

Eriko



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Kristin Mueller Contemp. Jap. Lit. and Film 2/20/13 Eriko's entrance In the book Kitchen by Banana Yoshimoto, there is a scene in which Mikage first meets Eriko. The scene, on page 11, is a small insight into the work of Banana Yoshimoto. " Just then, with the scratch of a key in the door, an incredibly beautiful woman came running in, all out of breath... 'How do you do,' she said in a slightly husky voice, still panting, with a smile. 'I'm Yuichi's mother. My name is Eriko. ' This was his mother? Dumbfounded, I couldn't take my eyes off her.

Hair that rustled like silk to her shoulders; the deep sparkle of her long, narrow eyes; well-formed lips, a nose with a high, straight bridge-- the whole of her gave off a marvelous light that seemed to vibrate with life force. She didn't look human. " Here we see a small example of " magical realism". This is the writing style where most of the writing is about a very realistic, but there is a small part of the supernatural that takes part. In Kitchen, the supernatural part of the world that Mikage lives in is the light. There are many references to light that radiates off of people or objects.

Before Mikage is even close with Eriko she can still see the light that radiates off of Eriko. This light represents the miraculous forces that are in life. Though Mikage, and later Yuichi, can't see them due to the loss of their loved ones, the light shows them the things that are important. Another aspect of this scene is Eriko's extraordinary beauty. Unlike Mikage or Eriko's wife, Eriko is not plain. She is flashy and showy even to the point of appearing inhuman. Her beauty is what captivates people, including Mikage. Sadly her beauty also leads to her death.

This inhuman appearance brings everybody closer to her, whether intentional or not. Although it helps when it comes to including Mikage into her family, it also isolates Eriko from the outside world. These things were all what drew Mikage to Eriko as well as the family she formed with her, Eriko and Yuichi. This first meeting with Eriko was the moment when Mikage could no longer protest living with them and met the next light she would live her life for. Because of Eriko, Mikage was able to live continue her life and move forward after her grandmother's death.