

## OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/ENGLISH IB/TOPS/MACS/HOMEWORK 16

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_ CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following selections and answer the questions that follows.

## SELECTION 1/4

1957

Several months before my mother and I came to Canada, my father, Hing-Wun Chou, and his oldest friend, Doon-Yat Lim, bought the Dragon Café in the town of Irvine, not far from Toronto. They considered it a good buy, as it was already a Chinese restaurant, with woks in the kitchen and a rectangular sign with gold Chinese-style script above the front window. But most important for them, an enterprise in a town the size of Irvine cost less money than one in a bigger place. At the time I didn't realize that my father's business was typical of so many Chinese restaurants in small towns across Canada, often known as the local greasy spoon, every one of them a lonely family business isolated from the community it served.

While my mother and I were still in Hong Kong, we visited a tailor; he made each of us a woollen coat and several cotton dresses. But for my mother he also made a dark green traveling suit and a beautiful rose-coloured cheongsam. She packed our new clothes in a large brown leather suitcase, smoothing them carefully around bolts of material, folded sweaters, packages of medicinal herbs, small gifts for family, and our few personal belongings.

As I stood beside her in a long line to board the airplane, it was hard to believe that the beautiful woman in the *lo fon*-style suit and black high-heeled shoes was my mother. Until then, I had only seen her in cotton pyjama suits that fastened up the side or a light dress with a loose skirt. She had told me that we were going to a country called *Gun-ah-dye*, a

1. Why has the narrator's family moved from China to Canada in 1957?

- a. To visit Hing-Wun Chou and his older brother.
- b. The narrator's father has set up a business in a town not far from Toronto.
- c. To escape from oppression and extreme hardship.
- d. The narrator would soon be studying at the University of Toronto.
- e. All of the above.

2. According to the narrator, why is the Dragon Café a good buy? Choose the best answer or the best combination of answers.

- I. It was already a Chinese restaurant.
- II. It was financially reasonable.
- III. It was located in Canada.

- a. I only
- b. I and II
- c. II only
- d. I, II, and III
- e. III only

3. Circle the two words in the following sentence that suggest that running a local greasy spoon can affect the family's social life:

At the time I didn't realize that father's business was typical of so many Chinese restaurants in small towns across Canada, often known as the local greasy spoon, every one of them had a lonely family business isolated from the community it served.

4. Why does the narrator find it difficult to believe that the woman in a suit and high-heeled shoes can be her mother?

- a. Her mother is carrying a few packages of medicinal herbs.
- b. She stands beside her mother in a long line to board the airplane.
- c. A tailor has made a beautiful rose-coloured cheongsam.
- d. The long flight to Gun-ah-dye seems unbelievable.
- e. None of the above.

## SELECTION 2/4

land that was cold and covered with snow, a place where *lo fons* lived, a place where only English was spoken. She had pointed them out to me in the streets of Hong Kong. "They don't speak Chinese," she had said. "But soon you will learn English, and talk just like the *lo fons*. I am too old to learn, but you, Su-Jen, you will be just like them." I wondered what English sounded like. I didn't understand why it would be easy for me but difficult for my mother.

In the weeks before we left, she didn't seem excited about going to this new place, yet she took care to show me how to print the letters of the English alphabet, combining circles and sticks and half-circles. I traced the letters on the window of the airplane and remembered what she had told me about the missionaries, that when she was a child, they had taught her how to write the ABC's but not to read the words.

Whenever I looked out I saw clouds above and below and wondered if we were really moving through the sky. It seemed that our journey would never end.

My mother said that we were lucky my father already lived in Canada, otherwise the Communists would never have allowed us to leave China. She said that we were going to Canada because of me. There I would have a better life, I could go to school and our family would be together. But I knew if she had her way we would stay in China despite her fear of the Communists. Whenever I asked my mother who the Communists were, she was unable to explain in a way I understood; I only knew that in Canada, we would be safe from them.

The only thing about Canada that my mother seemed to look forward to was reuniting with Aunt Hai-Lan, her mother's youngest sister. Before the war, Hai-Lan had married Uncle Jong, who was from my father's village in Hoi Ping County.

5. Why is the expression “*lo fon*” in italics? Choose the best answer.

- a. It is an unusual expression.
- b. To create emphasis.
- c. It is not an English word.
- d. To sound politically correct.
- e. All of the above.

6. The expression “*lo fon*” is best described as

- a. a critical term.
- b. derogatory.
- c. a label from one culture to describe people from another culture.
- d. humorous.
- e. None of the above.

7. Why does the narrator describe the English alphabet as a combination of circles, sticks, and half-circles?

- a. To show an unfamiliarity with the English language in written form.
- b. To show that the English language, in written form, looks artistic.
- c. To reflect geometric features in the written alphabet.
- d. To sound funny.
- e. All of the above.

8. Where is the narrator when she wonders if “we were really moving through the sky”? Complete the sentence:

She is on \_\_\_\_\_.

9. From whom has the narrator’s mother learned English?

- a. The narrator’s grandparents.
- b. *Lo fons*.
- c. Canadians.
- d. Missionaries.
- e. None of the above.

## SELECTION 3/4

They had two sons before Jong returned to Canada. When the Japanese attacked, she and the other villagers fled and hid in the hills. My mother told me that she and Hai-Lan and Hai-Lan's sons were the only ones in her family who had survived the war. When it was over, they had found each other, and Hai-Lan had taken her in and cared for her. When my father returned to the village from Canada, she introduced him to my mother, and then left for Canada herself soon after my parents were married.

I stayed close to my mother after the airplane landed in Toronto, fearful of being lost in this crowd of strangers. We stood in a long line and waited for a *lo fon* man in a dark uniform to look at some papers that my mother thrust at him. She seemed nervous, even when the man smiled at me. The man finally gave back her papers and my mother quickly grabbed my hand and followed the crowd into another room. She was busy struggling with our bags when I saw a man and a woman rush toward us. They were a funny-looking couple – he was short and round while she was tall and thin with a head full of tight black curls. My mother looked up from her bags and held out her arms toward Aunt Hai-Lan. They embraced each other, laughing and crying at the same time. Afterwards Aunt Hai-Lan bent down and pressed me to her chest, speaking in our Four Counties dialect. Uncle Jong smiled and told me how grown up I looked for a six-year-old. He picked up our large brown suitcase, while Aunt Hai-Lan took the smaller one, chattering and hugging my mother with one arm. We walked through a large bluish-green room with narrow wooden benches. I saw a *lo fon* man pushing a broom and some *lo fon* women working behind a counter.

There were many *lo fon* men and women outside the building, waving and shouting in their strange language, some of them getting into cars lined along the road. My cheeks tingled with the cold. Uncle Jong led us to a taxi and spoke easily in

10. For each of the words below, give one word or short phrase (of not more than seven words) which has the same meaning that the word or phrase has in the passage.

i. Thrust	
ii. Dialect	
iii. Tingled	

8.

i) Which war does the narrator reference? Circle the right answer: First World War / Second War War.

ii) In one complete sentence, explain your answer using only the space provided here:

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9. Who is the man in a dark uniform?

- a. The narrator's father
- b. Doon-Yat Lim
- c. A customs officer
- d. Uncle Jong
- e. None of the above

10. How can we tell that Aunt Hai-Lan and Uncle Jong are happy to see the narrator and her mother? Check the points that apply.

They rush towards the narrator and her mother.	
Aunt Hai-Lan embraces the narrator's mother.	
Aunt Hai-Lan is crying and laughing at the same time.	
Aunt-Hai-Lan bends down and presses the narrator to her chest.	
Uncle Jong smiles.	

## SELECTION 4/4

English to the driver. I sat in the back seat, squeezed between my mother and her aunt; I leaned against my mother's arm. When I peeked up at the window, I saw only darkness.

Aunt Hai-Lan and Uncle Jong lived on D'Arcy Street in Chinatown, in the centre of Toronto. The first things Aunt Hai-Lan showed my mother were her refrigerator and electric stove. I didn't know anyone else who owned such luxuries, but Aunt Hai-Lan told us that in Canada all the *lo fons* had them in their homes and that most of them even owned cars. When I asked my mother if my father had a car, Uncle Jong laughed and said, "Only *lo fons*. We Chinese are too busy saving every penny we make. Your father would never spend that kind of money on himself. He's the only person who could make a monk look like a spendthrift. But now that you and your mother are here, Su-Jen, maybe things will be different."

While the adults sat in the kitchen and talked late into the night, I went to sleep in the sitting room on the couch that Aunt Hai-Lan folded down and covered with sheets and blankets. It wasn't quite flat, and when my mother came to bed, I kept rolling into her, into the long crease where the back and the seat of the sofa met. She tossed and turned for most of the night. At one point, I woke up and found myself alone on the couch. My mother was standing by the front window, gazing into the street below. I got up and stood beside her. She put her arm around me and together we looked at the strange landscape. The solid row of houses across the road was dark and there was not a person in sight. The street was coated with white. I had never seen snow before. It looked so smooth and even that I wanted to run out and touch it with my hands. I wondered if something was wrong with the trees, all those bony-looking branches without leaves. Everything was so still except for Uncle Jong snoring in the next room on the other

## WRITING

As sensitively and succinctly as you can, continue writing from the broken sentence, “Everything was so still except for Uncle Jong snoring in the next room on the other...” Use only the space provided. Describe what the narrator sees outside the front window. Include a brief, but touching, conversation between the narrator and her mother.

Everything was so still except for Uncle Jong snoring in the next room on the other \_\_\_\_\_

# THE END