

EAE 0422 A	Sujet Jury	Sujet Candidat		Code Sujet	CLG 25
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Your main commentary should be focused on *the singular and the plural*. Other topics may also be addressed.

After three days of unbillable time, of no production, of exile from their sanctuaries, of turkey and ham and cranberry sauce and new toys that came unassembled, the rested and rejuvenated lawyers of Bendini, Lambert & Locke returned to the fortress on Front Street with a vengeance. The parking lot was full by seven-thirty. They sat fixed and comfortable behind their heavy desks, drank coffee by the gallon, meditated over mail and correspondence and documents and mumbled incoherently and furiously into their Dictaphones. They barked orders at secretaries and clerks and paralegals, and at each other. There were a few 'How was your Christmas?' greetings in the halls and around the coffee-pots, but small talk was cheap and unbillable. The sounds of typewriters, intercoms and secretaries all harmonized into one glorious hum as the mint recovered from the nuisance of Christmas. Oliver Lambert walked the halls, smiling with satisfaction and listening, just listening to the sounds of wealth being made by the hour.

At noon, Lamar walked into the office and leaned across the desk. Mitch was deep into an oil and gas deal in Indonesia.

'Lunch?' Lamar asked.

'No, thanks. I'm behind.'

'Aren't we all. I thought we could run down to the Front Street Deli for a bowl of chili.'

'I'll pass. Thanks.'

Lamar glanced at his watch. 'The twenty-eighth.'

'Right. And do you know what happens on the twenty-eighth of December of every year?'

'You have a bowel movement.'

'Yes. And what else?'

'Okay. I give up. What happens?'

'At this very moment, in the dining room on the fifth floor, all the partners are gathered for a lunch of roast duck and French wine.'

'Wine, for lunch?'

'Yes. It's a very special occasion.'

'Okay?'

35 'After they eat for an hour, Roosevelt and Jessie Frances will leave and Lambert will hand out a financial summary for the year. It's got all the partners listed, and beside each name is a number that represents their total billing for the year. Then on the next page is a summary of the net profits after expenses. Then, based on production, they divide the pie!'

40 Mitch hung on every word. 'And?'

'And, last year the average piece of pie was three hundred and thirty thousand. And, of course, it's expected to be even higher this year. Goes up every year.'

45 'Three hundred and thirty thousand,' Mitch repeated slowly.

'Yep. And that's just the average. Locke will get close to a million, Victor Milligan will run a close second.'

'And what about us?'

50 'We get a piece too. A very small piece. Last year it was around nine thousand, on the average. Depends on how long you've been here and production.'

'Can we go watch?'

55 'They wouldn't sell a ticket to the President. It's supposed to be a secret meeting, but we all know about it. Word will begin drifting down late this afternoon.'

'When do they vote on who to make the next partner?'

'Normally, it would be done today. But, according to rumor, there may not be a new partner this year because of Marty and Joe. I think Marty was next in line, then Joe. Now, they might wait a year or two.'

60 'So who's next in line?'

Lamar stood straight and smiled proudly. 'One year from today, my friend, I will become a partner in Bendini, Lambert & Locke. I'm next in line, so don't get in my way this year.'

'I heard it was Massengill – a Harvard man, I might add.'

65 'Massengill doesn't have a prayer. I intend to bill a hundred and forty hours a week for the next fifty-two weeks, and those birds will beg me to become a partner.'