



Unit V

Mrs. Dalloway

- Virginia Woolf

Virginia Woolf

- **Virginia Woolf (25 January 1882 – 28 March 1941) was an English novelist and essayist, regarded as one of the foremost modernist literary figures of the twentieth century.**
- **She came from a prominent literary family. Her father, Leslie Stephen, was the originator of the (British) Dictionary of National Biography and her mother was a Duckworth.**
- **During the interwar period, Woolf was a significant figure in London literary society and a member of the Bloomsbury Group.**
- **Her most famous works include the novels Mrs Dalloway (1925), To the Lighthouse (1927) and Orlando (1928), and the book-length essay "A Room of One's Own" (1929), with its focus on the role of women in literature.**



Characters: Clarissa Dalloway

- The heroine of the novel, struggles constantly to balance her internal life with the external world. Her world consists of fashion, parties and high society.
- Clarissa has a tendency toward introspection that gives her a profound capacity for emotion, which many other characters lack.
- Constantly overlaying the past and present Clarissa struggles to reconcile herself to life memories. For most of the novel she considers aging and death with trepidation such as buying flowers.
- Through content, Clarissa never lets go of the doubt she feels about decisions that have shaped her life, particularly her decision to marry Richard instead of Peter.

Septimus Warren Smith

- A World War 1 veteran suffering from shell shock, married to an Italian woman named Lucrezia.
- Lucrezia make Septimus notice things outside himself, but he has removed himself from the physical world. Instead, he lives in an internal world, wherein he sees and hears things that aren't really there and he talks to his dead friend Evans.
- Though he is insane, Septimus views English society in much the same way as Clarissa does, and he struggles, as she does, to both maintain his privacy and fulfill his need to communicate with others.
- Septimus and Clarissa both have beak-noses, love Shakespeare, and fear oppression.

• Before the war he was a young idealistic poet. After the

Peter Walsh

- A close friend of Clarissa's, once desperately fall in love with her.
- Clarissa rejected Peter's marriage proposal when she was eighteen, and he moved to India.
- Peter acts as a foil to Richard, who is stable, generous and rather simple. Unlike calm Richard, Peter is like a storm, thundering and crashing.

Sally Seton

- A close friend of Clarissa and Peter in their young. She only exist as a figure in Clarissa's memory but she appears at the party, she is older but familiar.
- She and Clarissa were sexually attracted to one another as teenagers.
- Clarissa considers the moment when Sally kissed her own lips 'the most exquisite moment of her whole life'.
- Now Sally lives in Manchester and is married and also she has got five boys. Her married name is Lady Rosseter.

Richard Dalloway

- Richard is a simple, hardworking, sensible husband who loves Clarissa and their daughter, Elizabeth.
- A member of Parliament in the Conservative government, Richard plans to write a history of the great English military family, when the party comes to power.

Elizabeth Dalloway

- Clarissa and Richard's only child. Gentle, considerate, and somewhat passive, seventeen years old. She doesn't have Clarissa's energy.

Summary:

- **Mrs. Dalloway covers one day from morning to night in one woman's life. Clarissa Dalloway, an upper-class housewife, walks through her London neighborhood to prepare for the party she will host that evening.**
- **When she returns from flower shopping, an old suitor and friend, Peter Walsh, drops by her house unexpectedly.**
- **Years earlier, Clarissa refused Peter's marriage proposal, and Peter has never quite gotten over it. Peter asks Clarissa if she is happy with her husband, Richard, but before she can answer, her daughter, Elizabeth, enters the room.**
- **Peter leaves and goes to Regent's Park. He thinks about Clarissa's refusal, which still obsesses him. The**

- In the park Septimus and his wife are waiting for Septimus's appointment with Sir William Bradshaw, a celebrated psychiatrist.
- Before the war, Septimus was budding young poet and lover of Shakespeare ; when the war broke out, he enlisted immediately for romantic patriotic reasons. He became numb to the horrors of war and its aftermath: when his friend Evans died, he felt like sadness.
- Now Septimus sees nothing of worth in the England he fought for, and he has lost the desire to preserve either his society or himself. Suicidal, he believes his lack of feeling is a crime.
- Clearly Septimus's experiences in the war have permanently scarred him and he has serious mental

- **Richard Dalloway eats lunch with Hug Whitbread and Lady Bruton, members of high society. After lunch, Richard returns home to Clarissa with a large bunch of roses. He intends to tell her that he loves her but finds that he cannot, because it has been so long since he last said.**
- **Meanwhile, Septimus and Lucrezia are in their apartment enjoying a moment of happiness together before the men come to take Septimus to the mental hospital. Dr. Holmes arrives and Septimus fears the doctor will destroy his soul and he jumps from a window to his death.**
- **Peter hears the ambulance go by to pick up Septimus's body and marvels ironically at the level of London's civilization. He goes to Clarissa's party .**
- **Sir William Bradshaw comes party late and his wife**

- **MAJOR CONFLICT:** Clarissa and other characters try to preserve their souls and communicate in an oppressive and fragmentary post World War 1 England.
- **RISING ACTION:** Clarissa spends the day organizing a party that will bring people together, while her double, Septimus Warren Smith, eventually commits suicide due to the social pressure that oppress his soul.
- **CLIMAX:** At her party, Clarissa goes to a small room to contemplate Septimus's suicide. She identifies with him and is glad he did it, believing that he preserved his soul.
- **FALLING ACTION:** Clarissa returns to her party and is viewed from the outside. We don't know whether she will change due to her moment of clarity, but we