

Christy Collins

social work

Moral Ranking Exercise

Social Work with Groups – typically juniors, but new to the major

Done early in the semester

Several threads to pull upon completion

The assignment is to rank the 5 characters from “morally” worst to best – who is the WORST person and WHY?

Two primitive societies are separated by a turbulent river full of people-eating piranhas. An earlier civilized society built a connecting bridge between the two.

Olive lives in Elk Society and is very much in love with, and engaged to Isak, who lives in Moose Society. Both societies are highly opposed to premarital sex.

Both Olive and Isak are still virgins. Six days before the wedding a monsoon destroys the bridge. The night before the wedding, Benji the sailor visits Elk society, and Olive asks him to give her a ride across the river. Benji agrees on the condition Olive sleeps with him. Olive does not want this, but she believes it is her only way to get to Isak. She deliberates 5 hours and asks a long-time friend, Shari, for advice. Shari says, "It's your problem; I can't help. I'm not that keen on Moose Society anyway".

Olive says "yes" to Benji. When she makes it across, Isak is overjoyed to see her. She hugs him and starts to cry. Burdened with guilt, she tells Isak what happened. Isak is outraged. He believes Olive is tainted. He tells Olive he will not marry her and does not want to see her again.

Olive runs to Samson, a mutual friend. When Olive shares everything with Samson, he runs to find Isak and beats him unconscious. Olive looks on and laughs.

Takeaways from the assignment

- The importance of values
 - social justice and “taking advantage”
 - violence/aggression
 - apathy
- The unnamed “sixth character” (context/environment)
- The group process of problem-solving, persuasion, and agreement