

Agrégation interne d'anglais

Session 2018

Épreuve ESP

**Explication d'un texte
extrait du programme**

ESP

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Explication de texte

Cather, Willa, *My Ántonia* (1918). Oxford, New York: Oxford World's Classics, OUP, 2008, pp. 32-33.

Explication de faits de langue

Le candidat proposera une analyse linguistique des segments soulignés dans le texte.

We decided that *Ántonia* should ride Dude home, and I would walk. As she rode along slowly, her bare legs swinging against the pony's sides, she kept shouting back to me about how astonished everybody would be. I followed with the spade over my shoulder, dragging my snake. Her
5 exultation was contagious. The great land had never looked to me so big and free. If the red grass were full of rattlers, I was equal to them all. Nevertheless, I stole furtive glances behind me now and then to see that no avenging mate, older and bigger than my quarry, was racing up from the rear.

10 The sun had set when we reached our garden and went down the draw toward the house. Otto Fuchs was the first one we met. He was sitting on the edge of the cattle-pond, having a quiet pipe before supper. *Ántonia* called him to come quick and look. He did not say anything for a minute, but scratched his head and turned the snake over with his boot.

15 'Where did you run onto that beauty, Jim?'

'Up at the dog-town,' I answered laconically.

'Kill him yourself? How come you to have a weepion?'

'We'd been up to Russian Peter's, to borrow a spade for Ambrosch.'

20 Otto shook the ashes out of his pipe and squatted down to count the rattles. 'It was just luck you had a tool,' he said cautiously. 'Gosh! I wouldn't want to do any business with that fellow myself, unless I had a fence-post along. Your grandmother's snake-cane wouldn't more than tickle him. He could stand right up and talk to you, he could. Did he fight hard?'

25 *Ántonia* broke in: 'He fight something awful! He is all over Jimmy's boots. I scream for him to run, but he just hit and hit that snake like he was crazy.'

Otto winked at me. After *Ántonia* rode on he said: 'Got him in the head first crack, didn't you? That was just as well.'

30 We hung him up to the windmill, and when I went down to the kitchen, I found *Ántonia* standing in the middle of the floor, telling the story with a great deal of colour.

35 Subsequent experiences with rattlesnakes taught me that my first encounter was fortunate in circumstance. My big rattler was old, and had led too easy a life; there was not much fight in him. He had probably lived there for years, with a fat prairie-dog for breakfast whenever he felt like it, a sheltered home, even an owl-feather bed, perhaps, and he had forgot that the world doesn't owe rattlers a living. A snake of his size, in fighting trim, would be more than any boy could handle. So in reality it was a
40 mock adventure; the game was fixed for me by chance, as it probably was for many a dragon-slayer. I had been adequately armed by Russian Peter;

the snake was old and lazy; and I had *Ántonia* beside me, to appreciate and admire.

45 That snake hung on our corral fence for several days; some of the neighbours came to see it and agreed that it was the biggest rattler ever killed in those parts.