**“The Butterfly” – annotate as you listen to teacher think-aloud (I do)**

Isabella Bancroft knocked delicately on the door to her father’s study. She had been dreading this conversation ever since Edward’s proposal outside the theatre three nights earlier. They had been waiting for the carriage to be brought, and Isabella’s chaperone, Mrs Willcott, was busy catching up with an old friend. Edward had grasped her hand suddenly and professed in a panic his love for her.

‘Isabella, I love you,’ he had said. ‘I cannot keep this truth from you any longer. Please forgive me. It grieves me to put you in this awkward situation. Especially as I do not yet have the means to make us a home. But I could not keep this from you. I cannot ...’

Here, Isabella had interrupted him. ‘I will wait.’

And then, more recently, there had been that awful threat of an offer of marriage from their rich neighbour, Mr Burberry. Isabella hated everything about this man. If Edward was everything Isabella most admired in a potential husband — kind, gentle, creative, clever — Mr Burberry was everything she hated — proud, conceited, bland, cruel. He had not proposed yet, but the way he had leered suggestively at her over dinner the night before had given her the strong premonition that a proposal was not too far away. She was fairly certain he had already asked her father’s permission —something Edward had not done. Edward was only in the second year of his university studies, and as a third son, Edward would be expected to make his own way in the world.

‘Come in.’ Mr Bancroft’s voice was thick and gruff, much like his personality. Her father was someone who liked the thought of an ordered world, one in which everyone and everything had its time and its place. And if something in the world did not fit this order, then it would be made to.

Isabella slipped in. As usual, her father was engaging in his afternoon activity of mounting new specimens for his insect collection. Mr Bancroft saw himself as a naturalist, and the walls of his study were lined with glass cases of specimens from the local area and all over the world. Not that she’d ever admit it to her father, but these displays horrified Isabella: insects taken from their homes in the plants and soil, their lives robbed from them so that they could be pinned and preserved in her father’s study.

‘Ahh, Isabella. You will appreciate this specimen. Look at this fine fellow! Donald found him in the flower garden this morning. It’s a high brown fritillary or *Argynnis adippe*. Very rare.’

Though her throat was dry, Isabella managed to feign an exclamation of wonder.

‘It is very beautiful, Father.’ The butterfly was beautiful. Its wings were a startling, bright yellow, marked with black wavy lines and dots. Even though it was obviously dead now, the butterfly seemed to shine with health and life. It seemed out of place stuck between her father’s tweezers, no longer free to move or to fly.

‘Yes, I was just getting ready to pin him in place. Now, what can I do for you, child? You know how I dislike being disturbed during my time with my collection.’

‘My apologies, Father. I just have some important news that I must share with you.’

‘Yes?’ Her father sat down in his chair and picked up a pin — ready to pierce and place the latest piece into his collection.

‘It is regarding Edward.’

‘Malcolm’s son. Yes. The artist.’

‘Not an artist, Father. He is studying to be a lawyer.’

‘Yes, but he likes art. I remember he was talking to us about art. I thought he was a painter?’

‘He does like to paint, yes.’

‘You know I don’t believe in art, Isabella. Who needs pictures when nature provides so many wonders for us to admire?’

The pin went neatly and noiselessly through the thorax of the butterfly. It was now in place. Mr Bancroft sat back and admired his work.

‘He proposed, Father.’

‘Proposed what?’

‘He asked for my hand in marriage.’

Mr Bancroft looked up suddenly, fixing Isabella in place with his stare.

‘Definitely not. A preposterous suggestion. He has no means, no career. His family is respectable enough, but hardly what one would describe as wealthy. No, you have been bred to secure a good husband. A man of means.’

This response did not surprise Isabella. She had been expecting it. She took a deep breath.

‘Father, I love him.’

‘My young lady that is hardly a convincing argument. Do you really want to base a decision as important as whom you marry on the whims of a weak, feminine feeling? No, for such important matters, one must use one’s head, one’s reason.’

‘Father ...’

But he raised a hand to silence her.

‘The answer is no. Now get out. My collection needs to be maintained.’

Isabella bowed her head, ashamed. She had known before she had entered that this would be the outcome of the conversation. But at least she had tried to talk to him, to reason with him. Now she knew she would have to take more drastic measures.

**Think aloud:**

**Predictions from title**: butterflies are beautiful, free, short-lived, emerge from cocoon, are often collected

**Possible meaning of title:** story will be about literal butterfly, story will be about person who is like a butterfly, a butterfly will play an important role in the text

**Could the title be symbolic?** Very probable. Look for symbolism in stories with common nouns for titles e.g. The Crow, The Dinner Party

**Are the words of the title mentioned in the text:** Yes, very prominently. I need to notice every reference to butterfly and tease out the way in which the title enhances the meaning of the text.

**How does the title enhance the meaning of the text:** The way in which Mr. Bancroft treats butterflies parallels his controlling relationship with his daughter. I need to find the best quotes to demonstrate the way these references add to meaning.

**Genre:** short realistic narrative set in 19th century,

**How do I know?** Beginning, middle, end; orientation, complication, rising action, climax, resolution. I should mention the way the text conforms to the genre, perhaps best in intro

**Who or what am I positioned to sympathize with?** Isabella – mainly through her loving nature (the way she is represented) and negative representations of father and Mr. Burberry. We are also usually ready to accept the cultural idea that true love is important.

**What concepts are explored?** Parent/child relationships, moving into adulthood, power of love, need for self-determination, freedom and freewill, cruelty to insects,

**What ideas am I being positioned to accep**t? That pinning butterflies is a cruel and unnecessary pastime, that love should be more important consideration that material comfort or a father’s wishes, that adults should be able to make decisions such as who they should marry themselves, that parents should not treat adult children like possessions or extensions of their own ambitions, that fathers should not treat daughters any differently than sons, that girls should have as much free will and determination as boys,

**What is a big idea, a universal idea?** Human beings deserve to be in control of their own destiny (libertarian ideology), woman should have equal rights to men when it comes to choosing a partner (feminist ideology), and patriarchal behaviour needs to be challenged (feminist ideology), human beings should not exert undue control over one another (libertarian ideology), true love is more important than materialism

**What are some supporting ideas?** An individual should be free to marry for love, a tyrannical parent should be resisted/challenged, a parent should not sacrifice a daughter to a man she detests,

**Reading and annotating**

**Genre** – note complication, climax and resolution i.e. father unlikely to give permission, father refuses permission, Isabella decides to defy him.

**Binarie**s: child/parent – libertarian ideology based on free will (don’t ask who has most power in story, ask which is you are positioned to prefer), woman/man – feminist ideology, nature/man – environmentalist ideology, kind/cruel – humanistic ideology, emotion/reason – feminist ideology, free-will/subjugation – libertarian ideology

**Narration and focalisation**: third person limited narrative focalized on Isabella helps to position us to sympathize with her viewpoint, her world-view.

**Symbol and metaphor** – could devote whole paragraph to way butterfly symbolizes Isabella’s situation and enhances the meaning of the story.

**Stylistic features and literary techniques**:

**Dialogue** – focus on what father says to daughter and the way he says if e.g. he is overbearing to the point of rudeness, he demeans female emotion etc. Could contrast with the proposal.

Imagery: choose most important to support your interpretation e.g. important visual image in first words: *Isabella Bancroft knocked delicately* *on the door to her father’s study* – this immediately alerts the reader to the nature of the conflict and to Isabella’s fear of her father and to her femininity. Also *Isabella slipped in.*

leered suggestively at her over dinner…..

*Even though it was obviously dead now, the butterfly seemed to shine with health and life.* Obvious comparison to Isabella. She will be metaphorically dead if she marries Mr Burberry

*The pin went neatly and noiselessly through the thorax of the butterfly* – emphasizes father’s cruel nature

Mr Bancroft looked up suddenly, ***fixing Isabella in place with his stare***. Obvious comparison to butterfly – possession, mere chattel

**Characterization:** here mention representation –focus on the father and/or contrast two suitors.

**Text structure**: relate to elements of narrative genre

**Rhetorical devices** – listing of attributes of two suitors, dramatic irony of Isabella’s final decision – we know but father doesn’t, short sentences (Isabella hated everything about this man. ) to emphasize ideas;