

EAE 0422 A	Sujet Jury	Sujet Candidat		Code Sujet	CLG 22
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Your main commentary should be focused on *negation*. Other topics may also be addressed.

5 Bertie mused on this as he looked out over Scotland Street. Life was very dull, he thought, but would undoubtedly improve when he turned eighteen and could leave home to go and live somewhere far away and exotic – Glasgow, perhaps; his friend Lard O’Connor had more or less promised him a job over there, and it would be fun to live in Glasgow and go with Lard to the Burrell Collection and places like that. But that was day-dreaming, and Bertie knew that he had another twelve years of his mother before he could get away. Twelve years! Twelve achingly slow years – a whole lifetime, it seemed to Bertie.

10 Yes, life was difficult, and it was becoming all the more difficult now that Irene had had her new baby. Bertie had suggested that they could perhaps have it adopted, but this suggestion had not been taken seriously.

15 ‘But, Bertie, what a funny thing to do!’ Irene had said, looking anxiously about the maternity ward in which Bertie, visiting his mother, had made the suggestion.

20 ‘But they need babies for adoption, Mummy,’ Bertie had said. ‘I was reading about it in the newspaper. They said that there weren’t enough babies to go round. I thought that maybe we could share our baby with somebody else. You always said it was good to share.’

25 Irene smiled weakly. ‘And of course it is. But there are some things you don’t share, Bertie, and a baby is one of them.’

30 It was not that Bertie disliked Ulysses, as his mother had insisted on naming his new baby brother. When Irene had first announced her pregnancy to Bertie, he had been pleased at the thought of having a brother or sister. This was not because he wanted the company, but mainly because he thought that the presence of a baby would distract his mother’s attention. Bertie did not dislike his mother; he merely wished that she would leave him alone and not make him do all the things that he was forced to do. If she was busy looking after a baby, then perhaps she would not have the time to take him to psychotherapy, or to yoga. Perhaps the baby

35 would need psychotherapy and could go to Dr Fairbairn instead of Bertie. It was an entertaining thought; Bertie imagined the baby lying in his pram while Dr Fairbairn leaned over him and asked him questions. It would not matter at all if the baby could say nothing in reply; Bertie doubted very much if Dr Fairbairn paid any attention to anything said to him by anybody. Yoga would be more difficult, at least until the baby was a few months old. There were some very young children at Bertie’s yoga class in Stockbridge – one of them just one year old. Perhaps they could try putting the baby into yoga positions by propping it up with cushions; he could suggest this to his mother and see what she thought.

45 Bertie’s hopes, though, that he would be left more to his own devices were soon to be dashed on the immovable, rock-like determination of Irene to ensure that her two sons – Bertie and baby Ulysses – should undergo a process of what she called ‘mutuality bonding’. [...]

50 ‘When you were a little baby yourself – and remember, that’s just six short years ago – yes, six! – you tended to be a little – how shall we put it? – guzzly, and you bit Mummy a little hard, making Mummy feel a bit tender. You don’t remember that, do you?’

55 Bertie looked away, appalled; the sheer embarrassment of the situation was more than he could bear.

60 ‘Well, you did,’ went on Irene. ‘So now Mummy has bought this special pump, and you can help to put it on Mummy and get the milk out for baby when he comes along. That will be such fun. It will be just like milking a cow.’

Bertie looked at his mother in horror. ‘Do I have to, Mummy?’

‘Now then, Bertie,’ said Irene. ‘It’s all part of looking after your new little brother. You don’t want to let him down, do you?’