Advanced Higher French

Le silence de la mer

Vercors
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Timescales

Week 1
You may have chosen to read the book in English over the holidays, but you must now focus on the French text as you will be required to complete the Specialist Study Unit prior to writing the essay for your folio. Your teacher will give you guidelines on how to complete this unit and he/she may also give you some examples of a completed Specialist Study Unit and a log book to use to write up your findings. You will find the examples on the following link: http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/75796.html

The first thing you have to do is choose an aspect of the novel on which to focus. You may wish to choose one of the essay titles for the folio (see page 57) and use that as your focus. You will then create a plan outlining the resources you are going to use and a possible timescale. You should now read the book in French. Use the timescale and activities below to help you manage your time. Remember to highlight key passages and quotes from the text that are relevant to your chosen focus.

Now read pages 17-26 of the book and write a summary of the main points covered in each section in English. Answer the questions on these sections of the book (see page 5)

Week 2
Read pages 27-38 and write a summary of the main points covered in each section in English. Answer the questions on these sections of the book (see page 5)

Week 3
Read pages 41-51 and write a summary of the main points covered in each section in English. Answer the questions on these sections of the book (see page 5)

Week 4
Read the notes on the characters in the book (pages 10-20) Make notes describing each character. Look at the key points you have noted, and find adjectives to describe each character in French.
Week 5
Look at the resume of the plot in French, and make sure you understand it. You should learn it thoroughly, so that you can speak fluently on the content of the book in French. Discuss any difficulties you are having with pronunciation with your teacher or the French assistant. You may even want to record it on your phone (or ask the assistant to do it for you). That will enable you to listen to the resume whenever you want. Not only will it help your pronunciation, but it will go a long way to preparing you for your oral exam in February/March.

Week 6
Look at the questions in French, and answer them as fully as you can. This pack of materials will help you do that, and your teacher or the French assistant will give you extra help. You may also want to record them as this will help you prepare for your oral exam in February/March.

Week 7-9
You are now ready to look at other sources in your plan. These could include a literary criticism of the book; some background information about the French Resistance or the author or the film of the book, but note that the film contains some scenes which are not in the book. One of these sources must be in French but the others can be in English.

Week 10
Complete your Specialist Study Unit and hand in your log book to the teacher. The teacher will award it a pass or fail. If you pass the Specialist Study Unit you are now ready to write your folio essay.
Questions on each section of *Le Silence de la Mer*

**Pages 17 – 18**

Read pages 17 -18

a) Describe the events leading up to the arrival of the German officer.
b) How does the narrator react to these events?

**Pages 19 -21**

Now read pages 19 -21

a) Why do you think the uncle and the niece refuse to speak to Werner von Ebrannac when he arrives?
b) How does Werner react to their silence?
c) What kind of person do you think Werner von Ebrannac is? Give two details to support your answer.
d) What does the narrator think of Werner von Ebrannac? Give reasons to support your answer.

**Pages 22 – 26**

Now read pages 22 - 26

a) How does Werner von Ebrannac feel about living in the house with the uncle and his niece?
b) Why do you think Werner von Ebrannac continues to visit the uncle and his niece every evening?
c) They have no intention of talking to him. Why do you think they allow him to continue to visit them each evening?
d) How did the uncle feel when Werner did not arrive at his usual time?
e) Why did Werner von Ebrannac change his clothes when he arrived that evening?
f) In what way did Werner’s relationship with the uncle and the niece change that evening? Give details.
g) How does Werner feel about France? Why had he never visited France?
h) What is his vision for France and Germany?
i) How does the uncle feel about Werner?
j) What is the niece’s reaction?

Pages 27 -30

Now read pages 27-30

a) Why does Werner von Ebrannac choose to change his clothes before coming downstairs to visit the uncle and the niece?
b) What excuse does he make for coming downstairs every evening?
c) Are the uncle and his niece taken in by this excuse? Explain your answer.
d) What does he talk to them about?
e) What does Werner’s enthusiasm for French literature and German music tell the reader about him? Why is this important to him?
f) Why does he tell the uncle and the niece he is happy about their attitude towards him?
g) Why is the niece embarrassed?
h) Why do you think Werner von Ebrannac tells the story of Beauty and the Beast?

Pages 31-32

Now read pages 31-32

a) What does the uncle think when he hears the harmonium being played?
b) How does he feel when he sees it is Werner von Ebrannac who is playing?
c) What does Werner von Ebrannac say he has learned from living in France?
d) Why is it so important to him that he is accepted by France and the French people?
e) What do you think he means by “Les obstacles seront surmontés”? 
Pages 33-36

Now read pages 33-36

a) The uncle says he admires Werner von Ebrannac. Why does he admire him?
b) Why do the uncle and niece feel uncomfortable?
c) How does the reader know that the niece is struggling to deal with the situation?
d) What personal details does Werner von Ebrannac give the reader in this section of the book? Why do you think this is important?
e) How does Werner von Ebrannac feel when he arrives in Chartres?
f) What is the significance of the story of the walk in the woods with his fiancée?
g) What is the niece’s reaction to this story?
h) How does the reader know that Werner von Ebrannac is not like other Nazis?

Pages 37-38

Now read pages 37-38

a) Werner von Ebrannac reads an extract from Macbeth. What is the significance of this?
b) What important piece of information does Werner von Ebrannac give the uncle and the niece?
c) How does Werner von Ebrannac feel about this?
d) What tells the reader he is an idealist?

Pages 41-51

Now read the last section of the book

a) When Werner von Ebrannac returns from Paris, the uncle and the niece do not see him for more than a week. How do they feel about this?
b) Describe what happens when the uncle has to go to the German headquarters.
c) Why does the niece wish to go to bed early that evening?
d) Why is the uncle angry?
e) Describe Werner von Ebrannac’s approach to them three days later.

f) How does the author build up a feeling of suspense?

g) In what way is Werner von Ebrannac’s behaviour different from that of other evenings?

h) How do the uncle and niece react to this?

i) Why do you think Werner von Ebrannac is once again dressed in his uniform?
The Plot

The plot is the word used to describe what happens in the book. In *Le Silence de la Mer*, the story line is fairly straightforward.

The book tells the story of a German officer, Werner von Ebrannac, who, during the German occupation of France in the Second World War, is forced to spend seven months in the house of an old man and his niece.

During his time in the house, Werner von Ebrannac visits the old man and his niece every evening, and speaks to them not only about his love for their country, but also about his passion for music and literature. He also explains to them that he eventually wants to see a union of the two countries.

The uncle and the niece listen politely to what Werner von Ebrannac has to say, but never answer him or address him in any way, because that is the only way they can express their patriotism for France, and show their hatred towards the occupying forces.

However, during the course of the novel, the reader becomes aware of a growing passion between Werner von Ebrannac and the niece, although she continues to remain silent and stubborn.

When Werner von Ebrannac goes to Paris on leave, he discovers that his compatriots do not share the same beliefs or ideals as he does, and that any co-operation between the two countries is merely a ploy to help destroy French culture which the Germans see as a threat to Nazism in Europe.

He returns to the uncle and niece’s house disillusioned, and announces to them that he has asked to be transferred to the Eastern front line. He informs his hosts of his decision, and tells them of his imminent departure, telling them why he has made that decision. It is at that point that the niece breaks her silence for the first and last time, and says goodbye to him, showing her true feelings for the German officer.

You will find a resume of the plot in French on page 42 of this booklet.
Characters

There are only three characters in this novel. They are Werner von Ebrannac, the uncle, and the niece.

Werner von Ebrannac

Werner von Ebrannac is the main character in the novel. The reader learns a lot about his character from the way he behaves and what he says in the book.

The first impression the reader has of Werner von Ebrannac is when he arrives at the uncle and niece’s house for the first time. A lot of activity has preceded his arrival, and the reader’s curiosity is aroused as to who this German officer actually is. The expectation is that he will be met with a negative reaction from the occupants of the house as Werner von Ebrannac has been forced upon them as a compulsory lodger by the occupying German force in France, and this colours the reader’s view slightly.

However, when he finally arrives, he is presented in a positive light by the narrator of the story (the uncle) who describes his appearance in minute detail.

Werner is polite from the first moment of his arrival. The first words he utters are “S’il vous plait” (p19). He removes his coat and smiles discretely at the niece, and then turns to the uncle and introduces himself. “Je me nomme Werner von Ebrannac” (p19) and then goes on to apologise for the inconvenience that his enforced stay might cause the uncle and the niece “Je suis désolé” (p19) and “Cela était naturellement nécessaire. J’eusse évité si cela était possible” (p20). Werner von Ebrannac comes across as a polite, cultured individual with whom the reader can identify and sympathise. The fact that he smiles several times during the initial meeting reinforces this impression.

“Il se tourna vers ma nièce, sourire discrètement en inclinant très légèrement le buste” (p19)

“...je visse naître un sourire sur ses lèvres. Son sourire était grave et sans nulle trace d’ironie” (p20)
His behaviour towards the uncle and the niece on the first morning after his arrival reinforces this impression. He comes downstairs into the kitchen, and tells them he had a good night’s sleep, and hopes they had had slept just as well. He is described as smiling on two occasions on p22.

He also compliments them on their house saying he is happy that he was not billeted at the castle on the hill as he should have been, “Ici est un beaucoup plus beau château” (p22).

On his return to the house that evening, he again apologises for disturbing them “Je crains que je vous dérange, dit-il (p22) and suggests they lock the door and he can go through the kitchen. However, the uncle and the niece do not do this, and Werner von Ebrannac continues to visit them in the evening. He is always described by the uncle as smiling, half-smiling, or taking pleasure in what he sees. His demeanour is in stark contrast to the stern, stubborn demeanour of the niece, and this shows Werner von Ebrannac in a positive light.

At first he only talks about trivial things like the weather or the temperature which demand no reply in return and always ends each of his monologues with the words “Je vous souhaite une bonne nuit”. Suddenly, one evening things change quite dramatically. This change follows a change in the weather, and Werner von Ebrannac does not appear at his usual time. When he finally does arrive, he is not in uniform. This change of appearance highlights to the reader that he is in fact a normal person, and not an enemy officer. The content of what he says also changes at this point in the text, and becomes much more personal. This draws not only the reader towards him, but also the uncle and the niece.

On page 24 he begins to talk about the difference in the winters in France and Germany, and in doing so show the marked contrast between the two countries, not only in physical terms, but also in terms of the mentality of the people. The winter in France is described as “une douce saison”, but in Germany “c’est bien dur”. In France the snow lies like a piece of lace on delicate trees, whilst in Germany the trees are firs tightly packed together, on which the snow lies heavily. Germany is described as a sturdy, powerful bull which needs force to live, whereas in France it is the spirit and the subtle, poetic thoughts which are important. This shows the reader that he has an idealistic picture of France, and that is further emphasised when he goes on to tell them of the great vision he has for France, (similar to that of his father) that one day France and Germany will be united like husband and wife. “Il va
He describes France as “la Princesse Lointaine” on page 25. This reference mirrors the behaviour of the niece towards Werner von Ebrannac, and is the first of several similar references in the book. This vision he has for France and Germany is mirrored in the relationship between Werner von Ebrannac and the niece. As he speaks he looks at her “En parlant il regardait ma nièce” (p25), but she refuses to look at him or respond to him in any way.

He is aware that he may have hurt his hosts feelings by talking of such matters, but he assures them that it is his true belief “Mais ce que je disais, je le pense avec un très bon coeur: je le pense par amour pour la France” (p26). There is great sincerity in what Werner von Ebrannac believes, and this makes the reader sympathise with him, although his views are idealistic and naïve. The contrast between his idealism and the reality he experiences in Paris makes this all the more poignant.

Werner von Ebrannac is a cultured man. The reader has already learned that he is a musician on page 25. He is well read and has a sound knowledge of French literature, as can be seen from his interest in the library of books the uncle and niece have. He again makes a contrast between France and Germany. France has the great writers but Germany has the great musicians, and he again shows his naivety when he talks about the union of the two countries, using the imagery of marriage to indicate this “Nous nous battrons plus: nous nous marierons” (pp28-29).

His attention focuses once more on the niece. He tells us that he is happy to have met resistance “…je suis heureux de son visage sévère” (p 29) and further on “Je suis heureux d’avoir trouvé ici un vieil home digne. Et une demoiselle silencieuse”, but that he would be pleased to break the silence, and therefore, the resistance of the French people. This again highlights his naivety and idealism.

This theme is continued when he recounts the story of Beauty and the Beast. This story symbolises that appearances can be deceptive, and underlines the growing feelings Werner von Ebrannac has towards the niece, although he realises that these feelings are not yet reciprocated, in the same way as Beauty initially abhors the Beast. This passage hints at how the relationship between the two will eventually end. It also symbolises the differences between the two countries. The reader’s sympathy is aroused when Werner von Ebrannac compares himself to
On pages 31-32, Werner von Ebrannac is described playing the harmonium. He plays Bach’s 8th Prelude and Fugue which the niece had been practising before the occupation, but has not touched since. When he finishes playing he tells his hosts that, although it is a great piece of music, it is not human, and this is likened to the German mentality: “Bach…Il ne pouvait être qu’allemand. Notre terre a ce caractère; ce caractère inhumain” (p31-32).

He goes on to tell them that he wants to compose his own music, something to which man can relate. That way he’ll be able to discover the truth. He says that it is only since he has come to live with them that he has realised this: “Je veux faire, moi, une musique à la mesure de l’homme…Depuis que je vis ici” (p32). This shows how idealistic Werner really is, and this impression is further reinforced on page 32 when he goes on to talk about needing France and the need to be welcomed by the country: “Maintenant j’ai besoin de la France. Mais je demande beaucoup: je demande qu’elle m’accueille” (p32). This is a plea to them to accept him, to stop resisting him, and, in particular, it is a plea to the niece to reciprocate his feelings. He again uses the imagery of a mother feeding her children and of marriage to highlight this wish: “Il faut la boire à son sein, il faut qu’elle vous offre son sein dans un mouvement et un sentiment maternels…qu’elle accepte de s’unir à nous” (p32).

He shows the reader his determination of pursuing this goal when he says he wants to live in France in a similar house, as a son of the village. And finishes by telling them: “‘Les obstacles seront surmontés’, dit-il. ‘La sincérité toujours surmonte les obstacles.’” (p32). This again indicates to the reader that he truly believes in his vision for the future of France and Germany.

On pages 33 and 34 he talks about his home in Germany and his travels. We learn that he has visited lots of European cities, but that his heart lies in the village in which he spent his childhood. He waxes lyrical about how destiny brought him to Chartres, and that he understands how the French must have felt when they arrived there in times gone by.

“J’imaginais les sentiments de ceux qui venaient jadis à elle, à pied, à cheval ou sur des chariots… Je partageais ses sentiments et j’aimais ces gens, et comme je voudrais être leur frère” (p34)
This shows how much he wishes to be accepted, and that shows him in a positive light, not only to the reader, but also to the uncle and niece. He reiterates the fact that France can cure the German people of the aspects of their character that Werner does not like. “Tant de choses remuent ensemble dans l’âme d’un Allemand, même le meilleur! Et dont il aimerait tant qu’on le guérisse…”(p34).

The negative traits of the German character are highlighted in the story of the walk in the forest with his one time fiancée. Werner von Ebrannac paints a very rosy picture of the scene, and how happy they both felt. However, this ideal day is spoiled when his fiancée is bitten by a mosquito. She then catches another one and punishes it by pulling its legs off one by one. This act reflects the cruelty of the German occupation of France, and the German quest to destroy French culture which Werner von Ebrannac only becomes aware of when he visits Paris. Werner’s naivety is again highlighted in this part of the text. He is horrified at this act of barbarism, in the same way as he will be horrified that his compatriots in Paris do not share his beliefs, and he renounces not only his fiancée, but all German girls. This passage reflects exactly what will happen in Paris when he renounces his compatriots and decides to go to the eastern front.

The Uncle

Despite the fact the uncle does not speak in the novel, we learn a lot about his character from the way in which he describes how he feels in general, and, in particular, how he feels towards Werner von Ebrannac.

At the start of the novel, the uncle greets the news of Werner von Ebrannac’s arrival with an air of resignation. He describes the preparations for the officer’s arrival in a detached manner. “Ils me parlèrent, dans ce qu’ils supposaient être du français. Je ne comprenais pas un mot. Pourtant je leur montraï les chambres libres” (p17).

However, the uncle’s curiosity about, and interest in, the German officer is aroused from the outset. This is shown from his very detailed description of Werner von Ebrannac’s physical appearance on pages 19-21.

The uncle seems positively disposed towards Werner von Ebrannac, although he initially refers to him as “l’officier” and “l’Allemand”. However, when Werner introduces himself, the uncle immediately
thinks his name does not sound German: “Le nom n’est pas allemand” (p19), giving the reader the impression that perhaps Werner von Ebrannac is not typical of his compatriots. This is further highlighted on page 22, when he remarks to his niece: “Dieu merci, il a l’air convenable”.

Although the uncle refuses to speak to Werner von Ebrannac, in a silent pact with his niece to demonstrate their resistance to the occupying forces, the reader is very aware that the uncle does not find this an easy thing to do. He almost seems to have a guilty conscience about it:

“D’un accord tacite nous avions décidé.....de ne rien change à notre vie...comme si l’officier n’existait pas; comme s’il eût été un fantôme. Mais il se peut qu’un autre sentiment se mêlât dans mon coeur....: je ne puis sans souffrir offenser un homme, fût-il mon ennemi” (p23)

The uncle’s interest and curiosity in Werner von Ebrannac is further underlined on page 23 when he expresses his concern for the officer in the inclement weather: “Malgré moi, j’imaginais l’officier, dehors, l’aspect saupoudré qu’il aurait en entrant” and when he fails to appear that evening the uncle is preoccupied “...je m’agaçais de reconnaître qu’il occupait ma pensée”. The reader is again made aware that he does not find keeping up this silent treatment easy when he reproaches his niece for refusing to speak to the officer on page 26.

The uncle even goes as far as to say he admires Werner von Ebrannac on page 33 “Et, ma foi, je l’admirais. Oui: qu’il ne se décourageât pas. Et que jamais il ne fût tenté de secouer cet implacable silence par quelque violence de langage...”.

When Werner reads the passage from Macbeth, the uncle realises in astonishment that he appears to share Werner’s sentiments “Je me demandais avec stupeur s’il pensait au même tyran que moi” (p37).

Werner von Ebrannac leaves to go to Paris. On his return his hosts do not see him for more than a week. The uncle admits that his absence troubles him: “Cette absence ne me laissait pas l’esprit en repos. Je
pensais à lui, je ne sais pas jusqu’à quel point je n’éprouvais pas du regret, de l’inquiétude.” (p41).

During that week the uncle has to go to the German headquarters, and while he is there, he sees Werner von Ebrannac. He admits he hangs about to see if he is noticed, although he does not really know why he is doing it. “J’entendais sa voix sourde aux inflexions chantantes et je restais là, bien que je n’eusse plus rien à y faire, sans savoir pourquoi, curieusement ému, attendant je ne sais quel dénouement” (p41).

That evening his niece is aware that something has happened, but the uncle does not share with her that he saw Werner von Ebrannac that day. Eventually she excuses herself and goes to bed. The uncle reacts emotively at this point to the absurd situation in which all three of them find themselves. “Après son départ je me sentis soulevé par une absurde colère: la colère d’être absurde et d’avoir une nièce absurde. Qu’est-ce que c’était que toute cette idiotie?” (p42).

Werner von Ebrannac eventually appears one evening, and the uncle’s description of his approach builds up the tension felt by all the characters. The uncle pictures Werner behind the door ready to knock on it, but he is filled with apprehension. When Werner knocks, but does not open the door, the uncle is filled with an inexplicable feeling of agitation “mais elle resta close, et alors je fus envahi par une incoercible agitation d’esprit....” (p43). Eventually he tells Werner to come in. The fact that he adds the word “Monsieur” shows how far his attitude to Werner has changed from their first meeting. He now sees him as the man and not as the enemy “Pourquoi ajoutai-je: Monsieur? Pour marquer que j’invitais l’homme et non l’officier ennemi?” (p44).

The very detailed description of Werner’s appearance and demeanour mirror the description of his physical appearance when he first arrived, and the detail shows how much Werner von Ebrannac is struggling to cope with the fact his compatriots do not share his vision for France and Germany. He feels his ideals have been betrayed, and he is struggling to contain his emotions. The uncle makes this clear in his observations of Werner von Ebrannac when he says on page 44 “J’appris ce jour-là qu’une main peut...réfléter les émotions aussi bien qu’un visage, - aussi bien et mieux qu’un visage car elle échappe avantage au contrôle de la volonté“.

He listens intently as Werner tells them that there is no hope left for France any more, and that he will leave for the Eastern front. The last
image of him, as described by the uncle is one of him smiling. However, when the uncle comes down for breakfast the next morning Werner von Ebrannac has gone. He describes the pale sun through the morning mist and tells the reader that it looks to him as if it is going to be really cold “Il me sembla qu’il faisait très froid” (p51) as if Werner von Ebrannac has taken with him all hope. It also suggests impending death, and hence, the novel ends on a pessimistic note.

**The Niece**

The niece like her uncle does not speak, but we learn a lot about her character through her gestures and actions, and also from the observations her uncle makes in the course of the narration.

The reader’s first impressions of the niece are of someone who resents the intrusion on her private life, and someone who is very apprehensive about how the situation is going to affect her life.

When she and her uncle hear Werner von Ebrannac coming back to the house on the first evening she looks at her uncle and puts down her cup. This indicates that she is nervous and a bit tense. “Ma niece me regarda et posa sa tasse.” (p19).

At first she appears to be totally indifferent to the German officer. Her actions on his arrival highlight her feelings. When he knocks on the door she answers it, but remains silent and acts almost as if there was no-one there.

“Elle avait rabattu la porte sur le mur, elle se tenait elle-même contre le mur sans rien regarder” (p19)

“Ma niece avait fermé la porte et resté adossée au mur, regardant droit devant elle” (p19)

When he asks to be shown to his room she again acts as if there was no-one else there: “Ma niece ouvrit la porte...et commença de gravir les marches, sans un regard pour l’officier, comme si elle eut été seule” (p20).

She seems determined not to allow herself to be charmed by the German officer. When her uncle remarks that he seems pleasant enough, her reaction is one of indifference “Ma nièce haussa les épaules” (p21).
Her uncle describes her on page 23 as “immanquablement sévère et insensible” or on page 25 as a statue.

Even when the uncle suggests that it is perhaps cruel to refuse to speak to the officer, the niece remains indignant “Elle haussait très haut les sourcils, sur des yeux brillants et indignés” (p26). She continues to appear unaffected by what Werner von Ebrannac has to say. She refuses to look at him, although he tries to make eye contact with her several times: “Son regard se porta sur le mien…puis retourna sur le visage, impitoyablement insensible, qu’il avait quitté” (p29).

However, as the novel progresses, the reader becomes aware of small, but marked changes in her reaction towards Werner von Ebrannac. Much as she wishes to remain indifferent to him, she becomes more and more drawn towards him. The first indication of a softening in her attitude is when he says on page 29: “Il faudra vaincre ce silence. Il faudra vaincre le silence de la France. Cela me plait”.

This seems to affect her quite considerably. For the first time, the reader feels that she, herself, thinks she is perhaps being a bit hard on the German officer. Not only does she blush, but a slight frown begins to appear, and she pulls almost too tightly on her thread almost breaking it.

“Je la voyais légèrement rougir......Ses doigts tiraient un peu trop vivement, trop sèchement sur l’aiguille, au risque de romper le fil” (p29)

The uncle also senses a change in his niece’s attitude when he remarks a little further on:

“Et moi je sentais l’âme de ma nièce s’agiter dans cette prison qu’elle avait elle-même construite, je le voyais à bien des signes dont le moindre était un léger tremblement des doigts” (p33).

The fact that the niece is becoming more and more enamoured by Werner von Ebrannac is very obvious when he starts to talk about his former fiancé on page 34: “Il attendit, pour continuer, que ma nièce eût enfilé de nouveau le fil qu’elle venait de casser...”.

When Werner comes back from his leave in Paris, he does not spend time with his hosts as he normally would. This not only bothers the uncle, but it also bothers his niece. Although they do not speak to each other about it, the uncle is aware that Werner’s absence is having the same effect on his niece as it is having on him. “...je voyais bien, à l’application
têtue qu’elle mettait soudain à son ouvrage... qu’elle non plus n’était pas exempt de pensées pareilles aux miennes” (p41).

The niece is also preoccupied after the uncle’s meeting with Werner in the German headquarters. Although the uncle does not tell her about it, she seems to sense that he is keeping something from her, and is unable to concentrate on her work “Mais les femmes ont une divination de félin. Tout au long de la soirée elle ne cessa de lever les yeux de son ouvrage...pour les porter sur moi; pour tenter de lire quelque chose....” (p42).

Finally she claims she has a migraine, and asks to go to bed early “A la fin, elle laissa tomber ses mains...me demanda la permission de s’aller coucher de bonne heure...” (p42). She appears to reproach her uncle and for the first time she shows emotion “Elle m’embrassa et il me sembla lire dans ses beaux yeux gris un reproche et une assez pesante tristesse” (p42).

Three days after this incident they hear Werner coming downstairs. The weather has been wet and damp, and the niece has a shawl around her shoulders. The shawl shows ten linked hands (p42). This is very symbolic, as it mirrors Ebrannac’s vision for the union of France and Germany, and seems to indicate that the niece in some ways shares this vision, although she would never dare vocalise her thoughts.

The niece’s reaction to Werner’s approach is very telling: “Ma nièce avait levé la tête et elle me regardait, elle attacha sur moi...un regard transparent et inhumaine de grand-duc” (p43) and when he finally reaches the last step, she appears to relax “Et quand la dernière marche eût crié...le regard de ma nièce s’envola, je vis les paupières s’alourdir, la tête s’incliner...(p43).

However, Werner knocks the door, but instead of entering the room as he usually does, he waits. This sudden change of habit confuses the uncle, and he looks to his niece for help, but finds none. She too is startled by this sudden change: “Elle regardait le bouton de la porte. Elle le regardait avec cette fixité inhumaine de grand-duc...elle était très pâle et je vis...se lever la lèvre supérieure dans une contraction douloureuse” (p43).

This shows the reader to what extent she has been affected by Werner’s presence in the house. The uncle also realises for the first time that his
niece has fallen in love with the German officer “et moi, devant ce drame intime soudain dévoilé...je perdis mes dernières forces” (p43).

Eventually, the niece tells her uncle that if no-one tells him to come in, he will leave, but it is her voice that betrays her emotion “Il va partir...d’une voix basse et si complètement découragé...”(pp43-44).

The uncle tells Werner to come in, and when he does he is dressed once more in his military uniform. He tells them he has something serious to say to them. When he says this, the niece faces him but keeps her head bowed, but again it is her actions which betray her emotion. “Elle enroulait autour de ses doigts la laine d’une pelote, tandis que la pelote se défaisait en roulant sur le tapis..... (p45).

Werner von Ebrannac tells them they have to forget everything that has been said in the last six months, and it is at this point that she looks at Werner for the first time “…elle leva la tête, et alors, pour la première fois, - pour la première fois- elle offrit à l’officier le regard de ses yeux pâles” (p45). The significance of this gesture is underlined by the fact that the words “pour la première fois” are repeated in the sentence.

Werner tells them his compatriots do not share the same vision as he does for the future of France and Germany, and that he has asked to be transferred to the Eastern front, to hell, where the wheat fields of the future will be nourished by the corpses of fallen soldiers (p50). The niece is very upset, “Le visage de ma nièce me fit peine. Il était d’une pâleur lunaire. Les lèvres...étaient disjointes, elles esquissaient la moue tragique des masques grecs.” (p50).

A few lines on, the uncle is aware of beads of sweat, not just beginning to appear on her forehead, but almost standing out on her forehead. This indicates to the reader how much she is being affected by Werner’s imminent departure. There is a feeling of great tension in the room. This is described by the uncle when he says “Ses paupières...semblaient l’être par un fil si tendu...qu’on n’eût pas osé passer un doigt entre leurs yeux” (p50). Further on, her eyes are described as being too open, too pale (p51).

Werner says goodbye to her, and the tension is further heightened by her hesitation. Eventually, she replies “Adieu” (p51).

This is extremely important in the novel. It shows the reader that Werner has managed to break the silence, and hence the resistance, of the niece to his attentions, indicating that the niece was indeed in love.
with Werner. The reader is left with the impression of a character torn between the love for her country and the love for a man who was the enemy of that country. Her character develops and changes in the course of the novel, and the reader is left with a feeling of sympathy for the girl who felt she was only behaving in the way that would have been expected of her, no matter how difficult that choice was for her.

Questions on characters

• Think of adjectives you could use to describe Werner von Ebrannac, and then look for evidence from the text to support your answer. For example, if you think Werner von Ebrannac is an idealist, what evidence can you find from the text to support your answer?

• Consider things like, does the uncle like Werner von Ebrannac? If so, how do you know? If not, what evidence can you find in the text to support your answer? Do you sympathise with how the uncle behaves towards Werner von Ebrannac? Why?

• How do you feel about the niece? Do you sympathise with her behaviour? What adjectives would you use to describe her character? What evidence can you find in the text to support your answer?
Themes

*Le Silence de la Mer* deals with various issues or themes. These themes are:

**A. War and Conflict**

There are various sorts of conflict addressed in *Le Silence de la Mer*:

1. The physical conflict between France and Germany
2. The inner conflict faced by each character:
   
   a) Werner von Ebrannac
   In the novel Werner struggles to reconcile his beliefs and ideals with those of his compatriots, and in particular with the Nazi vision for France
   
   b) The Uncle
   The uncle struggles to control his personal feelings towards Werner von Ebrannac as the enemy, and his patriotism towards his own country, and the resistance he must put up towards his enemy
   
   c) The Niece
   The niece struggles to reconcile her true feelings for Werner von Ebrannac with the hatred she feels for the occupying force which he represents

**B. Love**

There are various aspects to this theme:

1. Patriotism (love for one’s country)
2. Love displayed between Werner von Ebrannac and the niece

**C. Hatred and Cruelty**

The theme of hatred and cruelty is displayed in:
1. The niece’s attitude towards Werner von Ebrannac in the initial stages of the text
2. The attitude of Werner von Ebrannac’s compatriots towards France
Symbolism

Title

The title of the novel is a bit enigmatic. *Le Silence* obviously represents the silent resistance the uncle and his niece maintain in Werner von Ebrannac’s presence.

The reference to the sea could be seen as a reference to the fact that all is not as it appears on the surface. All three characters appear to be calm and in control. However, beneath the surface there are all sorts of conflicting emotions which are hidden from view, in the same way as we are unaware of the hidden depths of the sea or the undercurrents beneath the surface of the water.

- What is the significance of the title of the novel?
- Is it an appropriate title? Why/why not?

Other literary works

Why does the Werner von Ebrannac quote from Macbeth and Beauty and the Beast?

How are these two passages related to events in the novel?

Forest Walk

Read the passage on pages 34-35:

“Il y a dans le château voisin de chez nous, une jeune fille...Elle est très belle et très douce...Mais aussi j’étais effrayé pour toujours à l’égard des jeunes filles allemandes.”

Why is this passage so important in the novel?
### Glossary

**Pages 17-18**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Term</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>il fut</td>
<td>he was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>précéder</td>
<td>to precede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le déploiement</td>
<td>deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l’appareil militaire</td>
<td>military machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le troufion</td>
<td>trooper (slang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dégingandé</td>
<td>gangling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maigre</td>
<td>thin</td>
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<tr>
<td>carré</td>
<td>square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aux mains</td>
<td>with hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le carrier</td>
<td>quarryman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sans</td>
<td>without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le mot</td>
<td>word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pourtant</td>
<td>however</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>libre</td>
<td>free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paraître</td>
<td>to appear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le torpédo</td>
<td>touring car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pénétrer</td>
<td>to penetrate/enter into</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le soldat</td>
<td>soldier</td>
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<tr>
<td>souriant</td>
<td>smiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extirper</td>
<td>to drag/pull out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la caisse</td>
<td>box/case</td>
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<tr>
<td>le ballot</td>
<td>bundle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entouré de</td>
<td>surrounded by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la toile</td>
<td>cloth, material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monter</td>
<td>to take upstairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le cavalier</td>
<td>rider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apparaître</td>
<td>to appear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mettre pied à terre</td>
<td>to set foot on the ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le bâtiment</td>
<td>building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la pierre</td>
<td>stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la grange</td>
<td>barn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>se servir de</td>
<td>to use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un atelier</td>
<td>workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enfoncer</td>
<td>to hammer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le valet</td>
<td>clamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un établi</td>
<td>workbench</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
le trou  hole
la corde  rope
se passer  to happen
de bonne heure  early
ramener  to bring back
eux-mêmes  themselves
la paille  straw
la soupente  attic
la cantine  tin trunk
déposer  to put down/dump
voisin(e)  neighbouring
s’adresser à  to address
les draps  sheets

Pages 19-21

frapper  to knock
venir de  to have just
chaque  every
dormir  to sleep
assis  seated
au fond de  at the back of
la pièce  room
dans l’ombre  in the shadow
donner sur  to overlook
de plain-pied  at street level
courir  to run
le trottoir  pavement/path
le carreau  tile
commode  convenient
entendre  to hear
marcher  to walk
le bruit  noise
le talon  heel
la tasse  cup
garder  to keep
le mien/la mienne  mine
il faisait nuit  it was dark
la casquette  cap
plat  flat
un imperméable  raincoat
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Word</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jeter</td>
<td>to throw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>une épaule</td>
<td>shoulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comme</td>
<td>like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rester</td>
<td>to stay/remain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rabattre</td>
<td>to fold back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>se tenir</td>
<td>to stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contre</td>
<td>against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le mur</td>
<td>wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sans rien regarder</td>
<td>without looking at anything</td>
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<tr>
<td>à petits coups</td>
<td>in little sips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sembler</td>
<td>to seem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glisser</td>
<td>to slip/slide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l’avant-bras</td>
<td>forearm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>militairement</td>
<td>in a military fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>se découvrir</td>
<td>to take off his hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>se tourner vers</td>
<td>to turn to</td>
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<tr>
<td>discrètement</td>
<td>discretely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incliner</td>
<td>to bow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le buste</td>
<td>chest</td>
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<tr>
<td>légèrement</td>
<td>lightly/slightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faire face</td>
<td>to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adresser</td>
<td>to address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la révérence</td>
<td>bow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grave</td>
<td>serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>je me nomme</td>
<td>my name is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>avoir le temps de</td>
<td>to have time to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vite</td>
<td>quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le nom</td>
<td>name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le descendant</td>
<td>descendant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un émigré</td>
<td>emigrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ajouter</td>
<td>to add</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>désolé</td>
<td>sorry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trainer</td>
<td>to drag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adosser</td>
<td>to lean against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>droit</td>
<td>straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lentement</td>
<td>slowly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vide</td>
<td>empty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>croiser</td>
<td>to cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reprendre</td>
<td>to continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>éviter</td>
<td>to avoid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l’ordonnance</td>
<td>military orderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la tranquillité</td>
<td>peace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
debout
au milieu de
la solive
pencher
en avant
le cou
la naissance
la poitrine
voûté
la hanche
étroit
le visage
marqué
la joue
cacher
l’arcade
en arrière
briller
soyeusement
le lustre
se prolonger
de plus en plus
épais
le brouillard
alourdir
de plomb
désorienté
naître
le sourire
les lèvres
sans nulle trace
ébaucher un geste
échapper
raide
le profil
puissant
proéminent
entre
mi-joint
l’or
le feu
la cheminée

standing
in the middle of
rafter
to lean
forward
neck
(here) base
chest
stooped
hip
narrow
face
marked
cheek
to hide
arch
backwards
to shine
carefully (like silk, silkily)
lustre/light
to lengthen
more and more
thick
fog
to weigh down/increase
leaden
disorientated
to be born
smile
lips
with no trace
to start to make a movement
to escape
stiff
profile
powerful
prominent
between
half joined
gold
fire
hearth
éprouver
to feel
la patrie
homeland
brusquement
brusquely
un ange
angel
au-dessus de
above
le chemin
way
un escalier
staircase
gravir
to climb
la marche
step
suivre
to follow
le pas
footstep
résonner
to echo
le couloir
corridor
fort
strong
faible
weak
allumer
to light
hausser les épaules
to shrug one’s shoulders
attirer
to pull
le genou
knee
velours
velvet
coudre
to sew

Pages 22-26

le lendemain matin
the next morning
mener
to lead
entendre
to hear
par hasard
by chance
s’arrêter
to stop
le seuil
threshold
le/la vôtre
yours
le bois
wood
le charbon
coal
repeindre
to repaint
amener
to bring
le meuble
piece of furniture
le cuivre
copper
une assiette
plate
afin de
in order to
luiere
to gleam
le bord
edge
doré
golden
bas/basse low
treille trellis
tuile roof tile
largement widely
le maire mayor
désigner to point out
le revers back (of hand)
bâtisse building
apercevoir to notice/make out
coteau hillside
féliciter to congratulate
se tromper to make a mistake
saluer to salute
à travers through
la vitre window
la veille evening before
lui-même himself
craindre to fear
dérange to disturb
fermer à clef to lock
traverser to cross
la pièce room
la poignée handle
divers various
le coin corner
le fumoir smoking room
une inclinaison tilt
la raison reason
clair clear
un accord agreement
tacite silent
le moindre the least
fantôme ghost
il se peut que it is possible
le sentiment feeling
se mêler to mix up
volonté wish/willpower
sans without
souffrir to suffer
ennemi enemy
plus de more than
le mot word
même
étant
s’attarder
autour de
léger
traduire
un examen
immanquablement
une approbation
la chose
brusquement
au dehors
la pluie
glacial
mouillant
brûler
l’âtre
la bûche
conserver
malgré
saupoudré
largement
la venue
s’agacer
reconnaître
la pensée
tricoter
lentement
d’un air appliqué
l’intérieur
la démarche
trempé
d’abord
la veste
bleu acier
enchevêtré
la maille
large
le négligé
plein de
le chandail
de grosse laine

same
being
to linger
around
slight
to convey
examination
inevitably
approval
thing
suddenly
outside
rain
icy
wet
to burn
hearth
log
to keep
in spite of
sprinkled
widely/greatly
coming
to get annoyed
to recognise
thought
to knit
slowly
in a careful manner
inside
walk/step
soaked
first of all
jacket
steel blue
interwoven
stitch
wide
neglect
full of
sweater
of coarse wool
écru  cream
mouler  to fit tightly
se chauffer  to heat oneself up
le feu  fire
s’accroupir  to crouch
pivoter  to revolve
tenir  to hold
doux/douce  mild
dur  hard
un arbre  tree
le sapin  pine tree
serré  tight, dense
lourd  heavy
là-dessus  on top
fin  fine
la dentelle  piece of lace
le taureau  bull
trapu  sturdy
puissant  powerful
avoir besoin de  to need
vivre  to live
l’esprit  spirit
subtile  subtle
la voix  voice
sourd  dull
timbre  timbre (of voice)
l’ensemble  the whole thing
le bourdonnement  buzzing
plutôt  rather
chantant  lilting
appuyer  to lean
le linteau  lintel
le front  forehead
se courber  to bend
se cogner  to hit oneself
le sommet  top
demeurer  to stay
bouger  to move
la vivacité  liveliness
la fois  time
à demi allongé  half reclined
douillet  soft (comfortable)
la pesanteur  weight
secouer  to shake
de nouveau  again
rompre  to break
la guerre  war
compter  to count
de loin  far off
gravement  seriously
à cause de  because of
la poche  pocket
le jambage  side piece
la console  bracket/shelf support
de temps en temps  from time to time
se frotter  to rub
l’occipital  back of the head
le cerf  deer
le fauteuil  armchair
jusqu’à  up until
la défaite  defeat
la douleur  pain
vaincu  conquered
encore  again
mené par  led by
botté  wearing boots
casqué  wearing a helmet
promettre  to promise
sauf  except
s’effondrer  to collapse
la braise  ember
rouler  to roll
hors de  out of
se pencher  to lean
les pincettes  tongs
poursuivre  to continue
un exécutant  performer
ainsi  in this way
une drôle de figure  strange sight
un homme de guerre  man of war
se redresser  to stand up again
blessé  to hurt
le coeur  heart
lui re  to light up
tousser  to cough
peut-être  perhaps
l’obole  offering
hausser les sourcils  to raise one’s eyebrows
indigné  indignant
presque  almost
rougir  to blush

Pages 27-30

le mode  manner
en tenue  in uniform
épargner  to spare
oublier  to forget
s’habituer à  to get used to
le naturel  naturalness
candide  naïve
le prétexte  excuse
dupe  taken in
commodément  suitably
s’élever  to rise
doucement  softly
au long de  in the course of
le coeur  heart
tenter de  to try to
obtenir  to get
un acquiescement  approval/agreement
le regard  look
la phrase  sentence
briser  to break
s’enchaîner  to follow on from each other
la prière  prayer
la cariatide  pillar in the shape of a female figure
s’interrompre  to interrupt oneself
s’approcher de  to approach
bien sûr  of course
se ressembler  to look like
la lumière  light
celle-ci  this one
éclairer  to light
un habitant  inhabitant
le rayon  shelf
tant pensivement vouloir dire la merveille la bibliothèque suivre la reliure un appel hocher la tête glisser échapper imperceptible auquel songer aussitôt tout de suite surgir se presser la foule d’abord gravement se faire la guerre remuer se battre la paupière plisser la pommette la fossette poursuivre heureux la lâcheté mépriser détourner s’attarder divers impitoyablement insensible dignes vaincre têtu les restes sentir so much thoughtfully to mean marvel/wonder library to follow binding (of book) roll call to nod one’s head to slide to escape barely noticeable about which to think immediately straight away to appear to rush crowd first of all seriously to wage war to move to fight one another eyelid to crease cheekbone furrow to continue happy cowardice to scorn to turn away to linger various mercifully insensitive dignified to conquer stubborn remnants to feel
rougir  
le pli  
peu à peu  
s’inscrire  
le sourcil  
tirer  
vivement  
une aiguille  
rompre  
le fil  
la grandeur  
le conte  
le titre  
la Belle et la Bête  
tenir à merci  
impuissant  
à toute heure du jour  
implacable  
pesant  
fier/fière  
dur(e)  
valoir mieux  
dégrossi  
maladroit  
rustre  
auprès  
aspirer  
le geôlier  
haï  
la lueur  
la patte  
cesser de  
haïr  
la constance  
le sortilège  
maintenir  
le pelage  
dissiper  
le chevalier  
le baiser  
parer de  
rayonnant  
to blush  
fold/crease  
gradually  
to appear  
eyebrow  
to pull  
sharply  
needle  
to break  
thread  
greatness  
tale/story  
title  
Beauty and the Beast  
to keep at one’s mercy  
powerless  
at all times of day  
unmoveable  
weighty  
proud  
hard  
to be better  
coarse  
clumsy  
brutish  
next to  
to strive/aspire  
jailer  
hated  
light  
paw  
to cease  
to hate  
constancy  
spell  
to keep  
skin/hide  
to vanish  
knight  
kiss  
to adorn with  
radiant/beaming
le bonheur
additionner
le don
sans cesse
pleurer
surtout
la peine
émue
respirer

Pages 31-32

le chant
la débâcle
le cahier
se résoudre à
soulever
l'étonnement
la nécessité
le fauteuil
un ouvrage
à la rencontre de
le mien/la mienne
envoyer
déchiffrer
la nuque
se déplacer
la touche
rejoindre
hors de
la chair
deviner
pressentir
inconnaissable
désinvesti
songeur
la pensée
se mordiller
à la mesure de
combler
le chemin
atteindre

happiness
to add to
gift
incessantly
to cry
above all
grief
moved
to breathe

song
collapse
notebook
to decide
to raise/arouse
astonishment
need
armchair
work
meeting
mine
to send
to decipher/work out
nape of neck
to move
piano key
to come back to
beyond
flesh
to guess
to sense
unknown
stripped
thoughtful
thought
to chew
(here) which is for
to overwhelm
way
to reach
la vérité
suivre
tout à fait
tourner le dos
appuyer
se retenir à
entre
à travers
le barreau
bourdonnant
avoir besoin de
accueillir
un étranger
le voyageur
le conquérant
conquérir
le sein
la soif
étancher
la pierre
pareil/pareille
le fils
surmonter

truth
to follow
completely
to turn one’s back
to lean
to hold on to
between
through
bar
buzzing
to need
to welcome
stranger
traveller
conqueror
to conquer
breast
thirst
to quench
stone
similar
son
to overcome

tout ce qui/que
au cours de
plus de
la soirée
ne...guère
varier
la rapsodie
la découverte
de loin
grandir
ma foi
se décourager
secouer
envahir
saturer
irrespirable
everything that
in the course of
more than
evening
hardly/scarcely
to change
enthusiastic speech
discovery
from afar
to grow
well
to become discouraged
to shake
to invade
to saturate
unbreathable
le sien/la sienne  his
dès  from
s’agiter  to become agitated
le signe  sign
le moindre  the least
sans heurt  smoothly
le filtre  filter
respirer  to breath
librement  freely
de l’autre côté  on the other side
jusqu’à ce que  until
vécu  lived
là-bas  there
Vienne  Vienna
Varsovie  Warsaw
ne…aucun(e)  not a single
autant  as much
surtout  above all
dilater  to dilate/grow bigger
le souvenir  memory
la noblesse  nobility
un ancêtre  ancestor
la grandeur  greatness
la foi  faith
la gentillesse  kindness
le destin  destiny
conduire  to lead
par-dessus  over/above
le blé  wheat
de lointain  from a distance
jadis  in days gone by
partager  to share
s’assombrir  to darken
entendre  to hear
blindé  armoured
tant de choses  so many things
ensemble  together
guérir  to cure
de nouveau  again
se réjouir de  to be delighted about
épouser  to marry
presque  almost
fiancé(e) engaged
la promenade walk
enfiler to thread
le fil thread
venir de to have just
casser to break
le chas eye (of needle)
parvenir to manage
un écureuil squirrel
filer to dash about
la jonquille daffodil
la jacinthe hyacinth
sauvage wild
s’exclamer to cry out/exclaim
le présent gift
s’allonger to lie down
la mousse moss
la fougère fern
au-dessus above
la cime top/summit
se balancer to sway/swing
voler to fly
piquer to sting
le menton chin
sale dirty
la bête beast
vilain horrid
le moustique mosquito
faire un geste de la main to gesture
vif/vive quick
attraper to catch
punir to punish
arracher to pull off
le prétendant suitor
le remords remorse
effrayé afraid
à l’égard de with regard to
malgré in spite of
le/la camarade friend
tant pis too bad
en repos at peace
remonter to rise again
le maître
se diriger vers
retenu
tenir
l’épaule
frêle
la torsade
l’acajou
ajouter
quotidien

master
to go towards
restrained
to hold
shoulder
frail
coil
mahogany
to add
daily

printanier
le rayon
la bure
le lin
le col
tenir
fermé
l’index
s’éclairer
contenu
escompter
autrui
la puissance
filer
la noirceur
décrire
un écroulement
la pesanteur
coller
reprocher
ceux qui/que
obéir
la crainte
désormais
pendre
le géant
voler
relever la tête
se demander

spring
ray
sackcloth
linen
collar
to hold
shut
index finger
to light up
suppressed
to expect
others
power
to run
blackness
to describe
collapse
weight/heaviness
to stick
to criticise
those who
obey
fear
from now on
to hang
giant
to steal
to look up again
to wonder
plaindre  
malgré  
le mépris  
souhaiter  
sinon  
morne  
or  
vendre  
la patrie  
une entremetteuse  
claquer  
enfoncer  
la paume  
prévenir  
là permission  
mener  
merveilleux  
le témoin  
la blessure  
cicatriser  
profiter de  
autant que  
rendre  

to pity  
in spite of  
scorn  
to wish  
if not  
dull  
now  
to sell  
country  
go-between  
to slap/slam  
to thrust  
palm  
to warn  
leave  
to lead  
marvellous  
witness  
wound  
to heal up  
to take advantage of  
as much as  
to give back  

eéteindre  
là lumière  
là  
un hôte  
se révéler  
lorsque  
nombreux  
avouer  
en repos  
jusqu’à quel point  
éprouver  
l’inquiétude  
là-haut  
résonner  
inégal  
têtu  
to switch off  
light  
there  
guest  
to be revealed  
when  
numerous  
to confess  
at rest  
to what extent  
to feel  
anxiety  
upstairs  
to resound  
inequal  
stubborn  

**Pages 40-51**
soudain
un ouvrage
à la fois
buté
pareil
le mien/la mienne
quelconque
le pneu
tandis que
remplir
le formulaire
sortir de
tout d’abord
le sergent
bien que
le dénouement
la glace
tiré
pivoter
le talon
faire face
la lèvre
s’entr’ouvrir
la lenteur
presqu’aussitôt
secouer la tête
imperceptiblement
l’irrésolution
esquisser un geste
glisser
la terre
clocher
s’enfermer
de cela
la divination
le félin
s’efforcer
impassible
tirer
plier
l’étoffe
de bonne heure
suddenly
work
at the same time
obstinate
similar
mine
some or other
tyre
while
to fill in
form
to come out of
at first
sergeant
although
outcome
mirror
drawn
to turn
heel
to face
lip
to half open
slowness
almost immediately
to shake one’s head
imperceptively
hesitation
to make a vague gesture
to slide
ground
to limp
to shut oneself in
of that
guessing
feline
to force oneself
impassive
to pull/draw
to fold
material
early
le front
chasser
embrasser
la tristesse
la colère
l'idiotie
enraciné
à peine
vider
naître
le battement
se rappeler
durement
entété
noyer
à l'entour
baigner
moite
le carré
la soie
imprimé
se désigner
la mollesse
le fourneau
gémir
la marche
croissant
la volonté
subir
une épreuve
exténuant
le grand-duc
s'enveler
s'alourdir
se confier
le dossier
la lassitude
dépasser
retarder
l'avenir
la légèreté
la brusquerie
forehead
to chase away
to kiss
sadness
anger
stupidity/ idiocy
deep-rooted
scarcely
to empty
to arise
beating
to remember
hard
stubborn
to drown
round about
to bathe
sweaty/sticky
square
silk
printed
to point out
softness
bowl (of pipe)
to groan
step/stair
-growing/increasing
will
to be affected by
test
exhausting
kind of owl
to fly away
to grow heavy
to confide in
back
weariness
to exceed
to put off/postpone
future
lightness
brusqueness
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>French Word</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>la timidité</td>
<td>shyness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vaincu</td>
<td>conquered/overcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plein</td>
<td>full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le coup</td>
<td>knock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s’attendre à</td>
<td>to look forward to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>envahi</td>
<td>invaded/overcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incoercible</td>
<td>uncontrollable / irrepressible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l’incertitude</td>
<td>uncertainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s’écouler</td>
<td>to pass (of time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salutaire</td>
<td>healthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la ténacité</td>
<td>persistence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pêcher</td>
<td>to fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>le bouton</td>
<td>handle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frapper</td>
<td>to strike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>douloureux</td>
<td>painful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dévoilé</td>
<td>unveiled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bénin</td>
<td>minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la tergiversation</td>
<td>change of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perdre</td>
<td>to lose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la force</td>
<td>strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faible</td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bas/basse</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>davantage</td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ajouter</td>
<td>to add</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ignorer</td>
<td>to be unaware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peu importe</td>
<td>it doesn’t matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subsister</td>
<td>to remain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>endosser</td>
<td>to put on/don</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dans l’embrasure de la porte raide</td>
<td>in the doorway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raide</td>
<td>stiff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surprenant</td>
<td>surprising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>écarté</td>
<td>apart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saisi</td>
<td>seized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demeurer</td>
<td>to stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>démentir</td>
<td>to deny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refléter</td>
<td>to reflect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mieux</td>
<td>better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>échapper</td>
<td>to escape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>se tendre</td>
<td>to tense up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>se livrer</td>
<td>to give oneself up to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compassé</td>
<td>formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revivre</td>
<td>to come back to life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
guetter to watch
le faucon falcon
luisant glistening
fripé wrinkled
un être being
l’insomnie insomnia
s’immobiliser to stop
crispé tense
le goulot neck (of bottle)
débouché uncorked
la parole word
baisser to lower
enrouler to wrap
la laine wool
la pelote ball (of wool)
se défaire to unroll
le tapis carpet
s’accorder à to agree to
épargner to spare
la honte shame
le prix price
respirer to breathe
la poitrine chest
gonfler to swell
le creux hollow
échoué stranded
le sable sand
supporter to stand/bear
cacher to hide
le poignet wrist
amer bitter
la gravité seriousness
hocher la tête to nod one’s head
berner to deceive/make a fool of
sottement stupidly
la frontière border
la figure face
le mépris scorn
à l’égard de regarding
le ton tone
la véhémence strong feeling
le rêve dream
faire la guerre
le fou
le niais
avoir l’occasion de
détruire
surtout
se tromper
le ménagement
rampant
la chienne
essoufflé
serrer
la machoire
tel/telle
saillir
tortueux
le ver
battre
la tempe
la peau
le frémissement
souterrain
un coup de brise
la bulle
la pellicule
durcir
bouillir
s’accrocher à
oppressé
accablé
l’espoir
la constatation
inopinément
un coup de clarion
bourrelé
le grelin d’amarrer
purger
flatter
en même temps
le barrage
dioptrique
la cémentation
to wage war
fool
simpleton
to have the opportunity to
to destroy
especially
to deceive oneself
care
crawling
bitch
out of breath
to tighten
jaw
such
to stand out
twisted
worm
to beat
temple
skin
trembling
underground
gust of wind
bubble
film
to harden
to boil
to cling to
weighed down
overwhelmed
hope
observation
unexpectedly
sound of a bugle
tortured
mooring rope
to purge/cleanse
to flatter
at the same time
dam
refraction of light
case- hardening
se cogner to hit
le coin corner
égaré lost
le refuge shelter
s’aligner to line up
la menace threat
balayer to sweep
la pénombre half dark
tout à fait completely
creux hollow
vibrer to vibrate
inattendu unexpected
saisissant gripping
ultime last
trainer to drag
certes of course
l’antan the past
la mêlée mixture
la bête beast
grouiller to swarm
se nier to deny
lutter to fight
briser to break
malheureux unhappy
de compagnie together
sensible sensitive
quitter to leave
la supplication plea
mélanger to mix
tantôt...tantôt sometimes
le venin venom
l’estomac stomach
la peur fear
le ventre stomach
le commerce trade
mesurer to measure/weigh up
intimider to intimidate
la lucidité lucidity/consciousness
la trempe mettle/temper
sceller to seal
le tombeau tomb
à jamais forever
suffire to be enough
renaitre to be reborn
la cendre ash
bâtir to build
détruire to destroy
le meurtre murder
le diable devil
acharné relentless
souffrir to suffer
trahi betrayed
bouger to move
le plomb lead
la cire wax
le plâtre plaster
délabré dilapidated
la tache spot/stain
le salpêtre saltpetre (salty substance used in gunpowder)
projeter to throw up
en dessous below
agiter to move
farouche shy
lancer to throw
une exhortation urge
franchir to cross
le manège motion
écraser to crush
le droit right
le devoir duty
la certitude certainty
le carrefour crossroads
les ténèbres darkness
fétide stinking
lugubre gloomy
l’ange angel
au-dessus de above
céleste heavenly
se détendre to relax
la raideur stiffness
le sol ground
faire valoir to assert
accorder to grant
se mettre en route to set off
préciser to make clear
l’enfer hell
le blé wheat
nourrir to nourish
le cadavre corpse
se faire peine to pain
lunaire lunar
le bord edge
opaline iridescent
disjoint disjointed
la moue pout
la chevelure hair
jaillir to push out
la perle bead
la sueur sweat
la pupille pupil (of eye)
le courant current
la barque small boat
un anneau ring
la rive bank
oser to dare
le chambranle door frame
dénué devoid
s’assouplir to relax
de sorte que so that
s’évanouir to vanish
le lendemain the next day
matinal morning
la brume mist
Le Silence de la Mer raconte l’histoire d’un officier allemand, Werner von Ebrannac, qui est hébergé chez un vieux monsieur français et sa nièce pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale.

Amoureux de la France et de sa culture, Werner leur rend visite chaque soir et leur parle, non seulement de sa passion pour le pays, mais aussi de la littérature française, de la musique, et surtout de son espoir qu’un jour il y aura un rapprochement entre la France et l’Allemagne.

Par ses monologues, Werner tente de rompre le silence de ses hôtes, mais sans succès. L’oncle et sa nièce refusent de lui parler et lui opposent un silence déterminé parce que c’est le seul moyen par lequel ils peuvent exprimer leur patriotisme pour la France.

Cependant, au cours du récit, on est conscient d’une passion naissante entre Werner et la nièce bien qu’elle reste silencieuse et obstinée. Au cours d’une permission à Paris, Werner apprend que la collaboration entre les Allemands et les Français n’est qu’un prétexte pour détruire la culture française qui est dangereuse pour l’affirmation du nazisme en Europe.

Pendant son séjour à Paris, il découvre que ses amis d’avant-guerre ne partagent pas ses rêves et ses espoirs pour une grande Europe, et il rentre très déçu en province.

Une fois rentré, il décide de quitter le pays pour partir se battre sur les fronts de l’Est. Après avoir donné les raisons de sa décision à ses hôtes, la nièce lui parle pour la première et la dernière fois, en lui disant adieu.
Questions on Le Silence de la Mer

You have to sit an oral exam in February/March as part of your Advanced Higher course. You will be required to talk about the book you have read during this exam. The questions below will help you prepare for this.

1. Décris ce qui se passe dans Le Silence de la Mer?
   Le Silence de la Mer raconte l’histoire d’un officier allemand qui est hébergé chez un vieil monsieur et sa nièce pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale. (Voir le résumé à la page 42)

2. Qu’est-ce que tu penses de la nièce? C’est un personnage sympathique?
   Au début du roman, je ne la trouvais pas sympathique, mais j’ai vite compris qu’elle refusait de parler à Werner pour montrer sa résistance aux Allemands qui occupaient la France, et ce n’était pas parce qu’elle n’aimait pas Werner von Ebrannac. Au contraire, elle était amoureuse de lui, mais elle ne pouvait pas montrer ses émotions, et pour elle, c’était vraiment difficile.

3. Comment est-ce que tu trouves l’oncle?
   L’oncle est très sympathique et digne. Il aime bien Werner von Ebrannac, mais comme sa nièce il ne peut pas montrer ses émotions.

4. Pourquoi est-ce que l’oncle et la nièce refusent de parler à Werner von Ebrannac?
   Ils ne parlent pas à Werner von Ebrannac pour montrer leur résistance à l’occupation de la France par les Allemands. C’est le seul moyen qu’ils ont pour le faire.

5. A ton avis, est-ce que l’oncle aime Werner von Ebrannac?
   L’oncle aime beaucoup Werner von Ebrannac, à mon avis. Il le décrit au cours du roman d’une manière positive. Il dit même qu’il l’admet parce qu’il reste toujours fidèle à ses croyances et qu’il est toujours sincère.
6. Tu penses que la nièce est amoureuse de Werner von Ebrannac?
La nièce est vraiment amoureuse de Werner von Ebrannac. On le voit dans ses réactions, et bien qu’elle ne lui adresse pas la parole jusqu’à la fin du livre, elle l’écoute toujours quand il parle.

7. Est-ce que Werner von Ebrannac est un Allemand typique?
Pourquoi/pourquoi pas?
Werner von Ebrannac n’est pas un Allemand typique, parce qu’il ne partage pas les sentiments des autres Allemands. Il n’a pas les mêmes idées pour la France que les autres. Il est idéaliste.

8. Pourquoi est-il déçu quand il rentre de Paris?
Il est déçu parce qu’il s’est rendu compte que les autres Allemands ne partagent pas ses idées pour une union entre l’Allemagne et la France.

9. Pourquoi est-ce que Werner von Ebrannac décide de rejoindre une division à l’avant?
Il décide de rejoindre une division à l’avant parce qu’il ne peut pas supporter ce que font ses collègues, et il sait bien qu’en y allant, il va mourir. Pour lui, c’est le seul moyen de rester fidèle à ses idéaux.

10. Quels sont les thèmes principaux du livre, à ton avis?
Il y a plusieurs thèmes dans le livre, comme celui du conflit, de l’amour, et du devoir.

11. Qu’est-ce que tu penses de la fin du livre?
J’ai trouvé la fin du livre assez triste, mais inévitable. Werner von Ebrannac ne pouvait pas rester en France. Mais, en même temps, il ne pouvait pas partager les idées des Nazis parrapport à la France, alors pour lui, la seule chose qu’il pouvait faire était de rejoindre une division à l’avant.

12. Pourquoi est-ce que la nièce parle à Werner von Ebrannac à la fin du livre?
Elle veut lui dire adieu. Mais c’est très important parce qu’en rompant son silence, elle montre ses vraies émotions pour lui,
et Werner von Ebrannac a finalement réussi à vaincre sa résistance.

13. Que signifie le titre du récit?
Le titre du récit reflète le conflit des caractères. Bien que tout apparaîsse calme à la surface de la mer, il y a beaucoup de choses qui se passent sous la surface. Cela reflète les émotions des personnages dans le livre.

Folio Essay titles

1. Discuss the theme of conflict in Vercors’ Le Silence de la Mer.
2. In Vercors’s Le Silence de la Mer, Werner von Ebrannac does not share the views of his compatriots. To what extent does this make his final decision to return to military action inevitable?
3. Le Silence de la Mer is first and foremost a love story. To what extent do you agree with this statement?
Suggested Resources

Silence de la mer (2004)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYKELeheAJA&index=6&list=PLC9AEF77E71C34833

Critique of the film

http://www.dvdclassik.com/critique/le-silence-de-la-mer-melville

Other resources

Silence de la mer textbook/literary criticism/DVD www.amazon.fr


French resistance

School history department

www.amazon.co.uk

www.amazon.fr