**Agony from the Heart**

Paragraph 1

 The most painful event that a parent can ever experience is the death of his child. In this story, Precious Auntie’s father is an extremely gifted bonesetter who fails to save his four sons from a deadly disease. The loss of his children is devastating to him, and as a result “he spent his entire fortune and went into a lifetime of debt to pay for their funerals” (Tan 659). The death of Precious Auntie’s brothers causes her father to be plagued with grief for the remainder of his life. The bonesetter survives the death of his sons by living through the happiness of his daughter. According to Precious Auntie, “he spoiled me, let me do whatever a son might do” (Tan 659). She also comments, “My father was used to seeing pain of the worst kinds. But with me he was helpless. He couldn’t bear to see me cry” (Tan 659). This agony of loss is the central theme of the story. And while losing four sons is extremely difficult for the bonesetter, this tragedy results in the birth of a stronger relationship with his daughter as he struggles to endure the pain.

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Paragraph 2

 The loss of an intended spouse is also a catastrophic and traumatic experience. On the day of Precious Auntie’s marriage to Baby Uncle, a horse kicks Baby Uncle in the head. This fatal blow changes Precious Auntie’s life drastically. She continually hears the horrendous sound of the accident “in the breaking of twigs, the crackling of fire, and whenever a melon was split in two” (Tan 665). Tan reveals through the element of style ad description how the character endures the pain of this tragedy throughout her life. In fact, Precious Auntie is hysterical for weeks after her lover’s death. She even tries to commit suicide in order “to cause pain greater than what she already felt” (Tan 665-66). Fortunately, Precious Auntie has a daughter who gives her a purpose for living.

**Agony from the Heart**

Paragraph 3

 Losing a mother or father is devastating for a child. When a parent dies, a child feels as if a vital part of her existence is missing. Precious Auntie never really knows her mother because she loses her mother at a young age. Therefore, her relationship with her father becomes that much closer. Seeing her father “lying [dead] in a ditch” (Tan 665) is the worst nightmare that Precious Auntie can imagine. For days, she “apologized to the [corpse] of her father” (Tan 665) because she feels responsible for her father’s death. Even though Precious Auntie cannot prevent the accident that kills her father, she lives the rest of her life with agonizing feeling of guilt. Thus, Tan continues to develop the theme of death and agony, the pain of loss, through the development of these common everyday characters.