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APPENDICES

1. Synopsis of Drama *The Glass Menagerie*



In this memory, the narrator Tom Wingfield, who is also a character in the drama, tells the story from his memories. Set in St. Louis in 1937, Tom has a grueling job in a shoe warehouse to support his mother Amanda and his sister Laura. His father, Mr. Wingfield, left the family years ago and has not been heard from except by postcard since. But his presence is ubiquitous because the photo of him is still hanging in the family living room.

A faded middle-aged Southern belle, Amanda Wingfield shares a dingy St. Louis apartment with her son Tom in his early twenties and his little sister Laura.

Despite being her survivor and practitioner, Amanda longs for her comfort and admiration that she remembers from her days as an acclaimed Debutante. She is particularly worried about the future of her daughter Laura, her limping (as a result of pleurisy), and the future of a young woman with shivering anxiety about the outside world. Tom works in a shoe store and is doing his best to support his family.

It is dinner time at the Wingfield house; and Amanda retells stories of the many admirers of hers when she was young in the South. She is discouraged by Laura's profound shyness and her inability to attract men in the same way that she does. Amanda enrolls Laura in business school in hopes of helping her gain confidence.

Weeks later, Amanda discovers that Laura canceled without notifying her. Amanda decides that something must be done to find suitors for Laura. She starts selling magazine subscriptions to earn extra money, which she will surely bring to men.

Meanwhile, Tom is unhappy at work and seeks to be distracted by movies, drinking, literature, and writing, much to his mother's disappointment. He knows that his mother and sister depend on his income, but he feels trapped. Tom and Amanda frequently fight, and during one of their arguments, Tom accidentally breaks several of Laura's precious glass figures.

The next morning, Tom apologizes to his mother and they discuss his unease and Laura's prospects. She asks him to find "nice young men" at the camp to introduce them to Laura. Amanda is obsessed with finding a suitor for her daughter Laura, whose disabled shyness led her to drop out of high school. Study and a later course, and who spends much time polishing and curating his collection of small

glass animals. Urged by his mother to help find a life partner for Laura, Tom invites Jim, an acquaintance at work, to the house for dinner. Amanda is delighted and she wants everything to be perfect.

The next evening, Amanda prepares an elaborate meal and insists that Laura wear a new dress. Laura is petrified, especially when she discovers that Jim is the same person she had a crush on in high school. Tom and Jim arrive and Laura, still scared, quickly leaves the room. The men discuss his jobs in the warehouse, and Tom admits to Jim that he used the money from his electric bill to join the Merchant Marines and leave his job and his family to seek adventure in the world.

During dinner, Laura pretends to be sick, while Amanda is a reincarnation of her younger, flirtatious self. When dinner is over, the lights go out due to non-payment of the electricity bill. Candles are lit and Amanda encourages Jim to keep Laura company while she and Tom clean up dinner. At first, Laura is paralyzed by her shyness when Jim approaches her, but when they start talking, she begins to come out of her shell. They remember how they met in high school and the nickname "Blue Roses" she gave them. Laura and Jim continue to do well and enjoy each other's company.

Jim and Laura share a quiet dance in which he accidentally brushes his collection of crystal animals, throws a crystal unicorn to the ground, and breaks its horn. Jim then congratulates Laura and kisses her. After Jim tells Laura that he is engaged, Laura asks him to take the broken unicorn as a gift and then leaves. When Amanda finds out that Jim is about to get married, she turns her anger on Tom and cruelly hits him, even though Tom did not know that Jim was engaged. Tom seems quite surprised by this, and Jim may have made up the betrothal story, as he felt that

the family was trying to match him up with Laura and that he had no romantic interest in her.

The drama ends with Tom saying that he left home shortly after and never returned. He then says goodbye to his mother and his sister and asks Laura to blow out the candles.

2. Biography of Tennessee Williams



Tennessee Williams is widely recognized as one of the greatest playwrights in American history. From the mid-1940s to the early 1960s, he wrote a number of award-winning plays. Among them are *The Glass Menagerie*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Known for their dark characters and tragic themes, these plays combine poetic language with dramatic talent and are now considered American classics.

He was born on March 26, 1911 in Columbus, Mississippi, to Thomas Lanier Williams III. Known as "Tom" when he was young, he was a travel salesman who loved alcohol, violent language, and late-night poker games with Cornelius Scoffin Williams, a nonsense biker. In 1918, Cornelius became manager of the International

Shoe Company in St. Louis, Missouri. This area will be a permanent residence for the family. Cornelius and Edwina fought constantly. Cornelius felt fascinated by her family, but Edwina, who was too obsessed with her children, took a shower with her attention. This situation was exacerbated when Tom's throat was swollen due to a diphtheria attack, partially paralyzed for two years, and remained at risk of choking for the rest of his life. Tom was near his sister Rose. Their troubled family life was the source of the emotional and psychological problems that plagued both of them, and the source of many characters and themes in the play later written by Tennessee Williams.

Small and shy Tom was brutally teased in his early days at Eugene Field Elementary School. He fought so hard that he was sent to live in Mississippi with his grandparents for a year. When he returned, his mother bought him a typewriter and he started writing. His first article, *Isolated*, was published in the Ben Blewett Junior High newspaper in 1924. Tom attended University City High School, where his writings began to draw attention. He published two articles in magazines nationwide and wrote a collection of articles in school newspapers that were so popular that he was asked to continue writing after graduation. In 1929, Williams enrolled in the Faculty of Journalism at the University of Missouri, Columbia. His first famous play, *Beauty is the Word*, won prestigious mention at the school's annual Dramatic Arts Contest. In 1932, Tom's father dropped out of college and forced him to get a job at a shoe factory in St. Louis. While visiting his grandparents, Tom continued to write comedies played by a small Memphis theater company. In 1937, two of his plays, *Candles to the Sun* and *The Fugitive Kind*, were performed in St. Louis. Later that same year, Rose suffered from memory weakness and did not recover. Tom

enrolled at the University of Iowa. He worked in the drama department and in 1938 he graduated with an English degree.



After graduating, Williams submitted a play to a competition in New York. Since his minimum age was 25, he changed his date of birth from 1911 to 1914 and changed his name to "Tennessee" Williams. He won a \$100 special prize in the contest and was professionally known as Tennessee Williams from that point on. Later, Williams began his lifelong travel habits. During this time, he realized he was gay. All his relationship attempts ended with a broken heart. Sadness, loneliness, and the quest for love have become the themes of his play. In 1940, his first professional play, *Battle of Angels*, flopped. Broken and in debt, he traveled constantly, did many strange jobs, and earned a living with the help of his family and friendly strangers. Williams' groundbreaking hit, *The Glass Menagerie*, was full of characters based on his family with his own problems. Opened in Chicago in 1944, it was acclaimed and moved to Broadway the following year. There, the premier audience cheered on 24 curtain calls.

The Glass Menagerie won the 1945 New York Drama Critics Association Award and was the first of Tennessee Williams' long success. The *Street Car Named Desire* won the 1948 New York Drama Critics Association Award and the Pulitzer Prize. *Rose Tattoo* won the 1951 Tony Award for Best Play. In 1953, *Camino Real*, a complex work set in a mythical, microcosmic town whose inhabitants include Lord Byron and Don Quixote, was a commercial failure, but his *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), which exposes the emotional lies governing relationships in the family of a wealthy Southern planter, was awarded a Pulitzer Prize and was successfully filmed,

as was *The Night of the Iguana* (1961), the story of a defrocked minister turned sleazy tour guide, who finds God in a cheap Mexican hotel. *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958) deals with lobotomy, pederasty, and cannibalism, and in *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959), the gigolo hero is castrated for having infected a Southern politician's daughter with venereal disease.

Williams was in ill health frequently during the 1960s, compounded by years of addiction to sleeping pills and liquor, problems that he struggled to overcome after a severe mental and physical breakdown in 1969. His later plays were unsuccessful, closing soon to poor reviews. They include *Vieux Carré* (1977), about down-and-outs in New Orleans; *A Lovely Sunday for Crève Coeur* (1978–79), about a fading belle in St. Louis during the Great Depression; and *Clothes for a Summer Hotel* (1980), centring on Zelda Fitzgerald, wife of novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald, and on the people they knew.

Williams also wrote two novels, *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (1950) and *Moise and the World of Reason* (1975), essays, poetry, film scripts, short stories, and an autobiography, *Memoirs* (1975). His works won four Drama Critics' awards and were widely translated and performed around the world.

William's longtime love and personal assistant, Frank Merlo, died of lung cancer in 1963. Williams then fell into deep depression exacerbated by his substance and alcohol abuse. His writing activity declined and never fully recovered. In 1969 he suffered from memory weakness and was admitted to the psychiatric ward of Barnes Hospital in St. Louis. He got better, but for the rest of his life he suffered substance abuse. On February 24, 1983, the fear of childhood choking in Tennessee became a terrifying reality. Drunk with drugs and alcohol, he accidentally

swallowed the cap of an eye drop bottle and suffocated. Tennessee Williams plays a transformed American theater. Many of his plays are well adapted to award-winning films and television shows. It has been revived many times on Broadway and in theaters across the country and is considered an American classic. The city of New Orleans hosts the annual Tennessee Williams Literary Festival. At this festival, you can participate in a reputation contest dedicated to the famous line of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.