

The Glass Menagerie

This LibGuide was created to accompany the Visions & Voices event: The Glass Menagerie (9/10/10).

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Introduction

This LibGuide was created to accompany the Visions & Voices event: ***The Glass Menagerie***. On Friday September 10th, USC students will attend the Mark Taper Theater presentation of ***The Glass Menagerie***. [Read more about the event at the Visions & Voices website.](#)

About the play: "More than 65 years after its premiere, Tennessee Williams's ***The Glass Menagerie*** is recognized as one of the greatest plays ever written. Two-time Tony Award winner Judith Ivey stars as the matriarch of a fragile family hanging its hopes on the arrival of a 'gentleman caller.' Darkly humorous, and filled with bitterness and hope, this production of an American classic should not be missed."

Laurette Taylor - star of the original Broadway production, 1944



britannica.com

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Plot Synopsis

"The play is introduced to the audience by Tom as a memory play, based on his recollection of his mother Amanda and his sister Laura.

Amanda's husband abandoned the family long ago. Although a survivor and a pragmatist, Amanda yearns for the illusions and comforts she remembers from her days as a fêted Southern belle. She yearns especially for these things for her daughter Laura, a young adult with a crippled foot and tremulous insecurity about the outside world. Tom works in a warehouse, doing his best to support them. He chafes under the banality and boredom of everyday life and spends much of his spare time watching movies in cheap cinemas at all hours of the night.

Amanda is obsessed with finding a suitor for Laura, who spends most of her time with her collection of little glass animals. Tom eventually brings a nice boy named Jim home for dinner at the insistence of his mother, who hopes Jim will be the long-awaited suitor for Laura. Laura realizes that Jim is the man she loved in high school and has thought of ever since. After a long evening in which Jim and Laura are left alone by candlelight in the living room, waiting for electricity to be restored, Jim reveals that he is already engaged to be married, and he leaves. During their long scene together, Jim and Laura have shared a quiet dance, and he accidentally brushes against the glass menagerie, knocking the glass unicorn to the floor and breaking its horn off ('Now it's just like the other horses,' Laura says).

When Amanda learns that Jim was engaged she assumes Tom knew and lashes out at him: ('That's right, now that you've had us make such fools of ourselves. The effort, the preparations, all the expense! The new floor lamp, the rug, the clothes for Laura! all for what? To entertain some other girl's fiancé! Go to the movies, go! Don't think about us, a mother deserted, an unmarried sister who's crippled and has no job! Don't let anything interfere with your selfish pleasure. Just go, go, go - to the movies!' At play's end, as Tom speaks, it becomes clear that Tom left home soon afterward and never returned. In Tom's final speech, as he watches his mother comforting Laura long ago, he bids farewell: 'Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be! I reach for a cigarette, I cross the street, I run into the movies or a bar, I buy a drink, I speak to the nearest stranger - anything that can blow your candles out! [LAURA bends over the candles.] - for nowadays the world is lit by lightning! Blow out your candles, Laura - and so good-bye.' Laura blows the candles out as the play ends."

-Wikipedia



Sara Krulwich/The New York Times

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Theater Resources (Selected)

[International Index to the Performing Arts Full Text](#)

"A performing arts resource with over half a million indexed articles, plus detailed abstracts and full text from 1864 to the present, covering theatre, dance and film."

[Play Index](#)

"Search over 30,000 plays written from Antiquity to the present and published from 1949 to the present. Play Index covers a wide range of plays including mysteries, pageants, plays in verse, puppet performances, radio and television plays, and classic drama. Search for plays by title; author; subject (sisters, culture conflict, marriage); style (symbolism, experimental theater); genre (comedy, melodrama, musical); cast type; more."

[Theatre in Video](#)

"Contains more than 250 definitive performances of the world's leading plays, together with more than 100 film documentaries, online in streaming video - more than 500 hours in all. This release contains 279 titles, representing hundreds of leading playwrights, actors and directors."

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Multidisciplinary Databases (Selected)

[Academic OneFile](#)

"Formerly *Expanded Academic ASAP*. Includes abstracts or references for articles from more than 1,500 scholarly, trade and general-interest publications."

[Arts and Humanities Search \(OCLC\)](#)

"Records referencing many of the world's leading arts and humanities journals."

[JSTOR](#)

"A growing full text collection of core social science, humanities, and science journals. Some backfiles date back to the early 1800s. Fields covered include: anthropology, ecology, economics, education, finance, history, mathematics, philosophy, political science, sociology, literature, and theater."

[MLA International Bibliography](#)

"Index to scholarly publication in literature, languages, linguistics, and folklore from over 4000 journals and series published worldwide. Indexing only: no full text."

[ProQuest Research Library](#)

"*ProQuest Research Library* is a multi-disciplinary index. It covers dozens of subject areas and indexes thousands of scholarly and general titles and provides full text for a significant number of the articles included. It is an excellent starting place for research for a paper, particularly if one isn't sure where to begin one's research."

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Theater Journals (Selected)

[American Theatre](#)

"A consumer magazine featuring reports on plays in print, as well as performances and theater season schedules. Presents current trends in nonprofit American theater. Contains three to four articles in each issue; sometimes the complete text of a short play is included."

[The Journal of American Drama and Theatre](#)

"The widely acclaimed journal devoted solely to drama and theatre in the USA - past and present. Provocative, thoughtful articles by the leading scholars of our time providing valuable insight and information on the heritage of American theatre,

as well as its continuing contribution to world literature and the performing arts."

Theater

"For more than thirty years Theater has been the most informative, serious, and imaginative American journal available to readers interested in contemporary theater. It has been the first publisher of pathbreaking plays from writers as diverse as Athol Fugard, Sarah Kane, W. David Hancock, David Greenspan, Richard Foreman, Rinde Eckert, and Adrienne Kennedy. It has printed writings on theater by dramatists including Heiner Müller, Dario Fo, Mac Wellman, and Suzan-Lori Parks."

Theatre Journal

"For over five decades, *Theatre Journal's* broad array of scholarly articles and reviews has earned it an international reputation as one of the most authoritative and useful publications of theatre studies available today. Drawing contributions from noted practitioners and scholars, *Theatre Journal* features social and historical studies, production reviews, and theoretical inquiries that analyze dramatic texts and production."

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A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

"The fifth Tennessee Williams play to reach the screen, wealthy Mississippi plantation owner Big Daddy Pollitt, unaware that he's dying of cancer and disturbed by the strained and childless marriage of his favored alcoholic son Brick and his other son, Gooper, whose wife is about to bring forth another in the endless line of little 'no-neck monsters,' celebrates his sixty-fifth birthday with his family. Brick's wife, Maggie, beautiful and desirable, tries unsuccessfully to coax her husband away from the bottle, while alternately enticing him and taunting him about his obsession with his deceased best friend and the guilt about their relationship. The seamy tensions reach a climax when the truth of Big Daddy's health is revealed, and he and Brick manage to resolve their differences."

Dragon Country

"This production pairs together two Tennessee Williams plays, written twenty years apart, each examining the theme of isolation with searing clarity."

Eccentricities of a Nightingale

"Tony Award-winning actress Blythe Danner portrays the sensitive spinster Alma Winemiller in this 1948 drama by Tennessee Williams, a radically revised version of his earlier play *Summer and Smoke*, set in Mississippi at the turn of the century. Frustrated with longing for the socially prominent young doctor next door, the eccentric, highly emotional minister's daughter decides to settle for one night with him in a rented hotel room."

The Glass Menagerie

"A strong willed woman attempts to impose her shattered dreams into the life and personality of her shy, reclusive daughter."

A Streetcar Named Desire

"An uncensored version of the story of a repressed widow who visits her sister in New Orleans and is raped and driven mad by her brother-in-law."

Suddenly Last Summer (BBC version) & Suddenly Last Summer (1959 film)

"A wealthy harridan, Violet Venable, attempts to bribe Dr. Cukrowicz, a young psycho-surgeon from a New Orleans mental hospital that is desperately in need of funds, into lobotomizing her niece, Catherine Holly. Violet wants the operation performed in order to prevent Catherine from defiling the memory of her son, the poet Sebastian. Catherine has been babbling obscenely about Sebastian's mysterious death that she witnessed while on holiday together in Spain the previous summer."

Ten Blocks on the Camino Real

"Set in a fictional Latin American country populated by a worn-out Casanova, a nostalgic Camille, and a disillusioned Byron, Tennessee Williams' allegorical one-act play stars Martin Sheen as an American G.I. named Kilroy, an ex-boxer with the soul of a poet."

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Critical Companion to Tennessee Williams

"Heintzelman (Metropolitan Museum of Art) and Smith-Howard (NYU) offer an excellent resource for those studying Williams's life and extensive body of work. Well written and well organized, it is divided into several parts, which facilitates swift retrieval of information. Part 1 is a brief biography outlining the lives, background, and people who influenced Williams's life, some of whom were the basis for many of his stories and characters. Part 2 is a comprehensive A-Z listing of Williams's major and minor works. A synopsis and commentary accompany each story, along with character descriptions and background. Production or publication histories are included when and where appropriate. Part 3 contains an alphabetical listing of related entries, which elaborate on the people and places relevant to Williams's life. These entries further enhance the previous bibliography and list of works. Part 4 includes a chronology of Williams's life and works, a list of festivals, Internet resources, and information on libraries housing important collections for researching Williams. Also included is a bibliography of Williams's works, and related secondary sources. A well-organized index concludes the work."

The Influence of Tennessee Williams: Essays on Fifteen American Playwrights

"The author of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was never shy about drawing on his personal and family drama for stage material. This collection of 15 essays examines how Williams's confessional style and subject matter in turn influenced a diverse group of American playwrights over the past six decades. Critical comparisons with William Inge, Edward Albee, Neil Simon, David Mamet, Beth Henley, Christopher Durang, Tony Kushner, and others reveal the complexity of his influence. A special feature of this collection is its emphasis on how Williams was received by African American dramatists, including Lorraine Hansberry, August Wilson, Adrienne Kennedy and Suzan-Lori Parks. The collection ends with an original interview with Edward Albee on why and how Williams influenced him."

Memoirs

"After O'Neill, Williams is perhaps the best dramatist the United States has yet produced. Born in his grandfather's rectory in Columbus, Mississippi, Williams and his family later moved to St. Louis. There Williams endured many bad years caused by the abuse of his father and his own anguish over his introverted sister, who was later permanently institutionalized. Williams attended the University of Missouri, and, after time out to clerk for a shoe company and for his own mental breakdown, also attended Washington University of St. Louis and the University of Iowa, from which he graduated in 1938. Williams began to write plays in 1935. During 1943 he spent six months as a contract screenwriter for MGM but produced only one script, *The Gentleman Caller*. When MGM rejected it, Williams turned it into his first major success, *The Glass Menagerie* (1945). In this intensely autobiographical play, Williams dramatizes the story of Amanda, who dreams of restoring her lost past by finding a gentleman caller for her crippled daughter, and of Amanda's son Tom, who longs to escape from the responsibility of supporting his mother and sister"

Tennessee Williams and His Contemporaries

"This collection of lively transcribed panel discussions, taken from those presented at the March 2006 conference, includes commentary on re-reading, teaching, and interpreting a wide range of aspects of Williams's production and life, including his early and late work, his attention to his contexts, and his relations with Carson McCullers, Lillian Hellman and William Inge. Participants describe the various ways they teach the plays, analyze Williams's connections with and uses of the bizarre, and exchange information about the surprising finds they have made in the playwright's unpublished materials and discuss the relevant ethical and aesthetic considerations."

Tennessee Williams's The Glass Menagerie

"Premiering in 1944, *The Glass Menagerie* was Tennessee Williams's first popular success. Today the play is considered one of Williams's masterpieces and is frequently performed. This updated volume is an essential resource for those seeking to deepen their appreciation of this fascinating character study."

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