



World Words

Baby Scorpion

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Student's Activities

Pre-Listening Activity 1



A baby
scorpion

A log burning
on a fire



A couple sitting
together,
embracing



Later:
the ghost of the
baby scorpion

<i>fear</i>	<i>hold</i>
<i>hate</i>	<i>smile</i>
<i>love</i>	<i>tremble</i>
<i>warm</i>	<i>cry</i>
<i>chill</i>	<i>hug</i>
<i>worry</i>	<i>hurt</i>
<i>protect</i>	<i>touch</i>
<i>defend</i>	<i>scream</i>

Pre-Listening Activity 2

1. You will hear the poet talking about the poem and some international 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 the **symmetry** of the poem, the **characters** that appear in the poem, issues related to **dialogue**, **folk** or fairy **tales** or developing **empathy** and **sympathy** in the listener or reader. Then listen to the broadcast to check your answers.

- a. "...and then out of his love came this deep, dark thing, the baby scorpion. Maybe he was jealous."
- b. "I wanted it to have an atmosphere, a quality of a very old story that might be in a children's book."
- c. "They seem to have a lesson or a moral, and you can't quite decide what that is!"
- d. "After reading this I might think twice about killing a spider."
- e. "It's a circle the fire is kept going keeping their love alive, perhaps at the end they die, the scorpion dies, the fire consumes itself and dies and with them dies their love."
- f. "I much prefer to read or listen to stories that show me things rather than tell me things, where people act or do things in front of my eyes. I didn't want to tell people what was happening. I wanted it to happen."
- g. "I would like to commend the writer for putting across such a different view of scorpions."
- h. "The woman - girlfriend - seems extremely vulnerable, or threatened. She is trying to convince herself it's right to kill this animal."
- i. "I felt frightened of scorpions even though I was much bigger than them and I felt this was quite unfair."
- j. "I wanted to suggest that the scorpion was noble: the knight through a forest of red thorns."

	Symmetry	Characters	Dialogue	Folk Tales	Sympathy
The poet					
The students					



After Listening Activities

A. There appear to be a number of animals which, as babies, elicit very different feelings from humans to those felt when the animals are full grown. In the case of the baby scorpion in the poem the sentiment described is *pity*. The fear only came when the woman thought of the scorpion as an adult.

Which of the following animals might elicit positive feelings in humans when young but negative ones when older? Describe the positive feelings and then the negative ones.

lion	wolf
snake	duck
elephant	sheep
fox	horse
spider	shark
eagle	seagull

B. In the poem, the girl says:

"I am young and beautiful among my own kind".
I will not harm you unless frightened.
If there is no alternative I will kill myself.
I do not want death forced upon me.
I will come to meet it in all my wildness"

In which ways might these have been the words of the scorpion?

C. Language Point

There is a little dialogue in the poem. Note that when positive things are being stated 'It's a black snowflake', 'I am young and beautiful' the language is a simple use of subject-verb-object', but when fear or aggression comes into the story then the imperative is used, 'Find it and kill it', 'Make sure....', 'Look ...'. This adds a harder, more brutal note to the language.