

EAE 0422 A	Sujet Jury	Sujet Candidat		Code Sujet	CLG 19
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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.