

Session 2006

BACCALAURÉAT GÉNÉRAL

ANGLAIS

Langue vivante 1

Série L

Durée : 3 heures – Coefficient 4

L'usage du dictionnaire et des calculatrices est interdit.

Compréhension Expression	14 points
Traduction	6 points

Avant de composer, le candidat s'assurera que le sujet comporte bien 4 pages numérotées de 1 à 4.

The scene is set in the 17th century. The painter referred to is Vermeer.

He did not work on the painting of me every day. He had the concert to paint as well, with or without van Ruijven and his women. He painted around them when they were not there, or asked me to take the place of one of the women – the girl sitting at the harpsichord, the woman standing next to it singing from a sheet of paper. I did not wear their clothes. He simply wanted a body there. Sometimes the two women came without van Ruijven, and that was when he worked best. Van Ruijven himself was a difficult model. I could hear him when I was working in the attic. He could not sit still, and wanted to talk and play his lute. My master was patient with him, as he would be with a child, but sometimes I could hear a tone creep into his voice and knew that he would go out that night to the tavern, returning with eyes like glittering spoons.

I sat for him for the other painting three or four times a week, for an hour or two each time. It was the part of the week I liked best, with his eyes on only me for those hours. I did not mind that it was not an easy pose to hold, that looking sideways for long periods of time gave me headaches. I did not mind when sometimes he had me move my head again and again so that the yellow cloth swung around, so that he could paint me looking as if I had just turned to face him. I did whatever he asked of me.

He was not happy, though. February passed and March arrived, with its days of ice and sun, and he was not happy. He had been working on the painting for almost two months, and though I had not seen it, I thought it must be close to done. He was no longer having me mix quantities of colour for it, but used tiny amounts and made few movements with his brushes as I sat. I had thought I understood how he wanted me to be, but now I was not sure. Sometimes he simply sat and looked at me as if he were waiting for me to do something. Then he was not like a painter, but like a man, and it was hard to look at him.

One day he announced suddenly, as I was sitting in my chair, 'This will satisfy van Ruijven, but not me.'

I did not know what to say. I could not help him if I had not seen the painting. 'May I look at the painting, sir?'

He gazed at me curiously.

'Perhaps I can help,' I added, then wished I had not. I was afraid I had become too bold.

'All right,' he said after a moment.

I got up and stood behind him. He did not turn round, but sat very still. I could hear him breathing slowly and steadily.

The painting was like none of his others. It was just of me, of my head and shoulders, with no tables or curtains, no windows or powderbrushes to soften and distract. He had painted me with my eyes wide, the light falling across my face but the left side of me in shadow. I was wearing blue and yellow and brown. The cloth wound round my head made me look not like myself, but like Griet from another town, from another country altogether. The background was black, making me appear very much alone, although I was clearly looking at someone. I seemed to be waiting for something I did not think would ever happen.

He was right – the painting might satisfy van Ruijven, but something was missing from it.

I knew before he did. When I saw what was needed – that point of brightness he had used to catch the eye in other paintings – I shivered. This will be the end, I thought.

50 I was right.

This time I did not try to help him as I had with the painting of van Ruijven's wife writing a letter. I did not creep into the studio and change things. [...]

He would find it for himself anyway.

55 It took longer than I had expected. I sat for him twice more before he discovered what was missing. Each time he painted with a dissatisfied look on his face, and dismissed me early.

I waited.

Tracy Chevalier, *The Girl With A Pearl Earring*, 2000

15. Answer ONE of the following questions (200 words).

a) Is art necessary to man ? What needs does it fulfill in man?

b) Do you have an artistic hobby ? Write about it. If not, which art would you choose and why?

TRADUCTION

Translate from line 36 to 46 "I got up.... think would ever happen."