

THE DINNER PARTY: *To the Lighthouse*

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

<i>Mrs. Ramsay, Internal</i>	Prue
Mrs. Ramsay	Jasper
Mr. Bankes	Rose
<i>Mr. Bankes, internal</i>	Roger
Lily,	Minta
<i>Lily, internal</i>	<i>Minta, internal</i>
Mr. Ramsay	Paul
<i>Mr. Ramsay, internal</i>	Andrew
Tansley	Nancy
<i>Tansley, internal</i>	
Augustus	

NOTE: While characters' internal voices are speaking, it's almost as if time has stopped for the other characters.

A room with a large dining table, set for an elegant meal. Mrs. Ramsay, internal and actual, enter. Also Mr. Ramsay internal and actual, Mr. Bankes, internal and actual, and Lily, internal and actual.

Mrs. R (Internal): But what have I done with my life?

Mrs. R takes her place at the head of the table. Mrs. Ramsay (Internal) stands behind her. Mr. R. sits at the far end, with internal Mr. Ramsay standing behind.

Mr. R: William, sit by me. (*Wearily*) Lily, over there (*pointing across the table.*)

Mr. Bankes sits to Mrs. Ramsay's left with internal Mr. Bankes behind him, and Lily sits one chair away from Mrs. Ramsay to her right, with internal Lily behind her.

Mrs. R (internal): They have **that**, Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle...I, only this...an infinitely long table and plates and knives. At the far end is my husband, sitting down, all in a heap, frowning.

Mr. Ramsay sits grumpily at his end of the table, frowning.

Mrs. R (internal): What at? I don't know. I don't mind. I can't understand how I ever felt any emotion or affection for him. I feel like I'm past everything, through everything, out of everything.

Mrs. R. takes a helping of soup.

Tansley enters, internal and actual. Prue enters and sits next to Lily towards her father's end of the table.

Mr. R: Sit there, please. (*points Tansley to the spot opposite Lily*)
Augustus Carmichael enters and sits to Mr. Ramsay's right.

The actual characters mime conversations with those around them. Mrs. R. begins to ladle out soup.

Mrs. R (internal): Nothing is happening. No one is speaking to me, nothing is happening. But this is not a thing that one says...

Mrs. R looks around

Mrs. R (internal): This room is very shabby. There is no beauty anywhere. Nothing seems to have merged. We're all sitting separate. And the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rests on me. Men are so sterile. If I don't do it, nobody will.

Mrs. Ramsay gives herself a little shake and bends herself in Mr. Bankes' direction.

Mrs. R (internal): Poor man! Who has no wife, and no children, and dines alone in lodgings except for tonight. I pity him

Mr. R (to Mr. Bankes): Did you find your letters? I told them to put them in the hall for you.

Lily (internal): There she goes. How old she looks, how worn she looks, and how remote.

Mrs. R. turns to Mr. Bankes, smiling.

Lily (internal, amused): Why does she pity him? It's one of those misjudgments of hers that seem to be instinctive and arise from some need of her own rather than of other people's. He is not in the least pitiable. He has his work. And I! I have my work! My picture! Yes, I shall put the tree further in the middle; then I shall avoid that awkward space. That's what I shall do. That's what has been puzzling me.

Lily picks up the salt shaker and puts it down again on a flower in the pattern in the tablecloth as if to remind herself to move the tree.

Mr. Bankes: It's odd that one scarcely gets anything worth having by post, yet one always wants one's letters.

Charles Tansley (internal): What damned rot they talk.

Tansley lays down his spoon precisely in the middle of his plate.

Lily (internal): Of course he's sitting precisely in the middle of the view. He swept his plate clean just as if he were determined to make sure of his meals! But nevertheless, it's almost impossible to dislike anyone if you look at them. I like his eyes; they are blue, deep set, frightening.

Mrs. R: Do you write many letters, Mr. Tansley?

Lily (internal): I suppose she pities him too. She always pities men as if they lack something – women never, as if they have something.

Charles Tansley (irritated): I write to my mother; otherwise I do not suppose I write one letter a month.

Charles Tansley (internal): I'm not going to talk the sort of rot these people want me to talk. I'm not going to be condescended to by these silly women. I was reading in my room, and now I came down and it all seems silly, superficial, flimsy. Why do they dress? I'm wearing my ordinary clothes. I don't have any dress clothes. They do nothing but talk, talk, talk, eat, eat, eat. It's the women's fault. Women make civilization impossible with all their "charm," all their silliness.

Charles Tansley (asserting himself into the conversation): No going to the Lighthouse tomorrow, Mrs. Ramsay.

Charles Tansley (internal): I like her; I admire her; but I feel it necessary to assert myself.

Lily (internal): He is really, in spite of his eyes, the most uncharming human being I've ever met. So why do I mind what he says? Women can't write, women can't paint – what does that matter coming from him, since clearly it is not true to him, but for some reason helpful to him, and that's why he says it? There's the sprig on the tablecloth; there's my painting; I must move the tree to the middle; that matters – nothing else. Can I not hold fast to that and not lose my temper and not argue; and if I want revenge, take it by laughing at him?

Lily: Oh, Mr. Tansley, do take me to the Lighthouse with you. I should so love it.

Charles Tansley (internal): She's telling lies. She's saying what she doesn't mean to annoy me, for some reason. She's laughing at me. I know she's trying to tease me for some reason; she doesn't want to go to the Lighthouse with me; she despises me; so does Prue Ramsay; so do they all. But I'm not going to be made a fool of by women.

Tansley turns deliberately in his chair and looks out of the window.

Charles Tansley (rudely): It will be too rough for you tomorrow. You would be sick.

Charles Tansley (internal): It annoys me that she made me speak like that, with Mrs. Ramsay listening. If only I could be alone in my room working, among my books. That's where I feel at my ease. And I've never run a penny into debt; I've never cost my father a penny since I was fifteen; I've helped them at home out of my savings; I'm educating my sister. Still, I wish I had known how to answer Miss Briscoe properly; I wish it hadn't come out all in a jerk like that. I wish I could think of something to say to Mrs. Ramsay, something which would show her I'm not just a dry prig. That's what they all think me.

Tansley turns toward Mrs. Ramsay. Mrs. Ramsay is talking to Mr. Bankes.

Charles Tansley (internal): She's talking about people I've never heard of.

Mrs. Ramsay (speaking to the maid): Yes, take it away. Be sure to keep the food hot!

Mr. Bankes (internal): This is why I prefer dining alone. All these interruptions annoy me. Well, such are the sacrifices one's friends ask of one.

He maintains a courteous expression on his face. He spreads the fingers of his left hand on the tablecloth as a mechanic examines a tool beautifully polished and ready for use in an interval of leisure.

Mr. Bankes (internal): It would have hurt her if I had refused to come. But it's not worth it for me.

Mr. Bankes *looks at his hand.*

Mr. Bankes (internal): If I were alone dinner would be almost over now. I would be free to work. Yes, it's a terrible waste of time.

The children are still dropping in. Jasper enters and sits down next to Prue. Rose enters and sits next to Jasper.

Mrs. Ramsay: I wish one of you would run up to Roger's room.

Mr. Bankes (internal): How trifling it all is, how boring it all is, compared with the other thing – work. Here I sit, drumming my fingers on the table-cloth when I might be working –

Roger enters and sits one seat away from Mr Tansley.

Mr. Bankes (internal): What a waste of time it all is to be sure! Yet, she is one of my oldest friends. I am by way of being devoted to her. Yet now, at this moment, her presence means absolutely nothing to me. I feel uncomfortable. I feel treacherous, that I can sit by her side and feel nothing for her. The truth is, I do not enjoy family life. It's in this sort of state that one asks oneself, What does one live for? Why does one take all these pains for the human race to go on? It is so very desirable? Are we attractive as a species? Not so very.

He looks at the rather untidy Jasper and Roger.

Mrs. Ramsay (*turning back to him*): I'm so sorry.

Mr. Bankes (internal): How odd. I feel rigid and barren, like a pair of boots that have been soaked and gone dry so that you can hardly force your feet into them. But I must force my feet into them. I must make myself talk. Unless I'm very careful, she'll find out my treachery; that I do not care a straw for her, and that would not be at all pleasant.

Mr. Bankes *bends his head courteously towards Mrs. Ramsay.*

Mrs. Ramsay: How you must detest dining in this bear garden.

Mr. Bankes: No, not at all.

Mr. Tansley (internal): They seem so insincere. They do talk nonsense, the Ramsays. I can't wait to write this down so I can tell my friends about it one day. Some day, when I'm among people with whom I can say whatever I like, I'll sarcastically describe "staying with the Ramsays" and what nonsense they talk. But now, at this moment, sitting stuck here with this empty seat beside me, nothing is shaping itself at all. It's all in scraps and fragments. I feel extremely uncomfortable. I want somebody to give me a chance of asserting myself.

Mr. Tansley wants this so urgently that he fidgets in his chair, looks at this person, then at that person, tries to break into their talk, opens his mouth and shuts it again.

Mr. Tansley (internal): They are talking about the fishing industry. Why does no one ask me my opinion? What do they know about the fishing industry?

Lily (internal): Look at Mr. Tansley. I know exactly how he's feeling – he's dying to break into the conversation.

Lily screws up her eyes.

Lily (internal): But he sneers at women, "can't paint, can't write," so why should I help him to relieve himself? I know there is a code of behaviour whose seventh article (it may be) says that on occasions of this sort it behoves the woman, whatever her own occupation might be, to go to the help of the young man opposite. And, after all, it is also their duty to help us, suppose the Tube were to burst into flames. Then I should certainly expect Mr Tansley to get me out. But how would it be if neither of us did either of these things?

She sits there smiling and says nothing.

Mrs. R: You're not planning to go to the Lighthouse, are you, Lily. Remember poor Mr Langley; he had been round the world dozens of times, but he told me he never suffered as he did when my husband took him there. Are you a good sailor, Mr Tansley?

Mr. Tansley (internal): Aha! Here's my chance! I'm raising my hammer: I'm swinging it high in air; it's coming down, I'm going to crush her... but no...I can't smite this butterfly with such an instrument.

Mr. Tansley: I've never been sick in my life.

Mr. Tansley (internal): I did it. I held my tongue. That was a loaded sentence, loaded with gunpowder. What I WANTED to say was that my grandfather was a fisherman; my father a chemist; that I've worked my way up entirely myself; that I am proud of it; that I am Charles Tansley — a fact that nobody here seems to realise; but one of these days every single person will know it.

Tansley scowls and looks straight ahead.

Mr. Tansley (internal): I could almost pity these mild cultivated people, who will be blown sky high, like bales of wool and barrels of apples, one of these days by the gunpowder that is in me.

Lily (internal): Uh oh, Mrs. Ramsay is signaling me. She's saying, "I am drowning, my dear, in seas of fire. Unless you apply some balm to the anguish of this hour and say something nice to that young man there, life will run upon the rocks— So of course, for the hundred and fiftieth time I have to renounce the experiment — what happens if one is not nice to that young man there — and be nice.

Lily (quickly and kindly): Will you take me, Mr Tansley?

Mr. Tansley (internal): Hmm... she's being friendly to me now — I guess I don't need to be such a pompous ass.

Mr. Tansley (to Lily, loudly, in a pause of conversation so everyone is listening): I was thrown out of a boat when I was a baby; my father used to fish me out with a boat-hook; that was how I learnt to swim. One of my uncles kept the light on some rock or other off the Scottish coast. I was there with him in a storm.

Mr. Tansley (internal): Ha! They all heard it! I said I was with my uncle in a lighthouse in a storm.

Lily (internal): Ah. All the tension is relieved now. The focus is on Tansley. And I know Mrs Ramsay is grateful, because SHE doesn't have to hold up the conversation. She's free now to talk for a moment herself. Ah, but what haven't I paid to get that moment for you, Mrs. Ramsay? After all, I wasn't being sincere. I was doing the usual trick — being nice.

Lily's eye catches the salt cellar, which she had placed there to remind her.

Lily (internal): Next morning I will move the tree further towards the middle. Oh Lord, I can't wait to get to painting tomorrow!

Lily's excitement makes her laugh out loud at what Mr Tansley is saying.

Lily (internal): Who cares after all? Let him talk all night if he likes it.

Lily: But how long do they leave men on a Lighthouse?

Lily (internal): I've got to admit, he is amazingly well informed.

Mr. Tansley (internal): She really is pretty nice after all. I'm actually beginning to enjoy myself...

Mrs. R (sighing, to Mr. Banks, looking at Roger and Jasper, who are goofing around): The children are disgraceful.

Mr. Bankes: Punctuality is one of the minor virtues which we do not acquire until later in life.

Mrs. R: If at all

Mrs Ramsay (internal): What an old maid William is becoming.

Mr. Bankes (internal): I know I'm being a traitor; I know she wants to talk about something more intimate, but I don't feel like it. Life can be so disagreeable. So here I sit, waiting for the next course. Perhaps the others are saying something interesting? What are they saying? That the fishing season is bad; that the men are emigrating. They are talking about wages and unemployment. The young man is abusing the government. What a relief it is to catch on to something of this sort when private life is disagreeable.

Mr. Tansley: ...one of the most scandalous acts of the present government.

Mr. Bankes (internal): Lily is listening; Mrs Ramsay is listening; they are all listening.

Lily (internal): I'm bored. Something is lacking.

Mr. Bankes (internal): Something is lacking.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal, pulling her shawl round her): Something is lacking.

Lily, Mr. Bankes and Mrs. R (internal), all speaking at once: Pray heaven that the inside of my mind may not be exposed. The others are feeling this. They are outraged and indignant with the government about the fishermen. Whereas, I feel nothing at all.

Lily looks at the leaf on the table.

Lily (internal): Here they go, arguing about politics

Mrs Ramsay (internal): Why am I so bored by this talk?

Mrs R. looks at her husband at the other end of the table.

Mrs R. (internal): I wish he would say something. One word. For if he says a thing, it makes all the difference. He goes to the heart of things. He cares about fishermen and their wages. He cannot sleep for thinking of them. It's because I admire him so much that I'm waiting for him to speak. I feel rather as if somebody has been praising my husband to me and our marriage; he is wonderful, and we do have a wonderful marriage.

Augustus Carmichael: Ellen, please, another plate of soup.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): I'll look at my husband...I know he will look magnificent. Oh my goodness, he looks dreadful! He is screwing his face up, he is scowling and frowning, and flushing with anger. What on earth is it about? What could be the matter? Only that poor old Augustus has asked for another plate of soup — that is all.

Mr. Ramsay (internal): It is unthinkable, it is detestable. I will look at Mrs. Ramsay so she knows how I feel. Look! Augustus is beginning his soup over again! You know I loathe the people eating when I have finished.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): Oh no... his anger is flying like a pack of hounds into his eyes, his brow... I know that in a moment something violent will explode— thank goodness! he's going to stop himself... he's clapping a brake on the wheel; the whole of his body looks like it's emitting sparks but at least not words!

Mr. Ramsay scowls.

Mr. Ramsay (internal): I said nothing, I would have you observe. Give me the credit for that!

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): But why after all should poor Augustus not ask for another plate of soup? Surely they could let Augustus have his soup if he wanted it.

Mr. Ramsay (internal): I hate people wallowing in food.

Mr Ramsay *frowns at Mrs Ramsay.*

Mr. Ramsay (internal): I hate everything dragging on for hours like this. But I controlled myself, I would have you observe, disgusting though the sight was.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): But why show it so plainly? Everybody could see. There is Rose gazing at you, there is Roger gazing at you; both will be off in spasms of laughter in another second. Alright, it's time.

Mrs. Ramsay: (*Promptly*) Light the candles.

Rose and Roger *jump up instantly and go and fumble at the sideboard.*

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): Why can he never conceal his feelings? Did Augustus Carmichael notice? Perhaps he did; perhaps he did not. I can't help respecting the composure with which he sits there, drinking his soup. If he wants soup, he asks for soup. Whether people laugh at him or are angry with him he is the same. He does not like me, I know. But that's part of the reason I respect him.

Augustus Carmichael drinks his soup.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): Look at Augustus, I wonder...What does he feel, and why is he always content and dignified; And there he lies all day long on the lawn brooding presumably over his poetry, till he reminds one of a cat watching birds, and then he claps his paws together when he finds the word, and her husband says, "Poor old Augustus — he's a true poet," which is high praise from my husband.

Rose and Roger *put eight candles down the middle of the table and light them.*

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): Ah, there we go! Now we can all see each other. And that beautiful fruit bowl Rose arranged! What did she do with it? The way she arranged those grapes and pears, that horny pink-lined shell, the bananas, it makes me think of a trophy fetched from the bottom of the sea. And look! Augustus sees it as well!. There's been a change; everyone feels it. It's as if we are all conscious of making a party together in a hollow, on an island; working together against that fluidity out there. I've been a bit uneasy, waiting for Paul and Minta to come in. I haven't been able to settle to things. But now they must come.

Lily (internal): Hmm...why is everyone suddenly so exhilarated? Some weight has been taken off us; anything might happen.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): They must come now.

Mrs. Ramsay *looks at the door. At that instant, Minta Doyle and her internal voice, Paul Rayley and his internal voice, and a maid carrying a great dish in her hands come in together. Andrew and Nancy also enter. Andrew sits between Rose and Minta. Nancy sits between Roger and Carmichael.*

Minta: We're awfully late; we're horribly late.

Minta *sits in the empty chair next to Mr. Ramsay, Paul in the empty chair next to Mrs. Ramsay.*

Minta (*sounding sad and nearly crying, looking down, looking up*): I lost my brooch — my grandmother's brooch.

Mr. Ramsay (internal): Poor girl. She needs cheering up. I'll come to the rescue. I'll tease her a bit.

Mr. Ramsay: How could you be such a goose as to scramble about the rocks in jewels?

Minta (internal): I'm terrified of him — he is so fearfully clever, and the first night when I sat by him, and he talked about George Eliot, I was really frightened, for I left the third volume of MIDDLEMARCH in the train and never knew what happened in the end; but afterwards I got on perfectly, and made myself out even more ignorant than I was, because he liked telling me I was a fool. And so tonight I'm not frightened. Besides, I knew, directly I came into the room that the miracle has happened; I'm wearing my golden haze. Sometimes I have it; sometimes not. I never know why it comes or why it goes, or if I have it until I come into the room and then I know instantly by the way some man looks at me. Yes, tonight I have it, tremendously; I can tell by the way Mr Ramsay just told me not to be a fool.

Minta *smiles*.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): It must have happened then; they are engaged. How odd — I never expected to feel jealous again, but I do. My husband feels it too — Minta's glow. Indeed, I'm not jealous, only, now and then, when I make myself look in my glass, a little resentful that I have grown old, perhaps, by my own fault. I'm grateful to them for laughing at him., till he seems a young man; not burdened, not weighed down with the greatness of his labours and the sorrows of the world and his fame or his failure, but again as I first knew him, gaunt but gallant; helping me out of a boat; with delightful ways, like that...

Mrs. Ramsay *looks at* Mr. Ramsay

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): How astonishingly young he looks, teasing Minta.

Mrs. Ramsay (*to the Swiss girl*): Put it down there.

Mrs. Ramsay *helps the Swiss girl to place gently before her the huge brown pot in which is the boeuf en daube*

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): For my own part, I like the dumb young men. Paul must sit by me. They do not bother one with their dissertations. There is something very charming about Paul. I find his manner delightful, and his sharp cut nose and his bright blue eyes. He is so considerate. Will he tell me — now that they are all talking again — what happened?

Paul: We went back to look for Minta's brooch. We—

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): That's enough. I know that it is the first time he has said "we." "We did this, we did that." They'll say that all their lives.

The maid, *with a little flourish, takes the cover off the boeuf en daube*.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): Oh my goodness, the boeuf en daube smells exquisite!

Mrs. Ramsay *puts the ladle in the dish*.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): The cook spent three days over this dish. And I must take great care, to choose a specially tender piece for William Bankes.

She peers into the dish, with its shiny walls and its confusion of savoury brown and yellow meats and its bay leaves and its wine.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): This will celebrate the occasion.

Mr. Bankes (*eating his boeuf attentively*): It is a triumph.

Mr. Bankes *lays his knife down for a moment*.

Mr. Bankes (internal): It's rich; it's tender. It's perfectly cooked.

Mr. Bankes: How do you manage these things in the depths of the country?

Mr. Bankes (internal): She is a wonderful woman.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): William's affection has come back to me, everything is all right again.

During the following conversation Mrs. Ramsay laughs and gesticulates. She is relaxed and enjoying herself.

Mrs. Ramsay (*with a ring of great pleasure in her voice*): It is a French recipe of my grandmother's.

Mr. Bankes: Of course it is French. What passes for cookery in England is an abomination.

Mrs. Ramsay: You're right.

Mr. Bankes: It is putting cabbages in water. It is roasting meat till it is like leather. It is cutting off the delicious skins of vegetables in which all the virtue of the vegetable is contained.

Mrs. Ramsay: And the waste. A whole French family could live on what an English cook throws away.

Lily (internal): How childlike, how absurd she is, sitting up there with all her beauty opened again in her, talking about the skins of vegetables. Always she gets her own way in the end. Now she has brought this off — Paul and Minta, one might suppose, are engaged. Mr Bankes is dining here. She puts a spell on them all, by wishing, so simply, so directly...what a contrast to my own poverty of spirit.

I suppose that it is partly that belief (for her face is all lit up — without looking young, she looks radiant) in this strange, this terrifying thing. Mrs Ramsay, as she talks about the skins of vegetables, exalts **that**, worships **that**; holds her hands over **it** to warm them, to protect it, and yet, having brought it all about, somehow laughs, leads her victims to the altar.

And even I am feeling it now...the emotion, the vibration, of love. How inconspicuous I feel myself by Paul's side!

Lily (*shyly to Paul*): When did Minta lose her brooch?

Paul smiles an exquisite smile, veiled by memory, tinged by dreams. He shakes his head.

Paul: On the beach.

Paul (*lowering his voice to keep it secret from Minta*): I'm going to find it. I'm getting up early.

Paul looks at Minta, who is laughing beside Mr Ramsay.

Lily (internal): I want to let him know, violently and outrageously, how much I want to help him. I can just see it... in the dawn on the beach **I** will be the one to pounce on the brooch half-hidden by some stone, and thus **I** will be included among the sailors and adventurers.

Lily (*with unaccustomed emotion*): Let me come with you.

Paul laughs.

Lily (internal): He means yes or no — either perhaps. But it's not his meaning — it's the odd chuckle, as if he just said, Throw yourself over the cliff if you like, I don't care. There is Minta, being charming to Mr Ramsay at the other end of the table; I flinch for her, being exposed to these fangs. I'm glad that's not for me. For at any rate...

Lily sees the salt cellar on the pattern again.

Lily (internal): I need not marry, thank Heaven: I need not undergo that degradation. I am saved from that dilution. I would move the tree rather more to the middle. Such is the complexity of things. For what happens to me, especially staying with the Ramsays, is to be made to feel violently two opposite things at the same time.

Mr. Bankes: Then there is that liquid the English call coffee.

Mrs. Ramsay (*thoroughly roused and talking very emphatically*) : Oh, coffee! But it is much rather a question of real butter and clean milk. You know how dreadful the English dairy system is. The state in which milk is delivered at the door! I've done my research, and....

Andrew *starts laughing, and the other children join in.* Mr. Ramsay *starts laughing.*

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): They're laughing at me ... But Lily, she's on my side. She helped me out with Mr. Tansley. She anyhow agrees with me.

Mrs. Ramsay *looks warmly at Lily, who is little fluttered, a little startled. (For she was thinking about love.)*

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): They are both out of things, both Lily and Charles Tansley. Both suffer from the glow of the other two. He, it is clear, feels himself utterly in the cold; no woman will look at him with Paul Rayley in the room. Poor fellow! Still, he has his dissertation, the influence of somebody upon something: he can take care of himself. With Lily it is different. She fades, under Minta's glow; becomes more inconspicuous than ever, in her little grey dress with her little puckered face and her little Chinese eyes. Everything about her is so small. Yet, in comparison to Minta, of the two, I think Lily at forty will be the better. There is in Lily a thread of something; a flare of something; something of her own which I like very much indeed, but no man will, I fear.

Oh, but nonsense; William must marry Lily. They have so many things in common. Lily is so fond of flowers. I must arrange for them to take a long walk together.

Foolishly, I set them opposite each other. That can be remedied tomorrow. If it is fine, they should go for a picnic. They're all talking about boots, so I can think my own thoughts. Everything seems possible. Everything seems right. Just now... But this cannot last. Yet just now...

Mrs. Ramsay *looks at them all eating. She helps William Bankes to one very small specially tender piece more, and peers into the depths of the earthenware pot*

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): There is a coherence in things, a stability; something is immune from change, and shines out.

Mrs. Ramsay *glances at the window with its ripple of reflected lights.*

Mr. Bankes: Are you sure there's enough for everyone?

Mrs. Ramsay: Yes, there is plenty for everybody.

Andrew *gets up and comes over with his plate for seconds.*

Mrs. Ramsay: Andrew, hold your plate lower, or I shall spill it.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): The BOEUF EN DAUBE is a perfect triumph.

Mrs. Ramsay *puts the spoon down.*

Mr. Bankes: I attach no importance to changes in fashion. Who can tell what is going to last — in literature or indeed in anything else? Let us enjoy what we do enjoy.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): I so admire his integrity. He never seems for a moment to think, but how does this affect me? But then if you have the other temperament, which must have praise, which must have encouragement, naturally you begin (and I know that Mr Ramsay is beginning) to be uneasy; to want somebody to say, Oh, but your work will last, Mr Ramsay, or something like that.

I hope nobody touches the fruit. Oh, what a pity— someone took a pear, and spoilt the whole thing.

Mrs. Ramsay *looks sympathetically at Rose sitting between Jasper and Prue.*

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): How odd to see them sitting there, in a row, my children, Jasper, Rose, Prue, Andrew, almost silent, but with some joke of their own going on, I can see that from the twitching at their lips. It's something quite apart from everything else, something they are hoarding up to laugh over in their own room. It's not about their father, I hope. No, I don't think so. What is it? It makes me a bit sad that they will laugh when I am not there.

But look at Prue tonight, it's not now quite true of her. The faintest light is on her face, as if the glow of Minta opposite, some excitement, some anticipation of happiness is reflected in her. She keeps looking at Minta, shyly, yet curiously.

Mrs Ramsay *looked from Prue to Minta.*

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): You will be as happy as she is one of these days. You will be much happier, because you are my daughter; my own daughter must be happier than other people's daughters.

But dinner is over. It's time to go. They are only playing with things on their plates. I'll wait until they are done laughing at some story my husband is telling. He is having a joke with Minta about a bet. Then I will get up. I like Charles Tansley; I like his laugh. I like him for being so angry with Paul and Minta. I like his awkwardness. There is a lot in that young man after all. And Lily.

Mrs. Ramsay *puts her napkin beside her plate.*

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): She always has some joke of her own. One need never bother about Lily.

Mrs. Ramsay *waits. She tucks her napkin under the edge of her plate.*

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): Look how brightly the candle flames are burning now that the panes are black.

Mrs. Ramsay *waits.*

Mr. Ramsay *(with rhythm and a ring of exultation, and melancholy in his voice):*

Come out and climb the garden path, Luriana Lurilee.

The China rose is all abloom and buzzing with the yellow bee

And all the lives we ever lived and all the lives to be

Are full of trees and changing leaves.

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): It's as if, like music, the words are being spoken by my own voice, outside my self, saying quite easily and naturally what has been in my mind the whole evening while I've said different things.

Mr. Ramsay:

I wonder if it seems to you, Luriana, Lurilee

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): They too feel relief and pleasure, as if this is, at last, the natural thing to say, this is their own voice speaking. Oh. The voice has stopped.

Mrs. Ramsay *looks around. She makes herself get up. Augustus Carmichael rises and, holding his table napkin so that it looks like a long white robe he chants:*

Augustus Carmichael:

To see the Kings go riding by

Over lawn and daisy lea

With their palm leaves and cedar

Luriana, Lurilee

Mrs. Ramsay *walks past him. He turns slightly towards her repeating the last words:*

Augustus Carmichael:

Luriana, Lurilee

Carmichael *bows to her as if doing homage.*

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): How odd. For some reason he likes me better than he ever has before. How relieved and grateful I feel!

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): Now I have to carry everything a step further.

Mrs. Ramsay, *with her foot on the threshold , waits a moment longer.*

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): The scene is vanishing even as I look...

Mrs. Ramsay *takes Minta's arm and leaves the room.*

As she leaves, her internal voice follows behind her. Before leaving the room it glances over its shoulder and says...

Mrs. Ramsay (internal): It's changing, it's shaping itself differently; it has become already the past.