

Epreuve écrite

Examen de fin d'études secondaires 2006

Section: A

Branche: Anglais

Nom et prénom du candidat

She felt a sickness overtake her. Her late-afternoon walks had not concealed her meetings with a boy her mother had long had intuition of. Hatsue knew she had not fooled anybody, she had not fooled herself, as it turned out, either, she had never felt completely right. How could they say, she and Ishmael, that they truly loved each other? They had simply grown up together, been children together, and the proximity of it, the closeness of it, had produced in them love's illusion. And yet - on the other hand - what was love if it wasn't the instinct she felt to be on the moss inside the cedar tree with this boy she had always known? He was the boy of this place, of these woods, these beaches, the boy who smelled like this forest. If identity was geography instead of blood - if living in a place was what really mattered - then Ishmael was part of her, inside of her, as much as anything Japanese. It was, she knew, the simplest kind of love, the purest form, untainted by Mind, which twisted everything, as Mrs. Shigemura, ironically, had preached. No, she told herself, she'd merely followed her instincts, and her instincts did not make the kinds of distinctions having Japanese blood demanded. She didn't know what else love could be.

One hour later, inside the cedar tree, she brought this matter up with Ishmael. 'We've known each other forever,' she said. 'I can hardly remember not knowing you. It's hard to remember the days before you. I don't even know if there were any.'

'My memory is like that, too,' said Ishmael. 'Do you remember that glass box I had? The one we took into the water?'

'Of course,' she said. 'I remember it.'

'That must have been ten years ago,' said Ishmael. 'Hanging onto that box. Being out there in the ocean - that's what I remember.'

'That's what I want to talk about,' said Hatsue. 'A box in the ocean - what kind of a start is that? What, really, did we have in common? We didn't even know each other.'

'We knew each other. We've always known each other. We've never been strangers the way most people are when they meet and start going out.'

'That's another thing,' said Hatsue. 'We don't go out - that isn't the right word - we can't go out, Ishmael. We're trapped inside this tree.'

'We're going to graduate in three months,' answered Ishmael. 'I think we should move to Seattle after that. It'll be different in Seattle - you'll see.'

'They're arresting people like me there, too, just like here, Ishmael. A white and a Japanese - I don't care if it's Seattle - we couldn't just go walking down the street together. Not after Pearl Harbor. You know that. Besides, you're going to be drafted in June. That's the way it's going to be. You won't be moving to Seattle, either. Let's be honest with ourselves.'

'Then what will we do? You tell me. What's the answer, Hatsue?'

'There isn't one,' she said. 'I don't know, Ishmael. There isn't anything we can do.'

'We just have to be patient,' Ishmael replied. 'This war won't go on forever.'
They sat in silence inside their tree, Ishmael propped up against one elbow, Hatsue with her head perched against his ribs and legs up against the glossy wood. 'It's nice in here,' said Hatsue. 'It's always nice in this place.'
'I love you,' answered Ishmael. 'I'll always love you.'
'I know you do,' said Hatsue. 'But I'm trying to be realistic about this.' (605 words)

(David Guterson, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, 1995)

Vocabulary:

to conceal	- to hide
moss (n)	- Moos, la mousse
untainted by	- here : not corrupted by
trapped	- caught
drafted	- recruited (by the Army)

Questions : (60 marks)

- 1) From whose perspective / point of view is the situation in the text seen ? Justify your answer by referring to the extract. (5)
- 2) What information on the main characters' past, present and future (age, nationality, historical background, expectations ...) does the novelist convey in this excerpt ? (Your answer should reveal a clear structure.) (12)
- 3) Analyse the love relationship of the two protagonists by closely referring to Hatsue's definition of love and Ishmael's point of view. (10 + 8 = 18)
- 4) Comment on the way Guterson uses the cedar tree in the story. (5)
- 5) 'That's another thing', said Hatsue. 'We don't go out - that isn't the right word - we can't go out, Ishmael.'
Why did Hatsue keep her relationship secret and why can't they go out together ? (5)
- 6) What is your personal point of view of a love affair between two people from different cultures ? (Write about 200 words) (15)