

Série S-ES LV1

1 Ted and I met in a politics of ecology class when he leaned over and offered to pay me two
dollars for the last week's notes. I refused the money and accepted a cup of coffee instead. This
was during my second semester at UC Berkeley, where I had enrolled as a liberal arts major
and later changed to fine arts. Ted was in his third year in pre-med, his choice, he told me, ever
5 since he dissected a fetal pig in the sixth grade.

I have to admit that what I initially found attractive in Ted were precisely the things
that made him different from my brothers and the Chinese boys I had dated: his brashness; the
assuredness in which he asked for things and expected to get them; his opinionated manner;
his angular face and lanky body; the thickness of his arms; the fact that his parents immigrated
10 from Tarrytown, New York, not Tientsin, China.

My mother must have noticed these same differences after Ted picked me up one
evening at my parents' house. When I returned home, my mother was still up, watching
television.

"He is American," warned my mother, as if I had been too blind to notice. "A
15 *waigoren*."

"I'm American too," I said. "And it's not as if I'm going to marry him or something."

Mrs. Jordan also had a few words to say. Ted had casually invited me to a family
picnic, the annual clan reunion held by the polo fields in Golden Gate Park. Although we had
dated only a few times in the last month -and certainly had never slept together, since both of
20 us lived at home -Ted introduced me to all his relatives as his girlfriend, which, until then, I
didn't know I was.

Later, when Ted and his father went off to play volleyball with the others, his mother
took my hand, and we started walking along the grass, away from the crowd. She squeezed my
palm warmly but never seemed to look at me.

25 "I'm so glad to meet you *finally*," Mrs. Jordan said. I wanted to tell her I wasn't really
Ted's girlfriend, but she went on. "I think it's nice that you and Ted are having such a lot of fun
together. So I hope you won't misunderstand what I have to say."

And then she spoke quietly about Ted's future, his need to concentrate on his medical
studies, why it would be years before he could even think about marriage. She assured me she
30 had nothing whatsoever against minorities; she and her husband, who owned a chain of office
supply stores, personally knew many fine people who were Oriental, Spanish, and even black.
But Ted was going to be in one of those professions where he would be judged by a different
standard, by patients and other doctors who might not be as understanding as the Jordans were.

She said it was so unfortunate the way the rest of the world was, how unpopular the
35 Vietnam War was.

"Mrs. Jordan, I am not Vietnamese," I said softly, even though I was on the verge of
shouting.

"And I have no intention of marrying your son."

40 When Ted drove me home that day, I told him I couldn't see him anymore. When he
asked me why, I shrugged. When he pressed me, I told him what his mother had said,
verbatim, without comment.

"And you're just going to sit there! Let my mother decide what's right?" he shouted, as
if I were a co-conspirator who had turned traitor. I was touched that Ted was so upset.

45 "What should we do?" I asked, and I had a pained feeling I thought was the beginning
of love.

In those early months, we clung to each other with a rather silly desperation, because, in spite of anything my mother or Mrs. Jordan could say, there was nothing that really prevented us from seeing one another. With imagined tragedy hovering over us, we became inseparable, two halves creating the whole: yin and yang. I was victim to his hero. I was
50 always in danger and he was always rescuing me. I would fall and he would lift me up. It was exhilarating and draining. The emotional effect of saving and being saved was addicting to both of us. [...]

"What should we do?" I continued to ask him.

Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*, 1989

I - COMPREHENSION

1. In what country does the scene take place? Justify by giving one quotation.
2. Who are the characters, what are their origins, and how are they related to one another?
3. What do Ted's parents do for a living?
4. How did the two main characters' relationship begin? (20 words)
5. What is unusual about this new relationship for the narrator? (10 words)
6. What is the reaction of each mother? (50 words)
7. The two young people react differently to their mothers' opinions. Explain what it reveals about their respective personalities. Use your own words (40 words) and quotations from the text
8. Does the relationship evolve according to the parents' expectations? Use your own words (15 words) and a quotation from the text.
9. Translate into French from line 25 to line 27. (from "*I'm so glad*" to "*what I have to say*"),

II - EXPRESSION

Choisir un **seul** des deux sujets suivants. (300 mots +/- 10 %)

1. Imagine you are the narrator. You write a letter to your best friend the day after your conversation with Ted's mother.
2. Do you think parents should interfere with their children's future plans? Illustrate your point with examples.