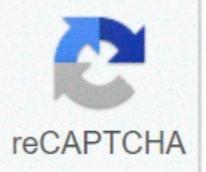




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Streetcar named desire summary and analysis

Unlock the more straightforward side of a Streetcar Named Desire with this concise and insightful summary and analysis! This engaging summary presents an analysis of A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams, which tells the story of two very different sisters, Blanche and Stella, who are forced to live together after Blanche loses both her job and the family home. However, the gentle, highly strung Blanche soon clashes with Stella's boorish husband Stanley, and their volatile relationship hastens her impending mental and emotional collapse. A Streetcar Named Desire won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and is one of Tennessee Williams' most celebrated plays. Williams's other works include *The Glass Menagerie*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Suddenly Last Summer*, and he is widely considered to be one of the greatest American playwrights of all time. Find out everything you need to know about A Streetcar Named Desire in a fraction of the time! This in-depth and informative reading guide brings you: A complete plot summary, character studies, key themes and symbols, questions for further reflection, and choose your reading journey. The clear and concise style makes for easy understanding, providing the perfect opportunity to improve your literary knowledge in no time. See the very best of literature in a whole new light with BrightSummaries.com! Tennessee Williams's (March 26, 1911 - February 25, 1983) A Streetcar Named Desire (1947), is generally regarded as his best. Initial reaction was mixed, but there would be little argument now that it is one of the most powerful plays in the modern theater. Like *The Glass Menagerie*, it concerns, primarily, a man and two women and a "gentleman caller." As in *The Glass Menagerie*, one of the women is very much aware of the contrast between the present and her southern- aristocratic past; one woman (Stella) is practical if not always adequately aware, while the other (Blanche) lives partly in a dream world and teeters on the brink of psychosis; the gentleman caller could perhaps save the latter were circumstances somewhat different; and the play's single set is a slum apartment. It is located in Elysian Fields, a section of the French Quarter of New Orleans. The action takes place in the downstairs two-room apartment rented by the Kowalskis. Marlon Brando and Vivien Leigh in the 1951 adaptation of a Streetcar Named Desire Scene 1 Stella Kowalski relaxes in a shabby armchair in the bedroom of the small apartment. She eats chocolates and reads a movie magazine. Stella's husband, Stanley Kowalski, enters, carrying a package of meat dripping with blood and yelling for his wife. Stanley tosses the meat to Stella, who catches it in a surprised reaction. Stanley leaves to go bowling with his friends, and Stella decides to tag along. She hurriedly prims in the living room mirror, quickly closes the apartment door behind her, and says hello to Eunice Hubbell and a Negro woman who are sitting on the landing. As she exits, the two women laugh about Stanley's lack of manners. Blanche DuBois enters. She is carrying a small suitcase and a piece of paper. She is a fading Southern belle, whose appearance suggests she is going to a garden party, but her search for her sister, Stella, has landed her in the slums of the French Quarter. Eunice notices the confused Blanche, and she asks whether she is lost. Blanche explains that she was instructed to take a streetcar named Desire to Elysian Fields via a streetcar called Cemetery. She informs him that she is indeed in the right place. Eunice lets her into the Kowalski's apartment to wait for Stella. Stella arrives, and noticing that Blanche is shaking and anxious, Stella is concerned by her sister's behavior, and she attempts to calm her nerves by offering her a drink. Blanche urges Stella to explain why she is living in such a depressed condition. Blanche says she has taken a leave of absence from her high school teaching job. She says that she is having a difficult time and needs a break. Blanche mentions the weight Stella has gained, and she complimented her on her appearance; however, Stella knows that her sister is being critical. Blanche demands that Stella stand so she can fully inspect the size of her hips, her less than perfect haircut. She asks Stella about having a maid, but the Kowalski's apartment only consists of two rooms. Blanche is horrified by this news. She pours another drink to curb her intolerance of the place. Blanche has been lonely; she feels her sister abandoned her when she left Mississippi and their father died. Blanche admits that she is not well. Stella insists that her sister stay at the apartment, and she directs her to a folding bed. She insists that Stanley will not mind the lack of privacy, as he is Polish. Stella advises her sister that Stanley is unlike the Southern gentlemen they knew back in Laurel, Mississippi. She confesses he is ill mannered, but she is madly in love with him. Blanche confesses that she has lost *Belle Reve*, the family plantation. Blanche expresses her resentment of her sister because she was "in bed with her Polack" while Blanche scraped and clawed to hold on to *Belle Reve*. Stella is very upset to know that they have lost their homeestead. Blanche bitterly blames the foreclosure on the many deaths in the family. Blanche is plagued with guilt, as well as being hopelessly adrift, and she projects her feelings of loss onto Stella, who runs into the bathroom to escape her sister's wrath. Stanley returns home. He shouts to his friends, Steve Hubbell and Mitch (Harold Mitchell), from the stairwell. Blanche speaks to him before he notices her presence. Stanley is cordial to her and asks for Stella, who has locked herself away in the bathroom. He offers Blanche another shot of whiskey, noticing that the bottle has already been sampled. Blanche declines the offer, stating that she rarely drinks. Her obvious dishonesty spurs Stanley to ask some very personal questions regarding her past, namely, about her husband. He sheds his sweater shirt to find relief in the summer heat and welcomes her to stay with them. Upset by his meddlesome inquiries, Blanche replies that her young husband is dead. She grows nauseous discussing this subject and has to sit down to regain her composure. Around six o'clock the following evening, Blanche and Stella plan to have dinner out and see a movie while Stanley and his friends have a poker night in the apartment. While Blanche readies herself in the bathroom, Stella tells Stanley that *Belle Reve* has been lost. She also warns him not to mention that she is pregnant because Blanche is already so unstable. Stanley is most concerned with the loss of the estate. He suspects Blanche sold the plantation and kept all of the profits for herself. Referring to the Napoleonic Code, Stanley wants to know whether he has been swindled. To find proof of the foreclosure he rummages through Blanche's trunk. Appraising the furs and jewelry she has, he urges Stella to acknowledge that Blanche has deceived her. Stella fears the looming confrontation, so she escapes to the porch. When Blanche finds her from her hot bath and realizes that Stella is not around, she flirts with Stanley as a means of winning him over; however, he is interested only in the profits from *Belle Reve*. When Stanley accuses Blanche of selling the plantation and keeping all of the money, she insists that she has never cheated. She says, "I know I fib a good deal. After all, a woman's charm is fifty percent illusion, but when a thing is important, I tell the truth." Stanley rifles through the trunk again, searching for documents that will prove Blanche is lying. Stanley discovers yellowing letters held together by aging ribbons, and he withholds these visibly precious items until she pulls two manila envelopes from her belongings. Blanche says that his touch has contaminated her cherished love letters. She tells Stanley that this paperwork is all that is left of the plantation, and he continues berating her by demanding to know how she could allow the foreclosure to happen. Blanche recoils with anger and retorts that the plantation has been lost by generations of negligent men who "exchanged the land for their epic fornifications." Stanley intends to have the documents read by a lawyer friend, and Blanche agrees to do so. Now that Stanley has been proved wrong, he justifies his concern with the fact that Stella is pregnant. 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