

Ananas

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Word Count:

In *Kitchen*, written by Banana Yoshimoto and translated by Megan Backus, Yoshimoto highlights the fact that people find comfort in chaos through contrasting imagery. *Kitchen* is, in itself, a novel of contrasts. Yoshimoto repeatedly contrasts images of light and dark, warm and cold, and noise and silence. The dark, cold, and silence are all controlled systems, but are, as a result, devoid of interaction. In contrast, the light, warmth, and noise are messy and imperfect. However, Yoshimoto, through Mikage's attraction to light, warmth, and noise suggests that that is the crux of life, and is something to be sought and embraced. Through contrasting imagery, Yoshimoto illustrates how chaos is inherent—and required—in life.

Yoshimoto's contrast of light and dark calls back to a time when humans were primitive, and all life revolved around the fire. Mikage, in the much more modern time period of the 1980s, finds her own fire, revolving around "[t]ruly great people [that] emit a light that warms the hearts of those around them" (Yoshimoto 53). Yoshimoto suggests that, indeed, truly great people are like small fires, beacons of light in the darkness. However, the nature of the fire is still chaotic, as a fire

can just as easily burn down a mountainside as it can thaw frozen hearts.