

The Man Who Loved Clowns
By June Rae Wood
A Teaching Unit

S&T Publications, LLC

This is a sample pack from our teaching unit for June Rae Wood's novel *The Man Who Loved Clowns*. Our students love this novel! It is a wonderful book to read with your classes. You will laugh together and cry together as you read this powerful story about life, love, and loss. Neither you nor your students will ever forget it.

Scroll down to view the table of contents and two free lessons from our teaching unit.

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The highlighted chapters above are the two free lessons provided in this sample.

The Man Who Loved Clowns

Chapters 1-2

Author's Craft (lead, imagery, symbolism)

Name _____

Date _____

An author's craft - the specific techniques that an author chooses to relay an intended message. These techniques can include (but are not limited to) tone, flashback, imagery, irony, word choice, and dialogue.

In chapters one and two, we will examine the author's craft of using a lead or "grabber", symbolism, flashback, and vivid descriptions.

Lead/Grabber

Reread the first paragraph of the novel.

"Delrita! Delrita Jensen! Wait up!"

I clutched my books to my chest and plowed on through the sea of sweaty bodies in the junior high hallway. Without looking back, I knew it was that new girl yelling at me. Because she and I had to share a math book, she was the only person in this whole school who didn't consider me invisible. All I wanted was for her to leave me alone.

1. What type of grabber/lead does the author choose to use? _____

2. Is this grabber effective? _____ If so, what questions arise in your mind after reading it?

Descriptions and Imagery:

Imagery – Language that creates a sensory impression within the reader’s mind.

The author weaves in a description of Delrita in this first chapter. What phrases are used to describe her? _____

- Throughout this chapter, the author uses imagery to help the readers feel like they are there. Read the following two passages and underline the smells that the author refers to. *Without answering, I walked through the doorway onto the sidewalk, away from the noise and the smell of books and chalk dust. Across the street, a man was mowing a ditch, and I caught a faint whiff of dust and dried weeds.*
- Underline the imagery that is included when there is a description of the busses. *Almost in unison, the bus drivers started grinding gears and revving up their engines. The exhaust fumes burned my eyes and throat.*

Discuss:

Why should authors use imagery?

Chapter 2

Symbolism – The author’s use of an object, person, place, or event that has both a meaning in itself and stands for something larger than itself.

Read the following passage from chapter two.

To chase away my fears, I’d think about the tree I’d once seen growing from a rock. Maybe I’d be like that tree, which stood proud and willowy after fighting its way to the sun, while the rock was cracked with a deep, jagged scar all the way to the ground.

What does the tree symbolize? _____

What does the rock symbolize? _____

The author chooses to use this symbolism to help the reader learn about Delrita. Which is she more like at this point in the book, the rock or the tree? _____

Flashback – The technique of disrupting the flow of a narrative by having a character remember past events.

Where is the flashback in this chapter? _____

Discuss

Why do authors use flashbacks?

The Man Who Loved Clowns

Chapters 3-4

Understanding Idioms & Making Inferences/Drawing Conclusions

Name _____

Date _____

Idiom- Words used in a special way that may be different from their literal meaning (e.g., **It's raining cats and dogs.**)

Underline the idioms in the following sentences from chapters three and four. Then, tell what each idiom means.

1. *If she passed the word during fourth hour Monday, Avanelle would be out of my hair.*

Meaning _____

2. *With a clean red T-shirt and a freshly scrubbed face, Punky made a beeline for Aunt Queenie.*

Meaning _____

3. *Wouldn't she hit the ceiling if she knew that as soon as Punky cleaned the meat off a horn, he'd fling the bone behind the TV?*

Meaning _____

4. *She probably thought I was like the other kids, who hadn't exactly beaten a path to her locker when she enrolled in school this morning.*

Meaning _____

Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions Whenever we read something, we are constantly making inferences and drawing conclusions. We do this based on what we already know from our prior knowledge or what we learn from the text.

Read the following passages from chapters three and four. Then, answer the questions.

"Hi, hon. How was school today?" she asked...

"Nothing to shout about. I got a B on my book report, and Mr. Casey thinks I have artistic promise."

"Promise? That's an understatement if I ever heard one."

- What does Delrita's mom mean when she says, "That's an understatement if I ever heard one."? What can you conclude about Delrita's artistic ability?

Punky loved commercials, and he was always flipping the channels back and forth, watching for his favorites. Our cupboards overflowed with boxes of detergents that danced, toilet paper that unrolled itself, and several kinds of cat food, even though we'd never owned a cat.

- Why are their cupboards full of all of these products?
-

"But he's never even been to school," argued Aunt Queenie...

Uncle Bert looked uncomfortable. He wiped his face with his napkin and said uneasily, "Queenie, we've been through all this before..."

"Before Mama died, I gave her my word that I'd keep him with me always, and that's what I'm doing. I know you've helped some with the handicapped, but you haven't lived it. Mama and I have, and Bert. Ask him what it's like to see people poking fun and making mean comments about someone you love."

Uncle Bert, who'd been taking a drink of iced tea, started choking. I wondered if it was on purpose.

- What can the reader conclude about Bert from these two passages?
 - a. He loves his wife and will always defend her point of view on things.
 - b. He is intimidated by his wife and a little afraid to express his own opinions.
 - c. He thinks his wife is right all of the time.
 - d. He enjoys arguing with his wife and likes to pick fights with her.

Punky looked startled at the magnified sound. He grabbed the mike from Dad, crammed it back into the box, and shoved it at Uncle Bert. "You have it," he said.

- Why does Punky give back the microphone?
-

When I leaned over and saw a kid's program featuring Jellybean the Clown, I knew Punky wouldn't touch the dial again until the show was over.

Around midnight, when I heard the first TV station signing off the air, I brushed the wood shavings off my lap and got up.

- These two passages help the reader to infer about the setting. We are given hints in these passages about when (around what year it is) the action in this book takes place. Underline the hints. Can you find them? When do you think this book takes place?
-