

<b>EAE 0422 A</b>	<b>Sujet Jury</b>	<b>Sujet Candidat</b>	<b>Code Sujet</b>	<b>CLG 11</b>
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**Your main commentary should be focused on *modal auxiliaries*. Other topics may also be addressed.**

In a folded packet on the night table had been a pair of shining earrings.

— Are they your wife's?

5 She was trying one on, fastening it to her ear. She turned her head one way and the other, looking at herself in the mirror.

— What are they, silver?

— They're platinum. Better than silver.

— They're your wife's.

— They were being repaired. I had to pick them up.

10 It was hard not to admire her, her bare neck, her aplomb.

— Can I borrow them? she asked.

— I can't. She knows I was supposed to pick them up.

— Just say they weren't ready.

— Darling...

15 — I'll give them back. Is that what you're afraid of? I'd just like to wear them once, something that's hers but at the moment mine.

— That's very Bette Davis.

— Who?

— Just be careful and don't lose them, he managed to say.

20 That was a Tuesday. Two nights later a terrible event occurred. It was at a reception given by a group dedicated to the Impressionists; Pascale was a supporter but was away that evening and couldn't attend. Sally had insisted that Brian go, and in the crowd coming up the stairway he had seen, with a stab of jealousy, more fierce because  
25 it was a complete surprise, Pamela. He began to push his way forward to see who she might be with.

— Hey, where are you going in such a hurry?

It was Del, his brother-in-law.

— Where have you been hiding?

30 — Hiding?

— We haven't seen you for weeks.

Brian liked him, but not at this moment.

— Why don't you come to dinner with us tonight, afterward?

— I can't, Brian said unthinkingly.

35 — Come on, we're going to Elio's, Del insisted. Look at all these women. Where do they come from? They weren't around when I was single.

Brian hardly heard him. Past his brother-in-law, near the windows not fifteen feet away, he could see Pamela talking to Michael Brule, not just exchanging a greeting but in some sort of conversation. She was wearing a pale blue dress, one he liked, cut low in back. Her dark hair was tied and he could see quite clearly, she was wearing the earrings. They were unmistakable. He moved a bit so as not to be observed, his heart beating furiously. Finally Brule was gone.

40 — Darling, you must be crazy, he said in a furious, low voice when he reached her.

— Hello, she said cheerfully.

There was always such life in that voice.

— What are you doing? he insisted.

50 — What do you mean?

— The earrings!

— I'm wearing them, she said.

— You can't wear them. That was my father-in-law. He bought them! He gave them to Sally! Why did you wear them here?

55 His voice was still low but people close by could hear the anxiety.

— How was I to know? Pamela said.

— Jesus, I knew I shouldn't have lent them to you.

— Oh, take the damned earrings, she said, suddenly annoyed.

— Don't do that.

60 She was taking them off. It was the first time he had seen her angry and suddenly he was frightened, afraid to be in her disfavor.

— Don't, please. I'm the one who should be angry, he said.

She pushed them into his hand.

65 — And yes, she said, he saw them. Then, with astounding confidence, Don't worry, he won't say anything.

— What do you mean? What makes you so sure? The answer suddenly struck him like an illness.

— Don't worry, he won't, she said.

Somebody was handing her a glass of wine.

70 — Thank you, she said calmly. This is Brian, a friend of mine. Brian, this is Tahar.

She did not answer the phone that night. The next day, his father-in-law called and asked to meet for lunch, it was important.