

Short story "two kinds"



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short story "Two Kinds," Amy Tan explores the clash of cultures between a first-generation Chinese-American daughter, Jing-mei, and her mother, Suyan, a Chinese immigrant. Suyan is certain that Jing-mei can become a prodigy if she only tries hard enough. At first Jing-mei is eager to try, but she always falls short of her mother's expectations. She decides that the prodigy in her is the girl who would steadfastly refuse to be what she is not. While the mother and daughter reveal their personality through their language, actions, and thoughts, conflict develops between the two women when their cultures and aspirations collide. "Two Kinds" focuses on the theme of conflict between two kinds of women as well as two kinds of daughters. American Dream my Tan's short story "Two Kinds" chronicles the childhood memories of Jing-mei, a first generation American citizen, and her mother Suyuan Woo, an immigrant to the states. This account tells of a daughters struggle between her Chinese ancestry and American expectations for success, along with her mother's aspirations of greatness for her daughter and Jing-mei's battle for her own will.

Set in San Francisco in the 1950's, America was coming off a long bout of war, and coming into a time of great economic prosperity, and the Woo's hoped for nothing less than the best. The immigration networks between China and the US had been connected, allowing for a microcosm of Chinese culture in America in Chinatown. Through the use of setting, Tan shows the contradictory relationship of East versus West, and mother versus daughter which ultimately portrays the theme of the mothers' American dream.

Theme Statement: A major theme in Amy Tan's Two kinds is growing up in america with