

ENGLISH A1 – HIGHER LEVEL – PAPER 1
ANGLAIS A1 – NIVEAU SUPÉRIEUR – ÉPREUVE 1
INGLÉS A1 – NIVEL SUPERIOR – PRUEBA 1

Tuesday 4 May 2004 (morning)

Mardi 4 mai 2004 (matin)

Martes 4 de mayo de 2004 (mañana)

2 hours / 2 heures / 2 horas

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Write a commentary on one passage only.

INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Rédigez un commentaire sur un seul des passages.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un comentario sobre un solo fragmento.

Write a commentary on one of the following:

1. (a)

The ship sank.¹ It made a sound like a monstrous metallic burp. Things bubbled at the surface and then vanished. Everything was screaming: the sea, the wind, my heart. From the lifeboat I saw something in the water.

5 I cried, 'Richard Parker, is that you? It is so hard to see. Oh, that this rain would stop! Richard Parker? Richard Parker? Yes, it is you!'

I could see his head. He was struggling to stay at the surface of the water.

'Jesus, Mary, Muhammad and Vishnu², how good to see you, Richard Parker! Don't give up, please. Come to the lifeboat. Do you hear this whistle? *TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE!* You heard right. Swim, swim! You're a strong swimmer. It's not a hundred feet.'

10 He had seen me. He looked panic-stricken. He started swimming my way. The water about him was shifting wildly. He looked small and helpless.

'Richard Parker, can you believe what has happened to us? Tell me it's a bad dream. Tell me it's not real. Tell me I'm still in my bunk on the *Tsimtsum* and I'm tossing and turning and soon I'll wake up from this nightmare. Tell me I'm still happy. Mother, my tender guardian angel of wisdom, where are you? And you, Father, my loving worrywart? And you, Ravi³, dazzling hero of my childhood? Vishnu preserve me, Allah protect me, Christ save me, I can't bear it! *TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE!*

I was not wounded in any part of my body, but I had never experienced such intense pain, such a ripping of the nerves, such an ache of the heart.

20 He would not make it. He would drown. He was hardly moving forward and his movements were weak. His nose and mouth kept dipping underwater. Only his eyes were steadily on me.

'What are you doing, Richard Parker? Don't you love life? Keep swimming then! *TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE!* Kick with your legs. Kick! Kick! Kick!'

He stirred in the water and made to swim.

25 'And what of my extended family – birds, beasts and reptiles? They too have drowned. Every single thing I value in life has been destroyed. And I am allowed no explanation? I am to suffer hell without any account from heaven? In that case, what is the purpose of reason, Richard Parker? Is it no more than to shine at practicalities – the getting of food, clothing and shelter? Why can't reason give greater answers? Why can we throw a question further than we can pull in an answer? Why such a vast net if there's so little fish to catch?

His head was barely above water. He was looking up, taking in the sky one last time. There was a lifebuoy in the boat with a rope tied to it. I took hold of it and waved it in the air.

'Do you see this lifebuoy, Richard Parker? Do you see it? Catch hold of it. *HUMPF!* I'll try again. *HUMPF!*

35 He was too far. But the sight of the lifebuoy flying his way gave him hope. He revived and started beating the water with vigorous, desperate strokes.

'That's right! One, two. One, two. One, two. Breathe when you can. Watch for the waves. *TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE!*

40 My heart was chilled to ice. I felt ill with grief. But there was no time for frozen shock. It was shock in activity. Something in me did not want to give up on life, was unwilling to let go,

wanted to fight to the very end. Where that part of me got the heart, I don't know.

'Isn't it ironic, Richard Parker? We're in hell yet we're still afraid of immortality. Look how close you are! *TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE! TREEEEEE!* Hurrah, hurrah! You've made it, Richard Parker, you've made it. Catch! *HUMPF!*'

45 I threw the lifebuoy mightily. It fell in the water right in front of him. With his last energies he stretched forward and took hold of it.

'Hold on tight, I'll pull you in. Don't let go. Pull with your eyes while I pull with my hands. In a few seconds you'll be aboard and we'll be together. Wait a second. Together? We'll be *together?* Have I gone mad?'

50 I woke up to what I was doing. I yanked on the rope.

'Let go of that lifebuoy, Richard Parker! Let go, I said. I don't want you here, do you understand? Go somewhere else. Leave me alone. Get lost. Drown! Drown!'

He was kicking vigorously with his legs. I grabbed an oar. I thrust it at him, meaning to push him away. I missed and lost hold of the oar.

55 I grabbed another oar. I dropped it in an oarlock and pulled as hard as I could, meaning to move the lifeboat away. All I accomplished was to turn the lifeboat a little. Bringing one end closer to Richard Parker.

I would hit him on the head! I lifted the oar in the air.

He was too fast. He reached up and pulled himself aboard.

60 'Oh my God!'

Ravi was right. Truly I was to be the next goat. I had a wet, trembling, half-drowned, heaving and coughing three-year-old adult Bengal tiger in my lifeboat. Richard Parker rose unsteadily to his feet on the tarpaulin, eyes blazing as they met mine, ears laid tight to his head, all weapons drawn. His head was the size and the colour of the lifebuoy, with teeth.

65 I turned around, stepped over the zebra and threw myself overboard.

Yann Martel, *Life of Pi* (2001)

¹ The narrator and his family are transporting some of the animals from their zoo when the ship sinks.

² Jesus, Mary, Muhammad and Vishnu: Figures of different faiths: Jesus, Mary and Christ (l.16) are Christian; Muhammad and Allah (l.16) are Muslim and Vishnu is a Hindu god.

³ Ravi: the narrator's brother

1. (b)

Planting a Sequoia*

All afternoon my brothers and I have worked in the orchard,
Digging this hole, laying you into it, carefully packing the soil.
Rain blackened the horizon, but cold winds kept it over the Pacific,
And the sky above us stayed the dull gray
5 Of an old year coming to an end.

In Sicily a father plants a tree to celebrate his first son's birth –
An olive or a fig tree – a sign that the earth has one more life to bear.
I would have done the same, proudly laying new stock into my father's orchard,
A green sapling rising among the twisted apple boughs,
10 A promise of new fruit in other autumns.

But today we kneel in the cold planting you, our native giant,
Defying the practical custom of our fathers,
Wrapping in your roots a lock of hair, a piece of an infant's birth cord,
All that remains above earth of a first-born son,
15 A few stray atoms brought back to the elements.

We will give you what we can – our labor and our soil,
Water drawn from the earth when the skies fail,
Nights scented with the ocean fog, days softened by the circuit of bees.
We plant you in the corner of the grove, bathed in western light,
20 A slender shoot against the sunset.

And when our family is no more, all of his unborn brothers dead,
Every niece and nephew scattered, the house torn down,
His mother's beauty ashes in the air,
I want you to stand among strangers, all young and ephemeral to you,
25 Silently keeping the secret of your birth.

Dana Gioia, from *The Gods of Winter* (1991)

* sequoia: a giant coniferous tree