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This lesson has four parts:

1. **Before you watch** - Keywords for understanding a short film (5-10 mins)
  2. **Watch!** - Watch the short film *Borrowed Light* (4 mins)
  3. **Discuss** - Answer questions about the film (10-20 mins)
  4. **Hear from the filmmaker** - An Interview with the director of *Borrowed Light* (5 mins)
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## **Borrowed Light**

**Director/Animator:** Olivia Huynh

**Country:** US

**Run time:** 4 minutes

**Language:** No dialogue

### **1. BEFORE YOU WATCH**

**Key Words** - Keep these words in mind as you watch the film, or come back to them after the film

**FILM** - Film is another word for movie. A film or movie is made up of a series of images that appear to be moving.

**SHORT FILM** - A short film is just like the movies you are used to watching (which are called feature films) but shorter. It is kind of like comparing a novel to a short story or poem.

**ANIMATION** - An animated film (or cartoon) is made from a series of drawings, computer graphics, or photos of objects that appear to be moving because of small changes in each frame. Like a flipbook!

**FILMMAKER** - Just as the art in a museum is made by an artist, a film is made by a filmmaker or a team of filmmakers.

**FICTION** - A story that is made up or make believe

**CHARACTER** - A person, animal or object who plays a part in the story and/or has feelings

**SETTING** - Where and when a story takes place

**CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION** - The conflict is the problem that the characters face and the resolution is the way that the problem is solved.

**SOUNDTRACK** - The songs or music heard in a film. The soundtrack is especially important in a film like this where the characters don't speak.

## 2. WATCH!

Below is a link to watch the short film, *Borrowed Light*. The film is about 4 minutes long. It has sound so make sure to plug in your headphones or turn the volume up. After you watch the film, come back to this page to learn more about the film and the filmmaker.

Link to view film: <https://www.oliviawhen.com/#/borrowed-light/>



Watch the film a second time if you feel like it!

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## 3. DISCUSS

How would you describe this film to someone else?

Did your feelings about the main character change from the beginning of the film to the end?

At first I thought the character in the purple hood...

In the middle of the film I thought the character in the purple hood...

By the end of the film I thought the character...

What was the hooded character in the film DOING?

WHY do you think they were doing that?

What makes you think that?

If the character were to speak to the man in the tie, or to someone else, what do you think they would say?

What do you think the title *Borrowed Light* means?

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### It's all in the Details!

In a short film, the filmmaker creates every image, sound and action carefully to best tell their story to YOU, the viewer. Often, when you watch a film a second (or even a third or fourth) time, you will notice details that you hadn't noticed the first time!

**Watch the film again** and see what new details you notice! You can pause the film when you find something and write it down below.

**I noticed...**

### Here are some things we noticed:

**The numbers below are the timestamps, you can move your cursor along the line at the bottom of the film to find this part of the film.**

**0:28** - Calendar with a star drawn on a certain date shows that the hooded character has been looking forward to this special day. The star literally represents the meteor shower.

**0:55** - When the character leaves the observatory there is an eviction notice and graffiti on the door. It seems like the observatory has been closed for a long time.

**1:34** - The girl's room has plenty of details: a poster for the observatory on the wall (she is a fan!) and space themed decorations.

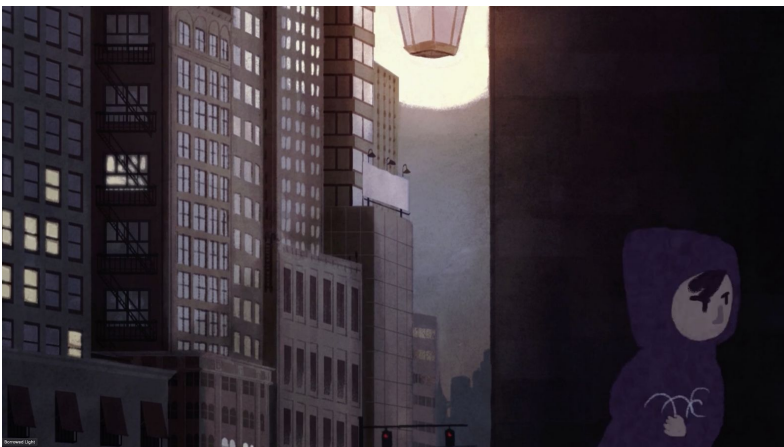
**1:55** - The billboard features an image of a house and a lightbulb.

**2:14** - There are more observatory posters on the wall, which seem to have been up for a long time based on the poor condition they are in.

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### Let's Talk Character!

Fill in the blanks about the characters and what you see in the image.



If I saw this character on the street I would think...

I think this because...



Fill in the blanks below for each character in the image. Watch the film again if you need to.

|   | Man wearing a tie | Character in Purple |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| Pick three adjectives to describe this character                  | 1.<br>2.<br>3.    | 1.<br>2.<br>3.      |
| What is their goal?<br>What are they trying to accomplish?        |                   |                     |
| What actions do they take to try and achieve their goal?          |                   |                     |
| Do they achieve their goal? What is the outcome of their actions? |                   |                     |

In the beginning the Man thinks the Character in Purple is...

But by the end of the film, he realizes that...



What do you think each character is thinking in this image?

**The filmmaker, Olivia Huynh created a behind-the-scenes blog so we can learn more about her and her film!**

Take a look at [this entry](#) all about the two main characters, their designs and the thought process behind Olivia's decisions. How does this new information compare with the impressions you had?

Although this gives us more information about what the artist had in mind, it does not make any of the viewers' interpretations incorrect. Each viewer is entitled to an opinion. A single work of art can mean many different things to different people depending on their perspective.

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### **Let's Hear from Olivia!**

#### **How did you become a filmmaker?**

I started drawing when I was a kid and just never stopped. After high school, I went to college to become an animator.

#### **What is your life as a filmmaker like?**

Currently I work as a Google Doodler, so I make illustrations, films, and games for most of the day. It's a lot of research to learn as much as I can about the topics, and then working with other artists and engineers to make something we think tells a good story and makes people want to learn more.



**Why do you make films? What do you like about making films?** I like to tell stories, especially ones that I think are important, even if they're not my own. I like to help by being a megaphone for other voices to be heard.

**Why do you like animation?**

I like to draw, and animation is just a bunch of drawings put together so that they appear to be moving. I also just like to watch cartoons myself. My favorites right now are *Ducktales*, *Gravity Falls*, and *Pokemon Sun & Moon*.

**What inspired this film?**

I like to look at the stars. Whenever there's a big change in life, the stars are always still there. It's very comforting, especially in hard times. I moved to the city for school, where they're much harder to see. The main emotion behind the film was wanting to share something I think is beautiful and worth preserving with other people.

**How would you describe the experience of making this film?**

I made this film as my final project in college. It was great to be with so many other people working on their own films. I had a lot of support from my professors and peers, but it was kind of stressful too since it was also my homework.

**What do you like to do when you are not busy making films?**

I like playing video games and gardening. My room is filled with lots of plants. I like to paint and draw for fun too, but try to take breaks since it's also my job.

**Where do you live?**

I live in a city in California. Luckily, there are lots of observatories nearby.

**What is your favorite food?**

Sweets! Especially small cakes. They make me feel like a giant.

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**Check out Olivia Huynh's behind the scenes blog to learn more about how she made this film:** <https://lightbulbless.tumblr.com/>

**See her Google Doodles here:** <https://www.oliviawhen.com/#/google-doodles/>

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To learn more about the New York International Children's Film Festival, visit our website: [nyicff.org](http://nyicff.org)

To receive updates from our education department, including new Film Ed From Home resources, sign up for our mailing list [here](#)

Questions? Feedback? Email [jessica@nyicff.org](mailto:jessica@nyicff.org)