

CONCOURS GÉNÉRAL DES LYCÉES

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SESSION 2024

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**VERSION ET COMPOSITION EN LANGUE ANGLAISE**

(Classes de terminale voie générale et toutes séries technologiques)

Durée : 5 heures

*L'usage de tout dictionnaire est interdit*

**Consignes aux candidats**

- Ne pas utiliser d'encre claire
- N'utiliser ni colle, ni agrafe
- Ne joindre aucun brouillon
- Ne pas composer dans la marge
- Numéroté chaque page en bas à droite (numéro de page / nombre total de pages)
- Sur chaque copie, renseigner l'en-tête + l'identification du concours :

Concours / Examen : CGL    Epreuve : Anglais    Matière : ANGL    Session : 2024

**Tournez la page S.V.P.**

Rosemary had been married two years. She had a duck<sup>1</sup> of a boy. No, not Peter—Michael. And her husband absolutely adored her. They were rich, really rich, not just comfortably well off, which is odious and stuffy and sounds like one's grandparents. But if Rosemary wanted to shop she would go to Paris as you and I would go to Bond Street. If she wanted to buy flowers, the car pulled up at that perfect shop in Regent Street, and Rosemary inside the shop just gazed in her dazzled, rather exotic way, and said: "I want those and those and those. Give me four bunches of those. And that jar of roses. Yes, I'll have all the roses in the jar. No, no lilac. I hate lilac. It's got no shape." [...]

One winter afternoon she had been buying something in a little antique shop in Curzon Street. It was a shop she liked. For one thing, one usually had it to oneself. And then the man who kept it was ridiculously fond of serving her. He beamed whenever she came in. He clasped his hands; he was so gratified he could scarcely speak. Flattery, of course. All the same, there was something...

"You see, madam," he would explain in his low respectful tones, "I love my things. I would rather not part with them than sell them to someone who does not appreciate them, who has not that fine feeling which is so rare. ..." And, breathing deeply he unrolled a tiny square of blue velvet and pressed it on the glass counter with his pale finger-tips.

Today it was a little box. He had been keeping it for her. He had shown it to nobody as yet. An exquisite little enamel box with a glaze<sup>2</sup> so fine it looked as though it had been baked in cream. On the lid a minute creature stood under a flowery tree, and a more minute creature still had her arms round his neck. Her hat, really no bigger than a geranium petal, hung from a branch; it had green ribbons. And there was a pink cloud like a watchful cherub floating above their heads. Rosemary took her hands out of her long gloves. She always took off her gloves to examine such things. Yes, she liked it very much. She loved it; it was a great duck. She must have it. And, turning the creamy box, opening and shutting it, she couldn't help noticing how charming her hands were against the blue velvet. The shopman, in some dim cavern of his mind, may have dared to think so too. For he took a pencil, leant over the counter, and his pale bloodless fingers crept timidly towards those rosy, flashing ones, as he murmured gently: "If I may venture to point out to madam, the flowers on the little lady's bodice."

"Charming!" Rosemary admired the flowers. But what was the price? For a moment the shopman did not seem to hear. Then a murmur reached her. "Twenty-eight guineas<sup>3</sup>, madam."

"Twenty-eight guineas." Rosemary gave no sign. She laid the little box down; she buttoned her gloves again. Twenty-eight guineas. Even if one is rich... She looked vague. She stared at a plump tea-kettle like a plump hen above the shopman's head, and her voice was dreamy as she answered: "Well, keep it for me—will you? I'll..."

But the shopman had already bowed as though keeping it for her was all any human being could ask. He would be willing, of course, to keep it for her for ever.

The discreet door shut with a click. She was outside on the step, gazing at the winter afternoon. Rain was falling, and with the rain it seemed the dark came too, spinning down like ashes. There was a cold bitter taste in the air, and the new-lighted lamps looked sad. Sad were the lights in the houses opposite. Dimly they burned as if regretting something. And people hurried by, hidden under their hateful umbrellas. Rosemary felt a strange pang. She pressed her muff against her breast; she wished she had the little box, too, to cling to. [...] But at [that very instant], a young girl, thin, dark, shadowy—where had she come from?—was standing at Rosemary's elbow and a voice like a sigh, almost like a sob, breathed: "Madam, may I speak to you a moment?"

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1 duck: a term of endearment for someone or something one is fond of.

2 glaze: *vernis*.

3 One guinea is the equivalent of £1.05. (In 1920, most wages in Britain were comprised between £1 and £2 a week.)

“Speak to me?” Rosemary turned. She saw a little battered creature with enormous eyes, someone quite young, no older than herself, who clutched at her coat-collar with reddened hands, and shivered as though she had just come out of the water.

50 “M-madam,” stammered the voice. “Would you let me have the price of a cup of tea?”

“A cup of tea?” There was something simple, sincere in that voice; it wasn’t in the least the voice of a beggar. “Then have you no money at all?” asked Rosemary.

“None, madam,” came the answer.

55 “How extraordinary!” Rosemary peered through the dusk, and the girl gazed back at her. How more than extraordinary! And suddenly it seemed to Rosemary such an adventure. It was like something out of a novel by Dostoevsky, this meeting in the dusk. Supposing she took the girl home? Supposing she did do one of those things she was always reading about or seeing on the stage, what would happen? It would be thrilling. And she heard herself saying afterwards to the amazement of her friends: “I simply took her home with me,” as she stepped  
60 forward and said to that dim person beside her: “Come home to tea with me.”

The girl drew back startled. She even stopped shivering for a moment. Rosemary put out a hand and touched her arm. “I mean it,” she said, smiling. And she felt how simple and kind her smile was. “Why won’t you? Do. Come home with me now in my car and have tea.” [...]

65 Hungry people are easily led. The footman held the door of the car open, and a moment later they were skimming through the dusk.

“There!” said Rosemary. She had a feeling of triumph as she slipped her hand through the velvet strap. She could have said, “Now I’ve got you,” as she gazed at the little captive she had netted. But of course she meant it kindly. Oh, more than kindly. She was going to prove to this girl that—wonderful things did happen in life, that—fairy godmothers were real, that—rich  
70 people had hearts, and that women *were* sisters. She turned impulsively, saying: “Don’t be frightened. After all, why shouldn’t you come back with me? We’re both women. If I’m the more fortunate, you ought to expect...”

But happily at that moment, for she didn’t know how the sentence was going to end, the car stopped. The bell was rung, the door opened, and with a charming, protecting, almost  
75 embracing movement, Rosemary drew the other into the hall. Warmth, softness, light, a sweet scent, all those things so familiar to her she never even thought about them, she watched that other receive. It was fascinating. She was like the rich little girl in her nursery with all the cupboards to open, all the boxes to unpack.

80 “Come, come upstairs,” said Rosemary, longing to begin to be generous. “Come up to my room.” And, besides, she wanted to spare this poor little thing from being stared at by the servants; she decided as they mounted the stairs she would not even ring for Jeanne, but take off her things by herself. The great thing was to be natural! [...]

The girl stood just inside the door; she seemed dazed. But Rosemary didn’t mind that.

85 “Come and sit down,” she cried, dragging her big chair up to the fire, “in this comfy chair. Come and get warm. You look so dreadfully cold.”

“I daren’t, madam,” said the girl, and she edged backwards.

“Oh, please,”—Rosemary ran forward—“you mustn’t be frightened, you mustn’t, really. Sit down, and when I’ve taken off my things we shall go into the next room and have tea and be cosy. Why are you afraid?” And gently she half pushed the thin figure into its deep cradle.

90 But there was no answer. [...] She leant over her, saying: “Won’t you take off your hat? Your pretty hair is all wet. And one is so much more comfortable without a hat, isn’t one?”

There was a whisper that sounded like “Very good, madam,” and the crushed hat was taken off.

“And let me help you off with your coat, too,” said Rosemary.

From “A Cup of Tea” by Katherine Mansfield, published in 1922 in *The Story-Teller*



**Questions to be answered in the following order:**

Question 1: The portrait of a lady shopper: Show how the text represents Rosemary as a person whose perception of the world is shaped by her economic situation.

Question 2: Study the relationship between the two women.

Question 3: Analyse the interplay of fiction and reality in the passage.

Question 4: Is it possible for people from different social classes to form connections? Illustrate your answer with examples from the English-speaking world.

**Translate into French:**

From "Today it was a little box." (line 18) to "She must have it." (line 25)