

Name: Date: Period:

**Close Reading Organizer - Part 2, Chapter 4: Two Kinds**

**Directions:** Read each summary entry and think about which themes listed in the Themes Key apply to it, then color

in those themes in the Theme Tracker. Next, write a few sentences of Analysis to explain how the themes you chose apply to each summary section.

**Themes Key**

Mother-Daughter Relationships

Storytelling and Tradition

Immigration, Language, and Mistranslation Fate and Autonomy

Sacrifice

Sexism and Power

**Summary**

**Theme Tracker**

**Your Analysis**

**June** remembers **Suyuan** telling her that a person could be anything in America if he or she worked hard enough. Suyuan is convinced that June could be a child star after watching Shirley Temple on television, but an attempt to get cute Shirley Temple curls backfires, leaving June with a boy’s bowl haircut. Around that time, June starts to hear an inner voice tell her that if she doesn’t hurry up and become perfect, her inner prodigy will disappear and June would “always be nothing.”

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**Suyuan** and **June** try different avenues of talent to find something June is amazing at, but they always end up deeply disappointed. At the same time, **Waverly** becomes a chess prodigy, and **Lindo** brags about her daughter’s victories. June can see Suyuan’s envy, even though Suyuan says Waverly is only good at being tricky.

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**June** gets sick of seeing **Suyuan**’s disappointment, and one night, looks at herself in the bathroom mirror and cries at

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**Summary**

**Theme Tracker**

**Your Analysis**

her own “sad, ugly” expression. In that moment, she believes she’s not meant to be a prodigy and promises herself to not let her mother change her into someone unrecognizable.

**Suyuan** sees a little Chinese girl playing the piano on “The Ed Sullivan Show” and decides that **June** should excel at that.

Having no spare money, Suyuan agrees to clean an old piano teacher’s house in exchange for June’s lessons. She also saves precious wages to get June a used piano. June whines, asking Suyuan “why don’t you like me the way I am? I’m not a genius!” Suyuan slaps her and calls her ungrateful.

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**June** starts her piano lessons, but quickly learns that her old teacher is deaf and can only feel rhythms. She stops trying to play correctly and just stays in rhythm so her teacher will praise her playing. Adult June thinks that she never really gave herself a fair chance, because she was actually quite good naturally, but was determined not to play well.

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The pointless lessons continue, and **June** gets more apathetic as **Suyuan** becomes more boastful of June’s “talents,” despite never having heard June play. Suyuan enters June in a talent show, to play “Pleading Child” from Schumann’s Scenes from Childhood. June daydreams rather than prepares, and practices her ending curtsy more than the song. She believes her natural talent will see her through the performance.

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The day of the talent show, all of the Joy Luck Club members are in attendance, and **June** comes on stage, completely confident. The beginning of the song sounds so good to daydreaming June that she loses track of her notes, and messes up the entire piece.

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**Summary**

**Theme Tracker**

**Your Analysis**

June is stunned by her failure, but **Suyuan** is completely humiliated after bragging so much. **Waverly** tells June that not everyone can be a prodigy, and the gravity of June’s self-imposed mediocrity sets in. June blames her mother for the humiliating debacle.

Two days later, **Suyuan** tells **June** to practice at her usual time in the afternoon; June assumed that the talent show failure meant she was free from ever playing again. June throws a tantrum, accusing Suyuan of wanting a daughter that June can’t be. June feels the dark side of her come out, and shouts “I wish I were dead! Like them,” in reference to Suyuan’s lost daughters in China. Suyuan is so hurt that she backs out of the room and never speaks of the piano again.

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In the following years, **June** believes that to be authentic to herself, she has the right to fall short of expectations. Having internalized this sentiment, she constantly fails at life goals. On June’s thirtieth birthday, **Suyuan** gives her the used piano, saying that June had natural talent and could’ve been a genius if she tried.

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Soon after **Suyuan**’s passing, **June** gets the piano reconditioned for “purely sentimental reasons,” and discovers her old lesson books in the piano bench. She flips to “Pleading Child,” the same song she botched in the talent show, and learns that a song called “Perfectly Contented,” printed on the adjacent page, is actually the other half of “Pleading Child.” Together, they make up one complete song.

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