

Jing-mei character analysis



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Amy Tan's short story "Two Kinds" illustrates a young girl's struggle with her highly opinionated mother and finding her own way. Jing-Mei's mother continually enforces Jing-Mei to carry out tasks the way she wants her to, her way. Therefore Jing-Mei is unable to grow as her own person and carry out the choices she wants to. Throughout Jing-Mei's journey she begins to develop negative thoughts of herself and displays the attributes of insecurity, stubbornness and cruelty.

Jing-Mei's stubbornness encourages her to believe her mother is being unfair and cruel, "when [her] mother had told [her] this, [she] felt as though [she's] been sent to hell." When in reality, all her mother is doing is guiding her so she won't have to go through the hardships she herself had gone through (Page 5). Jing-Mei has no desire to cooperate with her mother. She fights with her every way she can, determined to extinguish her mother's dreams of her becoming successful, Jing-Mei neglects her studies as well as the piano.

Jing-Mei believes her mother is trying to change her, Jing-Mei states "I won't let her change me... I won't be what I'm not..." despite her mother's real intentions of her becoming successful (Page 3). Jing-Mei feels she must reject her mother in order to find herself "right then and there, [she] was determined to put a stop to her foolish pride." however, in doing so, she is rejecting her heritage and identity (Page 7).

Suyuan Woo's constant criticism hands Jing-Mei the idea of lack of affection, which results in Jing-Mei's insecurity. Suyuan's values of family obedience, concealment of unnecessary emotions, and criticism as expressions of love contrast with Jing-Mei's American ideas of independence, self-esteem and

open expressions of love guide Jing-Mei's belief of never fulfilling her mother's expectations. Therefore, Jing-Mei constantly puts herself down "[she] looked in the mirror... [she] began to cry, such a sad ugly girl! due to misunderstanding her mother's intentions (Page 3). Her mother's high expectations and criticism are her way of expressing love and faith in her daughter. Jing-Mei misunderstands her mother's actions which lead her to the conclusion that she will " never be the kind of daughter [her mother] wants her to be" and leads her to the question of " why don't you like me the way I am? I am not a genius! " (Page 10, 5).