

Alien relative by amy
tann



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Alien Relative The short story “ Alien Relative” by Amy Tan tells the story of a family emigrating from China to America. The narrator details how she and Hulan had been friends in China and Hulan had helped her during her first marriage to a man she describes only as “ bad” (Tan, 1993, p. 617). To repay this debt, the narrator and her husband arrange for Hulan, her husband, and three children to come to America and send them the money for five plane tickets (Tan, 1993). However, Hulan and her husband encounter difficulties that force them to spend some of the money for the tickets and have to leave their middle child, “ Feng-Yi Frank”, in Formosa, with Hulan promising her son “ I will never forget you, never lose you” before leaving him with his “ grandmother” (Tan, 1993, p. 621). Although the narrator tells immigration that Hulan is her sister, she is not actually related to the narrator, just like the “ grandmother” Hulan and her husband leave Feng-Yi Frank with “ was not even the real grandmother” (Tan, 1993, p. 622). Hulan, her husband, and her two remaining children leave Formosa the same night they leave Feng-Yi Frank with his grandmother and fly to America, assuming they will be able to send for Feng-Yi Frank right away (Tan, 1993). The fake grandmother takes him back to China and it winds up taking them eleven years to arrange for him to come to America (Tan, 1993). When he arrives, he is no longer the six year old boy they left behind, but a young man of seventeen years (Tan, 1993). He is an alien to the country he has just arrived in and an alien to his family, having been separated from them for so many years. Although Hulan does not recognize her son, “ he stared right at his mother, nobody else”, a familiar stranger, remembering that his parents had left him behind although he does not discuss it (Tan, 1993, p. 624). Reference Tan, A. (1993). Alien

Relative. In D. Roen, G. Glau, & B. Maid (Eds.), *The Brief McGraw-Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life* (pp. 617-625). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill