

**BACCALAURÉAT GÉNÉRAL****SESSION 2008****ANGLAIS - LV1**  
**Série L****Durée : 3 heures – coefficient 4****L'usage des calculatrices et de tout dictionnaire est interdit.***Barème appliqué pour la correction*

<i>Compréhension</i>	<i>14 points</i>
<i>Expression</i>	
<i>Traduction</i>	<i>6 points</i>

**Ce sujet comporte 5 pages.**

While Dukhi toiled in the fields and leather-work remained scarce, there was no work for his sons. Roopa tried to keep Ishvar and Narayan busy by sending them to search for firewood.

5 Despite their chores, the boys had many empty hours to run around by the river or chase wild rabbits. They knew exactly what their caste permitted or prohibited; instinct, and eavesdropping on the conversation of elders, had demarcated the borders in their consciousness as clearly as stone walls. Still, their mother worried that they would get into trouble. She waited anxiously for the threshing and winnowing to finish, when they would be occupied under her eye, sifting the chaff for stray grain.

10 Sometimes the brothers spent the morning near the village school. They listened to the upper-caste children recite the alphabet, and sing little songs about colours, numbers, the monsoon. The shrill voices flew out the window like flocks of sparrows. Later, in secret among the trees by the river, the two would try to repeat from memory what the children had sung.

15 If curiosity drew Ishvar and Narayan too close and the teacher spotted them, they were immediately chased away. 'Shameless little donkeys! Off with you or I'll break your bones!' But Ishvar and Narayan were quite skilled at spying on the class; they could creep near enough to hear chalks squeaking on slates.

20 The chalks and slates fascinated them. They yearned to hold the white sticks in their hands, make little white squiggles like the other children, draw pictures of huts, cows, goats, and flowers. It was like magic, to make things appear out of nowhere.

25 One morning, when Ishvar and Narayan were hidden behind the bushes, the students were brought into the front yard to practise a dance for the harvest festival. The sky was cloudless, and snatches of song could be heard from the fields in the distance. The labourers' melodies contained the agony of their aching backs, of their skin sizzling under the sun. Ishvar and Narayan listened for their father's voice, but could not separate the strands in the chorus.

30 The schoolchildren held hands and formed two concentric rings, barefoot, moving in opposite directions. Every now and then, the rings reversed the pattern of movement. This was cause for much mirth because some children were late in turning, and there were mixups and tangles.

35 After watching for a while, Ishvar and Narayan suddenly realized that the schoolhouse was empty. They went around the yard on all fours till they were behind the hut, and entered through a window.

40 In one corner, the children's footwear was arranged in neat rows; in another, beside the blackboard, were their lunchboxes. Food odours mingled with chalk dust. The boys headed for the cupboard where the slates and chalks were kept. Grabbing one each, they sat cross-legged on the floor with the slates in their laps, as they had so often watched the children do. But the two were uncertain about what came next. Narayan waited for his older brother to begin.

Ishvar was a little nervous, his chalk poised above the slate, fearful of what might happen. Gingerly he made contact, and drew a line, then another, and another. He grinned at Narayan - how easy it was to make his mark!

45 Now Narayan, his fingers shaking with excitement, chalked a short white line and  
displayed it proudly. They grew more adventurous, departing from straight lines,  
covering the slates with loops and curves and scrawls of all shapes and sizes, stopping  
only to admire, marvelling at the ease with which they could create, then erase with a  
sweep of the hand and re-create at will. And the chalk dust on their palms and fingers  
50 set them to giggling too – it could make thick funny lines on the forehead just like the  
caste marks of the Brahmins.

They returned to the cupboard to examine the rest of its contents, unrolling  
alphabet charts and opening picture books. Lost in the forbidden world, they did not  
notice that the dancing in the yard had ended, nor did they hear the teacher sneak up  
behind. He grabbed them by their ears and dragged them outside.

55 'You Chamaar rascals! Very brave you are getting, daring to enter the school!' He  
twisted their ears till they yelped with pain and started to cry. The schoolchildren  
fearfully huddled together.

60 'Is this what your parents teach you? To defile<sup>1</sup> the tools of learning and  
knowledge? Answer me! Is it?' He released their ears long enough to deliver stinging  
blows to the head, then seized them again.

Abridged from *A Fine Balance*, Rohinton Mistry, (Vintage International) 1997

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<sup>1</sup> - To defile : to make something less pure and good, especially by showing no respect.

**NOTE IMPORTANTE AUX CANDIDATS :**

Les candidats traiteront le sujet **sur la copie qui leur sera fournie** en respectant **l'ordre des questions** et en faisant apparaître la **numérotation**, (numéro et lettre repère le cas échéant, ex II.a). Ils composeront des phrases complètes à chaque fois qu'il leur est demandé de rédiger les réponses. **Le nombre de mots** indiqué constitue une exigence minimale. En l'absence d'indication, les candidats répondront brièvement à la question posée. Les **citations** seront précédées de la mention de la ligne.

**COMPRÉHENSION - EXPRESSION****I. THE PLACE**

Identify the exact place, the environment, the country.  
Justify by quoting the text.

**II. THE CHARACTERS**

The characters fall into two specific social groups (castes)

- a) Identify each group or caste.
- b) Say which group each character belongs to.
- c) Some characters are named: say how they are related.

**III. THE STORY**1. Read from the beginning down to '..... what the children had sung,' line 14

The story deals with 2 boys:

- a) How did they spend their days? Give 2 answers.
- b) 'Sometimes the brothers spent the morning near the village school'. (l.10) What did school represent for them? Why?
- c) How did they feel about it?
- d) What did they usually do to compensate? Quote from the text to support your answer.

2. Read from ' If curiosity...' to '....out of nowhere.' (Line 15 to line 21)

- a) In this passage, what did the boys do?
- b) What was their main feeling? What caused it and why?
- c) What was the teacher's reaction and why?
- d) Read the following statements and choose the ones that actually apply to the teacher.
  - he was an educator
  - he behaved like a loving father
  - he enforced the law of the country
  - he was an innovator and a philanthropist
  - he had conservative ideas

3. Read from line 22 'One morning....' down to the end.

- a) Retell the facts of this part of the story in your own words. (50 words)
- b) Describe the boys' feelings during the scene by giving logical endings to the following prompts:
  - First they were .....
  - Then they realized.....
  - As a result they felt.....
- c) Why were they caught? (explain and quote)

#### IV. A VISION OF SOCIETY

- a) The mother's vision: 'their mother worried that they would get into trouble' (lines 7-8). What was 'the trouble' here?
- b) Explain the teacher's vision: 'Is this what your parents teach you? To defile the tools of learning and knowledge?' lines 59-60.
- c) Find three words to qualify the society depicted here.

#### V EXPRESSION

Choose ONE of the two subjects which follow (200 words):

1. Imagine a dialogue between the mother and her children after the incident.

**OR**

2. Is it possible to resist temptation?

#### TRADUCTION

Translate into French from line 28 ('The schoolchildren held hands...') to line 37 ('...where the slates and chalks were kept').