

BACCALAURÉAT GÉNÉRAL

SESSION 2008

ANGLAIS – LVI

Séries ES-S

Durée : 3 heures - Coefficient 3

L'usage des calculatrices et de tout dictionnaire est interdit.

Barème appliqué pour la correction

<i>Compréhension écrite</i>	<i>10 points</i>
<i>Expression</i>	<i>10 points</i>

Ce sujet comporte 4 pages.

After the engagement¹, Pranab Kaku and Deborah began drifting out of our lives. They moved in together, to an apartment in Boston, in the South End, a part of the city my parents considered unsafe. We moved as well, to a house in Natick. Though my parents had bought the house, they occupied it as if they were still tenants, touching up scuff marks with leftover paint and reluctant to put holes in the walls, and every afternoon when the sun shone through the living-room window my mother closed the blinds so that our new furniture would not fade. A few weeks before the wedding, my parents invited Pranab Kaku to the house alone, and my mother prepared a special meal to mark the end of his bachelorhood. It would be the only Bengali aspect of the wedding; the rest of it would be strictly American, with a cake and minister² and Deborah in a long white dress and veil. There is a photograph of the dinner, taken by my father, the only picture, to my knowledge, in which my mother and Pranab Kaku appear together. The picture is slightly blurry; I remember Pranab Kaku explaining to my father how to work the camera, and so he is captured looking up from the kitchen table and the elaborate array of food my mother had prepared in his honor, his mouth open, his long arm outstretched and his finger pointing, instructing my father how to read the light meter or some such thing. My mother stands beside him, one hand placed on top of his head in a gesture of blessing, the first and last time she was to touch him in her life. "She will leave him," my mother told her friends afterward. "He is throwing his life away."

The wedding was at a church in Ipswich, with a reception at a country club. It was going to be a small ceremony, which my parents took to mean one or two hundred people as opposed to three or four hundred. My mother was shocked that fewer than thirty people had been invited, and she was more perplexed than honored that, of all the Bengalis Pranab Kaku knew by then, we were the only ones on the list. At the wedding, we sat, like the other guests, first on the hard wooden pews of the church and then at a long table that had been set up for lunch.

Though we were the closest thing Pranab Kaku had to a family that day, we were not included in the group photographs that were taken on the grounds of the country club, with Deborah's parents and grandparents and her many siblings³, and neither my mother nor my father got up to make a toast. My mother did not appreciate the fact that Deborah had made sure that my parents, who did not eat beef, were given fish instead of filet mignon like everyone else. She kept speaking in Bengali, complaining about the formality of the proceedings, and the fact that Pranab Kaku, wearing a tuxedo, barely said a word to us because he was too busy leaning over the shoulders of his new American in-laws as he circled the table. As usual, my father said nothing in response to my mother's commentary, quietly and methodically working through his meal, his fork and knife occasionally squeaking against the surface of the china, because he was accustomed to eating with his hands. He cleared his plate and then my mother's, for she had pronounced the food inedible, and then he announced that he had overeaten and had a stomachache. The only time my mother forced a smile was when Deborah appeared behind her chair, kissing her on the cheek and asking if we were enjoying ourselves. When the dancing started, my parents remained at the table, drinking tea, and after two or three songs they decided that it was time for us to go home, my mother shooting me looks to that effect across the room, where I was dancing in a circle with Pranab Kaku and Deborah and the other children at the wedding. I wanted to stay, and when, reluctantly, I walked over to where my parents sat Deborah followed me. "Boudi, let Usha stay. She's having such a good time," she said to my mother. "Lots of people will be heading back your way, someone can drop her off in a little while." But my mother said no, I had had plenty of fun already, and forced me to put on my coat over my long puff-sleeved dress. As we drove home from the wedding I told my mother, for the first but not the last time in my life, that I hated her.

Hell-Heaven, Jhumpa Lahiri, 2004

¹ a formal agreement to get married

² a member of the clergy

³ brothers and / or sisters

I. COMPRÉHENSION

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: 15b - **voir en particulier les questions 2, 5, 6, 8 et 9**). Ils composeront des phrases complètes 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 limitées aux éléments **pertinents** et précédées de la mention de la ligne.

1. In which country does the story take place? Justify with a quote from the text.
2. Pranab Kaku, Deborah, Boudi, Usha and one other person are the main characters.
 - a. Which one is the narrator?
 - b. Quote one element from the text to prove that the narrator is a child and another element to prove that she is a girl.
3. Identify the character who is not named.
4. Which two characters belong to the narrator's family?
5. a. Which two characters are not members of the narrator's family?
 - b. What major event in their lives is going to take place?
6. a. Say where Pranab Kaku is invited before this major event and on what special occasion.
 - b. What is the ethnic background of the people present?
7. What is Deborah's ethnic background? Read the whole text and find one element to justify your answer.
8. What does the passage from line 16 "My mother" to line 19 "....away" reveal about
 - a. the mother's feelings towards Pranab Kaku?
 - b. the mother's attitude towards Pranab Kaku and Deborah's plan? (20 words)
9. Say whether the following statements are true or false. Justify with a quotation from the text.
 - a. Three or four hundred people are present at the ceremony.
 - b. Most of the guests are Bengalis.
 - c. At one point the narrator feels that her family is excluded.
10. Describe the mother's feelings and attitude at the church and country club. Give examples to illustrate your answer. (40 words)

11. Explain to what extent Deborah's attitude is different from the mother's. (30 words). Then quote the text to support your answer.

12. What is the narrator's vision of her parents? (40 words)

II. EXPRESSION

Choose subject 1 (a+b) or subject 2.

Subject 1:

a) "As we drove home from the wedding I told my mother, for the first but not the last time in my life, that I hated her." (l.50-51) Imagine the conversation in the car and write the dialogue. (150 words)

b) For you, is taking photos more about enjoying the present or remembering the past? (150 words)

Subject 2:

To what extent is it necessary to make an effort to be tolerant? Illustrate your view with examples. (300 words)