

Two kinds



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The story "Two Kinds," written by Amy Tan, has a plot that many people can relate to while growing up as a child. The theme of the story is that there are two kinds of people: the one the mother wants her to be and the one Jing-mei (the protagonist and narrator of the story) strives to be. Both mother and daughter in the story have a very complicated relationship. The mother believes that you could become anything you wanted in America. The author emphasizes that Jing-mei's mother tries to dominate and control her life in every possible way you can imagine.

For example her mother's persistent ways in trying to make her into something she's not a "prodigy", as well as making her take piano lessons so she can win against one of her mother's friend's daughter in a talent show, and trying to mold her into an obedient child. Her mother then passes away and gives her the piano, Jing-mei speculated that the piano was a present from her mother who was trying to make peace with her, but was that her mother's real desire or was she still lost in her perception of making her daughter into the prodigy that she once envisioned.

The story's main character is a very young Chinese American girl, named Jing-mei, who resents her mother's strenuous actions towards her and just wants to be herself. On the hand, Jing-mei's mother was only trying to pursue the American dream, which was based on the achievement of several goals in order to reach achievement and success. The writer tries to dramatize the effect of Jing-mei's mother by telling us about her background; she came to America in 1949 after losing everything she ever had in life, such as her home, mother, father, first husband, and her two daughters, that were twin babies.

The role the mother plays in this story is like any other mother who only wants the best for her daughter, but does not know when to stop bullying her and the limits to stop with this whole stressful situation. The thought of her daughter being a prodigy and one of a kind outweighs the joy of being a parent. She also "believes you could be or do anything you wanted in America such as, open a restaurant, work for the government and get good retirement, buy a house with no money down, become rich or instantly famous, or even a prodigy at such a young age" (521).

Jing-mei's mother wants her daughter to have every advantage in this growing land of opportunity by reinforcing her to try harder in school so she could have academic excellence as Liz Brent states "The tone of this opening paragraph introduces an element of irony in the narrator's attitude toward her mother's vision of America as a place where "you could become anything you wanted to be." Everything sounds too simple and too easily achieved"(Overview 1).

Once again America is referred as the country of opportunities and where dreams come true while working hard and being dedicated to chores and the development of activities that involve a highly paid or talented future. At first the mother thought the daughter was able enough to be the next Chinese Shirley Temple, by making her watch old movies as if they were training videos. So she took her to a beauty training school to get her hair done like Shirley Temple but instead looked like Peter Pan. Not only acting was involved in this situation.

Memorizing capitals and states, multiplying numbers, finding the queen of hearts in a deck of cards, standing on her head without hands, predicting daily temperatures in certain states, reading three minutes from the bible and restating a summarize, were simple chores included in the creation of a perfect popular phenomenon. Instead of creating a new reality for her daughter, she just encouraged frustration; sadness and anger by making her imitate some other remarkable child. Jing-mei was a believer at first, but as a consequence of the new unexpected look she stated, " if you don't hurry up and get me out of here.

I'm disappearing for good. And then you'll always be nothing" (522). The author is trying to show us what was going on in Jing-mei brain at this certain time. Behind the acting idea, the child knew that she was just persuading her mother's expectations by reflecting a personality that did not belong to her. Indeed the only role she was playing was of a puppet. As the months went by and new experiences arrived, the mother came up with new ideas from watching The Ed Sullivan Show, like creating a famous piano player which ended up in a complete failure and public embarrassment.

Jing-mei was encourage one more time by her mother to receive piano lessons from Mr. Chong, a retired piano teacher who lacked of the ability to discriminate between sound notes. The classes were settled up as a relieve for Jing- mei because for the first time ever, she was not pushed to be perfect by the instructor. The teacher would never realize about the mistakes and notes that were not according to the songs melodies. A public presentation in a talent show was the reason Jing- mei decided to quit to the emotional pressure offered by her mother.

Since she was exposed to the public that did recognize how bad her performance was, but was more ironic was the songs she had to play which symbolizes the title of the story which Cynthia, Becerra tries to emphasize by saying “ The theme of two seemingly opposite sides of a person is symbolized in the two musical pieces by Schumann: “ Pleading Child,” the one she plays at her first and last piano recital, and its companion piece, “ Perfectly Contented. At the conclusion, June realizes that they were two halves of the same song, and that by playing both she becomes whole”(Masterplots II). The next action taken by Jing- mein was stepping up for herself and demonstrate that her obedience and loyalty to make her mother happy, crossed over boundaries. She explained to her mother that it was time for her to let live her own life with her own mind and expectations. The mother finally showed resignation to the reality and offered the piano to her as a gift. The mother finally understands that reaching the American dream is not based on stealing people’s abilities and accommodates those to you own. Being successful in life takes more than mimicking extraordinary actions; instead it takes internal motivation and mental persistence in order to achieve pleasure in life.