

'ripe figs' – kate chopin essay sample

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What does the title *_Ripe Figs_* bring to mind? The first thought was of the word 'old' while others may think of a fruit. There is a difference between 'old' and fruit. In *_Ripe Figs_*, Kate Chopin provides the readers with two characters, Maman-Nainaine and Babette, whom differ from each other not only physically but also in their perceptions. Within the words and descriptions that Chopin uses, one can find this contrast evident.

Maman-Nainaine is from a time and generation that probably used the changing seasons as their timeline due to the lack of electricity. This thought places Maman-Nainaine in the older generation. It also helps the reader to understand the reasoning why Maman-Nainaine uses the ripening of the figs. She is most likely from a generation of farmers who had to know when to plant, fertilize, and harvest based on the changing of the seasons. If they miscalculated, their crop would not do well. Babette, on the other hand, is of a youthful age, impatient and unhampered by the rigidness of her godmother, Maman-Nainaine.

On a deeper level, Chopin provides the reader with another example of how two individuals may experience the same thing differently. Babette and Maman-Nainaine both experience the time it takes the figs to ripen. Babette being still young and fresh may view the ripening as more of a beginning. Much like spring is a beginning that is full of possibilities and color. While being older, Maman-Nainaine, much like the end of winter, may perceive the ripening as the end of a life cycle.

The theme throughout is one of time. The perception of Babette is one of possibilities while Maman-Nainaine sees it more as the end of possibilities.

There is a good deal of symbolism used, which also helps bring out the differences. Ripe Figs is an excellent example of how Chopin uses a form of literature in order to provide the reader with a glimpse into how two individuals can contrast so much.