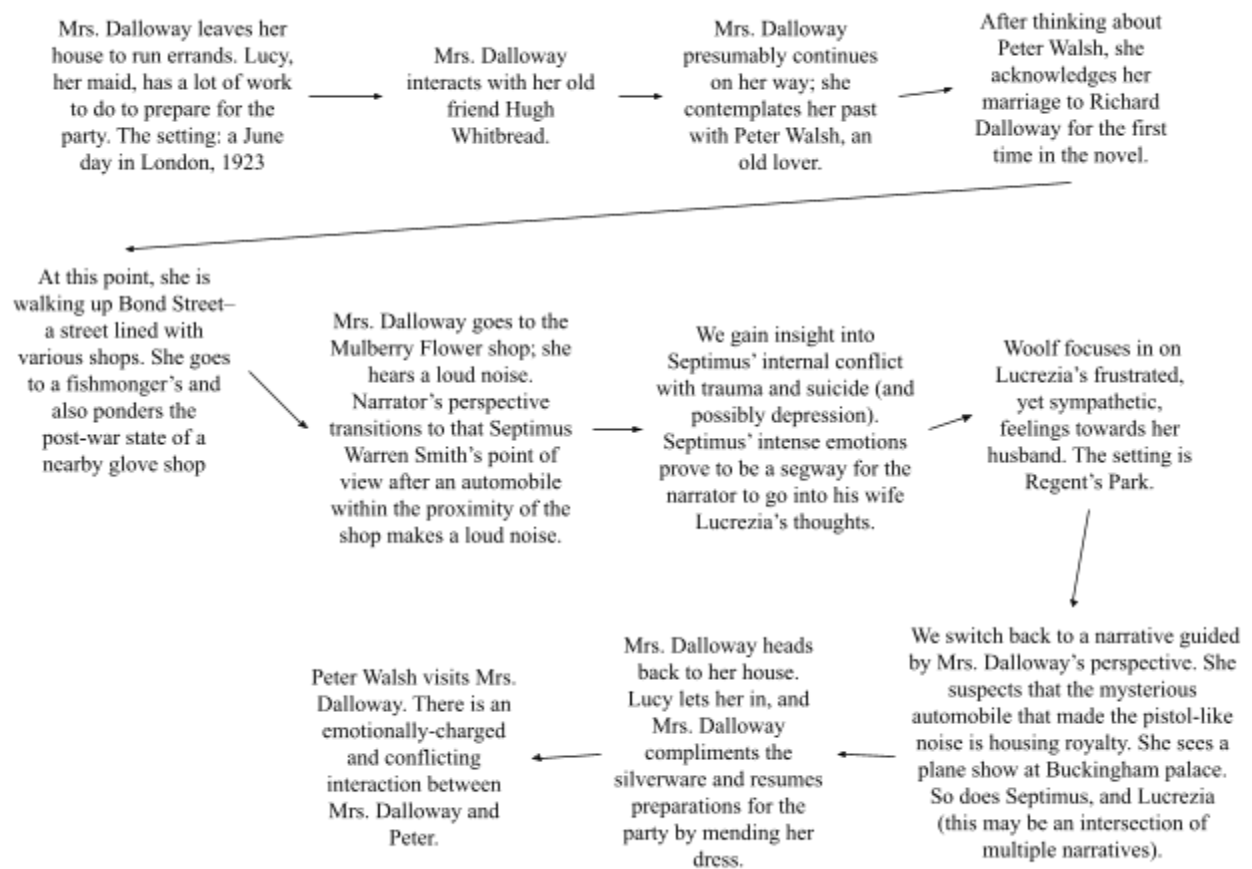


## Part I

*Prompt: Map the main events in the plot. (Character descriptions optional).*

### Plot Map



## Part II

*Prompt: Who is Septimus Smith? What internal conflicts does he struggle with?*

In an early scene of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, we are introduced to the peculiar character Septimus Warren Smith via a leap from Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway's perspective. The trigger for the leap between these two characters is the startling sound of an automobile in the street near the flower shop that Mrs. Dalloway was browsing for her upcoming party. As omnisciently narrated from the perspective of Mrs. Dalloway, "oh!- a pistol shot in the street outside! 'Dear, those motor cars,' said Miss Pym..." (Woolf 13). On the very next page, a transition consisting of discussion surrounding the mysterious resident of the automobile leads us to Septimus Smith.

Septimus is characterized as an anxious and run-down 30-year old man. Perhaps one of the first eye-catching components of his description is the stark contrast between his youthful age and the emphasis that Woolf places on his aura of uneasiness, "...with hazel eyes which had the look of apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive..." (Woolf 14). This indicates that he may have a complicated history— one which we have yet to discover more details about. Considering the time period and the individual's age, we can theorize that his past may have been negatively affected by World War I.

As Woolf reveals more and more of his behavior, our theory of the influence that World War I has had on Septimus is further solidified. In the aftermath of the loud noise from the automobile, we witness Septimus, frozen in his place, and whose world takes on a state of equal motionlessness: "Septimus Warren Smith, who found himself unable to pass... everything had

come to a standstill.” (Woolf 14). Considering that it was this pistol-like sound that induced such a (seemingly involuntary) response from Septimus, we can build on our theory and conclude that he may be suffering from shell-shock, or a similar trauma, as a veteran of the war.

Further evidence of Septimus’ mental suffering due to the war is revealed from the perspective of Septimus’ wife, Lucrezia’s thoughts, “...she could not sit beside him when he stared so... she saw him sitting in his shabby overcoat alone... hunched up, staring...” (Woolf 23). Septimus’ repetitively absent-minded and dull behavior (which could be, in tandem with anxiety, symptoms of trauma) continues to play into the possibility that he is a victim of post-traumatic stress disorder. Additionally, as Lucrezia mentions Septimus’ desire to commit suicide, “...it was cowardly for a man to say he would kill himself...” (Woolf 23), we gain a deeper insight into the internal conflict he faces— one that grapples between leading a life of suffering in opposition to potentially finding peace in death.