

<b>EAE 0422 A</b>	<b>Sujet Jury</b>	<b>Sujet Candidat</b>		<b>Code Sujet</b>	<b>CLG 19</b>
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**Your main commentary should be focused on *tenses and aspects*. Other topics may also be addressed.**

This is the saddest story I have ever heard.  
 We had known the Ashburnhams for nine seasons of the town of  
 Nauheim with an extreme intimacy – or rather, with an  
 acquaintanceship as loose and easy and yet as close as a good  
 5 glove’s with your hand. My wife and I knew Captain and  
 Mrs. Ashburnham as well as it is possible to know anybody and yet,  
 in another sense, we knew nothing at all about them. This is, I  
 believe, a state of things only possible with English people of whom  
 till today, when I sit down to puzzle out what I know of this sad  
 10 affair, I knew nothing whatever. Six months ago I had never been  
 to England and, certainly, I had never sounded the depths of an  
 English heart. I had known the shallows.  
 I don’t mean to say that we were not acquainted with many English  
 people. Living as we perforce lived, in Europe and being, as we  
 15 perforce were, leisured Americans, which is as much as to say that  
 we were un-American – we were thrown very much into the society  
 of the nicer English. Paris, you see, was our home. Somewhere  
 between Nice and Bordighera provided yearly winter quarters for us  
 and Nauheim always received us from July to September. You will  
 20 gather from this statement that one of us had, as the saying is, “a  
 heart” and, from the statement that my wife is dead, that she was  
 the sufferer.  
 Captain Ashburnham also had a heart. But, whereas a yearly  
 month or so at Nauheim turned him up to exactly the right pitch for  
 25 the rest of the twelvemonth, the two months or so were only just  
 enough to keep poor Florence alive from year to year. The reason  
 for his heart was approximately polo or too much hard  
 sportsmanship in his youth. The reason for poor Florence’s broken  
 years was a storm at sea upon our first crossing to Europe and the  
 30 immediate reasons for our imprisonment in that continent were  
 doctors’ orders. They said that even the short Channel crossing  
 might well kill the poor thing.  
 When we all first met, Captain Ashburnham, home on sick leave  
 from an India to which he was never to return, was thirty-three;

35 Mrs. Ashburnham – Leonora – was thirty-one. I was thirty-six and  
 poor Florence thirty. Thus to-day Florence would have been thirty-  
 nine and Captain Ashburnham forty-two; whereas I am forty-five  
 and Leonora forty. You will perceive therefore that our friendship  
 has been a young-middle-aged affair, since we were all of us of  
 40 quite quiet dispositions, the Ashburnhams being more particularly  
 what in England it is the custom to call “quite good people”.  
 They were descended, as you will probably expect, from the  
 Ashburnham who accompanied Charles I to the scaffold, and, as  
 you must also expect with this class of English people, you would  
 45 never have noticed it. Mrs. Ashburnham was a Powys; Florence was  
 a Hurlbird of Stamford, Connecticut, where, as you know, they are  
 more old-fashioned than even the inhabitants of Cranford, England,  
 could have been. I myself am a Dowell of Philadelphia, Pa. where,  
 50 it is historically true, there are more old English families than you  
 would find in any six English counties taken together. I carry about  
 with me indeed – as if it were the only thing that invisibly anchored  
 me to any spot upon the globe – the title deeds of my farm which  
 once covered several blocks between Chestnut and Walnut Streets.  
 55 These title deeds are of wampum, the grant of an Indian chief to  
 the first Dowell, who left Farnham in Surrey in company with  
 William Penn. Florence’s people, as is often the case with the  
 inhabitants of Connecticut, came from the neighbourhood of  
 Fordingbridge, where the Ashburnhams’ place is. From there, at  
 this moment, I am actually writing.  
 60 You may well ask why I write. And my reasons are quite many. For  
 it is not unusual in human beings who have witnessed the sack of a  
 city or the falling to pieces of a people, to desire to set down what  
 they have witnessed for the benefit of unknown heirs or of  
 generations infinitely remote; or, if you please, just to get the sight  
 65 out of their heads.