



Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione

X04A - ESAMI DI LICENZA LINGUISTICA SPERIMENTALE

Sessione ordinaria
Seconda prova scritta

LINGUA INGLESE
Comprensione e produzione in lingua straniera
Testo letterario

On the day of her wedding Edith had woken earlier than usual, her senses alerted by the quality of the light, which was hard, white and uneasy, harbouring surprises of an unpleasant nature, far removed from the mature sunshine on which she had been counting. She took the weather as an omen, and her abrupt awakening as a sign, though of what she could not say or even think. More to the point, as she passed her dressing table she caught sight of her face and was shocked to see it so pale and drawn. I am no longer young, she thought; this is my last chance. Penelope is right. It is high time I forgot ~~my~~ hopes, the hopes I was born with, and faced reality. I shall never have that for which I long with my inmost heart. How could I? It is too late. But there are all the comforts of what is called maturity: pleasant companionship, comfort, proper holidays. It is a reasonable prospect. And I was always a reasonable woman, she thought. We are all agreed on that.

And Geoffrey Long, that kind man who had been produced for her at that not too far distant dinner party, and who had been so lonely since his mother died: what more excellent guarantee could anyone produce of a safe and sensible future? Only a very innocent man, she thought, could play the traditional suitor so openly, and how impressed everyone had been, principally Penelope, but in the end even Edith herself, by his devotion, his generosity, his endless flowers, his fussy care, and finally his mother's gloomy opal ring. And he had offered her a complete life, a new home to move into, new friends, even a cottage in the country, luxuries which she would never have thought to procure for herself. And he was a personable man, if a little old-fashioned in his views: he did not, for example, approve of women working, and he teased her about the amount of time she gave to her books. And there was something so agreeably straightforward, even comic, about his courtship. And everyone said how good he had been to his mother. Everyone said how lucky his wife would be. Everyone said how lucky Edith was. Penelope said it with that faintly nettled air that implied that she herself would have been a more worthy recipient. And Edith was constantly reminded of her good fortune. And, really, there was no need to disclaim any of this. She was lucky. I am lucky, she reminded herself, looking at that drawn face in the glass of her dressing table.