

The Butterfly Effect Max Peng

All actions have consequences. Starting from a young age, children are taught that everything they do has an effect. If one commits an erroneous act, a dissatisfactory effect will result. Yet I never understood that. So what if I forget my homework one day? How could something so insignificant possibly have a profound effect on my life? How I wish I had adopted this mindset before it was too late...

"So Max, how was school today?"

"Not much. Just the usual. *There was one thing*..... my math teacher did go on a rant and started talking about some mathematical theory called *the butterfly effect*. It was full of complex systems. Only thing I remembered him saying was how a change in an initial condition can result in a significantly different outcome. I comprehended little of it, just a waste of my time."

"Mom? Mom?" The car abruptly came to a stop, with not a soul in the driver's seat, The world went silent, and then black. My eyelids slowly fluttered open. I was laying on the dirt, within a dense forest, my head throbbing. "Where in the..."

"Young man! Who are you?"

A somewhat short, muscular white man in an embellished general's uniform. The man had soft blue eyes, wavy brown hair, and thin lips. I couldn't believe it! Walking towards me was one of America's greatest generals, Ulysses S Grant!

"You must run back to your family. My Army of the Potomac has set up camp in this forest, intent on shedding blood." I dropped to my knees. "Sorry sir, I..I..."

"There shall be no need for such behavior. I am a man, just like you. Now, away you go. And do be careful, son. You never know what consequences your actions have." As he walked away, the world once again went black.

Must've been a dream. Yet something was extremely wrong. Remembering Grant's last words to me, I sprinted to my math teacher's classroom. Panting, I sat down and recalled my story to him. After I finished, he leaned close and said, "Imagine this. A yellow butterfly flaps its delicate wings. Weeks later, a tornado forms with a specific formation and path. Would you believe it if I told you that the butterfly inherently altered the tornado?"

"Impossible.." I breathed. "

"What effect would a mere butterfly exert upon a tornado?"

"Exactly! As paradoxical as it seems, it can. That is the powerful meaning of the butterfly effect; no matter how small something is, it will make a difference."

"Are you saying..."

"That your encounter with Ulysses S Grant drastically altered the future timeline? Yes. Yes I am. "How can I change what happened?" my voice shaking. "There is nothing you can do. You must move on from this; your future is so bright. I understand you made a grievous mistake. But never forget, you are destined to make a difference. Within you, you possess the power to change the world."