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But something was wrong, she thought, laying down her brush, her eyes weighing down on her painting as if bound by heavy stones, caught in an otherworldly trance. Any passersby might mistake her for a statue, her left hand at her side, her right resting tentatively on her implement. As if to quell the strange silence in the air, a sudden gust of wind rushed in from the open sea, a sound not unlike a whisper but with the force of a shout. Hearing her easel creak, Lily soon knew what was to come. However, she stood in acceptance, like a grandmother watching her children seep from the household they grew up in. Her easel tilted ungracefully, her painting falling first on to its side and finding a final resting place with its face to the ground. "Oh dear!", exclaimed Mr. Carmichael, who had been startled by the sudden destruction of beauty. This was the catalyst that brought Lily out of her trance, planting a stubborn pit in her stomach. Why, she thought, should this accident bother me so? The painting was to be forgotten and destroyed by time in the attic, and she knew this, so what difference did this make?

The wind had now begun to roar, causing the walls of the old house to creak and moan in response. The sudden change in weather caused Lily to look out over the water, and to her dismay the lighthouse had once again reappeared, its eye blinking periodically. The haze had dissipated, probably from all of the wind, and heavy gray clouds crept in from the horizon. I hope James and Cam are alright, she thought. While all of this had been preoccupying her, Mr. Carmichael salvaged her painting from the ground. It was covered in scratches, the once pretty blues and greens marred by pebbles from the ground. Worst of all was what remained of the stroke she had just made. The wet paint had smeared everywhere, and the center was now an

unrecognizable mass of dullness. Just as she had been entranced by her painting, now she felt its newly exposed pupil peering unforgivingly back at her, as if to ask why she had wronged it in this way. Lily felt the pit in her stomach deepen, and she found herself wondering if all this time spent on her work really meant anything. Of course it has, she reassured herself, but her reassurance felt like a trivial effort after such a long time being alive. She could have sworn she heard the sound of Tansley's impatient footsteps circling her, but it was only Carmichael pacing lightly. He remained silent, unknowing of what to say next. She shot him a glance, and he was unable to decipher if it was a look of anger or sorrow, but whatever it was he was sure he felt it too. Her insecurity has overtaken her again, he thought, unable to look any longer at the hideous image now resting on the easel.

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Despite the spring in his step, Mr. Ramsay appeared like that of a deer who had just been born, his old, spindly legs barely getting him past the rocky shore. Cam stifled a chuckle at the sight of her father, almost dropping the parcel as a result. As if to share this silent amusement with her brother she turned her head slightly to look at him, but his thoughts were elsewhere. His usual frown had receded a bit, into something serious but not grim. He was still thinking about the two words that had come out of his father's mouth. Even the smallest remark was enough to make James feel like a champion, like a captain who could have delivered plenty of cargo to the Lighthouse singlehandedly. For the first time in years, he felt thankful, watching his father stand omnipotently at the top of the shore, that God had given him the chance to come here.

The remark that had lifted him now turned away, only to bounce back with a

reminder of how his life truly was. James overheard his father talking to the bearded man waiting up at the Lighthouse:

“Him? That’s my son James,” he said, the bearded man’s eyes drifting down towards James, his bushy eyebrows concealing whatever purpose may have been behind the glance. “I wanted to take him here, to show him around. The boy hasn’t quite found his way. Getting out on the sea is a rite of passage for any man.” James felt his ears get hot, as he now kept his eyes on the ground. No longer did he want to look up at that figure anymore, the sharpness of his grin like a sword cutting through James’ curtains. What did he mean “Well done!”, he thought angrily. Was my sailing some kind of lesson to him? He felt his father put him into checkmate once again, but James did not want to play these games anymore. He couldn’t bear to hold it back any longer, and now that he had finally walked all the way up the shore with a parcel in his hands, he threw it at his father with all his might. Mr. Ramsay stumbled backwards, falling over and letting out a quick shout. He could feel the fire pushing him forward, the heat on his back screaming at him to continue, to take advantage of this pathetic man and crush him under his boot. But before he could move, Cam grabbed his arms, her cold hands barely stopping the blaze from reaching Mr. Ramsay.

The old man was more than ready to get back up and put James in his place but was unable to hold on to his anger as he drifted out of consciousness. Mr. Ramsay lay incapacitated on the rocks, his children standing over him unmoving, unready to resurrect him. James looked up at the Lighthouse, and then down at his father. He had never felt so incomplete.

(1000 words)

Rationale (300 words):

Despite Woolf's prominent modernist style, the finale of *To the Lighthouse* provided an odd amount of closure. Granted it was very superficial closure, but I was inspired to end the book differently. I chose to add two chapters to the ending of *To the Lighthouse*, trying to emulate Woolf's style with long sentences and stream of consciousness, like between Lily and Mr. Carmichael. More importantly, I reinforced Woolf's themes of impermanence by taking the victories that the characters Lily and James achieved for themselves and overturning them immediately. Lily, who had spent years unable to fully put herself first and center her tree, realizes that it cannot have been as simple as adding a single stroke. Her painting is ruined, and she is once again met with the insecurity that has followed her for her whole life. One example of this is how she mistakes Carmichael's footsteps for Tansley's, because Tansley was a recurring figure of criticism in her life.

At the lighthouse, the praise that James received from his father for steering the boat does not last. His father once again speaks of him as a child and takes credit for the trip to the lighthouse as if it had been his plan all along. James realizes how little his father's remarks should actually mean to him and retaliates. Mr. Ramsay is not declared outright to be dead, but either way the imagery of James reaching his lifelong destination is ruined by his godlike father resting at his feet. I also reinforced the imagery of Mr. Ramsay as a godlike figure as suggested in Chapter XII, with words like 'omnipotently' and 'resurrect'. In this sense, James has become the antichrist, by striking his own father, hurting himself further. My alternate ending is more cynical, to complement Woolf's modernist themes.