

BOOK SUMMARY: *Butterfly House* by Eve Bunting

This summary is divided into the segments of the read-aloud where the teacher stopped to think-aloud or to have the children turn and talk and record their thinking.

The book is a narrative, laid out in short lines as poetry. There is occasional rhyme between lines. There is text on one side of each double-page spread, and a full-page illustration on the other side.

Pages	Summary
Modeling	
1-4	The narrator explains that when she was little girl, she found a larva that was about to be eaten by a bird. She took it inside and her grandfather showed her how to put it in an empty jar, with a twig and thistle leaves. He knew “exactly what to do” because he had raised a butterfly himself when he was her age. She thinks how strange that her grandfather was once her age, and how they would have been best friends if she’d have been living back then. He assures her that they are still best friends.
6-10	The girl finds a box to make a home for the caterpillar to develop into a butterfly. She cuts a window and covers it with a screen, and she wonders if she looks scary to the caterpillar from the inside. They put a stick in the box so her wings can dry when she turns into a butterfly. The girl says, “I want it pretty til she goes,” and she and her grandfather proceed to draw flowers on different colored paper and glue them inside the box, and made a blue sky with clouds on the inside of the lid.
Guided Practice	
11 – 20	She colors a rainbow “like a hug to keep her safe.” She puts out food each day and watches as the larva changes. Her grandpa knew when to “gently pull away/the paper top she hung from.” They tape it inside the house so the chrysalis can hang from it. “Inside that magic place/she grew/transformed herself,/came out, drooped, limp and slack/with crumpled wings.” Once the Painted Lady butterfly came out, Grandpa said, “It’s time,” and the little girl knows she has to let the butterfly go free now. Her grandpa tells her it’s OK to cry. They set the butterfly free: “I watched her falter/as she felt/the first warm touch of sun/...I saw her fly/”Good-bye.”
22	“So many years have passed.” The illustration shows the narrator as an elderly woman, about the same age as Grandpa was in the earlier part of the book. She is living in Grandpa’s house, and has a beautiful garden full of the same kinds of flowers that they drew inside the box and that the Painted Lady loves. Every spring many Painted Ladies come to her garden. “When I walk/they flutter by/to kiss me/with a painted wing./Sometimes they cling/as though I am a flower myself.”
23-28	Her neighbors are mystified as to why the butterflies all come to her yard, and not to theirs. They plant thistles and the same kinds of flowers, but the butterflies don’t come to them. The woman thinks that the butterflies know that she saved their great-great-grandma, and made the lovely butterfly house for her, “so she’d see beauty/as she hung in that half sleep/that we’ve all known.” She thinks they say, “We visit her each spring/to give her back/the love she gave to us/so long ago.” The story ends, “It’s not a mystery to me./I think I know.”