

Epreuve écrite

Examen de fin d'études secondaires 2013

Section: A

Branche: anglais – texte inconnu

Numéro d'ordre du candidat

The stage represents a comfortless flat in Manchester and the street outside. Jazz music. Enter HELEN, a semi-whore, and her daughter, JO. They are loaded with baggage.

HELEN: Well! This is the place.

JO: And I don't like it.

HELEN: When I find somewhere for us to live I have to consider something far more important than your feelings... the rent. It's all I can afford.

JO: You can afford something better than this old ruin.

HELEN: When you start earning you can start moaning.

JO: Can't be soon enough for me. I'm cold and my shoes let water ... what a place ... and we're supposed to be living off her immoral earnings.

HELEN: I'm careful. Anyway, what's wrong with this place? Everything in it's falling apart, it's true, and we've no heating – but there's a lovely view of the gasworks, we share a bathroom with the community and this wallpaper's contemporary. What more do you want? Anyway it'll do for us. Pass me a glass, Jo.

JO: Where are they?

HELEN: I don't know.

JO: You packed 'em. She'd lose her head if it was loose.

HELEN: Here they are. I put 'em in my bag for safety. Pass me that bottle – it's in the carrier.

JO: Why should I run round after you? (Takes whisky bottle from bag)

HELEN: Children owe their parents these little attentions.

JO: I don't owe you a thing.

HELEN: Except respect, and I don't seem to get any of that.

JO: Drink, drink, drink, that's all you're fit for. You make me sick.

HELEN: Others may pray for their daily bread, I pray for ...

JO: Is that the bedroom?

HELEN: It is. Your health, Jo.

JO: We're sharing a bed again, I see.

HELEN: Of course, you know I can't bear to be parted from you.

JO: What I wouldn't give for a room of my own! God! It's freezing! Isn't there any sort of fire anywhere, Helen?

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HELEN: Yes, there's a gas-propelled thing somewhere.

JO: Where?

HELEN: Where? What were you given eyes for? Do you want me to carry you about? Don't stand there shivering; have some of this if you're so cold.

JO: You know I don't like it.

HELEN: Have you tried it?

JO: No.

HELEN: Then get it down you! (She wanders around the room searching for fire.) 'Where!' she says. She can never see anything till she falls over it. Now, where's it got to? I know I saw it here somewhere ... one of those shilling in the slot affairs; the landlady pointed it out to me as part of the furniture and fittings. I don't know. Oh! It'll turn up. What's up with you now?

JO: I don't like the smell of it.

HELEN: You don't smell it, you drink it! It consoles you.

JO: What do you need consoling about?

HELEN: Life! Come on, give it to me if you've done with it. I'll soon put it in a safe place. (Drinks)

JO: You're knocking it back worse than ever.

HELEN: Oh! Well. It's one way of passing time while I'm waiting for something to turn up. And it usually does if I drink hard enough. Oh my God! I've caught a shocking cold from somebody. Have you got a clean hanky, Jo?

from Shelagh Delaney, 'A Taste of Honey' (1956)
(559 words)

I COMPREHENSION

1. 'Well! This is the place.' Where are the two characters in the opening scene of the play? (5 marks)
2. Do you sympathise with Jo? Why/Why not? (15 marks)
3. What is Helen's attitude towards life? (15 marks)
4. Discuss the tone of the passage. (10 marks)

II PERSONAL OPINION

(15 marks)

'I don't owe you a thing.' Teenage years are traditionally years of rebellion. Discuss.