

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

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

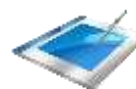
Pages 19 -21



Now read pages 19 -21

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

Pages 22 – 26



Now read pages 22 - 26

- How does Werner von Ebrennac feel about living in the house with the uncle and his niece?
- Why do you think Werner von Ebrennac continues to visit the uncle and his niece every evening?
- They have no intention of talking to him. Why do you think they allow him to continue to visit them each evening?
- How did the uncle feel when Werner did not arrive at his usual time?
- Why did Werner von Ebrennac change his clothes when he arrived that evening?
- In what way did Werner's relationship with the uncle and the niece change that evening? Give details.
- 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac who is playing?
- c) What does Werner von Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac. 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 Ebrennac give the reader in this section of the book? Why do you think this is important?
- e) How does Werner von Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac is not like other Nazis?

Pages 37-38



Now read pages 37-38

- a) Werner von Ebrennac reads an extract from Macbeth. What is the significance of this?
- b) What important piece of information does Werner von Ebrennac give the uncle and the niece?
- c) How does Werner von Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac'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 Ebrennac'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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac, 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac and the niece, although she continues to remain silent and stubborn.

When Werner von Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac, the uncle, and the niece.



Werner von Ebrennac

Werner von Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac" (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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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

nous unir, comme mari et femme” (p25), and “Je crois que de ceci il sortira des grandes choses” (p26).

He describes France as “la Princesse Lointaine” on page 25. This reference mirrors the behaviour of the niece towards Werner von Ebrennac, 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 battons 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac compares himself to

the Beast “J’aimais surtout la Bête, parce que je comprenais sa peine” (p30).

On pages 31-32, Werner von Ebrennac 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’imaginai 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac.

At the start of the novel, the uncle greets the news of Werner von Ebrennac’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 montrai 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 Ebrennac’s physical appearance on pages 19-21.

The uncle seems positively disposed towards Werner von Ebrennac, 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac, 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 avons 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 Ebrennac is further underlined on page 23 when he expresses his concern for the officer in the inclement weather: “Malgré moi, j’imaginai 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 Ebrennac 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...”. The uncle obviously finds the silent protest that he and his niece are making difficult to handle. He says on page 33 that when the silence invaded the room, it was Werner von Ebrennac who seemed most at ease rather than them. It is at this point that the uncle also starts to use Werner von Ebrennac’s name in the text. He is no longer “l’officier” or “l’Allemand” as he was previously, and this shows the reader to what extent the uncle is drawn to Werner. It is also Werner who makes him breathe more easily when he finally breaks the silence.

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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac. 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 inflections 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 davantage 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac. 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 plaît”.

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 rompre 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 Ebrennac 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 exempte 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 Ebrennac'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 attachait sur moi...un regard transparent et inhumain 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac, and then look for evidence from the text to support your answer. For example, if you think Werner von Ebrennac is an idealist, what evidence can you find from the text to support your answer?
- Consider things like, does the uncle like Werner von Ebrennac? 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 Ebrennac? 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 Ebrennac
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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac and the niece

C. Hatred and Cruelty

The theme of hatred and cruelty is displayed in:

1. The niece's attitude towards Werner von Ebrennac in the initial stages of the text
2. The attitude of Werner von Ebrennac'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 Ebrennac'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 Ebrennac quote from Macbeth and Beauty and the Beast?

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

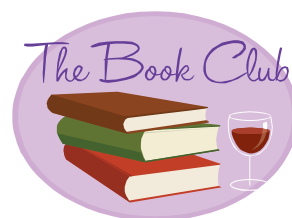
Forest Walk

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

il fut	he was
précéder	to precede
le déploiement	deployment
l'appareil militaire	military machine
le troufion	trooper (slang)
dégingandé	gangling
maigre	thin
carré	square
aux mains	with hands
le carrier	quarryman
sans	without
le mot	word
pourtant	however
libre	free
paraître	to appear
le torpédo	touring car
pénétrer	to penetrate/enter into
le soldat	soldier
souriant	smiling
extirper	to drag/pull out
la caisse	box/case
le ballot	bundle
entouré de	surrounded by
la toile	cloth, material
monter	to take upstairs
le cavalier	rider
apparaître	to appear
mettre pied à terre	to set foot on the ground
le bâtiment	building
la pierre	stone
la grange	barn
se servir de	to use
un atelier	workshop
enfoncer	to hammer
le valet	clamp
un établi	workbench

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

jeter	to throw
une épaule	shoulder
comme	like
rester	to stay/remain
rabattre	to fold back
se tenir	to stand
contre	against
le mur	wall
sans rien regarder	without looking at anything
à petits coups	in little sips
sembler	to seem
glisser	to slip/slide
l'avant-bras	forearm
militairement	in a military fashion
se découvrir	to take off his hat
se tourner vers	to turn to
discrètement	discretely
incliner	to bow
le buste	chest
légèrement	lightly/slightly
faire face	to face
adresser	to address
la révérence	bow
grave	serious
je me nomme	my name is
avoir le temps de	to have time to
vite	quickly
le nom	name
le descendant	descendant
un émigré	emigrant
ajouter	to add
désolé	sorry
trainer	to drag
adosser	to lean against
droit	straight
lentement	slowly
vide	empty
croiser	to cross
reprendre	to continue
éviter	to avoid
l'ordonnance	military orderly
la tranquillité	peace

debout	standing
au milieu de	in the middle of
la solive	rafter
pencher	to lean
en avant	forward
le cou	neck
la naissance	(here) base
la poitrine	chest
voûté	stooped
la hanche	hip
étroit	narrow
le visage	face
marqué	marked
la joue	cheek
cacher	to hide
l'arcade	arch
en arrière	backwards
briller	to shine
soyeusement	carefully (like silk, silkily)
le lustre	lustre/light
se prolonger	to lengthen
de plus en plus	more and more
épais	thick
le brouillard	fog
alourdir	to weigh down/increase
de plomb	leaden
désorienté	disorientated
naître	to be born
le sourire	smile
les lèvres	lips
sans nulle trace	with no trace
ébaucher un geste	to start to make a movement
échapper	to escape
raide	stiff
le profil	profile
puissant	powerful
proéminent	prominent
entre	between
mi-joint	half joined
l'or	gold
le feu	fire
la cheminée	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
luire	to gleam
le bord	edge
doré	golden

bas/basse	low
la treille	trellis
la tuile	roof tile
largement	widely
le maire	mayor
désigner	to point out
le revers	back (of hand)
la bâtisse	building
apercevoir	to notice/make out
le 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
déranger	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
le fantôme	ghost
il se peut que	it is possible
le sentiment	feeling
se mêler	to mix up
la volonté	wish/willpower
sans	without
souffrir	to suffer
un ennemi	enemy
plus de	more than
le mot	word

même	same
étant	being
s'attarder	to linger
autour de	around
léger	slight
traduire	to convey
un examen	examination
inmanquablement	inevitably
une approbation	approval
la chose	thing
brusquement	suddenly
au dehors	outside
la pluie	rain
glacial	icy
mouillant	wet
brûler	to burn
l'âtre	hearth
la bûche	log
conserver	to keep
malgré	in spite of
saupoudré	sprinkled
largement	widely/greatly
la venue	coming
s'agacer	to get annoyed
reconnaître	to recognise
la pensée	thought
tricoter	to knit
lentement	slowly
d'un air appliqué	in a careful manner
l'intérieur	inside
la démarche	walk/step
trempe	soaked
d'abord	first of all
la veste	jacket
bleu acier	steel blue
enchevêtré	interwoven
la maille	stitch
large	wide
le négligé	neglect
plein de	full of
le chandail	sweater
de grosse laine	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
luire	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	so much
pensivement	thoughtfully
vouloir dire	to mean
la merveille	marvel/wonder
la bibliothèque	library
suivre	to follow
la reliure	binding (of book)
un appel	roll call
hocher la tête	to nod one's head
glisser	to slide
échapper	to escape
imperceptible	barely noticeable
auquel	about which
songer	to think
aussitôt	immediately
tout de suite	straight away
surgir	to appear
se presser	to rush
la foule	crowd
d'abord	first of all
gravement	seriously
se faire la guerre	to wage war
remuer	to move
se battre	to fight one another
la paupière	eyelid
plisser	to crease
la pommette	cheekbone
la fossette	furrow
poursuivre	to continue
heureux	happy
la lâcheté	cowardice
mépriser	to scorn
détourner	to turn away
s'attarder	to linger
divers	various
impitoyablement	mercilessly
insensible	insensitive
digne	dignified
vaincre	to conquer
têtu	stubborn
les restes	remnants
sentir	to feel

rougir	to blush
le pli	fold/crease
peu à peu	gradually
s'inscrire	to appear
le sourcil	eyebrow
tirer	to pull
vivement	sharply
une aiguille	needle
rompre	to break
le fil	thread
la grandeur	greatness
le conte	tale/story
le titre	title
la Belle et la Bête	Beauty and the Beast
tenir à merci	to keep at one's mercy
impuissant	powerless
à toute heure du jour	at all times of day
implacable	unmoveable
pesant	weighty
fier/fière	proud
dur(e)	hard
valoir mieux	to be better
dégrossi	coarse
maladroit	clumsy
rustre	brutish
auprès	next to
aspirer	to strive/aspire
le geôlier	jailer
haï	hated
la lueur	light
la patte	paw
cesser de	to cease
haïr	to hate
la constance	constancy
le sortilège	spell
maintenir	to keep
le pelage	skin/hide
dissiper	to vanish
le chevalier	knight
le baiser	kiss
parer de	to adorn with
rayonnant	radiant/beaming

le bonheur	happiness
additionner	to add to
le don	gift
sans cesse	incessantly
pleurer	to cry
surtout	above all
la peine	grief
ému	moved
respirer	to breathe

Pages 31-32

le chant	song
la débâcle	collapse
le cahier	notebook
se résoudre à	to decide
soulever	to raise/arouse
l'étonnement	astonishment
la nécessité	need
le fauteuil	armchair
un ouvrage	work
à la rencontre de	meeting
le mien/la mienne	mine
envoyer	to send
déchiffrer	to decipher/work out
la nuque	nape of neck
se déplacer	to move
la touche	piano key
rejoindre	to come back to
hors de	beyond
la chair	flesh
deviner	to guess
pressentir	to sense
inconnaisable	unknown
désinvesti	stripped
songeur	thoughtful
la pensée	thought
se mordiller	to chew
à la mesure de	(here) which is for
combler	to overwhelm
le chemin	way
atteindre	to reach

la vérité	truth
suivre	to follow
tout à fait	completely
tourner le dos	to turn one's back
appuyer	to lean
se retenir à	to hold on to
entre	between
à travers	through
le barreau	bar
bourdonnant	buzzing
avoir besoin de	to need
accueillir	to welcome
un étranger	stranger
le voyageur	traveller
le conquérant	conqueror
conquérir	to conquer
le sein	breast
la soif	thirst
éteindre	to quench
la pierre	stone
pareil/pareille	similar
le fils	son
surmonter	to overcome

Pages 33-36

tout ce qui/que	everything that
au cours de	in the course of
plus de	more than
la soirée	evening
ne...guère	hardly/scarcely
varier	to change
la rapsodie	enthusiastic speech
la découverte	discovery
de loin	from afar
grandir	to grow
ma foi	well
se décourager	to become discouraged
secouer	to shake
envahir	to invade
saturer	to saturate
irrespirable	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 cîme	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	master
se diriger vers	to go towards
retenu	restrained
tenir	to hold
l'épaule	shoulder
frêle	frail
la torsade	coil
l'acajou	mahogany
ajouter	to add
quotidien	daily

Pages 37-39

printanier	spring
le rayon	ray
la bure	sackcloth
le lin	linen
le col	collar
tenir	to hold
refermé	shut
l'index	index finger
s'éclairer	to light up
contenu	suppressed
escompter	to expect
autrui	others
la puissance	power
filer	to run
la noirceur	blackness
décrire	to describe
un écroulement	collapse
la pesanteur	weight/heaviness
coller	to stick
reprocher	to criticise
ceux qui/que	those who
obéir	obey
la crainte	fear
désormais	from now on
pendre	to hang
le géant	giant
voler	to steal
relever la tête	to look up again
se demander	to wonder

plaindre	to pity
malgré	in spite of
le mépris	scorn
souhaiter	to wish
sinon	if not
morne	dull
or	now
vendre	to sell
la patrie	country
une entremetteuse	go-between
claquer	to slap/slam
enfoncer	to thrust
la paume	palm
prévenir	to warn
la permission	leave
mener	to lead
merveilleux	marvellous
le témoin	witness
la blessure	wound
cicatriser	to heal up
profiter de	to take advantage of
autant que	as much as
rendre	to give back

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

soudain	suddenly
un ouvrage	work
à la fois	at the same time
buté	obstinate
pareil	similar
le mien/la mienne	mine
quelconque	some or other
le pneu	tyre
tandis que	while
remplir	to fill in
le formulaire	form
sortir de	to come out of
tout d'abord	at first
le sergent	sergeant
bien que	although
le dénouement	outcome
la glace	mirror
tiré	drawn
pivoter	to turn
le talon	heel
faire face	to face
la lèvre	lip
s'entr'ouvrir	to half open
la lenteur	slowness
presqu'aussitôt	almost immediately
secouer la tête	to shake one's head
imperceptiblement	imperceptively
l'irrésolution	hesitation
esquisser un geste	to make a vague gesture
glisser	to slide
la terre	ground
clocher	to limp
s'enfermer	to shut oneself in
de cela	of that
la divination	guessing
le félin	feline
s'efforcer	to force oneself
impassible	impassive
tirer	to pull/draw
plier	to fold
l'étoffe	material
de bonne heure	early

le front	forehead
chasser	to chase away
embrasser	to kiss
la tristesse	sadness
la colère	anger
l'idiotie	stupidity/idiocy
enraciné	deep-rooted
à peine	scarcely
vider	to empty
naître	to arise
le battement	beating
se rappeler	to remember
durement	hard
entêté	stubborn
noyer	to drown
à l'entour	round about
baigner	to bathe
moite	sweaty/sticky
le carré	square
la soie	silk
imprimé	printed
se désigner	to point out
la mollesse	softness
le fourneau	bowl (of pipe)
gémir	to groan
la marche	step/stair
croissant	growing/increasing
la volonté	will
subir	to be affected by
une épreuve	test
exténuant	exhausting
le grand-duc	kind of owl
s'envoler	to fly away
s'alourdir	to grow heavy
se confier	to confide in
le dossier	back
la lassitude	weariness
dépasser	to exceed
retarder	to put off/postpone
l'avenir	future
la légèreté	lightness
la brusquerie	brusqueness

la timidité	shyness
vaincu	conquered/overcome
plein	full
le coup	knock
s'attendre à	to look forward to
envahi	invaded/overcome
incoercible	uncontrollable / irrepressible
l'incertitude	uncertainty
s'écouler	to pass (of time)
salutaire	healthy
la ténacité	persistence
pêcher	to fish
le bouton	handle
frapper	to strike
douloureux	painful
dévoilé	unveiled
bénin	minor
la tergiversation	change of mind
perdre	to lose
la force	strength
faible	weak
bas/basse	low
davantage	more
ajouter	to add
ignorer	to be unaware
peu importe	it doesn't matter
subsister	to remain
endosser	to put on/don
dans l'embrasure de la porte	in the doorway
raide	stiff
surprenant	surprising
écarté	apart
saisi	seized
demeurer	to stay
démentir	to deny
refléter	to reflect
mieux	better
échapper	to escape
se tendre	to tense up
se livrer	to give oneself up to
compassé	formal
revivre	to come back to life

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
caché	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	to wage war
le fou	fool
le niais	simpleton
avoir l'occasion de	to have the opportunity to
détruire	to destroy
surtout	especially
se tromper	to deceive oneself
le ménagement	care
rampant	crawling
la chienne	bitch
essoufflé	out of breath
serrer	to tighten
la mâchoire	jaw
tel/telle	such
saillir	to stand out
tortueux	twisted
le ver	worm
battre	to beat
la tempe	temple
la peau	skin
le frémissement	trembling
souterrain	underground
un coup de brise	gust of wind
la bulle	bubble
la pellicule	film
durcir	to harden
bouillir	to boil
s'accrocher à	to cling to
oppressé	weighed down
accablé	overwhelmed
l'espoir	hope
la constatation	observation
inopinément	unexpectedly
un coup de clarion	sound of a bugle
bourrelé	tortured
le grelin d'amarre	mooring rope
purger	to purge/cleanse
flatter	to flatter
en même temps	at the same time
le barrage	dam
dioptrique	refraction of light
la cémentation	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
renaître	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

Résumé of *Le Silence de la Mer*



Le Silence de la Mer raconte l'histoire d'un officier allemand, Werner von Ebrennac, 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 Ebrennac. 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 Ebrennac, 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 Ebrennac?
Ils ne parlent pas à Werner von Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac?
L'oncle aime beaucoup Werner von Ebrennac, à mon avis. Il le décrit au cours du roman d'une manière positive. Il dit même qu'il l'admire 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 Ebrennac?
La nièce est vraiment amoureuse de Werner von Ebrennac. 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 Ebrennac est un Allemand typique? Pourquoi/pourquoi pas?
Werner von Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac ne pouvait pas rester en France. Mais, en même temps, il ne pouvait pas partager les idées des Nazis par rapport 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 Ebrennac 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 Ebrennac 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 apparaisse 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 Ebrennac 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

Book Analysis: The Silence of the Sea by Vercors: Summary, Analysis, Reading Guide Paperback – 8 Oct 2015 by Bright Summaries www.amazon.co.uk

French resistance

School history department

www.amazon.co.uk

www.amazon.fr