

## Lesson 4

### Love

#### A. Warm up:

Butterflies are regarded as powerful symbols in many cultures and contexts. They are often associated with change and growth, due to their fascinating transformation from caterpillar to cocoon, and finally into a graceful butterfly. In Greek mythology, psyche (meaning "soul") is often depicted with butterfly wings. Butterflies are thus connected to the soul and the quest for love and beauty. In some cultures, particularly in Asia, butterflies appear in art as symbols of love, romance, beauty, and freedom. They are also seen as symbols of the transient and fleeting nature of life.



What comes to your mind when you think of butterflies?

Read the title of the short story given below. What do you think the story will be about?

#### B. Read the following short story and do the activities that follow.

### Butterfly Forever

Chen Qiyu

IT IS RAINING. The asphalt road looks cold and wet. It glitters with reflections of green, yellow, and red lights. We are taking shelter under the balcony. The green mailbox stands alone across the street. Inside the big pocket of my white windbreaker is a letter for my mother in the South.

Yingzi says she can mail the letter for me with the umbrella. I nod quietly and hand her the letter.

"Who told us to bring only one small umbrella?" She smiles, opens up the umbrella, and is ready to walk across the road to mail the letter for me. A few tiny raindrops from an umbrella rib fall onto my glasses.

With the piercing sound of a vehicle screeching to a halt, Yingzi's life flies in the air gently, and then slowly falls back on the cold and wet road, like a butterfly at night.

Although it is spring, it feels like deep autumn.

All she did was cross the road to mail a letter for me. A very simple act, yet I will never forget it as long as I live.

I open my eyes and remain standing under the balcony, blankly, my eyes filled with hot tears. All the cars in the entire world have stopped. People rush to the middle of the road. Nobody knows the one that lies on the road there is mine, my butterfly. At this moment she is only five meters away from me, yet it is so far away. Bigger raindrops fall onto my glasses, splashing into my life.

Why? Why did we bring only one umbrella?

Then I see Yingzi again, in her white windbreaker, the umbrella above her head, crossing the road quietly. She is mailing the letter for me. The letter I wrote to my mother in the South. I stand blankly under the balcony and see, once again, Yingzi walking toward the middle of the road.

The rain wasn't that big, yet it was the biggest rain in my entire life. Below is the content of the letter. Did Yingzi know?

"Ma, I am going to marry Yingzi next month."

Translated by Shouhna Qi.

### C. Imagery

Imagery is a device used in literary texts that uses vivid descriptions to appeal to a readers' senses, i.e., taste, smell, touch, hearing, or sight. Imagery can help a reader form mental images of the setting and events of a literary text, and immerse themselves into the world a writer creates through language.

Work with a partner to identify the use of imagery in "Butterfly Forever".

Now close your eyes and try to imagine what the characters see, feel, and hear by using the imagery in the story. Do you think the writer was successful in creating a vivid picture?

**D. Answer the following questions:**

Who are the main characters of the story? Does the story provide details of what the characters are like?

- ii. a. What is the relationship between the narrator and Yingzi?
- b. Which line in the story indicates their relationship?
- c. Did your feelings about the characters' fate change after their relationship was revealed?

In line 11, the narrator says that “it feels like deep autumn”, even though the season is spring. Why do you think he feels this way?

Why do you think the narrator refers to Yingzi as a butterfly?

How would you describe the narrator's feelings for Yingzi?

Have you ever lost someone who was very important to you? When and how did it happen?

The narrator in the story experiences feelings of grief, loss, and guilt. Can you relate to the emotions the narrator is going through?

**E. The Butterfly Effect**

The butterfly effect is a concept that suggests small, seemingly insignificant actions or events can have large, unpredictable consequences over time. The name comes from the idea that the flap of a butterfly's wings in one part of the world, for example, Bangladesh, could cause a tiny change in air pressure that eventually causes a tornado in Peru. This illustrates how minor actions in life can set off a chain of events resulting in major outcomes.

Create a group of 4-5 members and discuss the following questions:

- a. How can the concept of the Butterfly Effect be used to describe the chain of events leading to the tragedy in “Butterfly Forever”?
- b. Have you ever experienced a situation where a minor change or decision in your life led to a significant outcome? How might your life or experiences have been different if that small event had not occurred?

**F. Point of view in narration**

“Butterfly Forever” is written in the first-person narrative style, using "I" and "we" to reflect the narrator's direct involvement in the story's events. The original narration is from a man's perspective.

Try rewriting the story from Yingzi's point of view, using her thoughts and feelings to guide the narrative.

**G. Group Presentation:**

Many people around us experience grief, trauma, and depression. What advice would you give to a friend who is going through a difficult phase in their life?

Form a group of 5-6 members and prepare a presentation on the topic:

“Dealing with Difficult Emotions: Help Yourself and the People You Love.”

**H. Now read the poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, where the speaker conveys the depth and intensity of their feelings for a loved one.****How Do I Love Thee?**

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
 I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
 My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
 For the ends of being and ideal grace.  
 I love thee to the level of every day's  
 Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.  
 I love thee freely, as men strive for right.  
 I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.  
 I love thee with the passion put to use  
 In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.  
 I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
 With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,  
 Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,  
 I shall but love thee better after death.



- I. Match the words on the left column with their meanings on the right column in the context of the poem.**

Words	Meanings
depth	religious figures admired for their holiness.
breadth	a strong feeling or emotion
ideal grace	complete trust or confidence in someone or something
strive	admiration or approval
faith	a state of perfect virtue
saints	the distance from the top to the bottom
passion	to make a great effort toward something.
praise	the width of something

- J. Discuss the following questions in pairs.**

What is the main idea of the poem “How Do I love Thee”?

The speaker of the poem emphasizes how her love is enduring and transcends time and space. Do you agree? Which expressions used in the poem support this statement?

While the speaker in this poem claims that they will love someone “better after death”, the narrator in the short story “Butterfly Forever” has actually lost a loved one in an accident.

Can you compare how love and emotions are expressed by the two narrators?

- K. Think of someone in your life who deserves to know how much they mean to you. Write a short poem or letter dedicated to this person. You can draw inspiration from the declarations of love in the poem, or use your own unique style to express your feelings.**