

Theme



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Themes in “ The Joy Luck Club” Essay In the novel “ The Joy Luck Club” written by Tan, the character of Ying-ying St. Claire was proffered in Chapter 4, entitled the Moon Lady and in Chapter 14, Waiting Between the Trees. Her character in the novel was ingenuously depicted by Tan as transcending from a spoiled, lively and stubborn girl to being perceived as having lost her identity and strength due to life’s trials and vicissitudes and was thereby regarded as a totally restrained person who kept her silence for a long time. The theme applicable to her story is the importance of developing a strong sense of one's own identity and personal strength, despite challenges and difficulties in life. The essay aims to proffer justifications for the theme of developing a strong sense of identity to enable Ying-ying to regain the life she had, not only for her personal benefit, but more so for her daughter, Lena. Ying-ying’s story through the Moon Lady presented her vivid remembrance of the particularly special day when she was merely four years old and her nursemaid prepared her for the Moon Festival. The depiction of her character was so accurate in portraying a strong sense of fiery identity, always curious, on top of things and wanting to get her way. Despite being told to stay put or to observe traditional norms, Ying-ying defied everything as she narrated running after dragonflies, climbing to the rickshaw with her mother (instead of her amah), running through the length of their boat, watching a bird catch fishes, and falling into the water to be lost during the height of the Moon Festival. With all the commotions, the experience of being lost coincided with the metamorphic loss of her personal identity and strength as the fear that enveloped her during the experience transformed her life to silence and as she failed to relay her wish to the Moon Lady: to be found. The story that ensued narrated in Waiting Between the Trees foretold

how Ying-ying's first marriage failed and how she eventually married Clifford St. Claire. Despite the passive stance she persisted to maintain, at the time when she visited her daughter Lena, the power of clairvoyance was still eminent. It was revealed that Ying-ying stated when she observed Lena's marriage that: " I have always known a thing before it happens" (Tan, 243). There remains an inner strength and power waiting to be released. The bitterness that contained her personal identity stemmed from the pain she experienced with her first husband, who left her in the midst of her pregnancy and resulted to her decision to abort the baby. As Ying-ying contended " it is because I had so much joy that I came to have so much hate" (Tan, 247). The sense of losing her identity pervaded most of her adult life, from the time it was symbolically lost during the Moon Festival. But her power for clairvoyance and the desire to help her daughter from living an analogous life is a tenacious force that needs to find ways to burst forth and regain a proactive stance towards saving her daughter's life, from repeating the mistakes she committed. Given the course that Ying-ying's life took, a realization in the prime of her life recognizes the need to develop and release a strong sense of identity, she innately has, to regain the vibrant life she had, not only for her personal benefit, but more so for her daughter, Lena. Work Cited Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*. Ballantine Books. 1990. Print.