

**Session 2005**

**BACCALAUREAT GENERAL**

**ANGLAIS**

**Langue vivante 1**

**Série L**

**Durée : 3 heures - Coefficient 4**

**L'usage du dictionnaire et des calculatrices est interdit.**

<b>Compréhension</b>	<b>14 points</b>
<b>Expression</b>	
<b>Traduction</b>	<b>6 points</b>

**Le sujet comporte 3 pages numérotées 1/3 à 3/3.**

When Mel approached us at the airport, we heard a faint rattling<sup>1</sup>: a ring full of gold and silver keys hanging from his belt. With each step Mel took, the ring swung and rattled by his side. The keys were new to him. Mel was tall and thin, but the ring looked fat, important. Mel caught the ring and pushed it into his pocket. This silenced the keys for a moment. He shook everyone's hand – including mine – and laughing nervously said, "Welcome to America."

He then waved his hand in the air and when I followed it with my eyes, I saw a poster of a man and a woman at the beach, lying on striped towels, sunning themselves between two tall palm trees. Above the palm trees were large block letters that looked like they were on fire: SUNNY SAN DIEGO. The man was lying on his stomach, his face buried in his folded arms. The woman was lying on her back, with one leg down and the other leg up, bent at the knee. [...]

After Mel and his mother took us to the room in Mel's house where Ba, the four uncles and I would all be sleeping, they wished us goodnight and left us alone, closing the door quietly behind them. They stood in the hallway and we could hear them talking. Even without understanding a word of what they were saying, the tone of their voices troubled us. Had we been able to understand, we might have heard the following:

"I feel like I've inherited a boatload<sup>2</sup> of people. I mean, I've been living here alone and now I've got five men I've never met before, and what about that little girl?"

"Dear, you know your father wanted them here."

"Here in America, sure, but not here with me."

"Well, it's worked out that way. If your father were here –"

The woman started to cry.

"I'm sorry, Mother. I'm so sorry."

We heard their footsteps move down the hallway toward the living room.

Inside the bedroom, we all remained quiet in our places. Ba was standing with his back against the door. The four men were sitting on the two bunk beds and I was sitting on the double bed, my knees pulled up near my chest. One of the uncles took a deep breath and lay down on the bed. He was still wearing his shoes and let his feet hang off the edge of the bed so he wouldn't get the covers dirty.

Ba stepped forward and explained to the four men and me that Mel had bought our way into the United States. He said that Mel was a good man. We heard without really listening. We nodded. Ba said that Mel had let the people at the airport gates know that it was O.K. for us to be here. "If it wasn't for him," Ba said, "they would have sent us back the way we came."

We each thought of these long nights floating on the ocean, rocking back and forth in the middle of nowhere with nothing in sight. We remembered the ships that kept their distance. We remembered the people leaning over the decks of the ships to study us through their binoculars and not liking what they saw, turning away from our boat. If it was true that this man Mel would keep us from floating back there – to those salt-filled nights – what could we do but thank him? And then thank him again. Only why did it seem from the tones of the voices in the hallway as if something was wrong?

Ba said that we had to be patient.

Two of the uncles nodded. One closed his eyes. One lay down and turned toward the wall. I wrapped my arms around my knees and studied my bare feet. They were very clean; not a speck of sand or salt on them.

Ba said whatever we might come to think of Mel, we should always remember that he opened a door for us and that this was an important thing to remember.

lê thi diem thúy, *The gangster we are all looking for*, 2004

<sup>1</sup> rattle: series of short regular knocking sounds.

<sup>2</sup> in the late seventies and early eighties, thousands of Vietnamese fled their country by boat and found temporary refuge in neighbouring countries.

## COMPREHENSION – EXPRESSION

***Vous traiterez les questions dans l'ordre, en indiquant clairement leur numéro sur votre copie. Lorsque la réponse doit être développée, le nombre de mots ou d'éléments de réponse sera indiqué dans la question.***

1. Where exactly does the scene take place at the beginning of the text?
2. Where do the characters go from there?
3. a) Who do the following underlined words refer to?  
Line 12: "They wished us good night"  
Line 17: "I've got five men I've never met before, what about that little girl?"  
b) Among the characters mentioned above, who are the refugees?
4. What exactly has been arranged for the night? (20-30 words)
5. "Had we been able to understand, we might have heard the following" (lines 14 and 15).  
What does the first part of the sentence imply?
6. **In your own words**, say how Mel feels about the presence of the refugees. (30/40 words)
7. Give two quotations showing the effect of the conversation (line 16-23) on the refugees.
8. Describe Ba's attitude, what role does he try to play in the group? (20-30 words)
9. a) **In your own words**, explain why Mel is said to be "a good man" (line 30). (2 elements).  
b) What image does Ba use at the end of the text to refer to Mel's role?  
c) What element in the first paragraph announces this image ?
10. Focus on the memories Ba's words bring back to the narrator's mind. Describe the situation the refugees had to face and the reactions they were confronted with. (40-50 words)
11. Read lines 36 to 39 ("If it was true...wrong?"). Analyse the narrator's feelings. (20-30 words)
12. Choose **one** of the following subjects (250 words approximately. Write down the number of words.)  
**Subject 1:** Continue the story, starting with "The following day, we all got up early....."  
**Subject 2:** Leaving everything behind - a traumatic experience or a challenge? Discuss.

## TRADUCTION

Translate into French from line 1 to line 9 ("...SUNNY SAN DIEGO.")