



World Words

Candy Coated Unicorns and Converse All Stars

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Student's Activities

Pre-Listening Activities 1



Unicorn: Mythological animal with horse's head and single, straight horn. The unicorn is said to be the only fabulous creature not created out of human fear. It is referred to as being 'fierce yet good, selfless yet solitary, but always mysteriously beautiful'. (Marianna Mayer - *The Unicorn and the Lake*)

Candy-coated: to make something appear more pleasant than it is.

Converse All Stars: popular brand of sports shoes, or trainers, originally made for playing basketball. Also known as Chuck Taylor All Stars after legendary basketball player.



The Scene: A coffee shop, possibly part of a chain of coffee shops (e.g. Starbucks, Costa, Caffé Nero). On the table are newspapers with stories about wars in the Middle East. On the wall is a poster which says '*Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate, but that we are powerful beyond measure*'.

The Players: Two people, the poet and a stranger, are both crying, each enquiring after the reason for the other's tears. The poet discovers that the stranger has been beaten up by her boyfriend. Blood drips from her mouth.

Your task: How many different versions of their conversation can you think of? How might the Candy-coated unicorn, Converse All Stars and the poster fit into this scene? Perhaps they are just scenery.



Perhaps they are clues. You decide.

Pre-listening Activity 2

1. You will hear the poet talking about the poem and some students discussing their reaction to it. Read through the following comments which are made in the broadcast and decide first who was speaking - the poet or the students - and then decide if they were discussing male domination and **oppression**, or perhaps **hope** and resolution. Or were they talking about the way the poem was made, it's **imagery**, or even the **sound effects** that the use of words made? Then listen to the broadcast to check your answers.

- a. "I like the last part because '*when backpacks become briefcases and this table stables wars, we will sit and converse like all stars*', this tells the reader the person plans on doing something about their situation."
- b. "I think it's a common word but unusual in this setting. It holds the idea of a colour and of the sea."
- c. "Lots of 's' and surface sounds if you think about the scale of sound, from vowels from *a* down to *o* and *u*, those words dance across the highest spectrum of sound."
- d. "It's tradition that men are the head of the household and you are just property."
- e. "I like *her pupils sparkled bright black* - the idea of black sparkling rather than soaking in colour.... writing it would pose a little twist on the image."
- f. "As long as there is a space given to discuss and debate, then everything can be resolved."
- g. "When rhythm is used - when you think about sonnets - they are very structured rhymes, put in specific places and the way I write is to scatter it loosely so it sounds like musical conversation."
- h. "Her boyfriend is abusing her but at the same time she defends him and loves him."
- i. "I guess I was fooling around with the idea of tongues and snakes and a little bit to hint at the idea of a knife."
- j. "The poet used words that are incredibly descriptive. We are given a picture of what the setting looks like."

	Oppression	Hope	Imagery	Sound effects
The poet				
The students				



After Listening Activities

A. The poem is about the sadness caused by violence. Make a brief list of the references to violence and to sadness that you hear/read in the poem.

Your list	In what way do these lines from the poem offer hope to your list on the left?
	<p>We'll be here when the smoke clears; two strangers wearing Chuck Taylor trainers swapping tears.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>I will be brave</p> <p>I will dare to dream a candy coated unicorn in this bruised princess</p>

B. Language Notes:

On three occasions the expression 'crying for' is used. Could the poet have used the expression 'crying about'? Is there a difference?

On four occasions the poet uses the prefix 're-' to refer to a repeated action. In three of these cases the use of 're-' is unusual in that we don't normally emphasize the repeated nature of these actions. Why do you think the poet has chosen to do this?

C. Discussion

What will help the woman in the poem resolve her problem and what will work against this resolution?