

Analysis of chocolat

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Analysis of Chocolat In this extract from Chocolat by Joanne Harris, a mother and her young daughter, Anouk, have just arrived at Lansquenet-sous-Tannes, a small village in France. The story is told from the mother's point of view in the first person. Only at the end of the scene - when a man asks " On holiday, Madame? " - we discover that the narrator is a woman. It is carnival time. The narrator describes the excitement of the participants using the senses. For example, the atmosphere is full of smells of foods which sound really good; " pancakes and sausages and powdery-sweet waffles" contrast with the cold of the winter.

In the same way, the woman appeals to the sense of sight to describe the decorated carts which remind to some fairy tales; for instance, " a gingerbread house all icing and gilded cardboard" calls to mind Hansel and Gretel. Then, she compares the carnival with others that both she and her daughter have seen. " A procession of two hundred and fifty of the decorated chars in Paris last Mardi Gras, a hundred and eighty in New York, [...] drum majorettes with batons spinning and sparkling" tells us that the carnival itself is something typical of their lives.

In this case, it can represent the new beginning in the new town. It also means that they have travelled a lot. Moreover, when Anouk asks her mother " Are we staying? " we understand that the child likes so much the new village that she wants to stay there. In contrast with the carts of the carnival, which are colourful and expressive, the houses of Lansquenet-sous-Tannes " leaning secretively together". Only people have secrets, not the houses, so the author uses a metaphor to suggest something sinister about the place and probably to stimulate the interest of the readers.

The small village looks apparently perfect. “ There is no police station at Lansquenet-sous-Tannes, therefore no crime” means that people think that there are no crimes, but this does not convince the woman. “ But for now everything is blurred”. There is also a strong presence of the church and of the religion in general. For example, the church is described as “ aggressively whitewashed”; similarly, the priest is seen as “ a black figure” who is compared to the PlagueDoctor.

The priest is also described with a “ rigid stance” and “ pale eyes” which confirms the idea of an unfriendly person. All the other residents are characterized in two different ways. On the one hand, there are the adults, who look suspiciously and with curiosity to the two protagonists. As the text says, “ tourists are a rarity”. The sentence “ I feel their eyes upon us” emphasizes the fact that the woman and her daughter are observed. On the other hand, the children transmit colour and vitality.

For instance, the clothing of the adults are “ brown, black or grey”; the children, instead, “ flying colours of red and lime-green and yellow, seem like a different race”. The author uses a lot of adjectives, which add many details to the descriptions. For example, when the woman talks about her daughter, she says “ her eyes, which are the blue-green of the Earth seen from a great height, shining”. This also helps us to understand the close relationship between the two characters.