



To the Lighthouse

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General Summary

- Centers on the Ramsay family and their visits to the Isle of Skye in Scotland
- Takes place in their summer home there
- Ramsays are joined by the various friends and colleagues and there is a dinner party
- 10 years later the Ramsays return
- They sail to the lighthouse
- Lily finishes the painting that she has been working on for the duration of the book

Context of Writing

Published in 1927-post WW1

- During war, role of women changed: increased rights over property, education, local politics, marriage/divorce
 - o A lot of men died; disillusionment, death and loss of self
 - “home based work”-sewing of shoe making in factories
 - “sweated industries”-long work hours and low wages
 - o Social evils and authority over subjects
 - Gender roles and marital entrenchment
 - Tripartite Structure
 - o The Window-pre WW1
 - o Time Passes-during WW1
 - o The Lighthouse-post WW1



Key Quotes

- “...at the very moment when it was painful to be reminded of the inadequacy of human relationships, that the most perfect was flawed...” (40).
 - Everything that looks beautiful is flawed
 - Resembles Woolf’s vision of the world- no matter how beautiful it is, it is still destroyed
- “When darkness fell, the stroke of the Lighthouse... came now in the softer light of spring mixed with moonlight gliding gently as if it laid its caress and lingered stealthily and looked and and came lovingly again” (132-133).
 - Shows the consistency of the Lighthouse and the support it offers to the onlookers
 - Guides them home

Themes!

- Art as a Means of Preservation
- The Subjective Nature of Reality
- The Restorative Effects of Beauty
- Oedipus Complex
 - Parental issues → loves mothers

Motifs!

- Love
- Time
- Manipulation
- Identity
- Memory
- Brackets
- Gender-The Differing Behaviors of Men and Women