

People migrate to
america



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Reading Amy Tan's "Two Kinds" for the first time is confusing. The message is not quite clear until one studies the context of the story. The story deals with immigrants and the American expectation for success, but primarily of a daughters relationship to her mother. "Two Kinds" tells the story of Jing-mei and her mother. Jing-mei's mother migrated to America after "losing everything in China." When she was young, Jing-mei's mother told her the potential of being successful in America. "You can be a prodigy," her mother says.

Her mother had given Jing-mei piano lessons such that her talents will show. Eventhough Jing-mei recognizes that she has the talent, she refuses to give herself into it because she felt a sense of rebellion inside her. She was not able to show her true talents because of her own shortcomings. In the end her mother gives up her hopes for her daughter. The conflict lies within Jing-mei. She wants to be something else and at the same time she wants just to be herself. She was at first just as excited to find her prodigy.

But she felt the pressure coming from her mother and at the same time she felt impatient for it. Her mother, however, tried to impose to her what she cannot be. "I won't let her change me," she tells herself in the mirror. Once she found out her inclination, she refused to pursue and sharpen it partly because of her defiance towards her mother. Her mother, on the other hand, acted the way she did because of her dream of success. People migrate to America in search of greener pastures, but scholars believe that what the immigrants could not achieve they pass to their sons or daughters.

Jing-mei was a victim of such circumstance. Although, it was also the intention of her mother to see her daughter succeed in life, Jing-mei felt she's being

pushed to something she's not. Jing-mei did not see that her mother had deep faith in her. Many years had passed before Jing-mei realized her mother's attempt to bring out her "prodigy" and found her true self. She had already realized her "prodigy" during the piano recital but she remained defiant. Even during her lessons, she knew she could be good at it, even become great with it.

But she did not will it to happen. At her recital, she was confident she could do it, but because she did not take her lessons seriously, it ended shamefully for her and for her parents. When she grew old, her parents gave her as a gift the piano her mother bought for her when she was young. She was at first reluctant to accept it. Her mother explained: "this your piano... Always your piano. You only one can play... You have natural talent. You could be a genius if you want to." Jing-mei found the gift as a peace offering.

It gave her a chance to try again without feeling that she was doing it for the benefit of someone else. Playing it again, she found it easy enough to prove her mother had been right. In the end of the story where Jing-mei played the piano after some years without doing so, she played the "Pleading Child," the same piece she played unsuccessfully during the recital. She also noticed for the first time the piece on the opposite side entitled "Perfectly Contented." Jing-mei understood that she was playing two halves of the same song, and it reflected her feelings.

She was the pleading child and when she realized her mother's intentions and trust to her, she became perfectly contented. The story's moral runs two ways. First is with the parents not to push their sons or daughters too hard as to give them a hard time. They are, after all, just children who does not

understand the real world. Second is for the children to be obedient to their parents, for parents only want what is best for their children. A jing-mei's mother expressed: " Only two kinds of daughters... Those who are obedient and those who follow their own mind.

" It was unfortunate that Jing-mei did not realize that her internal conflict did not arise from her mother's expectations but from the love and faith her mother had for her until her mother had already died. The story also points that one's " prodigy" lies in the person's will to succeed. Jing-mei's failure at the recital was because she lacked the will to succeed, and at the same time, her rebelliousness towards her mother. It could be said as well that had her mother not pushed her too hard, Jing-mei could have done better and she would have pursued it at her own will.

I was not able to recognize the message the first time I read the story, most especially the connection of the piano pieces mentioned at the end: the " Pleading Child" and " Perfectly Contented. " But after reading it again and researching the context of the story, I came to appreciate it as giving lessons to parents and children. At the same time, the story also points to the importance of will power to the success of a person. Defiance blinds us that even when we recognize our own strengths and weaknesses, we sometimes refuse to let it show just to prove that others are wrong.

We tell ourselves " I am who I am" without really knowing who we really are. But the beauty of it all is that at the end of the day, we will come to realize our own shortcomings when left to find who we really are by ourselves. Summing up the lesson given by the story, it is best to be both kinds: the kind that is obedient towards one's parents and the kind that follows one's

own heart. It may not always be the case but, usually, once parents find out their child's talents, they can't help but enforce it, which, in the end, is best for the child. Show what you got and your parents will surely back you up.

Works Cited Tan, Amy. " Two Kinds. "