

THE HOURS

Clarissa & Richard

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

CLARISSA unlocks the door and enters holding a bouquet of flowers.

RICHARD
Mrs. Dalloway. It's you!

CLARISSA
Yes. It's me! It's me!

RICHARD
Come in.

CLARISSA
Oh, Richard, it's a beautiful morning! How about we let in a little more light?

She draws the curtains, makes her way over to RICHARD, who sits in a dark corner.

RICHARD
It's still morning?

CLARISSA
Yes, it is.

RICHARD
Have I died? Good morning, my dear.

CLARISSA
Any visitors?

Clarissa sets up the flowers and cleans as they talk.

RICHARD
Yes.

CLARISSA
Are they still here?

RICHARD
No, they've gone.

CLARISSA
How'd they look?

RICHARD
Today? Sort of like black fire. Sort of light and dark at the same time. There was one that was an electrified jellyfish. There was singing. May have been Greek.

CLARISSA

So, the ceremony is at 5. Do you remember? And then... the party is right after. They did bring you breakfast, didn't they?

RICHARD

What a question...of course.

CLARISSA

Richard, you did eat it?

RICHARD

Well, can you see it? Is it here? Is there any breakfast lying around?

CLARISSA

No, I don't see it.

RICHARD

Well, then I must have eaten it, mustn't I?

CLARISSA

I suppose.

RICHARD

Does it matter?

CLARISSA

Of course it matters. You know what the doctors say. Have you been skipping pills?

RICHARD

Clarissa, I can't take this.

CLARISSA

Take what?

RICHARD

Trying be proud and brave in front of everybody.

CLARISSA

Oh honey, it's not a performance.

RICHARD

Of course it is! I got the prize for my performance.

CLARISSA

Well, that is nonsense.

RICHARD

I got the prize for having AIDS and going nuts and being brave about it! I actually got the prize for having come through!

CLARISSA

It's not true.

RICHARD

For surviving!

CLARISSA

It's not true!

RICHARD

That's what I got the prize for! Do you think they would have given it to me if I were healthy?!

CLARISSA

Yes, as a matter of fact I do!

RICHARD

Is it here somewhere?

CLARISSA

What?

RICHARD

The prize? I'd like to look at it.

CLARISSA

No, you haven't gotten it yet. It's tonight.

RICHARD

Are you sure? I remember the ceremony perfectly. I seem to have fallen out of time.

CLARISSA

Richard. Richard. It's a party. It's only a party. Populated entirely by people who respect and admire you.

RICHARD

Ha, small party, is it? Select party, is it?

CLARISSA

Your friends.

RICHARD

I thought I lost all my friends. I thought I drove my friends crazy. Oh, Mrs. Dalloway... always giving parties... to cover the silence.

CLARISSA

Richard... you won't need to do anything - all you have to do is appear... sit on the sofa. And I will be there. This is a group of people who wanna tell you your work is going to live.

RICHARD

Oh is it? Is my work going to live? I can't go through it, Clarissa.

CLARISSA

Why do you say that?

RICHARD

I can't!

CLARISSA

Why?

RICHARD

Because I wanted to be a writer, that's all.

CLARISSA

So?

RICHARD

I wanted to write about it all. Everything that happens in a moment. The way the flowers look when you carry them in your arms. This towel - how it smells, how it feels... it's thread. All our feelings, yours and mine. The history of it. Who we once were. Everything in the world. Everything all mixed up. Like it's all mixed up now. And I failed. I failed. No matter what you start with, it ends up being so much less. Sheer fucking pride. And stupidity. We want everything, don't we?

CLARISSA

I suppose we do.

RICHARD
You kissed me on a beach.

CLARISSA
Yeah.

RICHARD
Do you remember? How many years ago.

CLARISSA
Of course I do.

RICHARD
What did you want then? Come closer.

CLARISSA
I'm right here.

RICHARD
Come closer. Would you please? Take my hand. Would you be angry...

CLARISSA
Would I be angry if you didn't show up at the party?

RICHARD
Would you be angry if I died?

CLARISSA
If you died?

RICHARD
Who is this party for?

CLARISSA
What do you mean who's it for? Why are you asking? What are you trying to say?

RICHARD
I am not trying to say anything. I'm saying, I think I'm only staying alive to satisfy you.

CLARISSA
Well, so that is what we do. That is what people do - they stay alive for each other. The doctors told you - you don't need to die. They told you. You can live like this for years.

RICHARD
Well, exactly!

CLARISSA
I don't accept this. I don't accept
what you say.

She grabs her things to leave.

RICHARD
Oh, and it's for you to decide, is
it? How long have you been doing
that? How many years... coming to
the apartment... What about your
own life? What about Sally? Just
wait till I die, and you'll have to
think of yourself. How are you
going to like that?

CLARISSA
Richard...it would be great if you
did come to the party, if you felt
well enough to come. Just to let
you know that I am making the crab
thing, not that I imagine it makes
any difference to you.

RICHARD
Of course it makes a difference, I
love the crab thing. Clarissa!

CLARISSA
Yes...

She goes to him. They kiss.

CLARISSA (CONT'D)
I'll be back at 3.30 and will help
you get dressed. *Three thirty.*

RICHARD
Wonderful!

She leaves.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Wonderful.