

Epreuve écrite

Examen de fin d'études secondaires 2008

Section: A

Branche: Anglais / texte inconnu

Numéro d'ordre du candidat

From SONS AND LOVERS by D.H. Lawrence

Paul was rather a delicate boy, subject to bronchitis. The others were all quite strong; so this was another reason for his mother's difference in feeling for him. One day he came home at dinner-time feeling ill. But it was not a family to make any fuss.

"What's the matter with you?" his mother had asked sharply.

"Nothing," he replied.

But he ate no dinner.

"If you eat no dinner, you're not going to school," she said.

"Why?" he asked.

"That's why."

So after dinner he lay down on the sofa, on the warm chintz cushions the children loved. Then he fell into a kind of doze. That afternoon Mrs Morel was ironing. She listened to the small, restless noise the boy made in his throat as she worked. Again rose in her heart the old, almost weary feeling towards him. She had never expected him to live. And yet he had a great vitality in his young body. Perhaps it would have been a little relief to her if he had died. She always felt a mixture of anguish in her love for him.

He, in his semi-conscious sleep, was vaguely aware of the clatter of the iron on the iron-stand, of the faint thud, thud of the ironing-board. Once roused, he opened his eyes to see his mother standing on the hearthrug with the hot iron near her cheek, listening, as it were, to the heat. Her still face, with the mouth closed tight from suffering and disillusion and self-denial, and her nose, the smallest bit on one side, and her blue eyes so young, quick and warm, made his heart contract with love. When she was quiet, so, she looked brave and rich with life, but as if she had been done out of her rights. It hurt the boy keenly, this feeling about her that she had never had her life's fulfilment: and his own incapability to make up to her hurt him with a sense of impotence, yet made him patiently dogged inside. It was his childish aim.

(...)

Paul was laid up with an attack of bronchitis. He did not mind much. What happened happened, and it was no good kicking against the pricks. He loved the evenings, after eight o'clock, when the light was put out, and he could watch the fire-flames spring over the darkness of the walls and ceiling; could watch huge shadows waving and tossing, till the room seemed full of men who battled silently.

On retiring to bed, the father would come into the sick room. He was always very gentle if anyone were ill. But he disturbed the atmosphere for the boy.

"Are ter asleep, my darlin'?" Morel asked softly.

"No; is my mother comin'?"

"She's just finishin' folding the clothes. Do you want anything?"

"I don't want nothing. But how long will she be?"

"Not long, my duckie."

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The father waited undecidedly on the hearthrug for a moment or two. He felt his son did not want him. Then he went to the top of the stairs and said to his wife:

"This childt's axing' for thee; how long art goin' to be?"

"Until I've finished, good gracious! Tell him to go to sleep."

"She says you're to go to sleep," the father repeated gently to Paul.

"Well, I want *her* to come," insisted the boy.

"He says he can't go off till you come," Morel called downstairs.

"Eh, dear? I shan't be long. And do stop shouting downstairs. There's the other children—"

(...) Morel loitered about indefinitely. The boy began to get feverish with irritation. His father's presence seemed to aggravate all his sick impatience. At last Morel, after having stood looking at his son awhile, said softly:

"Good night," my darling."

"Good night," Paul replied, turning round in relief to be alone. (638 words)

QUESTIONS: (60 marks)

You ARE NOT allowed to simply copy the text! Paraphrase is required!

1. Compare and comment on the attitude Mrs Morel adopts towards her children and her son Paul in particular. (6 marks)
2. Describe and analyze Paul's feelings for his mother and the life she is forced to lead. (12 marks)
3. Contrast Mr and Mrs Morel's ways of expressing themselves. What may the reader assume about their social status or upbringing? (4 marks)
4. Examine the nature of the relationship between Paul and his father. Justify your answer by closely referring to the extract. (12 marks)
5. Determine the main characteristics of D.H. Lawrence's style of writing in this passage. (10 marks)
6. Explore the reasons why nowadays some parents and their children may have difficulties in getting on with each other. (Do not exceed 250 words) (16 marks)