

The Glass Menagerie Book Notes

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams

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Author/Context

Tennessee Williams, originally Thomas Lanier, was born in 1911 in Columbus, Mississippi. He was the son of a traveling shoe salesman and a genteel minister's daughter. As a child, his family lived with his maternal grandparents of whom he was very fond. His father, Cornelius Coffin Williams, was of Tennessee frontiersman stock, his ancestors providing the state with its first governor and senator. Later in life, when Thomas Lanier changed his name to Tennessee, it wasn't difficult to determine the reason behind the name he chose. Williams said that as an adult with intentions of publishing, he had to change his name because his given name was tainted by a few publications of bad lyrical poetry from his teenage years.

In 1919 the shoe company promoted Williams' father, and the family moved to St. Louis. The move was hard on Williams and his sister Rose; until they moved to the city, the children had hardly been aware that their family was on the low end of the economic scale. Living in a Midwestern city where the schoolchildren made fun of their Southern accents, and living in a dingy apartment in one of many cookie cutter buildings, it was difficult to ignore their poverty.

Williams attended the University of Missouri for a brief while before working for three hated years at the shoe company that also employed his father. He then attended Washington University before finally landing at the University of Iowa, graduating in 1938. Williams had several menial jobs including work as a movie usher and poet-waiter, but he won a prize from the Group Theater in New York for a collection of one-act plays. After winning the prize, he became a client of the successful literary agent, Audrey Wood. He won the Rockefeller Fellowship in 1940 for his first full-length play, *Battle of Angels*, which had a catastrophic opening in Boston that year. Following that disappointment, he signed a six-month contract with MGM in 1943 as a scriptwriter, but the contract was broken when he submitted a script for *The Gentleman Caller*, which would later become *The Glass Menagerie*. Just before his move out to the West Coast in 1943, Williams' sister, Rose, underwent a prefrontal lobotomy because of her mental illness, and within *The Glass Menagerie* are echoes of his guilt for not sparing Rose from this operation.

The Glass Menagerie made its 1944 debut in Chicago and moved to New York in 1945 where it won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award as well as the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. This play launched his success as a playwright, and the show ran for 563 performances at New York's Playhouse Theatre. After such a blazing success, Williams' won another Critics' Award and Pulitzer for perhaps his most lasting masterpiece, *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 1948. He won yet another Pulitzer in 1955 for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

His other works include *Summer and Smoke* (1948), *The Rose Tattoo* (1951), *Camino Real* (1955), *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958), *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959), *The Night of the Iguana* (1961). He also published poetry collections, *The Summer Belvedere* (1944) and *Winter of Cities* (1956), as well as a collection of short stories in 1982 titled *It*

Happened the Day the Sun Rose. Williams published *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*, a novel, in 1950, in addition to writing film scripts and his own *Memoirs*, published in 1975. Williams died in 1983.

"[Williams'] plays, varying from darkly gloomy to seriously affirmative to comic, represent a broad and frequently searching study of life in the South, that at their best, as in *Streetcar*, they rise above regionalism to universality," claims *Southern Writers*. "While his critical reputation varied widely for years, it is now clear that Williams is one of the two or three most important American playwrights, the most important to come out of the South."

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Plot Summary

Tom Wingfield, the narrator as well as a main character, appears at the beginning to explain that this play is made up of memories, and as such, it will seem unrealistic in some respects. He introduces himself, his mother Amanda, his sister Laura, and the photograph of his long-absent father. He also tells that audience about the most realistic character, Jim, who will be Laura's gentleman caller.

The play is set in the 1930's in St. Louis where his family lived in a shabby apartment that looked just like the ones surrounding it. Tom works in a shoe warehouse and is miserably unhappy with his life because he wants to find adventure and write poetry. His job at the warehouse certainly doesn't satisfy these desires. His mother, an aging Southern belle abandoned by her husband sixteen years ago, is constantly nagging Tom about ways to improve himself; he's so miserable with his life, that her nagging only increases his irritation and drives him to the movies night after night to escape his pathetic life. Laura, who is too shy to interact with people outside her family, is a recluse with a slight handicap who is unable to have a life outside the apartment and her collection of glass animals.

Laura has dropped out of the typing class that Amanda insisted she take to prepare for supporting herself if necessary; Laura quit because she was embarrassed that she threw up in the classroom before the first timed test. Amanda, at her wit's end for how to procure a stable life for Laura, decides that marriage is the only other option, and she must seek a man to marry. Amanda convinces Tom to bring home someone from the warehouse to meet his sister. She tells Tom that he can go seek adventure only when Laura's future is certain, and he cooperates.

Tom brings home Jim O'Connor, a guy he knew vaguely in high school as the golden boy of high school. Tom knows that Laura knew Jim slightly, but he doesn't realize that Jim is the only man Laura's ever had feelings for. When Jim arrives, Laura is too overcome with anxiety to eat dinner with them, but circumstances (with a little help from Amanda) find Laura and Jim alone in the living room. When he finally remembers who she is, Laura begins to come out of her shell. The conversation wanders through high school to the present, and Jim, convinced that Laura needs someone to boost her confidence and a little overcome by the moment, kisses her. Only then does he realize his drastic mistake. He explains that he's engaged and can't be involved with her, and he leaves, breaking her fragile heart in the process.

Amanda, completely enraged and hopeless, believes that Tom set them up to look like fools. She and Tom have a huge fight that sends him out to the movies again. Shortly after that night, Tom is fired from the warehouse for writing a poem on a shoebox lid, and he goes off with the Merchant Marines to find the adventure he craves just as his father did. The only problem is that Tom can't forget about Laura no matter where he goes, and he hasn't completely escaped the life he led in St. Louis.

Major Characters

Tom Wingfield: Tom is the narrator and a main character of the play. Son of Amanda and the escaped father in the photograph above the mantle, and brother to Laura, Tom is the breadwinner for the family. He works in the Continental Shoemakers' factory and sneaks away to write poetry when business is slow. He dreams of getting away from home where he's trapped in a job he hates, and he goes to the movies every night to seek out adventure. The movies stop being enough to satisfy his desire, and he joins the Merchant Marines, using the money that was meant to pay the electricity bill for his membership fee. Although he does escape as his father did, he is still haunted by the memory of his sister he left behind, Laura.

Amanda Wingfield: Amanda is Tom and Laura's mother. She is a faded Southern belle whose greatest accomplishment in her own eyes was having 17 gentleman callers in one day when she lived in Blue Mountain. Out of those reported 17, she chose a man she loved, but he abandoned her, leaving her to raise their children alone. Amanda encourages her children to engage in activities to improve themselves (such as taking typing classes) because she wants them to be successful. But after Laura's failure to complete a typing class, Amanda concludes that she and Tom must find a husband for Laura so that she will have someone to support her. Amanda and Tom never really see eye to eye on anything; she worries and nags him constantly about his smoking and his escape to the movies every night (she thinks he is out drinking). Although she and Tom argue a great deal, when Jim O'Connor, the gentleman caller, arrives, Amanda is all sugar - her manners are perfect Southern hospitality.

Laura Wingfield: Laura is Tom's sister, older by about two years. She is crippled -- one leg slightly shorter than the other -- and wears a metal brace on her foot that is barely noticeable. In her mind, it is a neon sign pointing out her imperfection. She is painfully shy and self-conscious because of her infirmity, and because she is so timid, she withdraws from society. Laura finds comfort, safety, and companionship among the glass animal figurines she collects -- her glass menagerie. This escape becomes her world.

The Father: The only visual we have of the father is an enlarged photograph hanging on the living room wall. He's smiling from beneath a World War I doughboy cap. Mr. Wingfield was 'a long distance man who fell in love with long distances' and left his family. The last correspondence he sent them was a postcard from Matzalan, a town on the Pacific coast of Mexico, with only the words, 'Hello -- Goodbye!' written on it. Tom thinks of his father as an escape artist, but Amanda's feeling toward him is ambiguous. She doesn't want Tom to become like his father, and yet she keeps his picture hanging prominently, sixteen years after he abandoned them for good.

Jim O'Connor: Jim O'Connor is the gentleman caller Tom brings home from the Continental Shoemakers warehouse. He is a shipping clerk and takes night classes in public speaking and radio engineering. He has big plans to enter the television industry because he believes it will do well. He was the most popular boy in high school, and



although he doesn't remember right away, he shared a choir class with Laura. He called her 'Blue Roses' then because he had misunderstood her when she told him she had pleurosis. She had a crush on Jim then, so when he comes to their apartment for dinner, she is overcome by anxiety, but he is able to draw her out of her shell. He encourages her to be less self-conscious and more confident and gets so carried away in his encouragement, that he kisses her. Jim, knowing he cannot date Laura because he's engaged to a woman he loves, tells her everything and that he won't be visiting again and leaves. Before he goes, however, Laura gives him a souvenir --her favorite glass unicorn. Jim broke the horn when he knocked it from the table, and Laura gives it to him to remember her by. He takes the glass figurine when he leaves and his departure crushes any hope his visit created.

Objects/Places

Glass Menagerie: The glass menagerie is Laura's escape from reality. She is completely withdrawn from society. Her shyness and her minor disability make interactions with others difficult. She seems to care only for the little glass animals she collects, and does not seek friendship or companionship with others.

Photograph of the Father: The enlarged photograph of Mr. Wingfield that hangs smiling in the living room is a reminder to Tom that escape is possible. The photograph seems to mock Tom; he got away and left his son to fill his shoes as the breadwinner and protector of the house; all Tom really wants to do is find adventure and write poetry.

Fire Escape: The fire escape is the entrance to the Wingfield's apartment, and that is where Tom goes to smoke cigarettes, for which his mother harasses him endlessly. From the fire escape the sounds of the nightclub across the street can be heard, and although it is an 'escape,' it is still the doorway to the trap that is Tom's life. The fire escape is also a pretty clear symbolic object as it represents a way to escape from the issues of the Wingfield household.

Movies: Tom goes to the movies to get out of the apartment and experience adventure. He goes to the movies every night, but after a while he grows tired of watching the adventure and longs to experience it. The movies are his escape from the mundane life he leads.

Jonquils: Jonquils are the flowers that Amanda couldn't get enough of the summer she had 17 gentleman callers. They are the flowers of her youth and represent beauty and charm. Her life once held such promise; she was desired by many and had not yet been abandoned by the man she chose. Amanda uses jonquils to decorate for the gentleman caller's arrival, and it seems that this spreads the curse; the gentleman caller leaves Laura just as things look promising. Amanda equates this to her husband leaving them sixteen years ago.

Blue Mountain: Amanda's home when she was a young girl, before she married Mr. Wingfield. Blue Mountain is Amanda's rendition of the good ol' days, back when she was young and popular and loved and sought after. Laura's shyness prevents her from attracting suitors as Amanda had in her youth.

The Souvenir: The souvenir is the glass unicorn that is Laura's favorite. While she and Jim are dancing around the living room, the unicorn is knocked from the table and its horn is broken off. She gives the broken unicorn to Jim as a reminder of her.

The Victrola: The Victrola is like a coping mechanism for Laura. Whenever she's in a situation that makes her nervous, she plays the old records that her father left behind and draws enough security from them to make it through whatever ordeal she's facing.

D.A.R.: The Daughters of the American Revolution is a woman's society for descendants of the patriots of the Revolutionary War. It is an exclusive group only for women who can prove their ancestry and its membership is very prestigious. These meetings are very high-society, and Amanda's place among these women is unusual. It's a way of holding on to her faded glory. That's why she wears her best outfit (all imitation) and presents her sugary Southern charm to the other D.A.R. members. The D.A.R. is like the cool clique with whom she must associate.

Quotes

Quote 1: "long-delayed but always expected something that we live for." Part 1, Scene 1, pg. 5

Quote 2: "a long distance man who fell in love with long distances" Part 1, Scene 1, pg. 5

Quote 3: "Hello -- Goodbye!" Scene 1, pg. 5

Quote 4: "Mother, when you're disappointed, you get that awful suffering look on your face, like the picture of Jesus' mother in the museum." Part 1, Scene 2, pg. 15

Quote 5: "I've seen such pitiful cases in the South -- barely tolerated spinsters living upon the grudging patronage of sister's husband or brother's wife! -- stuck away in some little mousetrap of a room -- encouraged by one in-law to visit another -- little birdlike women without any nest -- eating the crust of humility all their life!" Part 1, Scene 2, pg. 16

Quote 6: "Blue Roses" Part 1, Scene 2, pg. 17

Quote 7: "Like some archetype of the universal unconscious, the image of the gentleman caller haunted [their] small apartment . . ." Part 2, Scene 3, pg. 19

Quote 8: "a Christian martyr." Part 2, Scene 3, pg. 20

Quote 9: "Every time you come in yelling that Goddamn 'Rise and Shine! Rise and Shine!' I say to myself, 'How lucky dead people are!' But I get up. I go! For sixty-five dollars a month I give up all that I dream of doing and being ever! And you say self -- self's all I ever think of. Why, listen, if self is what I thought of, Mother, I'd be where he is -- GONE!" Part 2, Scene 3, pg. 23

Quote 10: "But the wonderfulest trick of all was the coffin trick. We nailed him into a coffin and he got out of the coffin without removing one nail. There is a trick that would come in handy for me -- get me out of this two-by-four situation." Part 2, Scene 4, pg. 27

Quote 11: "Rise and Shine! Rise and shine!" Part 2, Scene 4, pg. 28

Quote 12: "I know your ambitions do not lie in the warehouse, that like everybody in the whole wide world -- you've had to -- make sacrifices, but -- Tom -- Tom -- life's not easy, it calls for -- Spartan endurance!" Part 2, Scene 4, pg. 32

Quote 13: "This was the compensation for lives that passed like mine, without any change or adventure. Adventure and change were imminent in this year. They were waiting around the corner for all these kids. Suspended in the mist over Berchtesgaden, caught in the folds of Chamberlain's umbrella. In Spain there was Guernica! But here there was only hot swing music and liquor, dance halls, bars, and movies, and sex that



hung in the gloom like a chandelier and flooded the world with brief, deceptive rainbows. . . . All the world was waiting for bombardments!" Part 3, Scene 5, pg. 39

Quote 14: "You are the only young man that I know of who ignores the fact that the future becomes the present, the present becomes the past, and the past turns into everlasting regret if you don't plan for it!" Part 3, Scene 5, pg. 45

Quote 15: "a world of her own -- a world of glass ornaments." Part 3, Scene 5, pg. 48

Quote 16: "Shakespeare" Part 3, Scene 6, pg. 50

Quote 17: "[a]ll pretty girls are a trap, a pretty trap, and men expect them to be." Part 3, Scene 6, pg. 52

Quote 18: "I know I seem dreamy, but inside -- well, I'm boiling! Whenever I pick up a shoe, I shudder a little thinking how short life is and what I am doing! Whatever that means, I know it doesn't mean shoes -- except as something to wear on a traveler's feet!" Part 3, Scene 6, pg. 62

Quote 19: "You think of yourself as having the only problems, as being the only one who is disappointed. But just look around you and you will see lots of people as disappointed as you are." Part 4, Scene 7, pg. 76

Quote 20: "Glass breaks so easily. No matter how careful you are." Part 4, Scene 7, pg. 86

Quote 21: "You don't know things anywhere! You live in a dream: you manufacture illusions." Part 4, Scene 7, pg. 95

Quote 22: "I didn't go to the moon, I went much further -- for time is the longest distance between two places." Part 4, Scene 7, pg. 96

Quote 23: "For nowadays the world is lit by lightning! Blow out your candles, Laura -- and so, goodbye . . ." Part 4, Scene 7, pg. 97

Topic Tracking: Disappointment

Part 1, Scene 1

Disappointment 1: Disappointment is a large part of the lives of the Wingfield family. They are all living with broken dreams of one variety or another. For Amanda, she is disappointed that a life she dreamed of in her days at Blue Mountain has crumbled -- abandoned by her husband, left with a disgruntled son and a crippled daughter who is painfully shy and doesn't have a job. Amanda is disappointed that Laura has no gentlemen callers and remembers the many men that called on her in her youth at Blue Mountain. He fears her daughter will become an old maid; feeling Amanda's fear, Laura knows she is a disappointment to her mother.

Part 1, Scene 2

Disappointment 2: Laura disappoints Amanda by dropping out of the typing class at the business college. Amanda had hoped that the class would give Laura some marketable skills so that she could support herself if necessary, but Laura, after throwing up before a test, gave up on it. Amanda's plan to secure a future for her daughter is ruined; now she has to find another way to provide security for her child.

Disappointment 3: Laura didn't tell Amanda that she quit the class because she knew that Amanda would be disappointed in her, and she didn't want to face it. She didn't want to have to confront the horrible, suffering expression her mother would wear when she heard the news. Instead, she just pretended to go to class everyday until Amanda discovered that Laura had dropped out.

Part 2, Scene 3

Disappointment 4: Tom is disappointed with his life because he feels trapped. There are things he longs to do in life, but he lives unfulfilled; Tom must work in the warehouse to support his mother and sister. Despite the fact that he sacrifices his dreams, Amanda insists that he acts selfish and jeopardizes their security by going to the movies until late every night and then going to work tired the next day. His sacrifice to support them is overshadowed by Amanda's belief that he's selfish.

Part 3, Scene 5

Disappointment 5: Although Amanda is optimistic at the prospect of a gentleman caller for Laura, Tom brings her lofty ambitions down a notch or two by reminding her not to expect too much from Laura because she is very different from other girls her age. She is a shy, crippled recluse who seems happiest living in her imaginary world with her glass menagerie. Even the finest, most interested gentleman caller will have difficulty breaking through her shyness.

Part 3, Scene 6



Disappointment 6: Amanda is upset that her daughter is already ruining their chances for hooking this gentleman caller because she's too afraid to even open the door. Amanda is sick of Laura's inability to be a part of society like a normal person, and this is a poor way to start off the evening.

Disappointment 7: Amanda is disappointed once again that Laura can't complete another task that she's set up to secure her future. Laura is too weak to even sit at the table with Jim, so how is she going to win him over or convince him to marry her?

Part 4, Scene 7

Disappointment 8: Jim explains that he's a little disappointed with the fact that he's not further along in the world; he had such promise as a high school student. Although he's disappointed, he's taking steps to improve his life and move his career along.

Disappointment 9: Laura's hopes had been lifted when Jim kissed her, but when he explains that he's engaged and won't be seeing her again, her disappointment plummets her into despair. Her dreams are broken as the unicorn ornament she loved is also broken by Jim's clumsiness.

Disappointment 10: Amanda's hopes for her daughter are crushed when she learns that Jim is engaged. She is horribly disappointed because things seemed to be going well only to fall apart in the end. All of her plans for Laura have crumbled. Tom is a disappointment as well because he has the same restlessness as his father. Both Amanda's children fall short of her expectations, and she is a terminally disappointed woman.

Topic Tracking: Escape

Part 1, Scene 1

Escape 1: Escape is a very real aspect of the Wingfield family. The first escapee was Mr. Wingfield, the gentleman in the photograph. He left his family sixteen years ago and has only sent one message to them since then. He made his escape, as Tom does by going to the movies, as Laura does through her glass menagerie and the music from the Victrola, and as Amanda does through her memories of Blue Mountain. The reality of their lives is too depressing and mundane, so each finds a way to escape.

Part 1, Scene 2

Escape 2: Amanda is searching desperately for some way to save her daughter from becoming a dependent old maid. Amanda knows that this kind of life is lonely and miserable, and she tries to give Laura the means to escape this fate by having her take typing classes so that she may later support herself. Laura drops out of the class, and Amanda has to find another escape route for her daughter; her ambitions turn to finding a male suitor for her daughter.

Part 2, Scene 3

Escape 3: Tom goes to the movies to escape the drab life he leads as a warehouse worker living with his mother and sister. He hates his life and feels trapped. He gets no recognition or appreciation from Amanda for the sacrifices he feels he makes to support the family. He could choose to abandon them like his father had, and find the adventure he lusts after.

Part 2, Scene 4

Escape 4: After seeing Malvolio the Magician escape from a coffin without removing a nail, Tom is very impressed, and he believes it parallels his situation at home. He has to find some way to escape without destroying his family the way his father had sixteen years ago. Tom's job at the warehouse pays the rent and the bills; since his father left, he was forced to provide for his mother and sister. Tom cannot escape the coffin without removing a nail, until there is someone to take his place. Thus, he is also interested in finding a suitor for Laura, although he is more realistic than his mother.

Escape 5: Amanda demands an explanation of why Tom spends so much time at the movies, and he tells her that it's because he seeks adventure. The movies are his escape from the mundane reality of his warehouse job and his mousetrap apartment.

Escape 6: Amanda mentions the letter Tom receives from the Merchant Marines. His plans for escape are exposed to the audience. What could be more adventurous than to sail far away with the Merchant Marines?

Part 3, Scene 5



Escape 7: Tom calls to Amanda's attention that it isn't normal for a girl to live wrapped up in a world of glass ornaments without human interaction. The glass menagerie is Laura's escape from the harshness of reality. Her disability and lack of confidence has led to an intense shyness. Her escape isolates her even further from society; she dotes over the glass ornaments to avoid interaction with others.

Part 3, Scene 6

Escape 8: Laura tries to avoid answering the door, but Amanda insists that she must do it. In order to make it through the trauma of opening the door for her brother and his guest, Laura plays the Victrola to ease her anxiety.

Escape 9: Tom is going to make his escape to the Merchant Marines. He's already joined and now just has to find the right time to break away; he knows he has to leave soon. Life is too short to be trapped in such a mundane existence.

Escape 10: Laura escaped from the horror of having dinner with her high school crush because she felt too afraid to face him. Instead of sitting at the table, she leaves for the living room sofa, feigning sickness.

Part 4, Scene 7

Escape 11: Tom finally escapes and joins the Merchant Marines, but even his escape doesn't save him. He's constantly haunted by the sad memory of his lonely sister, and everywhere he goes, her image stays with him; although he escaped the apartment, he didn't really get away from her memory.

Topic Tracking: Expectation

Part 1, Scene 1

Expectation 1: The Wingfields have expectations and dreams of how life will turn out for them, and of how situations will unfold leading to the ultimate realization of their dreams or goals. Unfortunately, reality never meets their expectations, and this disappointment breeds unrest and dissatisfaction. Tom introduces the expectations that exist within his family almost as if they have become another character. So much of the Wingfield's lives are spent expecting more than their mundane lives provide.

Expectation 2: Tom introduces his father as another character, one who failed to fulfill his expectations as a father. Rather than supporting the family, he left to seek his own adventure. Amanda, because her husband left her, can only expect the lives of her children to be successful. Growing up without a father is not what a child expects, and Tom, as the son, must become the breadwinner.

Expectation 3: Amanda expects her children to have the same genteel manners she grew up with, to always behave formally and politely, even in their own home. She expects her children to live up to her only definition of success: what her life was like as a child at Blue Mountain. Tom doesn't care for being genteel, and he makes light of her memories of Blue Mountain, where she grew up in an upper class and proper household. Amanda expects more from her son, and her critiques are ceaseless.

Expectation 4: While Amanda expects Tom to behave like a Southern gentleman in all respects right down to table manners, she also expects Laura to be something she's not -- a Southern belle. She expects Laura to be as popular and outgoing with the gentlemen as Amanda was when she was younger. Unfortunately, Laura's handicap and her debilitating shyness prevent her from living up to the expectations Amanda has for her.

Part 1, Scene 2

Expectation 5: Amanda's expectations of Laura change when she comes to the conclusion that Laura isn't cut out for a career in business. She quickly jumps to another unlikely expectation that Laura must immediately be introduced to men, in hopes she will find one to marry. This becomes the only way to secure a stable future for her daughter. She expects that if they work hard enough, they can find someone to marry Laura.

Part 2, Scene 4

Expectation 6: Amanda tries to tell Tom about how much she loved his father and how she never expected him to abandon her with their children and disappear forever. She expects Tom to find a way to help her establish a stable future for Laura. At the same time, Tom tries to explain to Amanda that he dreams of more than just working in a



warehouse. He craves more in life, and it's this craving that leads him to the movies every night. He knows that there is more out there, and he wants it, but right now he's settling for the story lines in films. This is his only exposure to what the world has to offer beyond the Wingfield apartment and the shoe warehouse.

Part 3, Scene 5

Expectation 7: Amanda expects that the gentleman caller Tom is bringing home will instantly fall in love with Laura, and want to marry her. In order for this to happen, Amanda has to make sure everything is perfect. The right curtains and slipcovers must be placed in the living room, and the meal must be nice enough. Her expectations of people and life is that everyone will bend to her will if she presents it in just the right, Southern tone.

Part 3, Scene 6

Expectation 8: Tom expects to escape without having to face any of the consequences of leaving. He expects to be gone before the lights are turned off, but he doesn't get away so easily.

Part 4, Scene 7

Expectation 9: Laura begins to expect that things will actually work out as her mother has planned, and that something will become of her and Jim. These hopes are quickly proved false, and Jim sees that he's done a horrible thing to raise her hopes. Laura hadn't expected much from the evening, but when Jim kissed her, things changed. Unfortunately, things do not work out the way she hoped.

Expectation 10: Tom believed when he left that he'd be able to escape without any repercussions. Like his father and Malvolio the Magician, he'd escaped from the coffin without removing a nail. The sister he left behind haunts him, and no matter how far away he is, or how long he's been gone, Laura's image remains.

Stage Direction

The Wingfield apartment faces an alley, and the fire escape is the entrance. The landing and the stairs descending from the fire escape are visible to the audience and the interior of the ground floor apartment is visible through a transparent curtain that acts as a fourth wall to the room. The room closest to the audience is the living room with a fold-out couch, an old fashion whatnot with a collection of tiny glass animals, and an enlarged picture of a smiling man in a World War I doughboy hat. The picture hangs on the back wall of the living room just to the left of the dining room entrance. There is also a typewriter keyboard chart and a shorthand diagram hanging next to the picture, above a typewriter that sits on a stand against the wall. The dining room, which is where the first scene begins, is behind a second transparent curtain.

In each scene, various images and captions are projected from behind onto a wall between the living room and dining room. The wall itself is indistinguishable from the rest of the room when not lit with the projector. These images and phrases are used to emphasize the important parts of each scene so that the weight of the objects doesn't encumber the dialogue of the play. Music is also used to give emotional emphasis to certain actions and moments throughout the play. The tune that plays is a recurring one, faintly heard during the relevant parts as if it's on the breeze, dissipating with shifts in the wind's direction. The tune is delicate, lovely, and somewhat sad. It carries with it the feeling of the precariousness of delicately spun glass: beautiful and easily broken. It is Laura's music and plays clearest when she, or the fragility of glass, which is her image, is the play's focus. The lighting is an important tool in the presentation of the play; the stage is dimly lit, and bright light focuses on Tom, the narrator, or another character, only when they are presenting an important memory to the audience.

Part 1, Scene 1

Tom enters in merchant sailor dress, and strolls over to the fire escape where he stops and lights a cigarette. He explains directly to the audience that he's turning time back to the '30's in America when the economy was crumbling and labor disturbances bred discontent in otherwise peaceful cities, including St. Louis, where the play is set. Tom tells the audience that the play is a memory play, and therefore has certain unrealistic qualities about it, including the music and the sentimental lighting. He introduces himself as the narrator and a character. He then introduces the other characters -- his mother Amanda, his sister Laura, and the gentleman caller. The gentleman caller is defined as most realistic character in the play; Tom's family seems somehow set apart from reality. The gentleman caller is not merely the link to reality; he is also a symbol of the "long-delayed but always expected something that we live for." Part 1, Scene 1, pg. 5

Topic Tracking: Expectation 1

Tom also talks about the fifth character in the play who never appears, his father. The only vestige of Mr. Wingfield that appears in the play is the enlarged and smiling photograph which hangs on the living room wall; he left sixteen years before the action of the play takes place. He was "a long distance man who fell in love with long distances." Part 1, Scene 1, pg. 5 The only correspondence they'd had from him since he left was a postcard from Matzalan, Mexico that simply said, "Hello -- Goodbye!" Part 1, Scene 1, pg. 5 Tom, as the narrator, says that the rest of the play is self-explanatory.

Topic Tracking: Escape 1

Topic Tracking: Expectation 2

The screen legend reads, "Ou sont les neiges," which means, "where are the snows." Amanda's voice calls to Tom from the softly lit dining room where she and Laura are seated at the table waiting for him to join them. From his fire escape perch, Tom bows to the audience and exits, only to reappear moments later in his place at the dinner table. Amanda's chair faces the audience while Tom and Laura are seated in profile as they mimic the motions of eating without food or utensils. Amanda nags Tom about the way that he's eating -- he's using his fingers rather than a crust of bread to push his food onto his fork, and he's not chewing slowly enough to suit her. At her correction, Tom lays down his imaginary fork and in response to her nagging, pushes himself away from the table in an outburst. She makes light of his annoyance and he leaves the table to walk toward the living room. Amanda, still prodding at him about manners, reminds him that he has not been excused from the table, and he answers that he's getting a cigarette. This spawns a whole new set of criticisms from her about how he smokes too much.

Topic Tracking: Expectation 3

Laura, having said nothing, rises from the table awkwardly to get the dessert, but her mother insists that she sit down and stay fresh for the gentleman callers that would no doubt begin arriving soon. Laura asserts that she isn't expecting any callers, but

Amanda insists, before walking offstage into the kitchenette, that gentlemen callers show up when they're least expected as they did one Sunday when she was a girl in Blue Mountain. While she's offstage, Tom grumbles that he already knows what's next, but Laura urges him to just let Amanda tell her story because it makes her happy to do so. Amanda comes back in with the dessert and tells her children how when she was a young girl in Blue Mountain she had seventeen gentlemen callers in one Sunday afternoon -- so many that they had to bring in folding chairs from her father's parish. An image of Amanda as a girl greeting her callers on a porch flickers on the projection screen. Tom, going along with the well-known story, asks how she entertained them. Her response is that she understood the art of conversation. As she talks, she addresses Tom's seat at the table although he's at the living room doorway. Tom motions for music and directs a spotlight to Amanda's face as she discusses her numerous gentlemen callers and their whereabouts. The screen legend says, "Ou sont les neiges d'antan?" which translates: "Where are the snows of yesteryear?" Tom responds to Amanda's story as if he's reading from a script; he is bored with his role in this redundant conversation.

Laura gets up from the table to clear the dishes, but Amanda sends her into the living room to practice her typing and to wait for the gentlemen callers to arrive. Amanda, bouncing into the kitchenette, babbles about how many callers will stop by today, and Tom throws his paper down in disgust and leaves for the living room with a groan. Laura, alone in the dining room, tells her mother that none will stop by, and Amanda reappears suggesting that there must have been a flood or some other natural disaster to prevent them from coming over. Laura, slipping through the gauzy curtains and into the living room, is bathed in a clear spotlight as "The Glass Menagerie" music plays faintly in the background. She assures her mother that there was no natural disaster, only that she's not as popular as Amanda was in Blue Mountain. Tom groans again, and Laura looks at him almost apologetically and her voice catches as she tells him that their mother is worried that Laura will be an old maid. The scene dims out with "The Glass Menagerie" music.

Topic Tracking: Disappointment 1

Topic Tracking: Expectation 4

Part 1, Scene 2

The screen image of blue roses fades as Laura's figure becomes visible in the rising lights, and "The Glass Menagerie" music stops. She is cleaning her glass ornaments when she hears Amanda coming up the fire escape stairs, so she hurriedly puts the glass away and sits in front of the typing chart as if she's been studying it the whole time Amanda was gone. As Amanda climbs the stairs in her imitation velvet coat with a faux fur collar, a 5- or 6-year-old cloche hat from the late 20's, a patent leather wallet with nickel clasps clutched in her hand, her expression is grim and stricken. She peers in the doorway and sees Laura at the typewriter and purses her lips, rolls her eyes, and shakes her head. She walks in and Laura nervously puts a hand to her lips and then gestures to the chart to show she's been studying it. Amanda leans against the closed door and stares at Laura with a dramatic, martyred expression. As Amanda continues her dramatic performance of the deceived and betrayed mother, she confronts Laura about dropping out of the typing class at Rubicam's Business College. The projector screen shows an image of a swarm of typewriters.

Topic Tracking: Disappointment 2

Amanda missed her D.A.R. meeting because when she stopped by the school to check up on Laura's progress, she learned that Laura hadn't attended class since she threw up in the classroom before the first timed test. The news shook Amanda not only because Laura had been deceiving her, but also because \$50 of tuition had been wasted along with Amanda's hope that Laura could get a job somewhere and support herself. Laura tells her mother that she's been going out walking everyday instead of going to class. From 7:30 to 5, she walks around the city, but spends most of her time in the park. The screen image changes to a park in winter. When Amanda asks why Laura didn't tell her that she wasn't going to class anymore, Laura responds, "Mother, when you're disappointed, you get that awful suffering look on your face, like the picture of Jesus' mother in the museum." Part 1, Scene 2, pg. 15. Laura couldn't face that expression.

Topic Tracking: Disappointment 3

In the pause after Laura's statement, the screen legend becomes, "The Crust of Humility." Amanda worries what will become of Laura now. She asks if she will just sit around and amuse herself with her glass menagerie and play the old records Mr. Wingfield left behind, willing to sacrifice a business career just because it made her sick to her stomach. Amanda says that she knows what happens to unmarried, jobless women. She says,

"I've seen such pitiful cases in the South -- barely tolerated spinsters living upon the grudging patronage of sister's husband or brother's wife! -- stuck away in some little mousetrap of a room -- encouraged by one in-law to visit another -- little birdlike women without any nest -- eating the crust of humility all their life!" Part 1, Scene 2, pg. 16

The future she has described is bleak, and if a business career for Laura is out, she offers up marriage as an alternative. She quizzes Laura about boys -- if there's ever been one Laura liked at all -- and Laura remembers only one from high school who sat next to her in a choir class. The screen image becomes a picture of Jim: a high school hero with a silver trophy. Laura shows her mother a picture of him in the yearbook from the senior operetta in which he played the lead, and then another picture of him with the debate trophy he won. Amanda hardly pays attention as Laura talks about how he called her "Blue Roses" Part 1, Scene 2, pg. 17 because he had once misunderstood her when she told him that she had missed school because she had pleurosis. He'd called her Blue Roses after that, and she points out that in the yearbook it mentions that he was engaged, so she assumes he must be married by now.

Amanda says that girls who aren't cut out for business careers get married, and that's what Laura will do. The idea seems to rejuvenate Amanda and she looks up at the photograph of the fugitive Mr. Wingfield while Laura seems doubtful of her mother's plan. She reaches for a piece of glass and reminds Amanda in an apologetic way that she's crippled. Amanda shushes her with assurances that her defect is only slight and that people with a slight disadvantage must cultivate other things, such as charm, to even it all out. Amanda looks at the picture again and says that her husband definitely had plenty of charm, and the scene fades with music.

Topic Tracking: Expectation 5

Topic Tracking: Escape 2

Part 2, Scene 3

The screen legend says, "After the fiasco --" and Tom explains from the fire escape that after the fiasco of Rubicam's Business College, Amanda became obsessed with finding a gentleman caller for Laura. "Like some archetype of the universal unconscious, the image of the gentleman caller haunted [their] small apartment . . ." Part 2, Scene 3, pg. 19 The screen image changes to a picture of a young man at the door with flowers. Tom explains that not an evening passed without some reference to this idea, this hope, and Amanda began to take action. Knowing that extra money would be needed to improve the apartment and Laura, Amanda began selling subscriptions to a woman's magazine over the phone.

The screen image changes to the cover of a glamour magazine as Amanda enters with the phone. The spotlight on the dim stage illuminates Amanda as she talks to a woman from her D.A.R. group. She speaks in her sympathetic, sugary style assuring the potential buyer that the sinus condition that ails her makes her no less than "a Christian martyr." Part 2, Scene 3, pg. 20. As Amanda holds the line while her potential customer checks on the food that's burning, Amanda realizes that the other woman has hung up on her. The scene dims out.

The screen legend reads, "You think I'm in love with Continental Shoemakers?" and before the lights come up again, Tom and Amanda's angry voices are heard in the dining room. Laura stands in front of them with hands clenched and a panicked expression on her face. The spotlight remains on only her throughout the scene. Tom is angry because he has nothing of his own in the apartment; even library books that he had checked out were returned without his permission. She says that she will not have such filth as D. H. Lawrence in her house, and Tom interrupts to point out that he pays the rent on her house.

Before he can finish, she's interrupted him again and he rips through the curtains between the dining and living rooms. Amanda is seen in the dining room in metal curlers and an oversized, old bathrobe that must have belonged to Mr. Wingfield. On the dining room table, the typewriter sits, surrounded by a disarray of manuscripts. A chair is overturned on the floor. The dining room is lit with a smoky, red glow that casts their gesturing shadows on the ceiling, and the scene suggests that Amanda interrupted Tom's creative labor. She follows Tom through the curtains insisting that he listen because she's run out of patience with him. He turns on her and points out that he, too, has run out of patience. He says that although it's unimportant to her, there is something he really *wants* to do, but explains it's not what he *has* to do. Before he can finish his explanation, she's interrupted him again to accuse him of doing things he's ashamed of. She believes that this is the only excuse for his behavior, and she thinks he lies about going to the movies every night. She says that he has no right to jeopardize his job and their security by staying out so late; he gets only a few hours sleep before work the next day. She thinks it's selfish behavior. Tom yells that he hates his job at the Continental Shoemakers warehouse, but he goes every day to support the family. He insists he'd rather have someone beat his brains out with a crowbar than go back. He says,



"Every time you come in yelling that Goddamn 'Rise and Shine! Rise and Shine!' I say to myself, 'How lucky dead people are!' But I get up. I go! For sixty-five dollars a month I give up all that I dream of doing and being ever! And you say self -- self's all I ever think of. Why, listen, if self is what I thought of, Mother, I'd be where he is -- GONE!" Part 2, Scene 3, pg. 23

He pushes past her to leave and tells her he's going to the movies. She accuses him of lying again and he towers over her and sneers that she's right. He's going to opium dens where he's part of a gang as a hired assassin who carries a tommy gun in a violin case. He says he runs a string of cat houses and goes to casinos with a patch over one eye and a fake mustache. Sometimes he wears green whiskers and then the men of the underworld call him El Diablo. His enemies are planning to dynamite the apartment and blow them all sky high, and he's looking forward to it. He says Amanda will go up into the sky and fly over Blue Mountain like the witch that she is. Then he grabs his coat and as he's clumsily trying to put it on, the shoulder rips. He throws it across the room and it knocks some ornaments from Laura's shelf, sending the glass tinkling onto the floor. She shrieks as if she's been wounded as "The Glass Menagerie" music plays and the screen legend says, "The Glass Menagerie." Laura turns her face away from the broken glass, and Amanda stands stunned by the witch comment as she tells Tom that she won't speak to him until he's apologized to her. She leaves the room and Tom goes to gather up the broken glass as Laura leans weakly against the mantle. Tom looks at her sorrowfully, but he can't speak, and the scene dims out to the music.

Topic Tracking: Escape 3

Topic Tracking: Disappointment 4

Part 2, Scene 4

A church bell rings somewhere beyond the dark apartment. Only a little light seeps in from the alley as Tom walks toward the fire escape. He shakes a little noisemaker after every toll of the bell as if to express the smallness of man in contrast to God. As he drunkenly sways up the stairs, a small light appears in the apartment. Laura, in her nightgown, notices that Tom's bed is empty while he roots around in his pockets on the fire escape in search of his key. A shower of movie ticket stubs and an empty bottle drop from his pocket before he finds the key and then, as he attempts to put it in the door, it slips from his fingers and falls through a crack in the landing. He lights a match and is crouching in search of the elusive key when Laura opens the door. He explains that he's been at the movies all night because they had a cartoon, a newsreel, and, among other things, a live performance by Malvolio the Magician. The magician turned water into wine then to beer and then to whiskey, which Tom can verify because he sampled it during both performances. He also waved his magic scarf over a bowl of goldfish and turned them to canaries. Tom has the magic scarf with him and he gives it to Laura. Then he says, "But the wonderfulest trick of all was the coffin trick. We nailed him into a coffin and he got out of the coffin without removing one nail. There is a trick that would come in handy for me -- get me out of this two-by-four situation." Part 2, Scene 4, pg. 27. Tom asks rhetorically who ever got himself out of a coffin without removing a nail, and the photograph of Mr. Wingfield lights up in answer. The scene dims.

Topic Tracking: Escape 4

The church bell tolls six o'clock and Amanda begins her chorus of "Rise and Shine! Rise and shine!" Part 2, Scene 4, pg. 28 She sends Laura in to wake Tom because she is still not speaking to him, and Laura begs him to apologize, but Tom is reluctant. He thinks he'll rather enjoy her ignoring him for a change instead of criticizing his every move. Amanda keeps calling to Laura to get ready and go to the store, so Laura pulls on an ugly, shapeless hat and a coat with sleeves that are too short and prepares to leave. Amanda tells her to charge the groceries to their account and Laura argues that the grocer makes a disapproving face when she does that, but Amanda insists.

As Laura is leaving, she slips on the stairs, and Tom and Amanda rush to the door. She assures them both that she's fine and then leaves while Amanda rants about how the landlord should be sued for leaving the stairs in such condition. Then she remembers she's not speaking to Tom and the silence returns as she faces the window. He enters the dining room where his coffee awaits him while the light from the window emphasizes Amanda's face and "Ave Maria" plays in the background.

Tom scalds his tongue with the hot coffee and Amanda, hearing his gasp, half turns towards him. After a few more awkward moments of throat clearing and blowing on his coffee, Tom apologizes to Amanda and she begins to cry. She says that her devotion to her children has made them hate her, and Tom comforts her as she cries pitifully. She tells him how hard she's worked for her children and how important Tom has been to her all this time since his father left. She tells him that he and Laura are unusual and full of



natural endowments and so capable of grand success if they would just try for it. As she talks, she makes him promise that he'll never be a drunkard, and then she confesses that she believed that he'd been spending his nights drinking instead of going to the movies. He laughs at her concern and then, as if they're back on good terms, she starts nagging him to eat breakfast, and to put cream in his coffee to cool it. Tom refuses all of her suggestions and things start to become tense again until she changes the subject to Laura.

"The Glass Menagerie" music plays, and the screen legend says, "Laura." Amanda tells Tom that although Laura is quiet, she notices things and broods about them. For instance, just the other day Amanda caught her crying because she thinks that Tom is unhappy in their apartment. Amanda says, "I know your ambitions do not lie in the warehouse, that like everybody in the whole wide world -- you've had to -- make sacrifices, but -- Tom -- Tom -- life's not easy, it calls for -- Spartan endurance!" Part 2, Scene 4, pg. 32. She tells him that she feels so much and she can't express to him how much she loved his father and that she sees Tom taking after him by staying out late and drinking. Amanda asks Tom if he goes out at night to escape the apartment; he denies it and expresses to her how he feels incapable of explaining the feelings in his heart. He suggests that they should just respect this and leave it alone, but he is unable to finish his sentence before Amanda starts grilling him about where he goes at night. He reiterates that he goes to the movies and finally explains that he goes there for adventure. The screen image changes to a picture of a ship with the Jolly Roger flying over it as Amanda argues that most men find adventure in their work. He disputes this by saying that most men obviously don't work in a warehouse. The argument grows more intense as Amanda insists that men who can't find adventure in their work just go without it; Tom points out that men are instinctually lovers, fighters, and hunters. A warehouse job doesn't exercise any of these instinctual drives. Amanda asserts that only animals respond to instinct and that good Christian men aspire to higher things. Tom makes light of her view. He gets up to leave, but she won't let him because they haven't talked about Laura yet.

Topic Tracking: Escape 5

Topic Tracking: Expectation 6

The screen legend changes to "Plans and Provisions." Amanda insists that she and Tom have to find a suitable gentleman caller for Laura. Amanda tells Tom that he acts like his father more and more and that she found the letter from the Merchant Marines, so she knows he wants to go. She tells him that he can go only when Laura has a husband to support her in place of Tom. Tom doesn't see how he can be responsible for whether or not Laura marries, and Amanda calls him selfish. He gets up and grabs his coat and hat to leave as Amanda commands him to find a nice boy down at the warehouse to bring home for Laura. On his way down the stairs, Tom reluctantly agrees to do it and Amanda is given some hope.

Topic Tracking: Escape 6

The screen image becomes the cover of a glamour magazine again as the spotlight illuminates Amanda. She is on the phone selling another subscription as the light fades.

Part 3, Scene 5

The screen legend reads, "Annunciation," and music plays softly as the light rises slowly on the Wingfield dining room. Amanda and Laura are silently and almost formally removing the supper dishes from the table. It is the early dusk of a spring evening, and Tom rises from the table and goes out to the fire escape. Amanda asks him to comb his hair and he slouches on the couch with a paper headlined, "Franco Triumphs." Amanda talks about how she wishes Tom would emulate his father in only one respect: his attention to personal appearance. Tom throws the paper down and goes to smoke, and Amanda nags him about how much he smokes and how that money would be better spent on a night course at the local college. He'd rather smoke, he says. She looks at Mr. Wingfield's photograph while "The World is Waiting for Sunrise" plays in the background. Tom addresses the audience, taking on his role as narrator for the moment to explain that sometimes the music from the Paradise Dance Hall across the alley would come into their home. From the fire escape, couples could be seen kissing in the alley. He says,

"This was the compensation for lives that passed like mine, without any change or adventure. Adventure and change were imminent in this year. They were waiting around the corner for all these kids. Suspended in the mist over Berchtesgaden, caught in the folds of Chamberlain's umbrella. In Spain there was Guernica! But here there was only hot swing music and liquor, dance halls, bars, and movies, and sex that hung in the gloom like a chandelier and flooded the world with brief, deceptive rainbows. . . . All the world was waiting for bombardments!" Part 3, Scene 5, pg. 39

Amanda comes outside and she and Tom both wish on the moon, but Tom won't tell what he wished for. Amanda says she wished for success and happiness for her children as she always does, moon or no moon. Tom expected her to wish for a gentleman caller, and when she asks why, he explains that it was the natural conclusion to draw given that she asked him to find one. He tells her that he's bringing someone home from the factory tomorrow, and the music rises while the screen image becomes a picture of a gentleman caller with a bouquet. Amanda insists that Tom hasn't given her enough time to prepare, but she'll get everything taken care of in time.

She drags Tom inside with her so she can give him the third degree about this boy he's found for Laura, and Tom explains that his name is Jim O'Connor. He's a friendly shipping clerk who takes night classes in radio engineering and public speaking. Amanda asks whether he drinks; she'd rather that Laura be an old maid than marry a drunkard. Tom thinks Amanda is getting ahead of herself given that Jim hasn't even met Laura yet. In fact, he doesn't even know about Laura yet. Amanda tells him, "You are the only young man that I know of who ignores the fact that the future becomes the present, the present becomes the past, and the past turns into everlasting regret if you don't plan for it!" Part 3, Scene 5, pg. 45. Amanda is sure that when Jim sees Laura, he'll be won over, but Tom is not so sure. He believes that Laura is pretty and sweet and wonderful to them because they're her family, but he thinks that people outside their family might find her terrible shyness, her handicap, and her complete absorption in her

glass menagerie somewhat peculiar. An ominous tango plays in the background as he points out that Laura lives in "a world of her own -- a world of glass ornaments." Part 3, Scene 5, pg. 48

Topic Tracking: Escape 7

Topic Tracking: Disappointment 5

Topic Tracking: Expectation 7

Tom gets up to go to the movies, and Amanda yells down the fire escape after him that she still doesn't believe he goes to the movies. She looks after him with a worried expression and then calls to Laura to come make a wish on the moon. The screen image changes to a picture of the moon as Laura enters somewhat dazed. She asks what she should wish for and Amanda, with tears, suggests happiness and good fortune. Violin music rises and the lights dim.

Part 3, Scene 6

Light rises on the fire escape landing where Tom is smoking. The screen image is of the high school hero. Tom narrates to the audience that he brought Jim home with him the next evening. He'd known Jim a little in high school; he had been the gregarious basketball star, debate captain, senior class president, and male lead in the annual light operas. He'd moved then in a bounding way, full of energy and enthusiasm that made success seem inevitable for him. But something must have happened to that energy, because six years after high school he had a job barely better than Tom's. The screen image becomes Jim as a shipping clerk. Tom continues to explain that Jim was the only guy at work who became friends with him. Tom was valuable to Jim because he remembered Jim's former glory days; Jim was friendly and called him "Shakespeare" Part 3, Scene 6, pg. 50 because Tom would hide in the bathroom at work and write poems. Because Jim was nice to him, other guys at work who had been hostile before began to warm up just enough to smile or say hello. Tom knew Laura had known Jim in school, but he wasn't certain that Jim would remember her at all because she was so shy. Even if Jim did remember her, he didn't know she was Tom's sister, but he was about to find out.

The screen legend reads, "The Accent of a Coming Foot," and the light on the fire escape dims as light rises in the living room. It's five o'clock on a spring Friday, and Amanda has made astonishing improvements to the apartment. There are new curtains and a floor lamp along with new sofa pillows to accent the updated covers on the chair and sofa. Amanda is hemming Laura's new dress, and Laura's hair seems softer and more flattering. She possesses a fragile, unearthly beauty like the momentary radiance of light on translucent glass. Laura is nervous, and Amanda can't understand why Laura resists interaction with other people so much. The final touch to Laura's ensemble is two handkerchief-wrapped powder puffs stuffed in the bosom of her dress to improve her bust line. When Laura protests that they seem to be setting a trap with all of these preparations, Amanda explains that "[a]ll pretty girls are a trap, a pretty trap, and men expect them to be." Part 3, Scene 6, pg. 52 The screen legend says, "A pretty trap."

Amanda goes off to dress, humming happily, while Laura stares at herself in the mirror. She turns slowly in front of the glass with a troubled expression, and the screen legend changes to, "This is my sister: Celebrate her with strings!" Music plays in the background. Amanda, still laughing youthfully, comes back in wearing a yellow dress with a blue sash that she has kept from her Blue Mountain days. She carries a bunch of jonquils and chatters on about the summer that she met Mr. Wingfield and was crazy for jonquils. She stops in front of his picture and music softly plays until she changes the subject to Mr. O'Connor. Laura, worried, asks his full name, and when Amanda tells her that his name is Jim O'Connor, Laura is panic-stricken and seems faint. The screen legend becomes, "Not Jim!" Amanda, unaware of the connection, keeps talking. The music takes on an ominous tone as Laura insists that she won't come to the table if it is the Jim O'Connor from high school. Amanda refuses to humor Laura's shyness and insists that when Tom and Jim arrive, Laura must let them in because Tom has forgotten

his key. Although Laura is terrified, Amanda won't let her out of it, and as Amanda goes into the kitchenette to finish dinner, the screen legend reads, "Terror!"

Laura sits on the couch nervously wringing her hands. The screen legend says, "The Opening of a Door!" as Tom and Jim climb the fire escape stairs. Laura hears them and retreats to the dining room entrance, but the doorbell rings before she can escape. Low drums play in the background as Amanda calls to her to open the door. Laura just stares at the door and after the second ring she goes to the kitchenette entrance and tells her mother that she can't open the door. Amanda furiously insists that Laura do it despite her claims that she's ill. Tom rings again and Laura darts to the Victrola and winds it up. As "Dardanella" plays, she goes to the door and cautiously opens it to let Tom and Jim inside. Tom introduces Laura to Jim, and after she puts her timid hand in his for an instant, she scurries out of the room. Tom explains that she is incredibly shy, and they leave it at that.

Topic Tracking: Disappointment 6

Topic Tracking: Escape 8

Tom and Jim go onto the fire escape to smoke and Jim begins trying to convince Tom to take some classes to fit him for an executive position. The screen image is an executive sitting at his desk. They continue talking and Jim mentions that their boss has talked to him about Tom. He warns Tom that if he doesn't shape up, he'll be out of a job. The screen image changes to the picture of a ship with the Jolly Roger. Tom leans over the fire escape rail and tells Jim that he's tired of watching people have adventure, and he's planning to find his own with the Merchant Marines. He paid his membership fees instead of paying the light bill and he doesn't plan to be around when they turn the lights off. He says,

"I know I seem dreamy, but inside -- well, I'm boiling! Whenever I pick up a shoe, I shudder a little thinking how short life is and what I am doing! Whatever that means, I know it doesn't mean shoes -- except as something to wear on a traveler's feet!" Part 3, Scene 6, pg. 62

Topic Tracking: Escape 9

Topic Tracking: Expectation 8

Amanda calls them inside and they are both a little surprised by her appearance. She turns on the Southern charm to impress Jim and after a brief moment of shock, he warms up to it. The screen image is a picture of Amanda as a young girl as she chatters on and on about various topics until Tom reminds her that they are ready for supper. Amanda sends Tom to bring his sister to the table as Amanda talks to Jim about her younger days. Tom comes back and tells Amanda that Laura isn't feeling well and doesn't want to come to dinner, but Amanda insists. Laura comes in looking faint and the screen legend says, "Terror!" A storm is building outside and a large clap of thunder rumbles when Laura stumbles and catches herself on a chair. The screen legend reads, "Ah!" as Amanda despairingly tells Tom to help his sister to the sofa to rest. Tom returns and sits down at the table with Amanda and Jim, and Amanda looks at Jim with a

frightened expression as Tom says grace. As Tom prays, Amanda steals a glance at Jim and Laura puts her hand over her mouth to suppress a sob. The scene dims.

Topic Tracking: Disappointment 7

Topic Tracking: Escape 10

Part 4, Scene 7

A half-hour has passed and dinner is ending. Laura is on the couch with her feet huddled beneath her and her eyes wide and strangely watchful. The soft light from the new floor lamp makes her face unearthly pretty as the rain falls outside and then drizzles to a stop. A moment after the curtain rises, the lights flicker and then go out. The screen legend reads, "Suspension of public service." Amanda, joking off the embarrassment, lights a candle on the table and leads Jim into the kitchenette to check the fuse box. The fuses are fine, and Amanda asks Tom if he paid the light bill, but he hadn't. The screen legend says, "Ha!" She chalks it up to negligence and he doesn't tell her about the Merchant Marines. She then insists that Tom help her with the dishes and sends Jim in the living room with a candelabrum and a glass of dandelion wine for Laura.

Laura sits up uneasily as Jim comes in the living room; she's so nervous she can hardly speak. The screen legend says, "I don't suppose you remember me at all!" As Laura talks to Jim, her voice is breathless and thin; Jim is perfectly comfortable, not really aware of how important this moment is to Laura. He convinces her to sit on the floor with him, with the candelabrum between them, and he begins to draw her out of her shell with his jovial conversation. She finally asks him if he's kept up with his singing, and she explains that they went to high school together. He claims that he had the feeling he'd seen her before, but what he started to call her wasn't really a name, it was "Blue Roses." She clears up the mystery for him by explaining why he called her that and reminding him that they had a singing class together and sat across the aisle from each other. He remembers that she always came in late and she explains that the brace on her foot made climbing stairs difficult. She always felt self-conscious walking in with that clumping noise after everyone had already taken their seats. Jim never noticed the noise and insists that she shouldn't have been so worried about it. He remembers that she was a loner; she blames it on her handicap and her shyness, and he tells her that she should work to overcome her shyness because her handicap is hardly noticeable. He tells her that she's looking at things the wrong way. He says, "You think of yourself as having the only problems, as being the only one who is disappointed. But just look around you and you will see lots of people as disappointed as you are." Part 4, Scene 7, pg. 76

He admits that he's a little disappointed that he hasn't made it further in life by now as he expected to after high school. Laura brings out the yearbook and they look through the pictures of him in various poses of glory. Laura, relaxing a little, admits that she saw all three performances of *The Pirates of Penzance* because she was hoping he would sign her program, but she never asked him to because he was always surrounded by his own friends and a crowd of girls. He admits that he was rather spoiled by attention back then and signs her program with the comment that although his autograph's not worth much now, he hopes its value will increase someday. She asks how his high school girlfriend is doing and he explains that they were never engaged at all and he hasn't seen her in years.



Topic Tracking: Disappointment 8

The screen legend reads, "What have you done since high school?" Jim lights a cigarette and smiles at Laura in a way that seems to light altar candles in her face. She picks up a piece of her glass menagerie and looks at it to hide her tumultuous emotion. Jim asks about Laura's life since high school and she explains that she really doesn't do much beyond taking care of her glass menagerie. Jim, hardly hearing what she's saying, announces that he thinks she has an inferiority complex. As he's explaining that she just has to find the one (or in some cases several -- looking at himself in the mirror) area in which she excels. As he explains how he's using the areas he excels in to prepare for a future in television, he looks at his starry-eyed reflection in the mirror. Laura seems in awe as he asks her where her interests lie. "The Glass Menagerie" music plays as she shows him the unicorn from her glass menagerie; it's her favorite piece. He suggests that the unicorn must get lonely because it's different from all the others, but she explains that he stays on a shelf with the horses and seems happy enough. Jim, warning that he's clumsy, holds it up to the candlelight and watches the light shine through it. Jim sets the ornament on the coffee table and opens the fire escape door - the music from the dance hall is a waltz.

Jim asks Laura to dance as "La Golondrina" plays. She tells him that she can't dance, but he convinces her and they take a few clumsy turns around the room before they bump into the table and knock the unicorn to the floor. The horn of the unicorn has broken off and Jim feels bad because it was her favorite, but Laura doesn't take it too hard. She tells him, "Glass breaks so easily. No matter how careful you are." Part 4, Scene 7, pg. 86 She says that now he'll fit in better with the horses, and Jim applauds her sense of humor. Then his voice changes; he grows serious. He tells her that she's different from all the other girls he knows. She looks away speechless. He tells her that she's pretty and the music rises slightly. He tells her that if she were his sister, he'd teach her to have some confidence because she's special. While other people are as common as weeds, she's blue roses. The screen image is blue roses and the music changes as Laura explains that blue isn't right for roses. Jim insists that it's right for her. He insists that someone ought to make her realize how special she is; someone ought to kiss her. As the music swells, he kisses her and then she sinks onto the sofa with a dazed and bright expression. Jim backs away and lights a cigarette, realizing that he's made a mistake.

Topic Tracking: Expectation 9

The screen legend reads, "A Souvenir" as Laura sits on the couch looking tenderly at the glass ornament. Amanda's laughter rings from offstage in the kitchenette while Jim tries to find the right way to rectify the situation he's created. He can tell by the way Laura looks and is acting that she expects that he'll call to visit and they'll date, but that's not how it's going to work out. He sits awkwardly beside her on the couch and explains that he's in love with someone. The screen legend becomes, "Love!" Laura sways slightly at the news, but Jim doesn't notice because he's on a roll about how wonderful it is to be in love and how he's such a better person for having this girl in his life, so he won't be coming back to see Laura. He accepted the dinner invitation

because his girlfriend is out of town, and he didn't realize it was a fix-up. Laura's expression is desolate and the light that brightened her face has gone out. Her silence makes Jim uneasy, and with trembling lips, she puts the unicorn into his hand and tells him to keep it as a souvenir. She goes and plays the Victrola.

Topic Tracking: Disappointment 9

The screen legend says, "Things have a way of turning out so badly," and the image is of a gentleman caller happily waving goodbye. Amanda comes in and notices the serious expression on Laura's face and Jim explains why. Amanda has brought lemonade and cookies, but Jim is preparing to leave. There is an ominous sound as the storm builds up again. When Amanda insists that he must come visit again, Jim explains that he can't because he is engaged. The rain begins to pour down in torrents and the screen legend reads, "The Sky Falls!" Jim thanks Amanda for her hospitality and tells Laura to take his advice to heart. He thanks her for the souvenir and then leaves.

Topic Tracking: Disappointment 10

As Laura crouches near the Victrola, not looking at her mother, Amanda calls Tom into the living room to congratulate him on his joke. Unsuspectingly, he comes in with punch and a cookie, only to be greeted by his mother's accusation that he knew Jim was engaged and did this to make a fool of her and his sister. Tom insists that he didn't know. The warehouse is just where he works, not where he knows everything about everyone. Amanda says, "You don't know things anywhere! You live in a dream: you manufacture illusions." Part 4, Scene 7, pg. 95. Tom heads to the door to go to the movies and Amanda yells about his selfishness. He insists that the more she yells at him, the faster he'll go, but this time he may go further than the movies. She tells him to just go to the moon then, and he slams out the door after smashing his glass onto the floor. Laura screams in fear. He stands on the fire escape as the moon breaks through the clouds and illuminates his face.

The screen legend says, "And so, goodbye . . ." As Tom speaks from the fire escape as the narrator again, Amanda mimes a comforting speech to Laura who is huddled on the couch with her face hidden by her hair. Then, as Amanda leaves the room, she looks up at the photograph and exits through the curtains. Tom says, "I didn't go to the moon, I went much further -- for time is the longest distance between two places." Part 4, Scene 7, pg. 96 He explains that he was soon fired from the warehouse for writing a poem on the lid of a shoebox. After that, he followed in his father's footsteps and wandered around, pursued by something that always sneaked up on him when he was alone. Bits of familiar music, translucent glass, and tiny perfume bottles in delicately colored glass always brought Laura to mind. She would touch him on the shoulder and he'd look into her eyes. Tom says that he's tried to leave her behind, but she haunts him, and he has to run away -- to a bar, to the movies -- anything that can make her memory fade. Laura bends over the candelabrum as he says, "For nowadays the world is lit by lightning! Blow out your candles, Laura -- and so, goodbye . . ." Part 4, Scene 7, pg. 97 Laura blows the candles out.

Topic Tracking: Escape 11
Topic Tracking: Expectation 10