

Série L LV1

1 Corinne wasn't happy about the invitation, still less about her husband's excitement at receiving it, at last. Where was his pride? Where was his *character*? How could he want to waste his hard-earned money (twenty-five hundred dollars for "induction fees,"¹ six hundred dollars annual dues!) when High Point Farm's expenditures were relentless, not to mention the children, a family of four healthy active
5 children costs. 'We've gotten along for almost twenty years without belonging to the Mt. Ephraim Country Club -why join now? *Who cares?*'" Corinne demanded.

 Clearly, Michael Mulvaney cared. Corinne, a Democrat and a liberal, the sort of Protestant who allowed no one to stand between her and God, argued, furthermore, that the Club was un-American, unchristian, immoral - "For whites only! And all male! Women can belong only as adjuncts to their
10 spouses or male relatives!"

 "So what?" Michael said.

 "So *what*? Don't you understand?"

 "Corinne, it's a private club. It's friends who've gotten together, who want a clubhouse, essentially. When the Club was founded, in 1925, there were only twelve men - they were *friends*. And,
15 eventually-"

 "Stop! I can't believe what I'm hearing! You, Michael Mulvaney -a bigot. A sexist. A *snob*."

 "Whatever the hell, Corinne? - I can't join the Women's Garden Club, or the Women's League of Voters-"

 "League of Women Voters-"

 "I can't join a Negro fraternity, or the Knights of Columbus. There are exclusively Jewish country clubs, there are Italian-American clubs, what's the problem?"

 "It's un-American, that's the problem!"

 "It's *American*, in fact: all kinds of organizations, private clubs, even secret clubs. It's people making their own decisions about who they want as friends."

 "Friends"? - it's as much about keeping people out. It's cruel, it's discriminatory. Look how they kept you waiting for years -how hurt you were. How you tried, you campaigned-"

 Heatedly Michael said, "Never mind about me! We're talking principles here. First principles. The right of a group of people to-"

 "To exclude others, for their own self-promotion. For 'business' purposes. And to *drink*. I've
30 heard tales about those country club bashes² -"

 "Corinne, everybody drinks. Anybody who wants to, drinks. Our friends drink."

 "*Your* friends drink-"

 "They're your friends, too! Drinking is hardly a monopoly of the country club set."

 "Michael, this ridiculous club discriminates against two members of your own family!
35 Marianne and I, being 'female,' can't even enter by the front door! We have to enter by a side door, through the 'family entrance.' Were you aware of that?"

 So they argued. For days, for a week. The quarrel would flame up, then subside; like a treacherous marshland fire it would seem to have been extinguished, when it had merely gone underground. Corinne sulked, and Corinne was sarcastic, and Corinne was morally, spiritually
40 dismayed. She knew, she knew *she* was right! But the children weren't eager to come to her defense. And there was Marianne's question, put to Corinne one day with dazzling simplicity: "Mom, don't you want Dad to be happy? *We* do."

 For even Marianne wanted to belong to the Mt. Ephraim Country Club. Especially Marianne -

¹ induction fees : money paid to join a club

² bashes : parties

so many of her friends' families belonged.

- 45 So Corinne, who was a good sport after all, bought a CONGRATULATIONS! card for Michael, got the kids to sign it, and added smudged paw prints with dogs' and cats' names attached; added a warning, in parenthesis, *A woman convinced against her will is of the same opinion still*. She signed the card LOVE ALWAYS YOUR 'WHISTLE' and dropped it off with a bottle of champagne at Mulvaney Roofing.

Joyce Carol Oates, *We were the Mulvaney*s (4th Estate, 2001)
600 words

I - COMPREHENSION:

1. In what country does the scene take place? Justify in your own words.
2. How many characters are present in the text? Give their names and say how they are related.
3. a) What invitation have they received?
b) Contrast Corinne's and Michael's reactions on receiving it. (one sentence in your own words)
4. Corinne's reasons for disapproving of the Club:
 - a) From line 2 ("*How could he want...*") to line 7 ("*Michael Mulvaney cared.*")
What two arguments does she give? (30 words)
 - b) From line 7 ("*Corinne, a Democrat...*") to line 26 ("*... you campaigned.*")
What does she reproach the club with? (40 words)
 - c) From line 27 ("*Heatedly Michael said.....*") to lines 33 ("*... the country club set.*") What is her third argument? (20 words)
5. How does Michael defend the club? How does he contradict her arguments? (50 words)
6. "*Michael, this ridiculous club discriminates against two members of your own family!*" (line 34).
Explain (20 words).
7. What convinces Corinne to change her mind in the end? (30 words)
8. How does Corinne inform Michael she has changed her mind? Is it a true change of heart? (30-40 words)
9. Imagine why he considers it so important to join this club. (30-40 words)

II - EXPRESSION:

Le candidat traitera les DEUX sujets :

A. Imagine the letter Michael Mulvaney wrote to apply for membership to the Mt. Ephraim Country club. (100 words)

B. Should you always choose friends with backgrounds and tastes similar to yours? (200 words)

III - TRADUCTION:

Translate the text into French from line 1 ("*Corinne wasn't happy...*") to line 7 ("*Clearly, Michael Mulvaney cared.*")