

The Alligator River exercise

Once upon a time there was a woman named Mary who was involved with a man named Alex.

Alex lived on the banks of a river and Mary lived across the bridge over the river. The river was full of man-eating alligators. One spring when the snows on the mountains melted and heavy rain fell, the river rose so high that the bridge was washed away.

Mary desperately wanted to cross the river to marry her beloved Alex, so she went to her neighbour Ian. Ian owned a small rowing boat and she asked if he could row her across the river. He agreed but only on the condition that she would have sex with him before they went.

She refused immediately and went to her other neighbour Sandy explaining her problem and what Ian had asked. The neighbour refused to get involved and made the excuse that Sandy's boat had a leak.

Mary was left with no alternative but to accept Ian's terms and on the next day Ian took her to Alex and soon they were married.

Next year she had a baby, and shortly afterwards Alex met Sandy when out fishing in the river. Sandy, after sharing some of Alex's beer, told him of Mary's conversation concerning Ian.

Alex stormed home confronting Mary with the story. She told him it was true, with which Alex told her to take the baby and leave.

Heart sick and dejected, Mary left. Walking down the road she met a childhood friend Jim, and revealed the whole story.

Jim left immediately and went to Alex's place and beat him brutally, then came and found Mary and the child and took them home and cared for them for years to come.

Rank the moral culpability of the five characters in the story giving the lowest number to the character you consider to be the most offensive and the highest to the character you consider to be the least objectionable (e.g. 1 = the worst, 5 = the best).

Who behaved the worst?

Mary

Alex

Ian

Sandy

Jim