

0. VIRGINIA WOOLF - Story Preface

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When Virginia Woolf was young she was known as Virginia Stephen. Her youthful nickname? “Goat.” (Not the 21st-century meaning, “Greatest of All Time,” but just the normal meaning ... “goat.”) Born on the 25th of January, in 1882, Virginia loved to play cricket at a very young age. In this photo, from her father's family album, we see her in 1886 playing cricket with her brother Adrian at their family home (Talland House). The photographer is unknown; the [photo is maintained at Smith College Libraries](#). Click on the image for a better view.

She was born “Adeline Virginia Stephen” on January 25, 1882. Her father, Sir [Leslie Stephen](#), founded the *Dictionary of [National Biography](#)* and was absolutely devoted to Virginia’s mother, Julia Jackson Duckworth, his second wife.

Virginia’s mother died when her daughter was only thirteen. By the time the soon-to-be-famous writer was twenty-two, her father was also dead. Two years later, the brother she adored—[Thoby](#)—died of typhus.

The future writer had mental breakdowns likely due, at least in part, to all these deaths.

In 1925, not long after the end of the first world war, Virginia released her novel *[Mrs. Dalloway](#)*. Using a “stream of consciousness” [style](#) that parallels the works of [James Joyce](#), the novel (its working title was *The Hours*) revolutionized writing of fiction in the 20th century.

It is also at the heart of Michael Cunningham’s Pulitzer Prize-winning story *[The Hours](#)* and begins with the famous first line:

Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.

Today, thanks to the BBC, we can still hear Virginia Woolf's voice—even though she died in 1941. In this [audio clip](#), recorded four years after *Mrs. Dalloway* was published, she gives her eulogy to words entitled, *Words Fail Me*.

And ... in her [letters](#) and [diaries](#), we learn about her debilitating headaches and bouts of depression which interrupted her creative [work](#) and life with her husband, [Leonard Woolf](#).

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/VIRGINIA-WOOLF-The-Hours>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

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Media Stream



[Sir Leslie Stephen - Father of Virginia Woolf](#)

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Virginia Stephen a/k/a Virginia Woolf - 1902

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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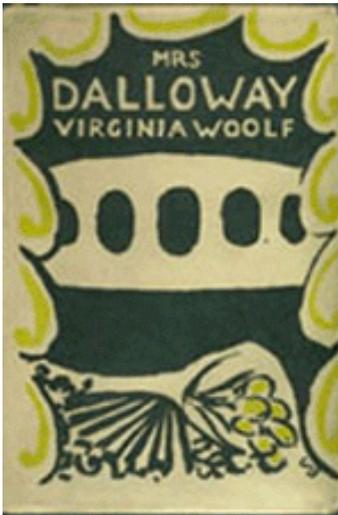
Thoby Stephen - Brother of Virginia Woolf

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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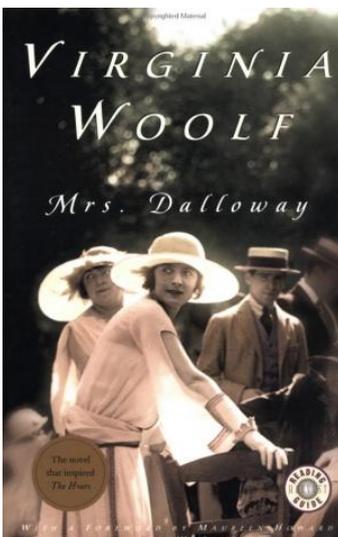


Mrs. Dalloway - First-Edition Cover

Image online, courtesy amazon.com website.

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Mrs. Dalloway - Recent Book Cover

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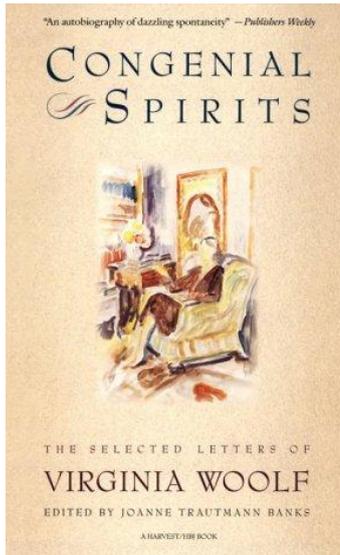


the hours
MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM
"Extremely moving, original and memorable." *Hermione Lee, TLS*
Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction & the PEN/Faulkner Award

[The Hours - by Michael Cunningham](#)

Image online, courtesy [amazon.com](#) website.

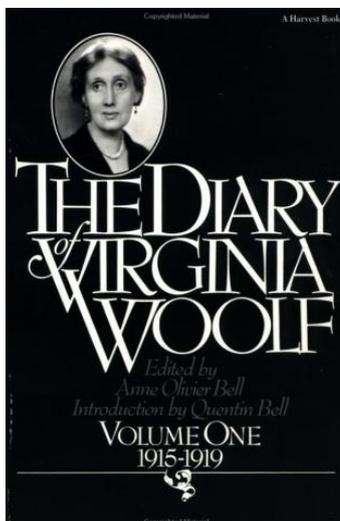
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[Congenial Spirits - by Virginia Woolf](#)

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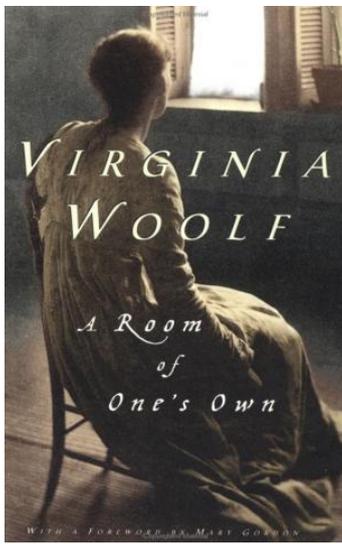


[The Diary of Virginia Woolf - Edited by Anne Olivier Bell](#)

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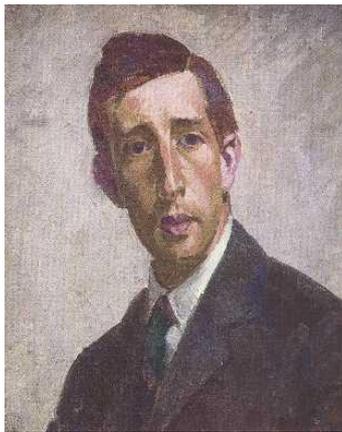


[A Room of One's Own - by Virginia Woolf](#)

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[Leonard Woolf](#)

Image online, courtesy the Leonard Woolf archive.

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