

The Mrs. Dalloway Confessions

Presented to the faculty of Lycoming College in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Departmental Honors in
English

by
Brian E. Sheehan

Lycoming College
April 26, 2006

The Mrs. Dalloway Confessions

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Characters:

Stephen Flow (1) (26 years old)
Helen White (2) (23 years old)
Virginia Woolf's Voice (1)
Vivian East (2) (26 years old)
Sierra Smith (1) (28 years old)
Rick Smith (2) (28 years old)
Leonard "Len" Darway (2) (30 years old)
Peter "Sully" Sullivan (2) (26 years old)
Dr. Sinjoy (Voice 2) (40 years old)
Another Doctor (Voice 1) (40 years old)

Location:

Here.

Time:

No

The Mrs. Dalloway Confessions, by Brian E. Sheehan,
Directed by Brian E. Sheehan, Stage Managed by Ellen Rae Blagg,
Set designed by Brian E. Sheehan and Ellen Rae Blagg, Costumes by
Brian E. Sheehan and Christen M. Miner, Lighting by Luke Krauss,
was presented by the Lycoming College Theatre Department
at the Dragon's Lair Theatre, Williamsport, Pa., from
April 20 to 22, 2006.

Cast:

- 1.....Brian E. Sheehan
- 2.....Christen M. Miner

The Mrs. Dalloway Confessions

Current time. We are in an area. The stage is bare except for six black boxes. The audience (preferably) will surround the area in an arena-like setting. Two aisles are open for entrances and exits. PowerPoint slides shown on a wall indicate the scene locations; they appear during the scene changes.

As the audience is seated, the lights should be bright but natural in various colors; this is a fresh, spring morning. The music should be modern and vibrant, but not too loud. The melodies and rhythms should be lively and quick, creating a positive and exciting atmosphere.

Slide 1: A Park. At center, 1 as Stephen Flow, a writer, sits on a park bench (The boxes should help to communicate this). He is absorbed by the notebook in front of him; he plays with his pen. A copy of Mrs. Dalloway lies at the other end of the bench next to his bag, or man-purse. Throughout the seating, he continually attempts to write something in the notebook, but cannot. He notices the audience as if each person is also in the park with him. Brief audience interactions may occur.

NOTE: 1 is a male. 2 is a female. The name of the character each actor is portraying appears in parenthesis by the corresponding number at the beginning of each scene. This is for the actor's and the reader's benefit.

As the show begins, the pre-show music softens and dies out. 1 as Stephen Flow looks out over the audience; he sighs and smiles as he takes in the scenery and the people. The scene should begin to brighten as he looks out. As he stretches, he throws the notebook and pen to the other end of the bench; the notebook lands on top of Mrs. Dalloway. After distracting himself for a bit and humming, he pushes the notebook aside and picks up Mrs. Dalloway. He hesitates before opening it and turning to the first page. He reads, then:

1 (Stephen Flow): (Reading.) "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself." (To the audience. More passionately.) "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself!" (Sighs, reflects, then shuts the book softly and puts it aside. The lights dim except for a bright spotlight on 1. 1 picks up the notebook and pen. Attempts to write something, but cannot. Pushes the pen into the paper and writes as he speaks.) "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself." (Then, attempts to write his own words. Stops. Groans. Slams the notebook down.

The lights brighten the whole room again. Loudly and abruptly to himself and the sky.)

Nothing! I can't write anything! *(Notices the audience once more. Blushes and smiles. To the audience as if they are in the park and have noticed him. Waves.)* I'm okay! I'm okay. *(To himself. Softly.)* They'll think I'm crazy. *(Laughs.)* Oh, well! *(Sighs.)* Okay. Write. Now. *(Picks up the notebook and pen. The lights dim except for a spotlight on 1 again. 1 puts the pen on the paper, but doesn't write anything. To the pen.)* Write! *(Pause.)* No? *(Stretches himself out on the bench. Dramatically.)* Alas.... *(Looking above.)* Why can't I write? Writer's block is terrible torture, you know that? *(Hums random notes. Looks around to see if people are noticing, then sings "Waltz for Eva and Che" from Evita.)* "Oh, what I'd give for a hundred [words] / What is the good of the strongest heart [when the play is] falling apart?" *(Speaks again, sarcastically.)* Or, not coming at all! *(Sighs.)* Enough of this sighing! I need to do something...now. Hmn. Shopping? That always cheers me up. *(Places the notebook and pen in his bag.)* Shopping for the party tonight? After I shop for myself! Yes. *(Places Mrs. Dalloway in the bag, then exits briskly. Blackout.)*

(Slide 2: Vintage Couture. After a brief blackout, the lights come up very brightly and artificially. These are the bright white lights of a designer clothing store, specifically the men's and women's vintage couture department. The music should be a grand, vibrant sonata which plays throughout the scene. Some of the boxes suggest a cashier station at which 2 as Helen White, a saleswoman and an acquaintance of Stephen's, stands. There are two displays on the other boxes at center stage: late 30s/early 40s woman's overcoat, gloves, hat, and heels; late 30s/early 40s man's coat and hat. 1 as Stephen Flow enters.)

2 (Helen White): *(Bored. Doesn't look up from the Vogue magazine she's reading. From routine.)* Hello. My name is Helen. Welcome.

1 (Stephen Flow): *(Clears his throat playfully to get her attention.)*

2: (*Doesn't look up. Forced. Impolitely.*) God bless you.

1: (*Laughs.*) Well, God bless you, too, dear!

2: (*Starts, then laughs as she notices Stephen. Walks toward him.*) Hello, Stephen Flow! It's been such a long time. Haven't felt the urge to shop recently, have you? You haven't been around!

1: I've been busy. Writing.

2: (*Playfully punches him in the arm. Jokingly.*) That's no excuse! (*Eagerly.*) What are you writing now? What's the play?

1: So far? Nothing! Something to do with this. (*Pulls out the copy of Mrs. Dalloway.*)

2: *Mrs. Dalloway.* By Virginia Woolf. Didn't she kill herself?

1: (*Laughs.*) Yes, yes. And I might do the same if I don't write something soon! Nothing was working, so I thought I'd come here for "inspiration"! And perhaps an outfit for tonight. (*Turns away and begins to stroll around the room as if browsing.*)

2: (*Walks back to the cashier station.*) Tonight? What's the occasion?

1: (*Stops suddenly. Embarrassed because Helen wasn't invited. To himself.*) Oh, dear. (*Turns back to Helen as if he didn't hear anything.*) What was that, dear?

2: Umm....

1: (*Quickly. Avoiding it.*) Oh, how is everything at home? Your girlfriend—what's her name?—Evelyn? How is she?

2: (*Perhaps a little hurt, but quickly recovers with the new subject.*) Very sick, unfortunately. She's really weak.

1: (*Crosses to the man's display. Picks up the hat. Tries it on and checks himself out in the "mirrors" during the following lines.*) How sad. How very, very awful for her. And you.

2: Yeah. But I'm strong for her. I've stood by her and I'm taking care of her. Her doctors are coming to visit tonight. (*Notices Stephen's lack of attention.*) And how is your Len?

1: (*Still focused on the hat.*) Oh, he's fine. We're doing very well.

2: Good. (*Surrendering. Back to the routine.*) Well, I'll let you shop. (*Back to her magazine.*)

If you need any help, let me know.

1: (*Noticing Helen again.*) Thank you, dear. (*Places the man's hat back on the display, then notices the woman's display. Astounded.*) Oh, my God! How gorgeous!

2: (*Smiles.*) You know you want to try it on.

1: (*Giggles.*) Maybe.... Yes! (*Puts on the heels, the overcoat, the gloves, then the hat. After placing the hat, he looks into the "mirrors" as the lights dim except for a spotlight on him. He is shocked.*) Oh, my God! I no longer see Stephen Flow. I see...(Takes on Virginia Woolf's voice)...Virginia Woolf. (*After taking in the moment, he picks up the man's coat and hat and brings them to 2 as Helen White.*) And you can be my husband, Leonard Woolf.

2: (*Laughs as she puts on the coat and hat. Takes Stephen's arm. Attempts a higher, British accent.*) Yes, dear, but there's no river here for you. No stones to put in your pockets! No drowning!

1: (*Laughs brightly.*) No! None of that! The life's what's important. The life! (*Notices the copy of Mrs. Dalloway.*) And the work. Yes. The life and the work...together. (*Reflects in the*

“mirrors,” then has a moment of inspiration. In his own voice.) That’s it! (Drops the copy of Mrs. Dalloway.)

(The lights dim again, except for a spotlight on Stephen. He is in communion with Virginia Woolf, neither being her nor “playing” her. 2 as Helen White moves away into the surrounding blackout and exits.)

1 (Stephen Flow as V. Woolf): (To the audience.) Hello, all. My name is Virginia Woolf. You may know me as that crazy woman writer who killed herself. What a name I’ve made for myself! Well, let’s forget that for a little while, shall we? How are you? (There should be very little or no response.) (To the light booth.) Excuse me? Could I get a little more light in here? I can’t see these people! No need to keep the crazy woman so isolated! (The entire room brightens.) See how well I can brighten a room? (Laughs.) That’s better.

(Interacts with various audience members.) How are you? How was your day? Actually, how is your day? It’s still going on, isn’t it? Give me details! (Laughs.) There is so much more to a person’s life and state of being than the words “good” and “tired.” There are plenty of other adjectives in the English language, you know!

Let’s concentrate. If you try hard enough, you can remember nearly every detail of your day: conversations, thoughts, memories, errands, encounters, anything! Each and every moment is significant because it is your moment of *your* life.

“Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.” What an opening line for a novel! And yet what a simple, commonplace act! Does it matter? Is it significant? Yes! Why? Because it matters to her! And every moment should matter to you...in your life. (Interacts more with the audience members. Urging them excitedly.) How are you *right now* at [insert the

time] today, [insert the date]? How are you at this moment? What do you feel? What do you think? Take it all in. *Make it significant.*

(The lights dim again with spotlight at center.) You're here. I'm here. Now, enter the writer! *(The moment fades as the lights come up all around. Stephen is himself again. He takes off the overcoat, the gloves, the hat, and the heels very quickly.)* That's it! Yes, that's it! *(Runs and picks up his bag and the dropped copy of Mrs. Dalloway and holds it to his chest. Stops. Looks at the outfit, then above.)* Thank you. *(Looks triumphantly and begins to exit. Sings "Rainbow High" from Evita.)* "I haven't started / Let's get this show on the road." *(He pulls out his cell phone from the bag and sees the time.)* Oh, dear! Look at the time! Home first. Then, I'll buy the flowers...myself. *(Smiles and laughs at himself. Exits. Blackout.)*

(Slide 3: Stephen Flow's Apartment. Lights up as I as Stephen Flow enters his apartment on his cell phone. This is very clean and very modern. The blocks should represent a coffee table or a sofa or both.)

1 (Stephen Flow): *(Loudly.)* I said, I cannot cancel the party! No, that's impossible! *(More calmly.)* I'm sorry I raised my voice, but, Vivian, what am I supposed to do? Yes, I know that I should be writing. But I'm allowed at least one night off. What?! Virginia Woolf would want me to be writing?! Ha! I bet she would come to my party. She would! And she would throw little witticisms about the room like she does semi-colons in her novels. Listen. I have to go. No, not to cancel. I have things to buy, places to go, people to see. I won't and that's final. Okay? Bye. Ciao! *(Hangs up. Puts the phone in his bag and tosses it aside.)*

(To himself and then out to the audience) We had it all once, didn't we? Everything was fresh. Everything was new. It's not new anymore; it's not fresh. I've tried to see more. See

everything for what it is. Can I? Can you? How can we see all at once for what it really is when we're so blind? So blind! And so lost. In everything. I have been so utterly lost. Here. There. Everywhere. Time flies as if it's always got somewhere to go. Somewhere else other than here. To stop time. Oh, wouldn't that be nice. To stop a second and know it for what it is, what it was, what it meant to you, to me, to all of us.

Virginia Woolf's Voice (recorded): It can be done. It has been done, has it not?

1: (*Notices the Voice, and then shakes his head. To the audience.*) I am so unsure of everything, yet I haven't given it up. Isn't that strange? Not to give it up? Isn't that what we've been taught? We cannot do it; we give it up. Natural. Easy. So easy! How sad and strange. We are sad and strange. And yet we *are*. Are we not? Oh, dear. So many questions. And answers? None. None from you, at least. But that's to be expected. I couldn't ask that of you, could I? How rude would that be? (*Laughs at himself.*) All this philosophical discussion!

(*A knock on the door.*)

1: Come in!

(*2 as Vivian East, a gay male and friend of Stephen's, enters.*)

2 (Vivian East): Hello, dahling! I'm here, I'm here. For you, Stephen, of course.

1: You didn't have to come.

2: Oh, but I did! You were such a poo on the phone, dear. And I'm sure you've been alone all morning. Len isn't here, right? (*Looks around, hopefully.*)

1: No, he's not here. He's out to lunch with some of his co-workers. But that doesn't mean....

(*Moves away from Vivian, but backs himself into a corner.*)

2: Oh. All alone. (*Smiles. Walks towards Stephen and takes his hand. Leads him to the couch and seats him. He begins a sensual massage.*) I wasn't asking for too much, was I? I mean, it's only a party, right?

1: (*Lightly mocking and sarcastic.*) Oh, yes, it's *only* a party. Trivial, isn't it?

2: (*Doesn't see the implication.*) Yes! And your play is so much more important to me. You know that, right?

1: Of course I know that! You have been very supportive, Vivian, but....

2: We have to be supportive of each other! We are working men. Artists! (*Pause.*) We need to support and...inspire each other. (*Leans in towards Stephen's face.*)

1: (*Whispered.*) Inspire? I'm blocked, but I don't think I....

2: (*Sits by Stephen and begins to massage his hands.*) You don't think what, dear? You know you can tell me. You used to tell me everything. Remember? We would lie together and you would pour your little heart out and then we'd.... (*Leans in to kiss Stephen, but Stephen turns away.*) That is, until Sully came along.

1: (*Nearly breathless. Crosses the room.*) Sully! Why bring Sully into this? We had...something.... (*Lost in the memory.*)

2: (*Bitterly.*) Yes, I know, you had something...different. And I was no longer a part of it. I was nothing. I barely existed that summer after Senior year. You two had each other.

1: (*Defensively, but it hurts.*) It wasn't that special! It was never official! We just...connected. And you were jealous.

2: (*Laughs.*) Jealous? No! It didn't last. (*Suddenly.*) He's here, you know. Sully's here.

1: (*Surprised. Excited.*) He's here? Really? How do you know?

2: I bumped into him on the sidewalk on my way here. *Very nearby here.* I invited him to the party. I hope you don't mind.

1: (*Quietly.*) No, of course not. Of course I'd love to have him here.

2: (*Slightly annoyed.*) Of course you would. (*Pauses, then uses this weapon.*) Oh, and he'll be bringing his wife, Sarah.

1: (*Shocked.*) His wife?!

2: Yes, he's married. That's what he tells me.

1: (*Aftershock.*) Wow.

2: But you won't mind seeing him and his wife, won't you? After all, you found Len. You have Len. You're happy. I'm happy. You know I like Len.

1: (*Happy for the distraction. Warmly.*) Yes, Len. I'm so lucky to have him. He's so protective. So warm. So safe.

2: (*Calling attention to himself.*) Yes, and *I* like him. And *I* like you. Don't you know that?!

1: Of course you like me. And I like you, too.

2: Because we've remained friends for so long! We've been through so much. And that's why we're here for each other at times like these. (*Crosses to Stephen. Moves very close to him.*) So, I'm here.

1: (*Matter-of-factly. Avoiding what's happening.*) Yes, you're here.

2: (*Eagerly. Touches Stephen's face.*) But Len isn't.

1: (*Weakening. Hurt.*) No, he isn't.

2: (*Very close. Pressing himself against Stephen while hugging him.*) So, let me support you now. Let me be safe...again. Let me inspire you. (*Looks up at Stephen and kisses him.*)

1: (*Suddenly thoroughly embarrassed and aggravated.*) Vivian! How could you do a thing like that? That's supposed to inspire me? Don't you have a conscience?! I have Len, for God's sake!

2: Yes, and what a fabulous relationship that is. He's not here, Stephen! I'm here to help you. He'll never know. (*Stands and leans toward Stephen to kiss him again.*)

1: (*Pushes Vivian away.*) No!

2: How could you refuse me? ME?! I laid myself open and vulnerable—once again—and you've shut me down! That hurts, you know that? Don't you think about that? About my feelings for once?

1: (*Sees the absurdity.*) I can't believe this! (*Resolute.*) That's it. I'm going to buy the flowers.

2: (*Stops Stephen from leaving.*) Oh, honey. Oh, honey, no! I ordered those as I was walking here since you refused to cancel. I called up that place...umm...that place what? Ten blocks from here? They'll be delivered this afternoon.

1: You ordered the flowers to be delivered? Delivery?! What did you order?!

2: (*Simply.*) Some roses or whatever. You know, things that'll look cute. Some pink. Some red.

I said, "Moll, dear, do whatever. Whatever you want!"

1: What were you thinking?! How did you think that was okay? This isn't your party!

2: (*Seductively once again.*) Oh, but it could be. If you cancelled, it could be me and you...alone. Forget Len! I could be your inspiration. I could be your new character! (*Takes Stephen's hand and spins into him.*) Say, "Hello!" to your gay Mrs. Dalloway!

1: (*Pushes Vivian away. Laughs at the absurdity of his seriousness.*) WHAT?! YOU?! Oh, my God. That's what you want. You don't want me. You want... (*Shortly. Quickly.*) I have to go. So do you. (*Plays the casting director. Stabbing at Vivian's ego.*) And, no, you're not him. You're not right. Not right at all.

2: (*Pathetically, dramatically despairing.*) I have tried! I have gone through hell and high water for you for years! I've done my best to make you happy. I've made you happy once or twice, haven't I? Oh, I have. And have you appreciated anything? Anything at all?

1: (*Trying not to laugh.*) Just go. Please. Now.

2: (*Kisses Stephen.*) That's what you'll be missing. (*Begins to cry.*) I...hope...you get whatever...whatev. (*Stops.*) You know what? Fuck you, bitch! (*Exits furiously and fabulously.*)

1: (*Stunned for a moment, then calls out to Vivian.*) Do cancel those flowers, dear! I won't take delivery. And remember the party tonight! You are still invited.

2: (*Offstage. Murmuring. Mocking.*) "Remember the party!" "Remember the party!"

1: (*Goes back to his hemming. Sits. Sings "I Need A Hero" from Footloose.*) "Where have all the good men gone? / And where are all the gods?" Oh, God. So, this day is not going very well. And it's barely begun! To turn back time. What a concept! What a wish! If only. If only we could get those "if onlys" out of our lives. Asking for pessimism, doubt, and depression.

V. Woolf's Voice: Buy the flowers. Are there not flowers to be bought?

1: (*To the Voice.*) The flowers! (*To the audience.*) I'm giving a party tonight. Please excuse me. There are flowers to be bought. (*Blackout as Stephen exits.*)

(Slide 4: A Street Outside the Apartment. *Lights up after 1 as Stephen Flow enters again. The blocks should represent a street scene.*)

1: (*To the audience. Reflective, but with renewed philosophical energy.*) Have you ever felt like everyone is watching you? Like everyone you pass, you meet, is looking, judging, trying to look deeper, inside. Well, maybe not deeper. Superficial looking suits most. At once they see and know you. You are this. You are that. Have I done that? Would I do that? I can't think so. I know that I am seen. Buying flowers, shopping, crossing the street. Don't get me wrong. I like it. But it is the becoming this, becoming that that bothers me. This or that. What is this or that? I am not this. I am not that. I am me. But I am a man. I am a gay man. And I buy flowers. And I throw parties. And there is so much more than that. So, how can you say, "You are this or you are that?" (*Loudly.*) *You have not lived my life!* (*Laughs at himself.*) And yet I will buy flowers. I will throw a party. I will be watched. I will become "this" or "that." I am changed with each person, each guest. Doesn't matter. I go on as everything goes on. No, I have not given it up. Why give it up? It is too beautiful, too precious. Too much. Just too much! But it is what I love. This. This life. (*Smiles. Blackout as Stephen exits.*)

(Slide 5: A Park. *The lights reveal a park scene similar to that of the opening scene. 1 as Sierra Smith enters, stares and wanders around with a bouquet of white roses. She stops and breathes deeply; she relaxes. After a few beats, 2 as Rick Smith enters. Sierra is immediately on edge.*)

2 (Rick Smith): (*Grabs Sierra's hand. Frantically.*) Sierra! I was looking for you! All over the park! Don't leave me like that.

1 (Sierra Smith): (*After a long pause.*) I had to go. I had to walk. I was told to walk, wasn't I? I was told to live, at least to seem to live. And what better way to live than to walk? And I wanted to buy flowers for tonight. That's all. (*Exhausted. Paranoid.*) Is there some hidden meaning behind my buying the flowers? Some significance? Some sinister motivations? (*Laughs.*) Yes!

2: Don't do this to me, Sierra. You haven't taken your pills, have you?

1: (*Distracting. Points out, beyond the audience.*) Do you see that young couple over there? They were staring. They see. They pretend not to see. They're afraid to see. And I know why it is. I'm not them. I'm not what they want to see. And yet I'm told to live and walk and act as if I am.... (*Prepares to wound Rick with the word "normal."*)

2: Don't say it. Not that word. You were told not to say that word!

1: What? Normal?! What will happen if I say normal? Normal is a word that means the opposite of me. According to your *friends*, at least.

2: They are not my friends, dear, and you know it. I have consulted them to look at you, to help you. You need help.

1: Because I'm not normal, right? I need help to be something else, something other than what I am now.

2: (*Suddenly. Loudly.*) You threatened to kill yourself!

1: (*Pause.*) So this is what it is. It matters so much. To say “I will kill myself” immediately dooms me to this! To being watched! To being helped! Four words. I said four words. Hasn’t everybody thought it? Haven’t you ever thought it?? Everyone wants to forsake life at some point. To be done with it all. And don’t I have reason? Don’t I?! I came home from a war! And I married you, Rick! All for your love. I have given up...for your love. (*Stares ahead as if in a trance. Actually sees her former companion, Susan.*) Oh, God. It is she! She is there! Oh, God! Save me! I loved you! I gave myself to you, Susan! It was not my fault. You sacrificed yourself! You died! YOU left me. I did not leave you. I married Rick. Now go! Leave me! You! You caused me to say it, to say I’d kill myself! I would have met you again! Given it all up. Given it all up for you. Yet I stay for him. But could I leave for you? Could I leave it all? I could. With you I am....

2: Don’t say it! Don’t say it, damn it! Where are the pills?! (*Searches his pockets.*)

1: (*Snaps out of the trance. Lashes out at Rick.*) Normal. (*Laughs hysterically and screams. Throws the roses at Rick’s feet.*) Normal! NORMAL! (*Exits.*)

2: (*Screams after her.*) Sierra! Stop! You need your pills! (*Stops. Picks up the roses, then notices the audience.*) Excuse me. I know you’re all watching. Could you please not watch?! She said she would kill herself! God damn it! (*Exits. Blackout.*)

(Slide 6: The Smiths’ Apartment. *Lights up on the Smiths’ apartment, an average American middle-class home. Four blocks represent a sofa and 2 blocks represent a small coffee table. I enters as Sierra Smith with an apron on. Has a vase of white roses.*)

1 (Sierra Smith): (*Speaks to the audience. Too polite, too perfect.*) Why, hello. Welcome to my home. My humble little abode. (*Laughs*) I’m afraid my husband isn’t home just yet. But he’ll

be home soon. He's out to lunch with some people. Some of his business partners. I, of course, was not invited. (*Breaks the façade for a bit.*) I am never usually invited. Although I do invite them. It's only polite after all. (*Plays with the roses.*) These are the flowers for the party. I saw them and I thought, "How nice. How perfect." (*Places roses on the table.*) These are perfect. I hope Rick thinks so. He wasn't happy at all that I had gone off on my own. But what a day! It's so nice to get out. To buy flowers. To be out amongst the crowds. Oh, people do excite me. How interesting! How intriguing! To be out on a day like this and watching people! And to have flowers all the while. (*Bitterly.*) But then we had to come home. It was time for my.... Well, I had to get better for—oh, yes—the party! (*Perfect once again, but the façade is clearly slightly cracked.*) Perfect. Just you wait! And I still have so much to do, yet I'm talking to you! My little musings. Inspired to talk by roses. Interesting, isn't it? But I should go off to the kitchen. I have to finish the dumplings. (*Excited. Lively.*) And in no time the party will be here! (*Exits.*)

(*2 as Rick Smith enters. Has a bag full of pills with a bottle of water in hand.*)

2 (Rick Smith): I have to buy the pills myself. For my wife. She's not all right, you see. I mean, I love her. You know that, right? I've loved her ever since the day we met. But it's been a losing battle for me. I don't understand. She decided to fight that war. Why? I don't know. And now she needs these pills to help her. They do help her. Don't they? The doctors say that they do. (*Pause.*) She said she would kill herself. I told you that already, didn't I? But she did. It was awful. In the middle of the street. Right then and there. And the words came out...so...easily. Too easily. I was afraid. Wouldn't you be? Killing herself. Leaving me, her

husband! Leaving this! This place! This life! Is it all that bad? A war. It happens so constantly, doesn't it? Shouldn't we be used to it? Why?! I'm sorry. I just don't understand. A woman in the army. Well, I support equal rights and all, but a soldier? Fighting and killing in the army? It's awful. Why not a man? Some woman's husband, huh?! I didn't say that. Sorry. Forgive me. And she hasn't asked forgiveness for saying that! She doesn't understand. This is why she's on the meds. It has to be this way. I was in love with her once. I love her now! On the pills or not, she's still my baby. And to see her suffer.... She needs the pills. I'm sorry. I shouldn't have to apologize for that! She does need them! What in the world would make you want to kill yourself? And leave it all behind? Leave me? Leave all this? The doctors say the pills are working. She looks well, doesn't she? People don't notice.... They don't, do they? She's perfectly all right...on the pills. And soon, hey, maybe she'll be off of them! And we'll be okay; we'll be all right again. I love her. And the pills and I will work our hardest to get her back to.... She'll be fine. Wait. Excuse me. *(Calls to side door.)* Honey, I'm home! I bought something for you! *(Takes a bottle of water and a bottle of pills out of the bag. Sets them down.)* She thinks we're having a party tonight. That's what people do, right? They have parties. The doctors are coming, though. It'll seem like a party. *(Calls out again.)* Honey? *(I as Sierra Smith enters. Both Sierra and Rick are immediately tense.)*

1: Hello, dear. I'm all right. I was just in the kitchen doing some things for tonight.

2: Were you now? Well, I didn't want to bother you. I just wanted to make sure everything was...

1: (*Notices the pills.*) ...All right. Yes, I know. That's why you're such a dear. That's why I love you. (*Kisses Rick on the cheek mechanically.*)

2: I.... (*Can't finish the three other words. Kisses Sierra on the cheek. Sierra freezes at his touch and concentrates on the roses. Holds Sierra's neck and attempts to kiss her on the lips. Sierra pulls away.*)

2: (*Hands the bag of pills to Sierra.*) Here.

1: (*Sarcastically.*) Oh, how lovely. You brought more things for the party. That's why you're such a dear. That's why I love you. (*Pause.*) And how was lunch?

2: Nice. Very nice.

1: Must be nice to get a break from me.

2: Sierra.... (*Pause.*) The guys say, "Hello."

1: No, they don't. I know they don't like me. Don't lie to me, dear.

2: I'm not. (*Pause. Forcibly.*) Well, are you going to take your pills? Just two right now.

1: Oh, yes. I guess I must, mustn't I? (*Takes a bottle of pills and opens it. Removes two pills and swallows them after a beat of hesitation. Turns and smiles bitterly.*)

2: Well, I should be off.

1: Yes, perhaps you should. Don't worry; I'll take care of the preparations. And I'll greet the guests alone if you're too late.

2: I'll probably be late. Two meetings in a row tonight! She's a slave driver. I would say that's what you get with a woman as CEO, but she gets things done.

1: (*Playing the dutiful wife.*) And so do you, dear. I'm sure a promotion is on the way.

2: Yeah...sure. Well, I'm off. (*Kisses Sierra on the cheek. She freezes once again.*) I'll be back. You have fun for now.

1: Goodbye, dear! (*Her last stab.*) Say, "Hello," to everyone at the office for me!

(*Rick exits.*)

1: (*Exhales. To the audience.*) Well, I guess that means I'm back to preparing. It will be lovely. Only a few people coming to this one, but it'll be wonderful. Refreshing, really. I'm so glad you could be here for this. I promise you a grand party. But I really must get back to the kitchen. Those pineapples are crying out to be sliced! (*Notices the roses again. They are a sanctuary to her. Plays with the petals. Re-arranges.*) Beautiful roses. (*Pricks her finger.*) Ow! Oh, God damn it! (*Sucks on her finger.*) Painful. (*Looks out at the audience.*) I'm so sorry you had to hear that. I pricked my finger. It happens. Such pleasure and pain in one small flower. (*Looks at the roses again. Purposely pricks another finger.*) Ow. Oh.... (*A bit of ecstasy. Stares at the two wounds. Smiles.*) Mmmm. Ahhhh. (*Picks a rose from the vase. Smells it. Waves it around, then clenches the stem with her fist. Pulls the rose quickly and forcefully out of her fist so that she pricks her whole hand.*) OHHHHH!!! AHHH! (*Her cries reach orgasmic intensity.*) YES! (*Looks down at her hand. Licks it.*) Pleasure and pain. How beautiful. (*Sighs. Recovers. Clenches her fist. Picks up the rose and places them back in the vase. Notices the audience again. Worried over their reactions, their judgements. Back to being perfect.*) How lovely that you all could come. It'll be a marvelous party. Wait and see! (*Exits. Blackout.*)

(Slide 7: A Street Near the Florist. *I as Stephen Flow enters. Lights up.*)

1: *(To the audience. Desperately needs them to agree.)* Have you ever stopped and thought about nature's lovely connections between us all? How delightfully we're weaved in and out of each other's lives, sometimes without even knowing it. God knows I can't really conceive it. But it's all there. We pass each other on the sidewalk, in a park, on a staircase and we affect each other. Well, maybe not "affect". But for a moment, we enter each other's life. A bundle of lives all intertwined. And we never notice it. We never think of it. I mean, why should we? It's not that we usually care. We could give two shits about the guy we're standing next to on the elevator. But, no matter what, we're narrating the same story for those few moments between floor eight and floor eleven. Even if we're not looking, we're thinking about that person and judging them. We can't help it! We're human! So, they enter our minds and thoughts and ideas for those few moments. Split seconds, sometimes. And we may not notice it. A glimpse or a glance—there's a window there. We'll stare, but not for too long. And God knows we'd never dare open it up and enter. We have too much to think about and feel ourselves. How awful would it be thinking about and feeling for everyone?! God knows how we'd do it. Well, yes, I guess God does know. Nature's connections. Delightful, isn't it? And so much more for me, the writer. Oh, God, all this talk and philosophy, and I haven't even bought the flowers yet!

V. Woolf's Voice: "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself."

1: *(To Voice. Playfully.)* Oh, hush, already! I know! I'm going! *(Exits.)*

(2 as Rick Smith enters with a single red rose as 1 as Stephen Flow exits. Same setting as the last monologue.)

2 (Rick Smith): (*Imagining Sierra Smith there. Apologetic. Careful.*) Honey, I'm home! How was the party? Did you miss me? I know I missed it all. I'm sorry. Did everyone like it? Did everyone have a good time? Did you have a good time? That's good. I... Well, I bought you a rose. Isn't it nice? And red is your favorite color. Isn't it beautiful? Yeah. Beautiful like you. Can't we forget the past? Forget tonight? Move on? Yeah. We'll move on and everything will be okay again. You'll be okay again. I know I wasn't there for the party, but I had...business meetings. I wanted to be here. Here for you. But I couldn't make it. I'm sorry. Do you forgive me? You do? That's great! I... (*Can't make out the other two words again.*) Well, what should we do tonight? I... Do you want to? I lo--.... (*Snaps back to reality. To the audience.*) Damn it, I can't! I can't say it to her. Why not?! I can't even say it to her when she's not here. But I love her. I do. And now she's alone. So why am I here? Alone? Without her? I'll go. I'll say it. I have to say it! I'm sure the party is over by now. The party. I mean, I'm sure the doctors are finished. It shouldn't take this long, should it? Well, no matter what, she'll be freaked out, so I should go to her. With this rose. It's nice, right? Beautiful? I'm going. I love her. I have to go. (*Exits.*)

(*I enters as Stephen Flow with a few bouquets of roses—pink, yellow, white—in one arm.*)

1 (Stephen Flow): (*To audience. Laughs brightly. Talks very quickly.*) Oh, God, that's what I love about this city. Tourists! I admit that I go celebrity hunting at times, but the tourists do it 24/7! I was walking and this group of five Japanese tourists starts flashing their cameras and screaming in my face. I could only make out "Star! Star!" as they waved paper and pens in my face. I literally freeze. What the hell is this all about? And, of course, the tourists start a chain

reaction. Other people stop, stare, and try to make out who I am. Jake Gyllenhaal? Toby McGuire? Doesn't matter. As long as it's a celebrity! Someone famous to watch, to observe. In that moment, they all feel famous. Hell, even I feel famous! And I'm not. Just an average gay man in the city. No one really knows me. Well, I like to think so sometimes, but nope. But, then again, don't we all like to think we're famous? Known by other people? Respected? Loved? Adored? (*Nervous about what the audience thinks. Throws himself back into the story.*) Anyway, so back to the scene. Yeah, this group will not let me move! I tried faking them out a few times, but I couldn't! Plus, I had to protect the roses. (*Looks down at the roses.*) Poor babies actually survived the attack. Then, thank the Lord in heaven! Thank Mary, actually! She's much more fabulous. Anyway, yeah, this large, dark limo drives by and catches their attention. So, they turn away from me and rush towards it. The poor sucker got stuck at a red light at the time, too. But you know what? I stood and stared, too. You see limos all the time here, but there's such a mystery to it, you know? And it happens over and over again. For a few moments in a day, everyone freezes and watches. No matter what they have to do or where they have to go, they stop and stare. And, for once, we're all connected on that street. We're all doing the same thing and wondering and dreaming. It's fascinating. And then the light turns green, the tourists back away, and the limo drives off. And everyone is immediately disconnected from the trance. And we walk forward again to where we're supposed to be going, turn again to watch it drive off for one last time, then move on. Strangely, though, there's a sadness in the air because we can never know who was in that limo. And then I remember that I was also a tourist target, so I walk faster, then take a quick turn down the next street. The

Japanese tourists didn't follow. Who did they think I was, huh? I have no idea. But it's nice to think that they thought I was...someone. Someone important. Fascinating, isn't it? But I'm just me. Only me. It's all good. I'm content with that. *(His cell phone rings. He pulls it out of his bag.)* Hello? Len! Hello, lovah.... God, I'm so happy to hear from you. Back from your meetings? Yes, I know they want my play. You know it'll come. You said that? Len, you're too good to me! So, you're back at the apartment? And you're taking care of the caterer! My God, don't give me a heart attack all at once! I'll be on my way. Yes, I have the flowers. Yes, I'll be right there. See you soon. Love you! *(Waits for a response. Receives none. Tries again.)* Love you! *(Pause.)* Ciao! *(Hangs up. Stops. To the audience. Distracting himself.)* Well, I have a party to prepare for! I hope you'll come. You're all invited! Now, you're going to the party of a star! *(Laughs.)* My party. *(Exits. Blackout.)*

(Slide 8: The Smiths' Apartment. 1 as Sierra Smith, who has a bandage on her hand from the previous scene, enters during blackout and sits on the couch. The Voices are recorded and spoken by 1 and 2 according to the Voice number. The Voices should fill the room. These are the doctors. The lights follow Sierra Smith and do not reveal the whole room until later. Sierra must acknowledge the doctors in two separate areas. They are actually there!)

Voice 1: You're taking you're pills, right?

1 (Sierra Smith): If I say, "Yes," will you go away?

Voice 2: That's not all we're here for. Have you said *it* lately?

Voice 1: You shouldn't say *that*.

Voice 2: People don't say such things, you know.

Voice 1: It's absurd.

Voice 2: You have a wonderful life.

Voice 1: A dedicated husband.

Voice 2: You don't need to work.

Voice 1: Well taken care of, I would say.

Voice 2: Don't you want to answer us?

1: NO! Go away! Oh, God, leave me alone!

Voice 1: We can't leave right now. We're here to help you.

Voice 2: Yes. We're here to help you. Do you understand that?

Voice 1: Do you?

1: NO! I don't need your help! I'm fine! Fine! Leave!

Voice 1: Please try to cooperate. We are trying to help you.

Voice 2: Yes. Cooperate. Answer us. You'll feel better.

Voice 1: Better than now.

1: I am fine. NOW. Oh, God, would you leave already? What can I do to make you leave?!

Voice 1: We won't leave until you cooperate. This is for you. And your husband.

Voice 2: You want to be better for him, don't you?

1: I love him! He loves me! But.... But we can't love each other with you in the way.

Voice 1: We are not in the way. Please remember that. We're here to help.

Voice 2: And you need help, don't you? Please. At least agree.

1: I do not need your help. I don't need you! I am perfectly fine. Normal. Whatever you want to call it. You are the insane ones! You are driving me insane!

Voice 1: Let's not label it like that. You are not insane. You are not well. There is a difference.

Voice 2: Please recognize the difference. That is a step in the road to recovery. Don't label yourself so.

1: Go. Please? My husband....

Voice 1: Your husband allowed us here. He invited us here. He knew that we could help you.

Voice 2: Let us help you.

1: My party! The party! Oh, God, I didn't prepare enough! And you're the guests. You are....

The party....

Voice 1: Yes. We were invited. And we can have fun. Just listen to us and respond.

Voice 2: It'll be a sort-of party. Something.

1: My party! There is no party! This is not a party! I was.... He.... Why must you do this to me? What did I do?

Voice 1: You said that you would...

Voice 2: kill...

Voice 1: yourself.

Voice 2: People don't say such things.

1: But I.... (*In a trance again. Imagines Susan is there.*) Susan! I did it.... Oh, Susan! I love you!

Voice 1: Who is Susan? Do you want to talk about it?

Voice 2: Just move on. We haven't got much time.

Voice 1: Will you agree to take the pills? Please let us know that you understand that you must take the pills.

1: I will not take the pills! They don't let me live! I was living. Before. I could live and breathe and enjoy life. The pills suffocate me. They drain all the life out of me. I don't remember who I am, what I am. I can't remember! And you have done this to me. Why do you do this to me? Oh, God, I can't stand it! Just let me live! Let me breathe! Let me....

Voice 1: And she still refuses. Why don't you understand?

Voice 2: The pills actually help you live a normal life.

1: That word! Normal! What does it mean to you? It means nothing to me! I have lived and I want to live. Isn't that normal? But you won't let me live. You won't let me breathe. I would say that is not normal. That is sick! That is insane! You are taking my life from me. Stealing my life! Stealing me! I can't express anything. I can't think. I can't feel. Why won't you?!

You! Just leave! Please leave!

Voice 1: You're deceived. You weren't living. The pills will help you.

(The voices' volumes drastically increase. The lights are eerie. Sierra's mind is snapping.)

Voice 2: Take the pills.

Voice 1: Take the pills. And don't...

Voice 2: live.

Voice 1: And don't...

Voice 2: breathe.

Voice 1: And don't...

Voice 2: think.

Voice 1: And don't...

Voice 2: feel.

Both: Take the pills.

1: (*Surrendering.*) I'll take the pills. I'll...take the pills! Please! Hear me? I'll take them! I'll take the pills.... (*Picks up the vase of white roses and holds them to her chest. Attempts to hold herself up by smelling them and squeezing the vase.*)

Voice 1: I'm glad we could convince you.

Voice 2: This is a good step. A very good step.

Voice 1: You're on the road to recovery. You will be....

(*2 as Rick Smith enters with the red rose. Lights on both Rick and Sierra now. Sierra flashes a glare at Rick as he enters, then moves away from him.*)

2 (Rick Smith): Honey, I'm home! (*Notices the doctors in the same place that Sierra acknowledges them. This is of utmost importance!*) Oh, the doctors are still here. Sorry. Were you saying something? I apologize.

Voice 1: We have made great progress. Your wife is fine. Nothing that pills and sleep can't help. Really nothing at all.

2: That's great! That's great, right, honey? I'm so...happy! (*Walks towards Sierra, who ignores him.*)

Voice 2: Could we speak to you in the other room before we leave?

2: Yes. But I....

Voice 1: Right this way.

2: (*Presenting the rose.*) Sierra, I got you a rose. It's red.

Voice 2: We'll only be a few minutes.

2: Your favorite.

Voice 1: Are you coming?

2: Yes. I.... Honey, I.... (*Begins to exit. Stops and places the rose by Sierra.*) I.... (*Can't say it.*)

Voice 1: Right this way, please.

Voice 2: Only a few minutes.

2: Okay. Be right there. (*Exits.*)

1: (*Falls to the ground with the vase.*) The pills. I can't. I can't! I've had enough. Enough! (*Pulls herself up slowly. Stands.*) Can't you see I've had it? I can't do it anymore. I've tried to live. I love it. I loved Susan, but she's...gone. (*Points in the direction of the other room.*) I had him. I had Rick. That should have been enough, but the war! (*Falls to the ground again. Incredibly weakened. Can barely lift her head.*) The war! The memories! Susan gone. Blown away. Blown...apart! Oh, God, no one should witness that. My life.... My party.... I can't. I just wanted a party. My party. (*Notices the rose. Picks it up.*) A beautiful rose. Red. My favorite. (*Smells the roses.*) How sweet. (*Looks at the rose, then looks at her hand with the bandage on it. The idea comes.*) Pleasure. Pain. Yes. (*Pulls the long rose from its paper, smells it, then strokes it. Moves the rose up and down her palm. Caresses her wrist with the stem's thorns. Violently stabs her wrist with the thorns and slashes it with the rose, then slashes the other. Screams wildly, triumphantly. Falls down on the table with a sigh. NOTE: For blood effect, a blood packet could be hidden in the large, red ribbon wrapped around the rose.*)

(2 as Rick Smith enters quickly. Spot on him as well as Sierra lying on the table at center.)

2: What did she do? God damn it! *(Runs to Sierra at center. Stops. Shocked.)* She...she...I....

Why?! She...she....

Voice 1: She slashed her wrists.

Voice 2: The coward!

2: Please leave. I need to. I loved her. I... *(Kneels down next to her. Picks up the rose and sobs. Lays the rose on Sierra's body. Whispers.)* I love you. *(Stands up and backs away into the blackout. Exits. Intense spotlight on Sierra's body.)*

Voice 1: It's a shame. What a shame.

Voice 2: We have a party to go to.

Voice 1: Yes, we do. Off with us then.

Voice 2: Shame, though.

Voice 1: Yes. Shame.

(Slide 9: Stephen Flow's Apartment. There is a sudden shift in mood. The music must be roaring. Sound effects of glasses and voices fill the room. The lights come up on Stephen's bedroom. The boxes form the bed. One box remains at center. There is a vase with a peach rose that was not in Stephen's bouquets on the center block. The copy of Mrs. Dalloway is beside the vase. A single spot lights the roses, then the lights expand to the whole room.)

(1 as Stephen Flow is already in the room, sipping a glass of wine and staring at the roses. 2 as Len (Leonard Darway) enters with a bottle of wine and a glass after the lights come up. The party must seem to be all around the room, everywhere.)

1 (Stephen Flow): Oh, Len, what a party!

2 (Len): Very nice. Almost everyone's here. Those doctors are late, though.

1: Well, those are your friends, dear. I don't really care for them.

2: (*Laughs.*) They are my friends and you will learn to like them. Besides, they are respectable citizens!

1: (*Groans sarcastically.*) I thought I had enough respectability for the two of us. Must we have more people that are respectable at the party? Does that prove anything to the others?

2: To some, yes. Come on. Sit down on the bed and have another glass of wine. You're almost done that one.

1: (*Stephen smiles, sits, and hands his glass to Len. Len pours two new glasses of wine.*)

You're so good to me. So caring. Know exactly what I want. This rose. The wine. So sweet.

2: Well, it's quite easy to guess that you almost always want another glass of wine, you lush, you!

1: (*Playfully pushes, then kisses Len. As he pulls away.*) You love me, right, Len?

2: What? Of course I do!

1: (*Stands.*) Could you say it?

2: Of course I can! (*Takes a gulp of wine. Chokes a little. Embarrassed.*) I'm sorry. I'm a little tipsy. You know that I do.

1: Yes, but why can't you say it? You never say it!

2: Actions speak louder than words, right?

1: I guess. So cliché, though.

2: Yes, but the rose. The wine. The kisses. (*Kisses Stephen on the cheek, almost patronizingly.*)

1: (*Pulls away.*) I know the kisses. You do. But can you just say it? Please?!

2: I thought I had!

1: No, you haven't. You haven't *said* it.

2: Then, let me say it. (*Len leans in and kisses Stephen passionately. Stephen lets go and falls into the kiss. Len pulls away and smiles. Stephen loses his balance and back onto the bed, smiling.*)

2: So, I'm going to get back to the guests. You get a grip on yourself and come out soon, okay? You are the hostess after all.

1: (*Faintly.*) Yes. I am the hostess. (*Shivers a little.*) Well, you go on ahead. I'll be out soon.

2: Good, good. (*Begins to exit. Stops and turns as if to say something, but cannot. Exits.*)

1: (*Stands. To the door.*) I love you, too. But why can't you...? (*Begins primping himself. To the audience.*) Vivian did show up, just to let you know. How silly! I'm over it. Naturally, he's brought some pretty boy-toy with him who could probably get him arrested. Thinks it'll make me jealous. Ha! Oh, well. Boys will be boys. Gay boys will be gay boys, more specifically. I'm not worried about it. He won't say anything. I won't say anything. Our friendship will be a bit more tense, but that's expected. And I'm still with Len. And Vivian will move on, all right. And I'm here.

I felt compelled to leave the party for a bit. Unfortunately, I chose to leave when a few of Len's office buddies on the lower rungs of the business ladder arrived. They already think I'm a snob. So what?! I've heard them poke fun at Len for ending up with an artist, a writer. As if it's some form of punishment! I'm not all that bad, am I? A snob, yes. But aren't we all in some way? Don't deny it. Well, I guess the snob should return to the party. (*Begins to exit, then*

notices someone in the other room.) Oh, my God! (Calls out.) Why, hello, Sully! Do come in! I haven't seen you in forever! (Pauses. Turns to the audience. Starts primping himself quickly, nervously.) Oh, this should be fun. (Walks a few steps into the room when 2 as Sully (Peter Sullivan), a former lover, enters. There is a long pause. The two stare at each other, fondly remembering the past and taking in the present.)

2 (Sully): Stephen! God, it's been so long! *(Hugs Stephen.)*

1 (Stephen Flow): *(Pulls away, but keeps his hands on Sully's arms.)* So, how have you been? *(Breaks away and distracts himself.)* It feels like decades since our college days!

2: I'm doing well. Very well, actually. I met someone very soon after...us...and we're happy. We've been together for years.

1: You met someone? Really? Oh, God! What's his name?

2: *(Immediately.)* Sarah.

1: *(In faux disbelief. But he's known this all along.)* Wait. You've been with a woman?

2: Yes. And married to her, too. I "turned" heterosexual...officially...after you!

1: Oh, you traitor!

2: But I feel so much more comfortable, so much more like me, you know? I never really felt like a gay man although I was. Does that make sense?

1: *(It doesn't make sense to him.)* Oh, it does. And you were quite the gay man! What happened?

2: Well, I met Sarah and she helped me find Jesus and now I'm here: a new sexuality, a new man!

1: So, how *is* Jesus?

2: What?!

1: You said you found Jesus, so I was wondering what he was up to.

2: Don't joke with me, Stephen. I'm serious.

1: I am, too! (*Laughs.*) No, I'm just having fun, Sully. Lighten up!

2: I know you're criticizing. You're laughing at me!

1: Oh, no, I'm laughing *with* you, silly!

2: Stephen, don't do this to me. I came to your party. I want to have a good time.

1: Well, thank you for coming! But I don't remember inviting you.

2: Oh, no, but I overheard the gossip on the street. Sarah and I are visiting for a week or two and we're at the hotel around the block.

1: You ran into Vivian. He told you.

2: Yes, so Vivian was "the gossip on the street." You don't mind, do you?

1: No! I am happy to see you. I just hope Vivian and his boy toy out there aren't too much of a shock for Sarah!

2: (*Laughs.*) Believe me, Vivian is more shocked that I'm with a woman and that we have children.

1: Wait. Wait! You have kids?!

2: Oh, yeah, three boys. (*Very masculine.*) They're my pride and joy.

1: Wow. Sarah must've popped them out one right after the other!

2: (*Blushes.*) Well, two were a set of twins, George and Michael, and then the younger one, Phil, came a year afterwards.

1: Quite a little army you've got there.

2: Yes, they are.

1: And you...you don't miss it at all?

2: Miss what?

1: Oh, you know! (*Does a stereotypical, flamboyant gesture.*)

2: Nope. Not really. Sorry.

1: Not at all? (*Gets a little too close to Sully.*)

2: Oh. (*Difficult to say.*) No. (*Crosses away from Stephen, quickly.*) Well, I should get back to the party! I'm sure Sarah's wondering where I am. Wouldn't want her to find us alone in your bedroom, would we? That is what she saved me from. You and me and things like that.

1: Yes. I guess. Interesting word choice there: "saved."

2: Yeah. (*Persuasively. Defensively.*) I love her. Well, I guess I'll see you out there soon? You'll have to meet Sarah.

1: Of course. See you out there. Soon.

2: Yeah. Bye for now! (*Pauses. Then, exits.*)

1: (*Sighs. He is hurt. To the audience.*) Well, that is *very* interesting. More than I expected, I guess. He seems happy. (*Trying to convince himself.*) Good for him. I guess. (*Pulling himself together. Brashly. Defensively.*) So, I reacted like a snob. What else was I supposed to do? It's my defense mechanism. It's who I am sometimes. Or, all the time? I don't know. (*Pause.*)

Party time? Yes? I'll go. (*Begins to exit to re-enter the party, but pauses. Offstage, over the noises of the party, there is a slice of a conversation between Len and Dr. Sinjoy, Voice 2. They are not onstage. This can be a recorded conversation to boost the volume.*)

2 (Len): So, you're late, Sinjoy, old pal! Doctor's duties held you back, I guess?

2 (Dr. Sinjoy, Voice 2): Very important case had to be attended to. Sorry. Woman killed herself.

(*Stephen turns away from the door and heads back into the room. The news obviously distresses him.*)

2 (Len): Killed herself? Oh, wow.

2 (Dr. Sinjoy, Voice 2): Yes, it was very disappointing. I was very optimistic about her, but I—no, she—failed. Just couldn't live anymore. Couldn't work well with me, with others. Hopeless case.

2 (Len): Poor thing. Oh, well. Party time now, isn't it? Let's get you a drink.

(*Pause.*) May I ask how she did it?

1 (Stephen Flow): (*The noises of the party are off. Silence. Stephen gulps some of the wine down. To the audience. Trying to laugh it off as one of humanity's absurdities.*) How did she do it? How?! What a grotesque, morbid question! Is he, are we that fascinated by a suicide? We need to know every little detail of someone's misfortune. (*Mockingly pretentious.*) And must that Doctor—what's his name? Sinjoy?—bring news of a death to my party? Why death? Why now? Why here? And isn't there some patient confidentiality thing? I guess it's null and void when someone gives life up. (*To himself. Shifts to introspection.*) She gave it up. She let

go. What would have made her do such a thing? How awful! I just can't wrap my mind around it. Did she have to? Was there no other way?

And then we ask, "How?" How did she do it? We need to know. Did she...I don't know...put stones in her pocket and drown? Was she...another Virginia Woolf? (*Pauses. Begins to notice the connections.*) Virginia. Oh, God. A death. News of death at a party. (*Pauses. Notices the copy of Mrs. Dalloway by the vase of roses.*) It's all in the novel! (*Back to introspection.*) But that woman. I don't understand.

V. Woolf's Voice: But you can. You can understand it.

1 (Stephen Flow): (*To the Voice.*) Why did she do it? (*Then, to the audience. Trying to figure out the scenario as a writer.*) Did she feel alone and abandoned? Even at a party? Or, did she feel unloved? Could her husband not say it? Did she need him to say it? And then those awful doctors come in. Did they think she was crazy? Sinjoy dismissed her so easily. Was she forced into anything? She did something. Or, she heard something, saw something. Was it there? She said something, didn't she? And then they forced themselves on her. Forced her to give it all up. Respectable men, my ass. I know what they can do with their prescriptions and pills. Hear a voice and you're done for. You're all alone. Locked in. Brainwashed. All alone. All alone when you hear voices, see things, say things, try to communicate.

V. Woolf's Voice: You can understand. You know.

1 (Stephen Flow): (*Reasonably. Logically.*) I hear voices. I see things. I create things. I create stories. I communicate them. I try to, at least. I write! And it could be madness. Or it couldn't be. I don't take pills. But she, that woman, did. And she was all alone. *She* was all alone. All

alone...*(Lights dim around the room. Stronger spot on the rose.)*...with the rose. *(Stephen nods and begins to play out the suicide scenario. He is in communion with the woman. He walks slowly to the rose and picks it out. Raises it in the air, then brings it down and caresses his face, body, arms, hands with its petals. Then, accidentally pricks himself.)* OW! Oh, God damn it! *(Looks back and forth from the rose to his finger. Pulls the stem towards his wrist and begins to caress it gently. As he reaches the point when he would slash his wrists as the woman did, he is full of passionate fury, but stops.)* Yes! That's it! *(Pulls the flower to his lips and caresses his lips with the petals. Sighs. Begins to release the passionate moment of communion. To the audience.)* Oh, God, no! I couldn't. She did. I love it too much! *(Laughs. Mockingly melodramatic.)* Life! Life!! *(Sighs. Smiles. Holds the rose. Turns to the audience.)* Yes, I've lived my life. I've written. *(Places the rose back in the vase.)* I've created. And I'll go on doing it. I love it too much. Too much to give it all up. Too much to let it all go.

V. Woolf's Voice: The writer lives.

1 (Stephen Flow): *(To the Voice. Sassy.)* Yes, the writer lives. In two or three worlds, maybe, but he lives. He won't cut his wrists on this beautiful rose. But he'll create something out of it. I'll create something out of it. And it'll be for you, Virginia. And for you, brave woman. And for me. *(To the audience.)* And for you. Yes, I'll write it. *(Smiles.)* Or have I done that already? *(Laughs knowingly. Pause. Relieved.)* Finally! *(Notices the wine glass.)* I do have a party to get to, don't I? And so do you! You're all here. I'm here. And the party is here. *(Runs to the door. Calls out.)* Open the wine! Turn up the music! Dance! Sing! Chat! Oh, how I love a party! *(Pauses. Begins to hum "Cabaret" from Cabaret. Then, sings as he runs to the*

copy of Mrs. Dalloway and chooses a specific passage to read. He is making connections.)

“What good is sitting alone in your room? / Come hear the music play... / Life is a cabaret, old, chum, / And I love a...” *(Stops as the volume of the music, voices and glasses from outside the door increases again. Then, specific voices rise above all the noise. They are offstage. They are having fun, being dramatic. The voices can be recorded.)*

2 (Len): Where is Stephen?

2 (Sully): We’re missing our hostess.

2 (Vivian): He is the hostess!

2 (Len): This is his party. He is....

(Stephen rushes to the entrance to the other room with the glass of wine in one hand.)

1 (Stephen Flow): *(Joyously. Rapturously. Fabulously dramatic. Calls out over the party noises, then shouts around the room while dancing freely.)* Yes, here’s Stephen Flow! Here’s your hostess! *(Pause.)* Here’s your Mrs. Dalloway! Here I am! *(Turns around and faces the audience. He smiles and raises his glass to them.)*

1 (Stephen Flow): *(Triumphantly. Confidently.)* Here I am. *(Exits.)*

(The volume of the music increases as does the laughter, chatter, and clinking of glasses. Lights slowly fade, but a strong spot remains on the rose and the novel. The noises soften and then fade out. There is a moment or two of silence and then the Voice of Virginia Woolf fills the room.)

Virginia Woolf’s Voice: So, I’ll ask you again, how are you?

(Blackout.)

End of Play

The Mrs. Dalloway Confessions
Props List

Set Props:

6 black boxes (7 for the party scene)

Hand props:

Black messenger bag (Stephen Flow)
Copy of *Mrs. Dalloway* (SF)
Notebook (SF)
Pen (SF)
Cell Phone (in the messenger bag) (SF)
Copy of *Vogue* (Helen White)
30s men's suit jacket (HW)*
30s men's hat (HW)*
30s women's overcoat (SF)*
30s women's hat (SF)*
30s women's gloves (SF)*
Women's heels (SF)*
1 bouquet of white roses wrapped in white tissue and cellophane (Sierra Smith)
White apron with pink trim (SS)
1 vase with white roses (SS)
Paper bag with bottles of pills and 1 bottle of water (Rick Smith)
3 bouquets of roses (pink, yellow, and white) wrapped in white tissue and cellophane (SF)
1 red rose with large, red ribbon attached wrapped in white tissue and cellophane (RS)
Hand bandage (SS)
1 vase with peach roses (SF)*
1 wine glass (SF)
2 wine glasses (Leonard Darway)
Bottle of wine (LD)

(* = pre-set)

The Mrs. Dalloway Confessions
Costume Plot

(In order of appearance)

Stephen Flow:

Light pink button-down shirt
Burgundy, light V-neck sweater (over shoulders)
Low rise, boot-cut dark blue denim
Black belt with silver buckle
Black “sports fusion” shoes
Black socks
Silver thumb ring
White shell necklace
Black messenger bag

-As Virginia Woolf (1930s):

Mauve ankle-length dress with pink sash
Gray overcoat with white pinstripes
Gray, floppy hat with pink ribbon
White scarf
White gloves
Sheer stockings
Black heels

-Party outfit:

Turquoise button-down shirt
Black, light V-neck sweater (over shoulders)
Black, boot-cut dress pants with turquoise pinstripes
Black belt with silver buckle
Black dress socks
Black dress shoes
Silver thumb ring

Helen White:

White button-down shirt
Red V-neck sweater
Dark blue denim
Dark brown belt
Dark brown heels

-As Leonard Woolf (1930s):

Light brown tweed suit
White button-down shirt
Light brown vest
Dark brown bow tie
Dark brown brimmed hat
Dark brown belt with gold buckle
Dark brown dress socks
Brown shoes

Vivian East:

Striped yellow and white button-down shirt
Loosely tied yellow and orange tie
Low rise, black flare denim
Black belt with silver buckle
Black sneakers

Sierra Smith:

Brown housedress with pink buttons and pink/brown sash
Sheer stockings
Brown or pink short heels
Pearl necklace
Gold wedding ring

White apron with pink trim (indoors)

Rick Smith:

Dark gray button-down shirt
Blue-gray suit jacket
Blue-gray suit pants
Black belt with gold buckle
Black dress socks
Black dress shoes
Gold wedding ring

Len (Leonard Darway):

Dark blue button-down shirt
Black dress pants
Black silk tie
Black belt with silver buckle
Black dress socks
Black dress shoes

Sully (Peter Sullivan):

Light blue button-down shirt
Gray pull-over sweater with a zipper at the top
Khakis
Brown belt with gold buckle
Brown socks
Brown loafers
Gold wedding ring

The Mrs. Dalloway Confessions
Annotated Bibliography

Alsop, Rachel, Annette Fitzsimons, and Kathleen Lennon. *Theorizing Gender*. Malden: Polity, 2002.

This book is a theoretical overview of approaches to gender, especially focusing on how we “become gendered” and the political and social consequences of gendering. Although the authors describe a variety of theories and reveal their contradictions, they attempt to present a more or less unified field of theory that is adaptable and ever-changing. This book also more clearly explained Judith Butler’s theories of performativity to me than her own book, *Gender Trouble*.

Bronfen, Elisabeth, and Misha Kvaka, eds. *Feminist Consequences: Theory for the New Century*. New York: Columbia, 2001.

This collection of critical works questions contemporary feminism and its practical applications in the real world. As a male writer queering a female writer’s text and focusing on gender theories, I wanted to explore contemporary feminist thought and find where I fit as a male into this world where sex and gender lines may still need to be drawn in order to have a successful feminism.

Dore, Heidi. “To the Lighthouse and Beyond: A Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury Trail.” *24-Hour Museum*. 15 April 2006.
<http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/trout_gfx_en/TRA15139.html>.

This is a visual resource on the web that maps out various locations within a historical timeline of Woolf’s life. This includes photographs of Woolf’s houses and the Bloomsbury Group’s favored meeting. There are also links to other web resources like the National Portrait Gallery, which displays portraits of most of the members of the Bloomsbury Group, some of which are painted by Vanessa Bell, Virginia’s sister. This is a great background resource that summarizes and interestingly depicts Woolf’s life in pictures.

Kukil, Karen V., and Jessica Bumpous.Bumpous. “Woolf in Her World: A Pen and a Press of Her Own.” Smith College Libraries. *Thirteenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*. June 2003. Materials from the Elizabeth P. Richardson Bloomsbury Iconography Collection and the Frances Hooper Collection of Virginia Woolf Books and Manuscripts.

14 Mar. 2006.

<<http://www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/rarebook/exhibitions/penandpress/index.htm>>.

This webpage of an exhibit at the Virginia Woolf Conference in 2003 provides a variety of primary resources about Woolf and her works, including photographs, letters, and book jacket art. Along with the visuals, Kukil and Bumpous provide brief descriptions of the images and how they relate to a history of Woolf's life and writings. There is a very interesting section on *Mrs. Dalloway* that includes two of Woolf's letters which indicate her harsh disapproval of doctors and her nervousness about her appearance.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

I discovered Butler through my queer theory studies, even though she considers herself a feminist rather than a queer theorist. However, her theories of gender performativity as opposed to "performance" fit perfectly into my reasons for gender bending throughout the performance of my play. Through acts of performativity—as opposed to actually "becoming" the opposite sex and promoting willing suspension of disbelief—the actors call attention to our assumptions about sex and gender and undermine their "naturalness."

Cunningham, Michael. *The Hours*. New York: Picador, 1998.

Although I wanted to present a Virginia Woolf who is very different from Cunningham's in my play, this novel is valuable due to Cunningham's very specific research into Woolf's life at the time when she wrote *Mrs. Dalloway*. The novel is also a great stepping stone in learning how to modernize something old and make it very fresh and new.

Dobie, Ann B. *Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism*. Boston: Thompson, 2002.

This introduction to literary theories provides a brief and clear definition of each mode of criticism and then explains how to apply it in writing. This was a great resource to use to discover what schools of criticism could be applied to *Mrs. Dalloway*. Then, my literary interpretations of the novel could be translated onto the stage.

Hodge, Francis. *Play Directing: Analysis, Communication, and Style*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1988.

This book was a constant companion to me while I was directing the play because it is one of the only directing books that explores arena staging and gives concrete examples of how to stage a play within an arena setting. It especially focuses on how the arena setting allows for a communal experience, where the audience cannot completely suspend their disbelief because

they can see other audience members and their reactions. Therefore, the director and actors can use these reactions as tools to make what they are doing or thinking or feeling clear to the opposite end of the room, even when their backs are turned to those audience members.

Hussey, Mark, ed. *Major Authors on CD-ROM: Virginia Woolf*. Woodbridge, CT: Primary Source Media, 1996.

This CD-Rom includes everything a Woolf scholar would ever need: her novels, her diaries, her letters, her essays, and everything that she ever wrote. I used this to look at Woolf's letters as well as her other publications at the time that she wrote and published *Mrs. Dalloway*. This was also a valuable resource for locating quotes to inspire the play and to include in the director's notes. I found this resource most amazing because it truly revealed the vast amount of writing that Woolf produced throughout her lifetime, including the various editions of her novels that she edited over and over again.

Marler, Regina. *Bloomsbury Pie: The Making of the Bloomsbury Boom*. New York: Henry Holt, 1997.

This is a very fair and balanced history of the Bloomsbury Group, the group of intellectuals in the early 20th Century to which both Leonard and Virginia Woolf belonged. Although the group has been both revered and hated, Marler provides both sides of the story and gives the reader the opportunities to see why such polar opposite reactions occurred throughout the rest of the twentieth century.

Mepham, John. *Criticism in Focus: Virginia Woolf*. New York: St. Martin's, 1992.

This is a very reliable companion in the first days of researching Woolf because it provides a brief but vastly encompassing history of critical approaches to Woolf and her works. Mepham covers every new contemporary literary theory and describes how it has been or could be applied to Woolf's writings. He also provides an extensive bibliography of works that study Woolf specifically through the various theories.

Morland, Iain and Annabelle Willox, eds. *Readers in Cultural Criticism: Queer Theory*. New York: Palgrave, 2005.

This is a great and clearly mapped out introduction to the very complex and constantly internally-challenging and changing world of queer theory. This is an especially valuable resource because it applies queer theory to all aspects of culture, not only literature. I was able to see how I could use queer theory as literary criticism and theatrical technique.

Nathan, Monique. *Virginia Woolf*. New York: Evergreen, 1961.

This is a very brief, but detailed biography of Virginia Woolf that includes a short anthology of her works. Nathan specifically focuses on the major events that occurred while Woolf wrote certain novels. The biography is mostly valuable for its history of Woolf's life in photographs.

Poole, Roger. *The Unknown Virginia Woolf*. New York: Cambridge, 1978.

This scholarly work/pseudo biography was extremely enlightening because it only relied on clues from Woolf's texts to create a history of her life and her "madness." Although some of Poole's arguments are debatable, his work as a piece of reader-response criticism is brilliant, never presuming that he is completely correct, yet defending each statement with segments of multiple texts. He proves that Virginia Woolf was constantly revealing and defending herself throughout her works.

Smith, Patricia Juliana. "'This Very Queer Knowledge': Virginia Woolf's Narratives of Female Homoerotic Desire." *Lesbian Panic: Homoeroticism in Modern British Women's Fiction*. New York: Columbia, 1997. 17-74.

The first chapter of this book only covers the lesbian elements in most of Virginia Woolf's novels. Smith not only focuses on Woolf's life as a lesbian, but how her characters react to lesbian situations. She especially studies Mrs. Dalloway's past with Sally Seton and the mentor/tutee relationship between Mrs. Kilman and Elizabeth in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Going beyond lesbian studies, though, she also explores the femininity and homosexual references found in Peter Walsh's and Septimus Smith's storylines.

Sullivan, Nikki. *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*. New York: New York U, 2003.

This book was another valuable introduction to queer theory that introduced to me Judith Butler's theories. It also provides a general history of queer theory and how it emerged from a gay and lesbian political and historical context. Sullivan continually emphasizes queer theory's future possibilities due to its inability to remain as one, monolithic entity that cannot be changed. Although she mainly uses cinematic examples, Sullivan does introduce the reader to queer theory's other cultural applications like the theatre.

Thomas, Calvin, ed. *Straight with a Twist: Queer Theory and the Subject of Heterosexuality*. Chicago: U of Illinois, 2000.

This book specifically considers heterosexuality in queer theory. The queer theorists throughout the book consider how men have learned from feminism and thus how straights could learn from queer theory to question heterosexuality, its contexts, and its reproduction. These scholars also discuss the queering of heterosexual texts. I used this text specifically to explore how queer

theory goes beyond gay and lesbian studies and to understand what messages I wanted to communicate about heterosexuality—specifically its relation to Butler’s theories of performativity—in my play through a queer point of view. Sexuality, too, can be performative.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Writer’s Diary*. Ed. Leonard Woolf. New York: Signet, 1968.

Although I read both Volumes Two and Three of Virginia Woolf’s *Diary*, this collection of her diary entries that are specifically about her writings as well as her reactions to others’ writings gives a brief but overall view of Woolf’s entire life as a writer, especially since time does not always permit reading every single volume of her *Diary*. One must be wary of the editor’s cuts, though.

Woolf, Virginia. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Bell, Olivier, and Andrew McNeillie, eds. Vol. 2 (1920-1924). New York: Harvest, 1978.

The selections from this volume of the *Diary* explore Virginia’s writing process as she wrote and prepared to publish *Mrs. Dalloway*. Woolf continually emphasizes her thoughts and feelings about what she believes the critical reception will be. Interestingly enough, there are only about thirty short references to *Mrs. Dalloway* throughout the *Diary*. However, the reader can still get a sense of her writing process, especially her nervousness about representing Septimus Smith and his “madness” properly. She has continually shifting mood swings about the novel, but relaxes with other writings. I find my own work meager compared to how much she wrote during *Mrs. Dalloway*!

Woolf, Virginia. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*. Bell, Olivier, and Andrew McNeillie, eds. Vol. 3 (1925-1930). New York: Harvest, 1978.

In this volume of the *Diary*, Woolf expresses her reactions to the publication and critical reception—both favorable and disastrous reviews—of *Mrs. Dalloway*. She often muses on how famous or infamous this novel will make her. As expected, she is more excited about the positive reviews while she harshly criticizes the negative reviewers. She continually notes that the novel is a financial success, selling well in the bookstores. Woolf also notes how fortunate she is to have the Hogarth Press and no editors except for Leonard, who is not as much of a hindrance as most male editors would be. She is thrilled to receive her personal profit from the novel, which was considered her own money—not Leonard’s—to spend as she wished.

Woolf, Virginia. *Moments of Being: A Collection of Autobiographical Writing*. Ed. Jeanne Schulkind. New York: Harcourt, 1985.

Besides the five volumes of *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, these previously unpublished autobiographical essays by Virginia Woolf give the greatest insights into Woolf’s life and view

of her writings. Although the reader should be aware that Woolf may be exaggerating or fictionalizing her life, he is still able to see Woolf as she really was, beyond the guise of fiction. The reader does not have to decipher any hidden meanings in the text here.

Woolf, Virginia, et al. *The Mrs. Dalloway Reader*. Ed. Francine Prose. New York: Harcourt, 2003.

This collection of scholarly material and personal reactions to *Mrs. Dalloway* including the text itself plus Woolf's collection of short stories, *Mrs. Dalloway's Party*, is an invaluable asset to research into the novel. Aside from *Mrs. Dalloway* itself, Woolf's Introduction to the novel, which is not included very often, is a most amazing primary resource because it is a combination of Woolf's thoughts, feelings, and opinions about the novel all condensed into one defense that brilliantly summarizes what Woolf is attempting to say through *Mrs. Dalloway*.