**The Drawbridge**

As he left for a visit to his outlying districts, the jealous baron warned his pretty wife: “Do not leave the castle while I am gone, or I will punish you severely when I return!” But as the hours passed, the young baroness grew lonely, and despite her husband’s warning she decided to visit her lover, who lived in the countryside nearby. The castle was situated on an island in a wide, fast-flowing river. A drawbridge linked the island to the mainland at the narrowest point in the river.

“Surely my husband will not return before dawn,” she thought and ordered her servants to lower the drawbridge and leave it down until she returned. After spending several pleasant hours with her lover, the baroness returned to the drawbridge, only to find it blocked by a gateman wildly waving a long, cruel knife. “Do not attempt to cross this bridge, Baroness, or I will have to kill you,” he cried. “The baron ordered me to do so.”

Fearing for her life, the baroness returned to her lover and asked him for help. “Our relationship is only a romantic one,” he said, “I will not help.” The baroness then sought out a boatman on the river, explaining her plight to him, and asked him to take her across the river in his boat. I will do it, but only if you can pay my fee of five marks.” But I have no money with me!” the baroness protested. “That is too bad. No money, no ride,” the boatman said flatly.

Her fear growing, the baroness ran crying to the home of a friend and, after explaining her desperate situation, begged for enough money to pay the boatman his fee. “If you had not disobeyed your husband, this would not have happened,” the friend said. “I will give you no money.”

With dawn approaching and her last resource exhausted, the baroness returned to the bridge in desperation, attempted to cross to the castle, and was slain by the gateman.

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Activity …..see below.

**Journal:**

***Who do you think is most responsible for the baroness’s death?***

Please rank the characters in order of how responsible you think they are in causing the death of the baroness. [ 1= most responsible and 6= least responsible]

\*This list should be prepared by one’s own value system, not the values of the time of the story.

Characters:

\_\_\_ Baron

\_\_\_ Baroness

\_\_\_ Gateman

\_\_\_ Boatman

\_\_\_ Friend

\_\_\_ Lover

In a journal, please discuss who you believe is the most responsible in the death of the baroness and why. You do not need to discuss the entire order (though you may if you want), but I am very interested in learning who you felt was the most responsible and why, and the least responsible and why.

***The journal, “The Drawbridge,” should be at least one paragraph in length (9-12 sentences).***

\*Consider the facts of the story in your assessment AND try to extend your thinking, so your judgements aren’t so obvious and simple.