

BACCALAURÉAT GÉNÉRAL

SESSION 2009

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.

Her son was waiting for her outside¹ when she finally emerged, but even though she saw him at once she gave no sign that she recognized him. The fifty-year-old extremely successful dentist, member of the Royal College of Dentists and a very old London club, did not dare raise his arm and wave to his mother. She walked towards him slowly and, after she reached him, stood staring at him as if he were a total stranger. The son lurched forward and made an awkward, half-bending movement to touch his mother's feet but at the same time surreptitiously tried to look as if he was tying his shoelaces. Mayadevi, who was on full alert, her eyes carefully scrutinizing her son for faults, pounced² like an eagle on the first wrong move.

'Ashamed to touch your mother's feet now, are you? A mother who has not long to live but even then has travelled such a great distance, fasting for twelve hours, sitting with all kinds of half-castes so that she can see her son,' she hissed.

Amit, who was well-known in dentists' circles for his dry, sharp wit, was about to defend himself with a few crisp, well-chosen words, but before he could speak, something clicked inside him. As he looked into that old, lined face, an irrational fear jolted his memory and he said in a whining, childish voice, 'No, Ma ... I ... so many people here,' stammering helplessly.

Now that she had established the old family, Mayadevi told her son to pick up her suitcase and take her to his home. Though the mother and son had not seen each other for more than thirty years, they drove to the semi-detached house in the beautiful, green, tree-lined suburbs in unbroken, stony silence. [...]

'Welcome to England, Mrs Banerjee. Hope you had a nice flight,' Martha, Amit's wife, said cheerfully.

Mayadevi looked up at her tall, large-boned daughter-in-law through the top of her spectacles for a few long, uncomfortable seconds and then said, 'I wish to wash hands. Everything so dirty.'

Martha's plain, good-natured face showed a brief flicker of surprise, but she beamed at her mother-in-law and said, 'Come and see your room and then we will have a nice cup of tea. Hope you like the new curtains we put up for you, Amit did not know what your favourite colour was, so I chose blue.'

She prattled on, her voice full of genuine affection for the old lady she had never met before. Amit crept up to shelter behind his wife's ample frame, as his mother examined the room, and cringed³ each time Martha came too close to her. He knew what would happen if Martha touched her by mistake.

'Are you feeling cold? Should we turn up the central heating?' asked Martha, suddenly feeling cold herself.

Though Mayadevi was shivering in her cotton sari, she said, 'Not cold, only wash hands, so much dirty.'

Martha quickly led her to the bathroom, gaily decorated with trailing plants and fluffy rugs. Mayadevi slammed the door shut on Martha's smiling face and began to wash her hands. First she washed the taps⁴ thoroughly, and then she began rinsing the soap, though it was a brand new one. Then she finally washed her hands meticulously four times in a row. When she had finished she turned the tap off with her elbow, so as not to touch the tap again. She dried her hands by shaking them about in the air, looking scornfully as she did so at the pretty, flowered hand towels Martha had put out for her. Then she went out to search for her son.

¹ outside: *outside the airport*

² pounce: suddenly attack

³ cringe: move back in fear

⁴ tap: device to turn water on and off

'How will I bathe in that jungle you call bathroom? Why has she put carpets in the bathroom? To hide the dirty floor?' she charged full force, happy to have found something to complain about so quickly.

50 'Ma, she can hear you,' said Amit, glancing nervously at the kitchen door, even though they were speaking in Bengali. 'You must be tired, why don't you eat the rice I have made for you and go to sleep now,' he suggested, desperately hoping she would agree.

Surprisingly, she did.

55 'If you are telling the truth that she did not make it,' was the only half-hearted resistance she put up and followed him to the kitchen.

'I cooked it, Ma, she did not even touch it. I am not lying to you,' he said, and flushed when he saw Martha watching him even though he knew she could not understand what he had said.

Abridged from *Mayadevi's London Yatra*, Bulbul Sharma, 2007

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 3, et 5). 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. Mayadevi is the main character. Say what her full name is and give one quotation to prove that she is Indian.

2. Say how she is related to Amit and Martha.

3. a) In what country do the three characters meet?
b) Explain what Mayadevi is doing there.

4. What adjectives best apply to Mayadevi in the first part of the passage (from line 1 to line 21)? Justify in each case with a quotation from the text.

affectionate, authoritarian, distant, embarrassed, moved, overjoyed, reproachful

5. a) Draw Amit's portrait (age, occupation, family and social status).
b) Would you say that his attitude corresponds to this portrait? Explain in your own words and justify by quoting the text.

6. ll.20-21 'they drove to the semi-detached house in the beautiful, green, tree-lined suburbs in unbroken, stony silence.' Account for the atmosphere in the car. (30 words)

7. From line 22 onwards, where is the scene set?

8. Given the social link between the two women, does Martha fulfil her role? Give four quotations to support your answer.

9. Is Martha rewarded for her efforts? Explain in your own words. (20 words)

10. How can you account for Mayadevi's attitude towards Martha? (30 words)

11. Is Amit a supportive husband? Analyse his behaviour to prove your point. (30 words)

12. Translate into French from line 50 to line 53 'Ma, she can hear you...' to '...Surprisingly she did.'

II. EXPRESSION

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

Subject 1 (a+b):

a) Is trying foreign food a sign of open-mindedness? (150 words)

b) Should the truth be told in all circumstances? Discuss. (150 words)

Subject 2:

As the saying goes 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do'. Do you think that you should adapt to local customs when travelling abroad? (300 words)