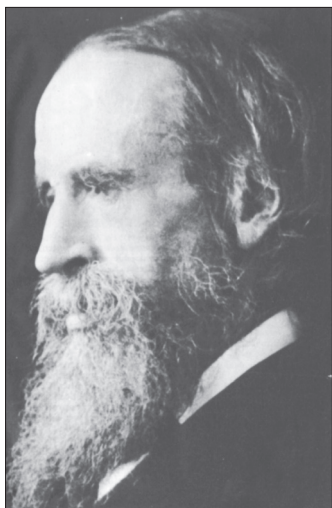


Contents

Jacob's Room	I
<i>Chapter 1</i>	3
<i>Chapter 2</i>	11
<i>Chapter 3</i>	27
<i>Chapter 4</i>	45
<i>Chapter 5</i>	63
<i>Chapter 6</i>	73
<i>Chapter 7</i>	83
<i>Chapter 8</i>	91
<i>Chapter 9</i>	101
<i>Chapter 10</i>	115
<i>Chapter 11</i>	125
<i>Chapter 12</i>	135
<i>Chapter 13</i>	163
<i>Chapter 14</i>	175
<i>Note on the Text</i>	177
<i>Notes</i>	177
Extra Material on <i>Jacob's Room</i>	183
<i>Virginia Woolf's Life</i>	185
<i>Virginia Woolf's Works</i>	197
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	209



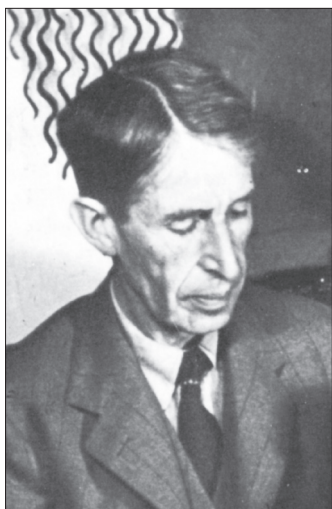
Virginia Woolf (1882–1941)



Leslie Stephen,
Virginia's father



Julia Duckworth Stephen,
Virginia's mother



Leonard Woolf,
Virginia's husband

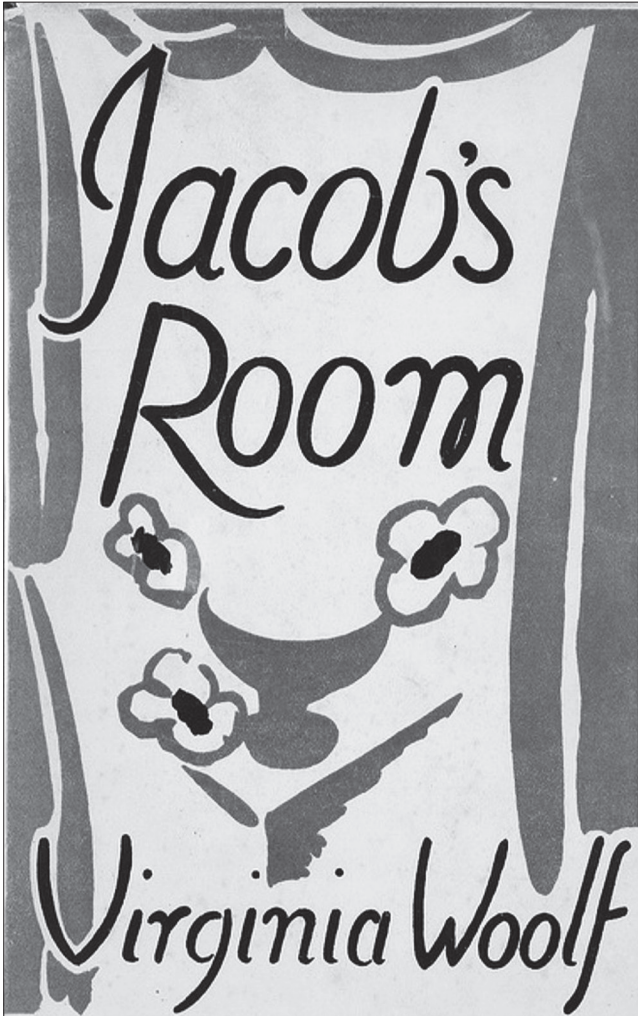


Vanessa Bell,
Virginia's sister



Talland House, the Stephens' summer house in St Ives, the inspiration for the Ramsays' house in *To the Lighthouse* (above) and Monk's House, the Woolfs' Sussex cottage (below)





Front cover of the first edition
of *Jacob's Room* (Hogarth Press, 1922)

Jacob's Room

Chapter 1

“SO OF COURSE,” wrote Betty Flanders, pressing her heels rather deeper in the sand, “there was nothing for it but to leave.”

Slowly welling from the point of her gold nib, pale-blue ink dissolved the full stop – for there her pen stuck, her eyes fixed, and tears slowly filled them. The entire bay quivered; the lighthouse wobbled; and she had the illusion that the mast of Mr Connor’s little yacht was bending like a wax candle in the sun. She winked quickly. Accidents were awful things. She winked again. The mast was straight; the waves were regular; the lighthouse was upright; but the blot had spread.

“...Nothing for it but to leave,” she read.

“Well, if Jacob doesn’t want to play” (the shadow of Archer, her eldest son, fell across the notepaper and looked blue on the sand, and she felt chilly – it was the third of September already) “if Jacob doesn’t want to play” – what a horrid blot! It must be getting late.

“Where *is* that tiresome little boy?” she said. “I don’t see him. Run and find him. Tell him to come at once.”

“...but mercifully,” she scribbled, ignoring the full stop, “everything seems satisfactorily arranged, packed though we are like herrings in a barrel, and forced to stand the perambulator, which the landlady quite naturally won’t allow...”

Such were Betty Flanders’s letters to Captain Barfoot – many-paged, tear-stained. Scarborough is seven hundred miles from Cornwall: Captain Barfoot is in Scarborough: Seabrook is dead. Tears made all the dahlias in her garden undulate in red waves and flashed the glasshouse in her eyes, and spangled the kitchen with bright knives, and made Mrs Jarvis, the rector’s wife, think at church, while the hymn tune played and Mrs Flanders bent low over her little boys’ heads, that

marriage is a fortress and widows stray solitary in the open fields, picking up stones, gleaned a few golden straws, lonely, unprotected, poor creatures. Mrs Flanders had been a widow these two years.

“Ja-cob! Ja-cob!” Archer shouted.

“Scarborough,” Mrs Flanders wrote on the envelope, and dashed a bold line beneath; it was her native town – the hub of the universe. But a stamp? She ferreted in her bag, then held it up mouth downwards, then fumbled in her lap, all so vigorously that Charles Steele in the Panama hat suspended his paintbrush.

Like the antennae of some irritable insect, it positively trembled. Here was that woman moving – actually going to get up – confound her! He struck the canvas a hasty violet-black dab. For the landscape needed it. It was too pale – greys flowing into lavenders, and one star or a white gull suspended just so – too pale as usual. The critics would say it was too pale, for he was an unknown man exhibiting obscurely, a favourite with his landladies’ children, wearing a cross on his watch chain, and much gratified if his landladies liked his pictures – which they often did.

“Ja-cob! Ja-cob!” Archer shouted.

Exasperated by the noise, yet loving children, Steele picked nervously at the dark little coils on his palette.

“I saw your brother – I saw your brother,” he said, nodding his head, as Archer lagged past him, trailing his spade and scowling at the old gentleman in spectacles.

“Over there – by the rock,” Steele muttered, with his brush between his teeth, squeezing out raw sienna, and keeping his eyes fixed on Betty Flanders’s back.

“Ja-cob! Ja-cob!” shouted Archer, lagging on after a second.

The voice had an extraordinary sadness. Pure from all body, pure from all passion, going out into the world, solitary, unanswered, breaking against rocks – so it sounded.

Steele frowned, but was pleased by the effect of the black – it was just *that* note which brought the rest together. “Ah, one may learn to paint at fifty! There’s Titian...” – and so, having found the right tint, up he looked and saw to his horror a cloud over the bay.

Mrs Flanders rose, slapped her coat this side and that to get the sand off and picked up her black parasol.

The rock was one of those tremendously solid brown, or rather black, rocks which emerge from the sand like something primitive. Rough with crinkled limpet shells and sparsely strewn with locks of dry seaweed, a small boy has to stretch his legs far apart, and indeed to feel rather heroic, before he gets to the top.

But there, on the very top, is a hollow full of water, with a sandy bottom – with a blob of jelly stuck to the side, and some mussels. A fish darts across. The fringe of yellow-brown seaweed flutters, and out pushes an opal-shelled crab—

“Oh, a huge crab,” Jacob murmured—
and begins his journey on weakly legs on the sandy bottom. Now! Jacob plunged his hand. The crab was cool and very light. But the water was thick with sand, and so, scrambling down, Jacob was about to jump, holding his bucket in front of him, when he saw, stretched entirely rigid, side by side, their faces very red, an enormous man and woman.

An enormous man and woman (it was early-closing day) were stretched motionless, with their heads on pocket handkerchiefs, side by side, within a few feet of the sea, while two or three gulls gracefully skirted the incoming waves, and settled near their boots.

The large red faces lying on the bandanna handkerchiefs stared up at Jacob. Jacob stared down at them. Holding his bucket very carefully, Jacob then jumped deliberately and trotted away very nonchalantly at first, but faster and faster as the waves came creaming up to him and he had to swerve to avoid them, and the gulls rose in front of him and floated out and settled again a little farther on. A large black woman was sitting on the sand. He ran towards her.

"Nanny! Nanny!" he cried, sobbing the words out on the crest of each gasping breath.

The waves came round her. She was a rock. She was covered with the seaweed which pops when it is pressed. He was lost.

There he stood. His face composed itself. He was about to roar when, lying among the black sticks and straw under the cliff, he saw a whole skull – perhaps a cow's skull... a skull, perhaps, with the teeth in it. Sobbing, but absent-mindedly, he ran farther and farther away, until he held the skull in his arms.

"There he is!" cried Mrs Flanders, coming round the rock and covering the whole space of the beach in a few seconds. "What has he got hold of? Put it down, Jacob! Drop it this moment! Something horrid, I know. Why didn't you stay with us? Naughty little boy! Now, put it down. Now, come along both of you" – and she swept round, holding Archer by one hand and fumbling for Jacob's arm with the other. But he ducked down and picked up the sheep's jaw, which was loose.

Swinging her bag, clutching her parasol, holding Archer's hand and telling the story of the gunpowder explosion in which poor Mr Curnow had lost his eye, Mrs Flanders hurried up the steep lane, aware all the time in the depths of her mind of some buried discomfort.

There on the sand, not far from the lovers, lay the old sheep's skull without its jaw. Clean, white, windswept, sand-rubbed, a more unpolluted piece of bone existed nowhere on the coast of Cornwall. The sea holly would grow through the eye sockets – it would turn to powder, or some golfer, hitting his ball one fine day, would disperse a little dust... No, but not in lodgings, thought Mrs Flanders. It's a great experiment coming so far with young children. There's no man to help with the perambulator. And Jacob is such a handful – so obstinate already.

"Throw it away, dear, do," she said, as they got into the road – but Jacob squirmed away from her, and, the wind rising, she took out her bonnet pin, looked at the sea and stuck it in afresh. The wind was rising. The waves showed that uneasiness – like

something alive, restive, expecting the whip – of waves before a storm. The fishing boats were leaning to the water’s brim. A pale yellow light shot across the purple sea, and shut. The lighthouse was lit. “Come along,” said Betty Flanders. The sun blazed in their faces and gilded the great blackberries trembling out from the hedge, which Archer tried to strip as they passed.

“Don’t lag, boys. You’ve got nothing to change into,” said Betty, pulling them along, and looking with uneasy emotion at the earth displayed so luridly, with sudden sparks of light from greenhouses in gardens, with a sort of yellow-and-black mutability, against this blazing sunset, this astonishing agitation and vitality of colour, which stirred Betty Flanders and made her think of responsibility and danger. She gripped Archer’s hand. On she plodded up the hill.

“What did I ask you to remember?” she said.

“I don’t know,” said Archer.

“Well, I don’t know either,” said Betty, humorously and simply, and who shall deny that this blankness of mind, when combined with profusion, mother wit, old wives’ tales, haphazard ways, moments of astonishing daring, humour and sentimentality – who shall deny that in these respects every woman is nicer than any man?

Well, Betty Flanders, to begin with.

She had her hand upon the garden gate.

“The meat!” she exclaimed, striking the latch down.

She had forgotten the meat.

There was Rebecca at the window.

The bareness of Mrs Pearce’s front room was fully displayed at ten o’clock at night, when a powerful oil lamp stood on the middle of the table. The harsh light fell on the garden, cut straight across the lawn, lit up a child’s bucket and a purple aster and reached the hedge. Mrs Flanders had left her sewing on the table. There were her large reels of white cotton and her steel spectacles, her needle case, her brown wool wound round an old postcard. There were the bulrushes and the *Strand* magazines, and the linoleum

sandy from the boys' boots. A daddy-long-legs shot from corner to corner and hit the lamp globe. The wind blew straight dashes of rain across the window, which flashed silver as they passed through the light. A single leaf tapped hurriedly, persistently, upon the glass. There was a hurricane out at sea.

Archer could not sleep.

Mrs Flanders stooped over him. "Think of the fairies," said Betty Flanders. "Think of the lovely, lovely birds settling down on their nests. Now shut your eyes and see the old mother bird with a worm in her beak. Now turn and shut your eyes," she murmured, "and shut your eyes."

The lodging house seemed full of gurgling and rushing, the cistern overflowing, water bubbling and squeaking and running along the pipes and streaming down the windows.

"What's all that water rushing in?" murmured Archer.

"It's only the bath water running away," said Mrs Flanders. Something snapped out of doors.

"I say, won't that steamer sink?" said Archer, opening his eyes.

"Of course it won't," said Mrs Flanders. "The captain's in bed long ago. Shut your eyes and think of the fairies, fast asleep under the flowers."

"I thought he'd never get off – such a hurricane," she whispered to Rebecca, who was bending over a spirit lamp in the small room next door. The wind rushed outside, but the small flame of the spirit lamp burned quietly, shaded from the cot by a book stood on edge.

"Did he take his bottle well?" Mrs Flanders whispered, and Rebecca nodded and went to the cot and turned down the quilt, and Mrs Flanders bent over and looked anxiously at the baby, asleep but frowning. The window shook, and Rebecca stole like a cat and wedged it. The two women murmured over the spirit lamp, plotting the eternal conspiracy of hush and clean bottles while the wind raged and gave a sudden wrench at the cheap fastenings.

Both looked round at the cot. Their lips were pursed. Mrs Flanders crossed over to the cot.

“Asleep?” whispered Rebecca, looking at the cot.

Mrs Flanders nodded.

“Goodnight, Rebecca,” Mrs Flanders murmured, and Rebecca called her “ma’am”, though they were conspirators plotting the eternal conspiracy of hush and clean bottles.

Mrs Flanders had left the lamp burning in the front room. There were her spectacles, her sewing, and a letter with the Scarborough postmark. She had not drawn the curtains either.

The light blazed out across the patch of grass, fell on the child’s green bucket with the gold line round it, and upon the aster, which trembled violently beside it. For the wind was tearing across the coast, hurling itself at the hills, and leaping, in sudden gusts, on top of its own back. How it spread over the town in the hollow! How the lights seemed to wink and quiver in its fury – lights in the harbour, lights in bedroom windows high up! And rolling dark waves before it, it raced over the Atlantic, jerking the stars above the ships this way and that.

There was a click in the front sitting room. Mr Pearce had extinguished the lamp. The garden went out. It was but a dark patch. Every inch was rained upon. Every blade of grass was bent by rain. Eyelids would have been fastened down by the rain. Lying on one’s back, one would have seen nothing but muddle and confusion – clouds turning and turning, and something yellow-tinted and sulphurous in the darkness.

The little boys in the front bedroom had thrown off their blankets and lay under the sheets. It was hot – rather sticky and steamy. Archer lay spread out, with one arm striking across the pillow. He was flushed, and when the heavy curtain blew out a little, he turned and half-opened his eyes. The wind actually stirred the cloth on the chest of drawers and let in a little light, so that the sharp edge of the chest of drawers was visible, running straight up, until a white shape bulged out, and a silver streak showed in the looking glass.

In the other bed by the door, Jacob lay asleep – fast asleep, profoundly unconscious. The sheep's jaw with the big yellow teeth in it lay at his feet. He had kicked it against the iron bed-rail.

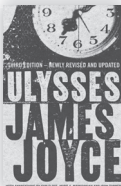
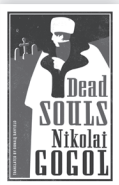
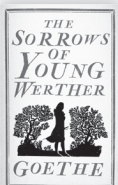
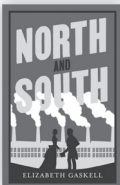
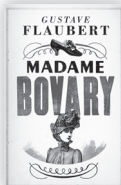
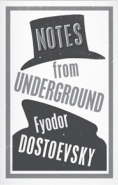
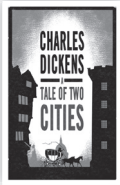
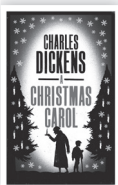
Outside, the rain poured down more directly and powerfully as the wind fell in the early hours of the morning. The aster was beaten to the earth. The child's bucket was half full of rainwater, and the opal-shelled crab slowly circled round the bottom, trying with its weakly legs to climb the steep side – trying again and falling back, and trying again and again.

EVERGREENS SERIES

Beautifully produced classics, affordably priced

Alma Classics is committed to making available a wide range of literature from around the globe. Most of the titles are enriched by an extensive critical apparatus, notes and extra reading material, as well as a selection of photographs. The texts are based on the most authoritative editions and edited using a fresh, accessible editorial approach. With an emphasis on production, editorial and typographical values, Alma Classics aspires to revitalize the whole experience of reading classics.







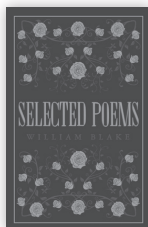
For our complete list and latest offers

visit

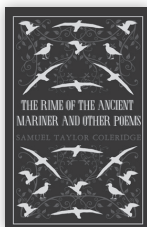
almabooks.com/evergreens

GREAT POETS SERIES

Each volume is based on the most authoritative text, and reflects Alma's commitment to provide affordable editions with valuable insight into the great poets' works.



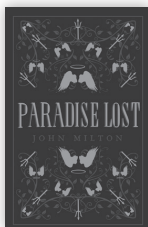
Selected Poems
Blake, William
ISBN: 9781847498212
£7.99 • PB • 288 pp



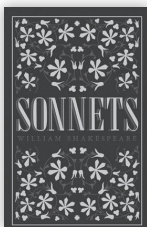
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor
ISBN: 9781847497529
£7.99 • PB • 256 pp



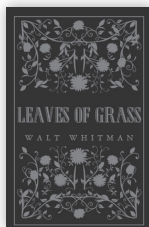
Complete Poems
Keats, John
ISBN: 9781847497567
£9.99 • PB • 520 pp



Paradise Lost
Milton, John
ISBN: 9781847498038
£7.99 • PB • 320 pp



Sonnets
Shakespeare, William
ISBN: 9781847496089
£4.99 • PB • 256 pp



Leaves of Grass
Whitman, Walt
ISBN: 9781847497550
£8.99 • PB • 288 pp

MORE POETRY TITLES

Dante Alighieri: *Inferno, Purgatory, Paradise, Rime, Vita Nuova, Love Poems*;
Alexander Pushkin: *Lyrics Vol. 1 and 2, Love Poems, Ruslan and Lyudmila*;
François Villon: *The Testament and Other Poems*; Cecco Angiolieri: *Sonnets*;
Guido Cavalcanti: *Complete Poems*; Emily Brontë: *Poems from the Moor*;
Anonymous: *Beowulf*; Ugo Foscolo: *Sepulchres*; W.B. Yeats: *Selected Poems*;
Charles Baudelaire: *The Flowers of Evil*; Sándor Márai: *The Withering World*;
Antonia Pozzi: *Poems*; Giuseppe Gioacchino Belli: *Sonnets*; Dickens: *Poems*

WWW.ALMABOOKS.COM/POETRY

ALMA CLASSICS

ALMA CLASSICS aims to publish mainstream and lesser-known European classics in an innovative and striking way, while employing the highest editorial and production standards. By way of a unique approach the range offers much more, both visually and textually, than readers have come to expect from contemporary classics publishing.

LATEST TITLES PUBLISHED BY ALMA CLASSICS

- 398 William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*
- 399 Jules Verne, *A Fantasy of Dr Ox*
- 400 Anonymous, *Beowulf*
- 401 Oscar Wilde, *Selected Plays*
- 402 Alexander Trocchi, *The Holy Man and Other Stories*
- 403 Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*
- 404 Cyrano de Bergerac, *A Voyage to the Moon*
- 405 Jack London, *White Fang*
- 406 Antonin Artaud, *Heliogabalus, or The Anarchist Crowned*
- 407 John Milton, *Paradise Lost*
- 408 James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mobicans*
- 409 Charles Dickens, *Mugby Junction*
- 410 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped*
- 411 Paul Éluard, *Selected Poems*
- 412 Alan Burns, *Dreamerika!*
- 413 Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*
- 414 Virginia Woolf, *Flush*
- 415 Abbé Prevost, *Manon Lescaut*
- 416 William Blake, *Selected Poems*
- 417 Alan Riddell, *Eclipse: Concrete Poems*
- 418 William Wordsworth, *The Prelude and Other Poems*
- 419 Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*
- 420 Pablo Picasso, *The Three Little Girls and Desire Caught by the Tail*
- 421 Nikolai Gogol, *The Government Inspector*
- 422 Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*
- 423 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Politics and Literature*
- 424 Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*
- 425 Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*
- 426 Frances Hodgson Burnett, *A Little Princess*
- 427 Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*
- 428 Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*
- 429 Mary Wollstonecraft, *The Vindications*
- 430 Anonymous, *The Song of Roland*
- 431 Edward Lear, *The Owl and the Pussycat and Other Nonsense Poetry*
- 432 Anton Chekhov, *Three Years*
- 433 Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Uncle's Dream*

