

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry

What's in Cio-Cio-San's Box?

SCENE 1: Cio-Cio-San shows Pinkerton her box of possessions

PINKERTON: Vieni, amor mio! Vi piace la casetta?

Come, my love! Do you like the house?

BUTTERFLY: Signor F. B. Pinkerton
Perdono ... io vorrei ... pochi oggetti da donna ...

Mr. F. B. Pinkerton
Sorry ... I'd like ... a few lady's things ...

PINKERTON: Dove sono?

Where are they?

She indicates the lacquer box.

BUTTERFLY: Sono qui ... vi dispiace?

They're here ... does that bother you?

Slightly surprised, he smiles, then invites her to show him.

PINKERTON: O perché mai, mia bella Butterfly?

Why would it bother me, my beautiful Butterfly?

One by one, she takes the objects from the box.

BUTTERFLY: Fazzoletti. La pipa. Una cintura.
Un piccolo fermaglio. Uno specchio. Un ventaglio.

A handkerchief. A pipe. A belt.
A little brooch. A mirror. A fan.

PINKERTON: (*seeing a little jar*) Quel barattolo?

The jar?

BUTTERFLY: Un vaso di tintura.

A pot of rouge.

PINKERTON: Ohibò!

Oh!

BUTTERFLY: Vi spiace? ... Via!

You don't like it? ... I'll get rid of it!

He pulls a long, narrow case out of the box.

PINKERTON: E quello?

What's this?

BUTTERFLY: (*very seriously*) Cosa sacra e mia.

Something sacred that belongs to me.

PINKERTON: (*with curiosity*) E non si può vedere?

Can I see?

BUTTERFLY: C'è troppa gente. Perdonate.

There are too many people here. Excuse me.

She disappears into the house, taking the case with her.

GORO: (*approaching Pinkerton and whispering into his ear*)
È un presente del Mikado a suo padre ...
coll'invito ...

It's a present from the Mikado to her father ...
with an invitation to ...

He makes a gesture of slicing open his own stomach.

PINKERTON: (*softly, to Goro*) E ... suo padre?

And ... her father?

GORO: Ha obbedito.

He obeyed.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry (CONTINUED)

Goro moves away, heading back into the house. Butterfly, meanwhile, has returned. She sits by Pinkerton on the terrace and removes several small statues from her box.

BUTTERFLY: Gli Ottokè.

The Hotoke.

Pinkerton picks up a statue and examines it with curiosity.

PINKERTON: Quei pupazzi? ... Avete detto?

What, dolls? ... What did you call them?

BUTTERFLY: Son l'anime degli avi.

They hold the souls of my ancestors.

Pinkerton puts the statue back down.

PINKERTON: Ah! ... il mio rispetto.

Ah! ... Then they have my respect.

She leans respectfully toward Pinkerton, as though wishing to tell him a secret.

BUTTERFLY: Ieri son salita tutta sola in segreto alla Missione.

Yesterday I went all by myself to the Mission.

Colla nuova mia vita posso adottare nuova religione.

With my new life, I want to adopt a new religion.

(fearfully) Lo zio Bonzo nol sa,

My uncle, the Bonze, doesn't know,

nè i miei lo sanno.

nor do my relatives.

Io seguo il mio destino e piena d'umiltà,

I'm following my own path, and, full of humility,

al Dio del signor Pinkerton m'inchino.

I wish to bow to the god of my husband Pinkerton.

È mio destino.

This is my destiny:

Nella stessa chiesetta in ginocchio con voi
pregherò lo stesso Dio. E per farvi contento

praying with you, in the same church,
to the same god. And if you want,

potrò forse obliar la gente mia.

I can perhaps even forget my own people entirely.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry (CONTINUED)

What is the object?

Why might this object be important to Cio-Cio-San?

How did (or how might) Pinkerton react to this object?

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Draw the object.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry (CONTINUED)

What's in Cio-Cio-San's Box?

SCENE 2: Cio-Cio-San prays silently before her Hotoke, and Suzuki prays audibly offstage

The walls of Butterfly's house are closed, leaving the living room in semi-darkness. Suzuki prays, bowing before an image of the Buddha. From time to time, she sounds her prayer bell. Butterfly sits alone, with her lacquered box open in front of her. One by one, she silently removes her Hotoke and looks at them longingly.

SUZUKI: (*praying*) E Izagi ed Izanami, Sarundasico e Kami ...
(*interrupting the prayer*) Oh! la mia testa!

Izagi and Izanami, Surundasico and Kami ...
Oh, my head!

She rings the bell again, to capture the gods' attention.

E tu Ten-Sjoo-daj!
(*on the verge of tears, looking at Butterfly*)
fate che Butterfly non pianga più,
mai più, mai più!

And you, Ten-Sioo-dai!

Please make Butterfly stop crying.
Please, may she never, never cry again!

BUTTERFLY: (*without moving*) Pigri ed obesi
son gli Dei giapponesi.
L'americano Iddio son persuasa
ben più presto risponde a chi l'implori.
Ma temo ch'egli ignori
che noi stiam qui di casa.

The gods you pray to
are lazy and fat.
I'm convinced that the American god
will respond to your prayers much more quickly.
But I'm afraid that he doesn't know
that we live here.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry (CONTINUED)

What's in Cio-Cio-San's Box?

SCENE 3: Cio-Cio-San prepares for Pinkerton's arrival

BUTTERFLY: *(to Suzuki)* Or vienmi ad adornar.
No! pria portami il bimbo.

Come help me get dressed.
No, first bring me my child.

Suzuki goes into the neighboring room and brings the child, whom she places next to Butterfly. Butterfly, meanwhile, looks at a little hand mirror.

BUTTERFLY: *(sadly)* Non son più quella!
Troppi sospiri la bocca mandò,
e l'occhio riguardò nel lontan troppo fiso.
(to Suzuki) Dammi sul viso un tocco di carmino

I'm no longer the beautiful girl I once was!
Too many sighs have passed these lips,
my eyes have spent too much time gazing at a far horizon.
Put a hint of rouge on my cheeks ...

She takes a brush and places some rouge on the cheeks of her child.

ed anche a te, piccino, perché la veglia non ti faccia
vôte per pallore le gote.

... and also some rouge for you, little one, so that this
night of waiting won't make you look pale and tired.

SUZUKI: *(asking Butterfly to sit still)* Non vi movete,
che v'ho a ravviare i capelli.

Don't move!
I need to fix your hair.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry (CONTINUED)

What's in Cio-Cio-San's Box?

SCENE 4: Cio-Cio-San's suicide

Butterfly picks up her lacquer box, carries it to the center of the room, and slowly lifts the lid. She takes out the long, thin case, and slowly pulls out the knife with which her father killed himself. Holding the hilt in one hand and the tip of the blade in the other, she kisses the blade with almost religious devotion.

BUTTERFLY: *(softly reading the words inscribed on the knife)*

"Con onor muore chi non può serbar
vita con onore."

"Let those who cannot live an honorable life have an
honorable death instead."

She places the tip of the blade at her throat. Suddenly the door opens, and Suzuki pushes the child into the room. The child runs toward his mother with his hands outstretched. Butterfly lets the knife fall. She rushes toward the child, embraces him, and smothers him with kisses.

BUTTERFLY: Tu? tu? tu? tu? tu? tu? tu?

(with great feeling, breathing hard)

piccolo Iddio! Amore, amore mio,
fior di giglio e di rosa.

(taking the child's head and pulling it toward herself)

Non saperlo mai per te,

pei tuoi puri occhi,

(in tears) muor Butterfly ...

perché tu possa andar di là dal mare

senza che ti rimorda ai di maturi,

il materno abbandono.

(with great love)

O a me, sceso dal trono dell'alto Paradiso,

guarda ben fiso, fiso di tua madre la faccia!

che ten resti una traccia, guarda ben!

Amore, addio! addio! piccolo amor!

(her voice breaking) Va, gioca, gioca!

You? You? You? You? You? You? You?

Oh, my dearest darling,
blossom of lily and rose.

I hope you never know this,

but it's for your sake, for your beautiful eyes,
that Butterfly must die ...

So that you can go to the other side of the sea

without thinking, when you've grown up,

that your mother abandoned you.

Oh my angel, who came to me from heaven,

look at your mother's face with care,

so that you'll one day remember a trace of it.

Goodbye, love! Goodbye, my little one!

Go now, go play! Go play!

Butterfly picks up the child and places him on her tatami mat. She hands him an American flag and a little doll, then carefully puts a blindfold over his eyes. Then she picks up the knife again and, with her gaze fixed on her child, places the knife against her own chest. With great conviction, she stabs herself and pulls the knife across her stomach. Collapsing on the floor, she looks up at her child, who is oblivious to what is happening. With a weak smile, she drags herself toward him, hugs him one last time, and then falls dead on the ground.

PINKERTON: *(from outside)* Butterfly! Butterfly! Butterfly!

Butterfly! Butterfly! Butterfly!

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objects of Inquiry (CONTINUED)

What's in *Your* Box?

1.	3.	4.
2.		5.

Object 1: What is this object? _____

What does it mean to you? _____

Object 2: What is this object? _____

What does it mean to you? _____

Object 3: What is this object? _____

What does it mean to you? _____

Object 4: What is this object? _____

What does it mean to you? _____

Object 5: What is this object? _____

What does it mean to you? _____