

# Chinese cinderella, sink or swim essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Chinese Cinderella written by Adeline Yen Mah, is regarding a young girl which is considered to be the cause of her mother's death and is identified as bad luck. After the death of her mother, a year later her father remarries a French woman, who Adeline and her siblings call Niang – meaning stepmother. Niang has two children which are now Adeline's stepbrother/sister. Niang's children are always favoured and receive the best of everything. Adeline struggles through life up to the age of fourteen when she proves to her family that she is more than what meets the eye, and proves to them that she is equal to everyone else, and tries her hardest so that she can be accepted for who she is.

Sink or Swim written by Ron Bunney, tells the story of a boy named Bazza at the age of 15/16 who runs away from home and makes his own way in life. While on this adventure, he comes across a fisherman named Earl who provides him with hospitality and gives him a job as a 'decky'. The boys' bond becomes closer and they develop into good friends. In my essay, I am going to discuss the similarities between both texts.

The topics I am going to discuss within my essay are loneliness, feeling of being unwanted and self – esteem. Loneliness is a feeling of isolation, which is expressed by many unwanted children. This feeling is demonstrated in both texts by the two main characters; Adeline and 'Bazza', as they suffer loneliness due to family problems and the issue of which both characters are made to feel like there is no one there for them in times of struggle and when they need them most. I'm nothing.

Less than nothing. A piece of garbage to be thrown out...” (p207). This quote from Chinese Cinderella, describes how Adeline feels, which is lonely. Adeline feels lonely because she believes that in her own father’s mind he does not even remember her name. When most of her family members dislike her – Father, Niang Little sister, Big sister, Big brother, second brother, third brother and fourth brother, she begins to dislike herself, resulting in the thought that she is worthless and nobody needs nor wants her around. When ‘Bazza’ leaves home because his mother’s boyfriend repeatedly bashed him, and becomes a ‘street kid’ he has to live like a ‘street kid’ and live everyday not knowing what dangers are lurking behind each corner of every building.

“ Where’d you sleep last night? ” “ In the bush ” “ Cold? ” “ Freezing ” “ Scared? ” (pp17, 18). Bazza was trying to act tough in trying to deny that he wasn’t scared at all, but he was. He was scared because he had no choice, but to sleep through cold, damp evenings with discomfort and he knew that he was alone. Earl gave Bazza hospitality such as food and a bed to sleep in. He had previously met other people that looked after him like Earl had, but a priest had tried to molest him, meaning that Bazza was now alert about the way people acted towards him and that he could no longer trust anyone.

This would have made Bazza feel lonesome due to trustworthy reasons. “ Mama died giving birth to you. If you had not been born, mama would still be alive. She died because of you. You are bad luck. ”(p3) Adeline believes that she is the cause of her mother’s death because Big Sister told her that she was. The actual reason for the death of her mother was because she came down with a high fever three days after Adeline was born. Adeline feels that

she was unwanted in her family because now that she is made to believe that she is the cause of her mother's death, she feels guilt and she also feels that she has brought shame upon the family.

Niang treats her as if she doesn't exist, and since Adeline is only her stepdaughter, she doesn't get the privileges and benefits that little sister and fourth brother receive, such as catching public transport to and from school and clothing. On the other hand, Bazza feels that he is unwanted when his mother's boyfriend continuously bashes him and takes him to the hospital for 'unexplained injuries', which causes Bazza to run away from home and make a living out of what he has which is nothing but bruises and scars. His mother did not care, because if she did then she would have said something to her boyfriend about it, but instead she was playing along as if nothing had happened. When Adeline heard about the play-writing competition she asked a nun at her school if she would stand a chance. The nun then replied "As good a chance as anyone else." (p209) Before she entered she doubted herself until the nun convinced her to believe in herself.

When Adeline heard this she did believe in herself and gained confidence to enter the competition. She had dedicated it to her grandfather. When she had found out that she won the competition and had also found out that her father was pleased with her achievement, she said "My whole being vibrated with all the joy in the world.

I only had to stretch out my hand to reach the stars. (p220) Since Bazza was Earl's 'decky', they worked on a boat all of the time. Bazza was placed in a situation where he had to transfer a person from one boat to another by

himself. Like Adeline, he wasn't too sure if he could do it on his own, but when he realized that Earl had a really important meeting to attend then he believed that he could actually do it. In conclusion of my essay, I personally believe that Chinese Cinderella is an interesting book to read because it really does capture the reader's attention unlike Sink or Swim. Chinese Cinderella caught my attention because I was able to relate to different chapters of the book.

Sink or Swim, however, started off as a good book to read but then it became more and more boring because it's basically about fishing, and fishing isn't particularly one of my interests. So I wouldn't recommend this book to anyone unless they are interested in fishing. If I was to rate Chinese Cinderella on a scale of one to ten I would rate it about an eight, and I would probably rate Sink or Swim about a four.