

Character analysis: mrs. dalloway

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Mrs. Dalloway It is apparent throughout the Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway that the character development and complexity of the female characters of the story are concentrated on far more than their male counterparts. It is my feelings that the magnitude of this character development comes about because of the observations and feelings of the main character Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway. From the beginning we get this description that she has a feeling of having an extremely good sense of character yet she is shallow, admitting she does many things not for herself but for the sake of other's opinions. I think that the other female characters portray the qualities and good traits that Clarissa wished that she herself possessed. They also serve to parallel and reveal Clarissa's attitude and personality making her persona more dynamic. Starting with the character that I feel represents what Clarissa wishes she could be more like is Sally Seton. Not only was Sally the object of attraction to Clarissa, but the two of them had dreams of changing the world. Sally is a free-spirited rebel that Clarissa wishes she could be more like. Because Clarissa turned out to be the way that everyone, like Peter, pretty much imagined her to it is Sally and her memories that serve as an escape. On the inside Clarissa wishes that she did follow through with her and Sally's plans to change the world and that they would have stayed together. Throughout the beginning of the novel we see Sally only through Clarissa's memories, but at the party, although older, she still doesn't have the same sort of restraints that Clarissa does. We discover that like Clarissa she has married, and she is the mother to five sons, this is a fate that both of them considered to be a catastrophe during the summer at Bourton. It is obvious that both women have conformed to the ideals of English society, but Sally

still believes that speaking your mind is the best contribution one can make. Clarissa also seems to be disappointed that Sally has chosen the path she has, it is as if it would have been better if Sally only lived in her memories. I think that Clarissa is jealous of Sally and regrets the lifestyle that she has chosen wishing that they could have fulfilled that one moment of passion that came from their kiss. Another female character that has a huge impact on the novel is Lucrezia Smith. Although she never meets Clarissa she serves to show the restraints that society can create. Rezia is burdened and tied down to the wreck that the war has made of her husband Septimus. She represents another victim of English society that is being held back. She is young and full of life and should not grow old with the same regrets as Clarissa. But because of her dutifulness to Septimus she will probably do just that. She is Clarissa in a young woman's body, and as far as we know she has never liberated, not even for a short period of time like Sally did for Clarissa. Lady Bruton represents the extreme of Clarissa's conforming to society. Although she is everything that Clarissa truly doesn't want to be at the same time she is exactly what Clarissa desires. We can clearly see this when Clarissa is frustrated and jealous of the time that Richard spends with her and the exclusive lunch that they have. But it is not Richard's affections that Clarissa is concerned with but the fact that she wasn't invited. Lady Bruton is the epitome of what Clarissa has become; a socialite whose main concern is a frilly party. Despite her internal struggle to escape this she only manages to show that she is deeper in her memories. Elizabeth Dalloway is Clarissa's daughter and is an object of struggle for Clarissa. Elizabeth prefers spending time with her history teacher Mrs. Killman and her dog. She is

religious because of her tutor's influence and is close with her father.

Clarissa seems dumbfounded and angry with Elizabeth and Mrs. Killman's relationship. Not only does her daughter prefer the company of her tutor as a female role model but has a strong relationship with Richard that Clarissa lacks. Elizabeth is also torn between Killman and her mother. She realizes that her mother has made attempts to make nice with Killman but the tutor's self pity is overwhelming. Like Sally, Elizabeth seems to be another person that Clarissa wishes to have kept a better maintained relationship with. Doris Killman as mentioned earlier is Elizabeth's teacher. She is of German descent and has faced many hardships from anti-German discrimination following the war. She is devoted to her religion and to Elizabeth, it is a bit off the strong sentiments she has for the young girl. It is obvious that Clarissa does not like Mrs. Killman but does make a stronger effort than her to be friendly. Killman is extremely envious of Clarissa and shows that although she lives a non secular life she is still caught up in the frivolous things that Clarissa takes for granted. Ellie Henderson is Clarissa's less privileged cousin. She embodies how shallow Clarissa really is. When word that Ellie is coming to the party Clarissa is displeased, she thinks her cousin is dull and can't even stomach the thought of her being at the party. Ellie is not welcomed in her cousin's house and feels out of place for the entire time. This just goes to show how much of a snob Clarissa really is. Daisy Simmons is Peter's young lover. She is married to a high ranking official in the Indian army and reminds me a little bit of Clarissa being married to higher society men. Daisy however has fallen for Peter, she is naïve youth. The last character that I am choosing to mention is the unnamed older woman that lives across from Clarissa. At

certain moments Clarissa watches her in her daily routine doing things like retiring to bed. She is a profound character in the sense that she represents that only time that Clarissa seems content. It is clear that Woolf definitely has put more concentration on the female characters in the novel. She portrays such a cross section of woman that they all play off of one another to make you think about the kind of person that you want to be. Clarissa although regretful seems to love the path she has chosen. The multitude of developed female characters creates a mirror from youth to age, paths unexplored to paths chosen, society restraints and regrets.