbridge. However, as she approached the drawbridge, she found it blocked by a madman wildly waving a wicked knife. "Do not cross this bridge pretty Baroness or I will kill you," he screamed.

Fearing for her life, the Baroness went back to her lover and asked for his help. "Our relationship is only a romantic one," her lover said. "I'll not help you get across the bridge." The Baroness left her lover and sought out a boatman. "She explained her plight to the boatman and asked him to take her across the river in his boat. "I will do it, but it will cost you 10 rubbles, the boatman said. "But I have no money with me," the Baroness protested. "That is too bad. No money, no ride," the boatman replied. Her fear growing, the Baroness ran crying to the home of a friend. Again she explained her situation and begged her friend to lend her the 10 rubbles to pay the boatman's fee. "If you had not disobeyed your husbands this would not have happened. You have created your own situation and I will give you no money," said her friend. Dawn was coming and her last resource was exhausted. The Baroness returned to the drawbridge. Again she pleaded with the madman but to no avail. In desperation she tried to run past him but failed. She was slain by the madman.

Teaching

We each have different viewpoints; this is especially poignant when it comes to matters like blame and guilt. To form consensus – when everyone agrees – is a matter of dealing with others' emotions and fixity of opinion.