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**Context**

- **Author:** Tennessee Williams
- **Published:** 1947

**Personal**

- Williams was influenced by European culture as well as American
  - Explains Blanche’s fanaticism with France
- Tennessee Williams was gay
  - He was an outsider in his society
  - Homosexuality was illegal, could explain why Alan (Blanche’s husband) married her - to look normal
- Blanche: insanity
  - His sister was institutionalised in a mental hospital
  - He suffered from depression
  - In 1946 he incorrectly believed he had incurable cancer
- Blanche: light → he had a preoccupation with physical ugliness
- Blanche: escapism → for him, writing was an escape from the real world
- Williams wrote about the human psyche
  - Instead of asking “why”, he asked “what did it feel like to have this happen?”
  - Focused on the emotional burdens of everyday life
  - Believed that humans are all savages at heart (i.e. Stanley)

**Historical: Post-WW2**

- America won the war, great sense of euphoria
- Williams is shining a spotlight on the New America (those who work hard for their life rather than inheriting it)
- Removed from old America, focuses on new America

**“A Streetcar Named Desire”**

- Many-layered Tragedy
  - The main character doesn’t die, one important person does (young husband)
  - Love and sex → culminates in a scene of rape, sexual violence
  - Gender, rules, power and influence → what people want, what people desire
    - “It’s all about desires” - Nottingham professor
- Disintegration of many things:
  - Mental stability (Blanche)
  - Society → concept of family, of community, of old families from the South
- Blanche catches a tram named “Desire” (following the “light), then takes a tram named “Cemeteries” to where Stella and Stanley live
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

Alternative Names

- Williams was going to name the book “The Moth”
  - Blanche is lost and fragile like a moth
  - Constantly searching for the light → but avoiding it simultaneously
- Williams was going to call it “The Poker Game”
  - Male tribal activity, excluding the females
  - Exclusive masculinity in the play
    - Therefore there is an exclusive to how Blanche handles her femininity

Themes

Desire

- “What you are talking about is brutal desire – just – Desire! – the name of that rattle-trap street-car that bangs through the Quarter, up one old narrow street and down another…” – Blanche (page 40, Scene IV, talking to Stella)
- In Scene IX, Blanche is talking about death, and says “the opposite is desire.” (page 74)
  - Desire is what keeps her alive → allows her to avoid her loneliness
- Love – this variation of desire only really appears in Scene VI, when Blanche is recalling her past love for Allan Grey

Loneliness

- Blanche x the Blue Piano (see below in Plastic Theatre)
  - Scene V – Young Man
  - Scene IX – Mitch leaves when Blanche screams fire as he tries to rape her
  - Scene X – before Stanley rapes her, she can’t reach the telephone operator, and “the barely audible blue piano begins to drum up louder.”
  - Scene XI – Stanley goes to make love to Stella again, whilst Blanche is being taken away to the mental asylum. In the background, there is the “swelling music of the blue piano” (page 90)
- As the play progresses, Blanche is losing her relationships with people around her
  - She’s an outsider to New Orleans, single, and often she’s fifth-wheeling with Stella x Stanley, Steve x Eunice
  - Scene VII – Stanley is trying to turn Stella against Blanche
  - Scene VIII – Stanley and Stella go to the hospital for the child
  - Scene IX – Mitch is her escape, but then he leaves her
  - Scene X – Stanley cuts her off from the telephone
  - Scene XI – we find out that Stella has turned against Blanche, and Eunice is telling Stella that “life has got to go on” (page 89). Blanche also ignores Stella when she calls after her, “[walking] on without turning.” (page 90)
- One moment in Scene III, where the stage directions have the blue piano play and shows how Stanley is lonely for Stella
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

- Just after Stanley and Stella fight, then Stanley is “like a baying hound” (page 33) at the base of the steps etc.

Escapism: Alcohol

- In Scene VI, when Blanche and Mitch have returned, she’s searching for liquor again (page 52), which is in line with the rest of the night where she tries to create a romantic, make-believe atmosphere.
- In the beginning of Scene IX, later on in the evening from the preceding scenes where Stanley and Stella have gone to the hospital, Blanche has “a bottle of liquor” and is “drinking to escape” (page 69).
- Later on in Scene IX, when Mitch is clearly behaving differently, Blanche looks to find a liquor called ‘Southern Comfort’ (page 71).

Escapism: Fantasy

- In Scene IV, talking to Stella about Shep Huntleigh
  - “I took the trip as an investment, thinking I’d meet someone with a million dollars.” – Blanche (page 37)
- With the Young Man in Scene V
  - “[...] when an hour isn’t just an hour – but a little bit of Eternity dropped in your hands [...]” – Blanche (p 48)
  - Blanche describes the young man as a young prince out of the Arabian Nights.” (page 49) → Arabian nights = folk tales, magical
  - After the young man leaves, she’s still standing “dreamily.” (p 49, s. d.)
- In Scene VI, Blanche is constantly trying to romanticise and create a new world
  - “I’m looking for the Pleiades, the Seven Sisters, but these girls are not out tonight [...] going home from their little bridge party.” – Blanche (page 51)
  - “We are going to pretend that we are sitting in a little artists’ café on the Left Bank in Paris!” – Blanche (page 52)
- In Scene IX, talking to Mitch
  - “I don’t want realism. [...] I’ll tell you what I want. Magic!” – Blanche (page 72)
  - “I don’t tell truth, I tell what ought to be truth. And if that is sinful, then let me be damned for it!” – Blanche (page 72)

Escapism: Lies

- Talking to Mitch in Scene IX
  - “Kiefafer, Stanley and Shaw have tied an old tin can to the tail of the kite.” – Blanche (page 73)
    - “Old tin can” → her lies, her past; it grounds the kite, reality
    - “Tail of the kite” → her façade of youth and innocence; her fantasies
- Talking to Stanley in Scene X
  - She lies to Stanley, saying that Mitch “returned with a box of roses to beg [her] forgiveness!” (page 78)
  - “Improvising feverishly.” (p78, stage directions) → lunacy
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

Cruelty
- In Scene VII, Stanley tells Mitch everything about Blanche's past, saying to Stella "you're goddam right I told him!" (page 62)
  - He has destroyed Blanche's last and only escape route
- Blanche, talking to Stanley in Scene X
  - "Deliberate cruelty is not forgivable. [...] it is the one thing of which I have never, never been guilty." – Blanche (page 78)
- Stanley in Scene X, before he rapes her (page 80)
  - He "crosses to [the phone] deliberately and sets it back on the hook." (p 80)
  - Afterwards, "his mouth slowly [curves] into a grin." (page 80)
- In the final scene, Scene XI, even as the Matron is getting Blanche to leave, Stanley decides to tear the lantern off the light bulb in front of Blanche, and to accuse her of "[leaving] nothing here but spilt talcum and old empty perfume bottles." (page 90)

Religious Imagery
- Towards the end, where Blanche has cathedral bells, Madonna
  - "Those cathedral bells – they're the only clean thing in the Quarter.“ – Blanche (p 84)
    - The cathedral chimes intersperse her speech
  - "It's [...] the blue of the robe in the old Madonna pictures.“ – Blanche (page 84, to Eunice and Stella about her jacket)
- Subtle imagery
  - “I don’t tell truth, I tell what ought to be truth. And if that is sinful, then let me be damned for it!” – Blanche (page 72)
  - “Shadows and lurid reflections move sinuously as flames along the wall spaces.” – hellish
  - “Sometimes – there’s God – so quickly!” – Blanche (p 57)

Appearances
- All Blanche has left, and even then, not really
  - Scene I – “I still have that awful vanity about my looks even now that my looks are slipping!” – Blanche (page 9, to Stella)
  - Scene III – “Wait till I powder before you open the door.” – Blanche (page 25, to Stella, before they enter the apartment)
  - Scene V – “You’ve got to be soft and attractive. And I-I’m fading now!” – Blanche (page 45, her speech about soft people and being one)
- Desperate to be flattered, she wants to be desired, wants to be wanted
  - Scene II – “Admire her dress and tell her she’s looking wonderful. That’s important with Blanche.” – Stella (page 16, to Stanley)

Lost
- Belle Reve → lost, American dream
  - Beautiful old dream is replaced with a new dream that anyone can achieve e.g. Stanley
- First time we see Blanche in Scene I she is lost
- Stella and Blanche
  - “Which way do we – go now – Stella?” – Blanche (page 23) → reflects Stella’s choice later on the play to stay with Stanley or help Blanche
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

- "The blind are – leading the blind!" – Blanche (page 24)
  - Blanche is blind – insane; Stella is blind – believing Stanley
- To Mitch, in Scene VI, Blanche says that “a girl alone in the world, has got to keep a firm hold on her emotions or she’ll be lost!” (page 51)

Women
- Women in this period are supposed to be virginal and chaste
  - Blanche pretends to be this, but Mitch is shocked when he finds out

Symbolisms / Motifs

Plastic Theatre

In ‘A Streetcar Named Desire’, props, noises and/or stage directions are used to reflect and represent Blanche’s state of mind. Her emotions, thoughts, and memories can be observed through the stage setup. Plastic Theatre is symbolic, non-realist, and metaphorical.

The Varsouviana Polka → Blanche’s past, insanity, losing truth and reality

Her ex-lover Allan Grey committed suicide after Blanche told him she was ‘disgusted’ to find him cheating on her with another man.

- Allan Grey’s surname – the “greyness” of his homosexuality showed her the reality of the world, and that not everyone can love her – loss of the blinding light

- Blanche’s Past
  - First heard in Scene I (page 15), when Stanley asks Blanche if she was once married: “The music of the polka rises up, faint in the distance.”
  - Throughout Scene VI (page 57), when Blanche is telling Mitch about her past, the “Polka music sounds, in a minor key faint with distance.”
  - In Scene VIII (page 68), when Stanley gives Blanche her ticket back to Laurel, where her past is, “the Varsouviana music steals in […]”

- Insanity
  - Again in Scene VIII (page 69), after the ticket to Laurel and after Stanley and Stella have gone to the hospital, “The Varsouviana is heard, its music rising with sinister rapidity [...]”
  - This representation of her insanity carries on through to Scene IX (page 69), just before Mitch turns up unshaven and in his work clothes.
    “The rapid, feverish polka tune... is heard,” and “the music is in her mind [...]”

- Mitch
  - “He kisses her forehead and her eyes and finally her lips. The Polka tune fades out.” (page 57, Scene VI) → Mitch is able to save her from her past

Blue Piano → dream-like atmosphere, Blanche’s loneliness, need for companionship

- Cyclical structure of the play
  - Part of the initial stage directions of Scene I (page 3), and is described to be the “spirit of the life” in New Orleans
The play concludes in Scene XI, with Stanley going to make love with Stella again, whilst Blanche is being taken away to the mental asylum. In the background, there is the “swelling music of the blue piano” (page 90)

- Loneliness
  - It’s heard in Scene V, when Blanche and the Young Man kiss
  - In Scene IX, after Mitch leaves when Blanche screams fire as he tries to rape her (page 75), “the distant piano is slow and blue.”
  - In Scene X, before Stanley rapes her, she tries to reach the telephone operator, but it doesn’t work, and “the barely audible ‘blue piano’ begins to drum up louder.”

**Locomotives → Stanley, Blanche’s desire to escape**
- Even as the locomotive represents Stanley, it simultaneously represents Blanche’s desire to escape, because she’s always trying to avoid / run from Stanley (he’s the one constantly bringing her past back, and trapping / threatening her)
- Stanley → like locomotives, he is modern, impressive, and raw
  - Scene IV – before Stella and Blanche are talking about Stanley (the long-ass rant about Stanley’s primitiveness), Stanley is associated with the locomotive (page 40), as it offers him cover to approach stealthily
  - Scene VI – Blanche is talking to Mitch about her past (page 56), when there is the presence of a locomotive → she’s trying to escape from her past
  - Scene X – before Stanley rapes her, the blue piano “turns into the roar of an approaching locomotive” (page 80). Loneliness → need for escape

**The Light**
- Light = the truth / Blanche’s past / Allan Grey [here](#)
- Blanche avoids the light
  - Scene I – “Her delicate beauty must avoid a strong light.” (p 5, stage directions)
  - Scene VI – “Let’s leave the light off. Shall we?” – Blanche (page 51, to Mitch, as she tries to create a romantic and fantastical atmosphere)
  - Scene VIII – “Candles aren’t safe, […] candles burn out […] and after that happens, electric light bulbs go on and you see too plainly…” – Blanche (p 66, about the candles on her birthday cake)
  - Scene IX – “I like it dark. The dark is comforting to me.” – Blanche (page 72, to Mitch just before they fall apart)
- Shadows
  - They come up in Scene X when Stanley and Blanche fight, and are described to be “of a grotesque and menacing form” and to move “sinuously” (page 79)
  - ^Her downfall

**Singing: “It’s only a paper moon!”**
- The lyrics of the song reflects how Blanche approaches life – not seriously, with a tendency for fantasy, make-believe, magic, and romance
- Turns up in Scene VII, when Stanley is telling Stella about Blanche’s past, and Blanche’s singing is interspersing Stanley’s accusations
  - [Here](#)
Bathing
- Cleaning oneself from one's own sins
  - Feeling guilty about something, wanting to cleanse this
  - Blanche – tries to cleanse herself of her sordid past; her baths take so long, and are never-ending, because she can't leave her past behind
  - Scene I – tells Stella not to look at her until she has bathed and rested (page 7)
- Blanches bathes often
  - Scene II – upon exit Stanley has rooted through her belongings already
    - "Here I am, all freshly bathed and scented, and feeling like a brand new human being!" – Blanche (page 18)
  - Scene III – upon returning from her night out with Blanche, and right after seeing Stanley hit Stella on her thick (sexual undertone) → ghost of her past
    - "I think I will bathe. […] My nerves are in knots." – Blanche (page 26)
  - Scene VII – bathing and singing whilst Stanley uproots her past to Stella
    - "A hot bath […] always gives me a brand new outlook on life!" (p 63)
  - Scene XI – she is bathing prior to being taken away to the mental asylum

Stanley
- Scene III – after fighting Stella, he says, "I want water," and the men take him to shower → he's trying to undo his misdeed of hurting Stella

Couples Fight and Get Back Together
- Cycle of breaking up and making up, and Blanche doesn't like this
  - Stanley x Stella
    - Scene III – Stanley beats Stella, and then he reconciles by acting “like a baying hound” (page 33) and then they have make-up sex
    - Scene VIII – Stanley rages and sweeps everything off the dinner table and asserts his dominance as King. At the end of the scene, Stella is in childbirth and arguably this is their reconciliation → still physical and stemming from sex
  - Steve x Eunice
    - Scene V – they fight, and Eunice goes to get a drink. Steve goes after her and later they return. Steve's arm is around Eunice's shoulder and she is sobbing luxuriously and he is cooing love-words.” (page 44)

Poker
- Exclusively male game, establishing the dominance of male presence

Characters

All names are very symbolic, e.g. street cars, Belle Reve, Blanche.

Blanche
- Blanche means ‘white’ in French → ironic innocence
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

- Represents “Old America”
  - She is a flawed character so it is difficult for us to feel sorry for her
    - She flirts with the Young Man whilst waiting for Mitch to take her out
    - Alcoholism, escapism, chronic liar
- Some pathos for Blanche but sometimes we feel like she has brought it on herself
  - She is torn between Stanley and Stella
  - She was kicked out of town because she worked at the “Flamingo Hotel”
    - Picked up a lot of men
- But by the end we do, because Stanley rapes her, and is unnecessarily cruel
- Blanche is persuaded to go to the mental asylum with the “kindness of strangers,” and not by force
  - “Kindness” and “strangers” is a questionable concept - Nott. Prof.
- Blanche is often compared to an animal
  - “There is a certain something about her uncertain manner, as well as her white clothes, that suggests a moth.” *(page 5, stage directions. Scene I, when Blanche first turns up and is characterised)*
  - Moths have short life spans

Stanley
- New America - hard work, gritty
  - “It isn’t genius […] it’s a drive that he has.” – Stella *(page 27, to Blanche)*
  - Immigrant working class person can exceed, class and race don’t matter anymore
- Stanley is seen as a hero because he fought in the war → ironic
  - Uncomfortable ending when Stanley wins because he is a horrible character
  - Grim when we see the ending
- Associated with the power sounds of locomotives: modern, impressive, and raw.
  - When Stanley is revealing Blanche’s past, this sound is dominant → locomotives are alternatively a symbol of Blanche’s desire to escape.
  - Scene IV – before Stella and Blanche are talking about Stanley (rant about Stanley’s primitiveness), Stanley is associated with the locomotive *(page 40)*
  - Scene X – before Stanley rapes her, the blue piano “turns into the roar of an approaching locomotive” *(page 80)*. Loneliness → need for escape
- Animal-like
  - Scene I, when he is first characterised *(page 13-14, stage directions)*
    - “Animal joy in his being…”
    - “[...] a richly feathered male bird among hens.”
  - Scene III, after Stanley and Stella fight and now they reconcile
    - “Stanley stumbles half-dressed out to the porch […] he throws back his head like a baying hound and bellows his wife’s name.” *(page 33)*
    - “Quit that howling […]!” – Eunice *(page 33)*
  - Scene IV, Blanche’s rant
  - Scene IV, post-Blanche’s speech *(page 41)*
    - “Stanley hesitates, licking his lips.”
    - “[...] suddenly he turns stealthily about […]”
- Alpha male, patriarchal
“[..] his life has been pleasure with women, the giving and taking of it [...] with power and pride.” (page 13-14, stage directions, characterisation)

“Not in my territory.” – Stanley (page 14, when Blanche says she’s from Laurel)

“Let’s get quick out of here!” – Steve (page 32, Scene III, after Stanley beats Stella) → they are scared of Stanley

“Every Man is a King! And I am the king around here, so don’t forget it!” – Stanley (page 65, to Stella when she asked him to clean up)

Stella
- “Mrs Stanley Kowalski” (page 5)
  - Weakness of women → need to take on the whole name
  - Only know she’s the woman because of the “Mrs.”
  - Blanche addresses Stella with phrases such as: “Stella for Star”, “Precious Lamb”
    - Impression that she is Blanche’s younger sister → makes Blanche’s position more tragic because her “younger” sister is married and has a baby whereas the former has neither
    - These are her pre-Stanley names (Stella for Star)
    - Blanche wants Stella back to how she was before Stanley
    - Takes Stanley’s side after the birth of her baby, but is guilt-ridden with what she has done to Blanche
      - “I never had so much trouble swallowing food in my life.” – Stella (page 66, to Stanley in Scene VIII after he throws plates and says he’s a King)
      - “I don’t know if I did the right thing.” – Stella (page 83, to Eunice in Scene XI, referring to sending Blanche to the mental asylum)
      - “Oh, God, what have I done to my sister?” – Stella (page 88, Scene XI, whilst Blanche is in the apartment with the Matron and Stanley)

Mitch
- Slightly child-like
  - “I told my mother how nice you were, and I liked you.” – Mitch (p 55, Scene VI)
- He starts off mild-mannered, then progresses into a Stanley (Scene IX when he tries to rape Blanche), until finally being reduced to uselessness by Scene XI
  - Scene III – polite, unlike the other men
    - “How do you do, Miss Dubois.” – Mitch (page 26)
  - Scene IX – turning into Stanley
  - Scene XI – weeks after Stanley rapes Blanche, and Mitch has left her
    - “You... you... you... Brag... brag... bull... bull...” (page 82, in response to Stanley’s explanation of what luck is. He cannot even form a sentence)
    - When Mitch hears Blanche, “[the] arm supporting his cards has sagged and his gaze is dissolved into space.” (page 83)
    - After threatening to kill Stanley, “Mitch collapses at the table, sobbing.” (page 88)

Characters: Contrasts
**Blanche x Stanley**
- “I can’t stand a naked light bulb, any more than I can a rude remark or vulgar action.” – Blanche  
  *(page 30)*
- Blanche is a soft person, whilst Stanley is a bold, primary colour
- “Deliberate cruelty is not forgivable. […] it is the one thing of which I have never, never been guilty.” – Blanche *(page 78)* → also contrasts with Mitch

**Blanche x Stella**
- Stella offers coke with the liquor but Blanche just wants hard liquor *(page 7)*
  - Innocence vs not so innocent
- Dreamer vs Realist
  - Blanche talks about Edgar Allan Poe and the “haunted woodland of Weir”, but Stella responds, “No, honey, those are the L & N tracks.” *(page 8)*
  - After Blanche builds up a romantic image of Shep Huntleigh, Stella just says “I should think [the Cadillac convertible] would have been – inconvenient in traffic!” *(page 37)*

**Stanley x Stella**
- Different classes, upbringing, background
  - “I pulled you down off them columns and how you loved it, having them coloured lights going!” – Stanley *(page 68, Scene VIII)*
- Stanley doesn’t know a fake fur-piece from a real fur piece, doesn’t know what rhinestone is → Stella does

**Stanley x Mitch**
- Stanley doesn’t talk about his own physique, because his presence is already sufficient; whereas Mitch is talking to Blanche about his body in Scene VI, whilst she is trying to create romance
- “He fumblingly embraces her.” *(page 53, stage directions)*
  - Stanley is more sure of himself with Stella
  - Similarly, Mitch doesn’t rape Blanche, but Stanley does...

## Setting

*Downtown New Orleans, French Quarter.*

### Timing
- Scenes 1 - 4: Early May → time of hope
- Scenes 5 - 6: August → very hot, steamy time of the year
- Scenes 7 – 10: 15th September → Blanche’s birthday. The beginning of “fall” (autumn)
- Scenes 11: Some weeks later (after the rape), October/November, end of the fall. Winter → death

### Elysian Fields
- Greek myth for where Heroes go, paradise → ironic because Stanley lives there
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

- CONTRASTS: with the grandeur of Belle Reve; and the refined, ‘whiteness’ of Blanche
- Poor, and common
  - “Faded white stairs” (page 3) → this place is lived in, it’s not perfect
  - The houses are “weathered grey, with rickety outside stairs” (page 3)
- But it has a “raffish charm” (page 3) which conceals the poverty
  - Mentions lots of colours, very graphic and detailed → contrasts with ‘A Doll’s House’ which doesn’t have many colours
    - “A peculiarly tender blue, almost turquoise”
- Sensory appeal: tactile, olfactory
  - “You can almost feel the warmth breath of the brown river” (page 3)
  - “Faint redolent of bananas and coffee” (page 3)
- Diverse melting pot!
  - Highlighted through “the infatuated fluency of brown fingers” (page 3)
  - Eunice and coloured woman lives as neighbours – equality
    - “Two women, one white and one coloured” (page 3)
- “Above the music of the “Blue Piano” the voices of people on the street can be heard overlapping.” (page 3)
  - “voices” → plural → so much going on, vibrant life
  - “Above” → arguably, if the blue piano represents loneliness, this could foreshadow / reflect how Blanche’s loneliness is essentially ignored / drowned out by the other characters

The Apartment

- Very small
- Owned by Eunice, Blanche owns nothing

Other Places: Belle Reve (Stella and Blanche’s familial plot of land)

- “Belle Reve” = Beautiful dream → ironic
- Elegant, beautiful, not done through hard work but made their wealth through the exploitation of slaves
  - Contrasts with New Orleans which is very multicultural.
  - The play opens with Eunice and a Negro woman: symbolic.
Scene I

Early May → time of hope
Elysian Fields, New Orleans

Initial Stage Directions (page 3)
- “...the atmosphere of decay.” → reference to the economic decay of the South
- “This ‘Blue Piano’ expresses the spirit of the life [...]”
  - Dreamy, lonely
  - Cyclical structure → the Blue Piano foregrounds and ends the play

Stanley: Characterised
- Rough
  - “Stanley (bellowing): Hey, there! Stella, Baby!” (page 4)
- Primal → alludes to the overarching idea of Stanley being animal-like
  - “Stanley carries... a red-stained package from a butcher’s.” (p4, stage directions)
    - Package → sexual innuendo
  - “Stanley: Catch!
    Stella: What?
    Stanley: Meat!” (page 4)

Blanche: Characterised (page 5, stage directions)
- Fragile, perhaps somewhat refined
  - “She is daintily dressed...”
  - “Her delicate beauty must avoid a strong light.”
    - Allusion to how her beauty is just a façade
    - Her fear of being exposed to bright light → revealing truths
- Supposedly innocent → “white suit”, “earrings of pearl”, “white gloves and hat”
- “There is something about her [...] that suggests a moth.”

Blanche: Lunacy
- “I've got to keep hold of myself!” (page 7, speaking to herself)
- When she sees Stella she rambles on and on, seemingly talking to herself and not giving Stella a chance to speak
  - “[Blanche] begins to speak with feverish vivacity [...]” (page 7, stage directions)
  - “[Blanche] is shaking all over and panting for breath as she tries to laugh. The bottle nearly slips from her grasp.” (page 7, stage directions)
- “I was on the verge of – lunacy, almost!” (page 8)
- “I'm – not very well... [Her voice drops and her look is frightened].” (page 10)

Blanche: Escapism
- “She pours half a tumbler of whiskey and tosses it down.” (p7, stage directions)
- “No coke, honey, not with my nerves tonight!” (page 7, when Stella looks to mix coke with Blanche’s liquor)
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

- Nerves → allusion to lunacy and a need for escape
- No coke → not as innocent, quite hard core
- “Only Mr. Edgar Allan Poe! [...] Out there I suppose it the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir!” (page 8)
  - Over-dramatizing, comparing Stella’s living location to Poe’s poetry
  - But this also shows that she is educated

Blanche: Light // Obsession with Physical Appearance

- “Turn that over-light off! [...] I won’t be looked at in this merciless glare!” (page 7)
- “Daylight never exposed so total a ruin!” (page 9, about herself)
- “I want you to look at my figure!” (page 9, to Stella)
  - Egocentric as well
- “I still have that awful vanity about my looks even now that my looks are slipping!” (page 9)
  - Looks are slipping → she recognises her ages
  - ^Could also allude to the façade

Blanche: Loneliness

- “I want to be near you, got to be with somebody, I can’t be alone!” (page 10)

Stanley: Stereotypical Male (page 13-14, stage directions)

- Primal, animal-like
  - “Animal joy in his being...”
  - “[...] a richly feathered male bird among hens.”
- Sexual
  - “[...] the centre of his life has been pleasure with women, the giving and taking of it [...] with power and pride.”
  - “[...] everything that is this, that bears his emblem of the gaudy seed-bearer.”
  - “He sizes women up at a glance, with sexual classifications [...]”

Stanley x Blanche

- “[Blanche draws] involuntarily back from his stare.” (page 14, stage directions)
  - Their first encounter → she is intimidated by Stanley
- “Not in my territory.” – Stanley (page 14, when asking where Blanche is from. Laurel)
  - Territory → animal-like, marking his area
- “The music of the polka rises up, faint in the distance.” (page 15, stage directions, when Stanley asks Blanche if she was married once)

Scene II

Early May → time of hope
6 o’clock the following evening.

- “[...] the perpetual ‘blue piano’ around the corner.” (page 15, stage directions)
  - Blanche’s loneliness and dreaminess
  - Perhaps this foreshadows her flirting with Stanley → need for companionship
Blanche: Obsession with Physical Appearance

- “Admire her dress and tell her she’s looking wonderful. That’s important with Blanche.” – Stella (page 16, to Stanley)
- “I was fishing for a compliment, Stanley.” – Blanche (page 19)

Stanley: Rough

- “I don’t care if [Blanche] hears me. Let’s see the papers!” – Stanley (page 17, to Stella)
  - Disregard for manners / niceties → down-to-earth, pragmatic
- “[Stanley] stalks into the bedroom.” (page 17, stage directions)
  - Stalks → animal-like
- “[Stanley] hurls the furs…” ”[…jerk] opens a small drawer…”
  - Hurls, jerks → dynamic, violent imagery
  - Fist-full → ‘measurement’, but “fist” implies violence
  - Juxtaposed against the dainty / refined nature of the clothing he is handling

Stanley: Realist

- “Open your eyes to this stuff!” – Stanley (page 17, to Stella about Blanche’s clothes)
  - Whereas in A Doll’s House it is Nora showing Helmer about the reality of things; Nora dealt with financial stuff on her own, while Stella does not

Stanley: Dominant

- “[...] and when you’re swindled under the Napoleonic code I’m swindled too. And I don’t like to be swindled.” – Stanley (page 17, to Stella)
  - Territorial → he wants what is supposedly his
- “Since when do you give me orders?” – Stanley (page 18)
  - Implies that Stanley is usually the one giving orders
  - Gender roles and sexism

Stanley: Popular

- He knows lots of people who can help him appraise Blanche’s things:
  - He has “an acquaintance who deals in this sort of merchandise”, “an acquaintance that works in a jewellery store” – Stanley (page 18, to Stella)
  - and “a lawyer acquaintance.” – Stanley (page 23, to Blanche)
  - Shows his extensive networking skills

Stanley: Ignorant

- Stanley wrongly assumes that Blanche’s furs are expensive, genuine ones, and states so with an air of justified anger
  - Stella tells him, “those are inexpensive summer furs that Blanche has had a long time” (page 18).
  - Still, he insists on having an acquaintance appraise them
Wrongly assumes Blanche's rhinestone tiara is made of diamonds, and then when Stella tells him so, he responds: "What's rhinestone?" (page 18)

**Stanley x Blanche (at this point, Stella has exited onto the porch)**

- **Juxtaposition**
  - Blanche "playfully sprays him" with her atomiser, but he "seizes" it and "slams it down on the dresser." (page 21)
    - "Seizes", "slams" → violent imagery, stereotypically masculine
    - "playfully", "sprays" → dainty, fragile, perhaps feminine

- **Sexual tension**
  - "[Stanley] crosses through the drapes with a smouldering look." (p19, stage directions)
  - "Blanche: To interest you a woman would have to –
    Stanley [slowly]: Lay… her cards on the table." (page 20)
    - "Lay" → sexual innuendo
  - "If I didn't know that you was my wife's sister I'd get ideas about you!" – Stanley (page 21)

- **Blanche flirting with Stanley**
  - Blanche asks Stanley to help her with "some buttons in back!" (page 19)
  - "[She smiles at him radiantly.] Would you think it possible that I was once considered to be –
    attractive?" (p19)
  - "May I have a drag on your cig?" – (page 19, to Stanley)
    - Cigarette → phallic symbol
  - "[She] playfully sprays him with [her atomizer]." (page 21, stage directions)

- **The Love Letters**
  - After the love letters make their appearances, Blanche "now seems faint with exhaustion" (page 22, stage directions). → how memories / being reminded of her past takes a toll on her energy

**Blanche Long Speech: Death**

- All we associate with Belle Reve is death and decay
- "Sometimes their breathing is hoarse, and sometimes it rattles, and sometimes they even cry out to you." → Auditory imagery, tripling
- "The Grim Reaper had put up his tent on our doorstep!"

**Blanche: Loneliness**

- "The 'blue piano' sounds louder" (page 23, stage directions)
  - Just after Stanley mentions that Stella is going to have a baby, and just after they finished the whole paper ordeal and Stella is returning (Blanche sent her off to get a lemon-coke)
  - Blanche’s loneliness and need for companionship is heightened by the fact that Stella is already married and with a child

**Blanche: Escapism**

- "How pretty the sky is! I ought to go there on a rocket that never comes down." (p23)

*Scene III*
**Early May → time of hope**

*The Poker Night → Stella and Blanche have gone out for dinner and drinks. The men are playing poker in Stella and Stanley’s place.*

- Important, pivotal scene
- Winners and losers → does Stanley or Blanche win?
- Blanche and Mitch meet → this relationship is important

**Initial Stage Directions (page 24)**

- Overloading of visual images → complete contrast to Blanche
  - Van Gogh - billiard parlour
  - The men’s coloured shirts – “solid blues, a purple, a red-and-white check, a light green.”
  - Symbolic of New Orleans → diverse, colourful
- “[The men are] as coarse and direct and powerful as the primary colours.”
  - “I like an artist who paints in strong, bold colours, primary colours.” – Blanche (page 20, to Stanley in Scene II) → arguably, this could allude to the tension between Blanche x Stanley, but also foreshadow Blanche x Mitch

**Stanley: Dominant // Alpha**

- Stanley is losing, but he is still in charge
- Dominates the opening conversation
  - “Get off the table, Mitch.” (page 24)

**Stanley: Rough // Stereotypical Masculinity**

- Misogynistic, primal → sexual
  - “Hurry back and we will fix you a sugar-tit.” – Stanley (page 25, to Mitch)
  - “Stanley gives a loud whack of his hand on [Stella’s] thigh.” (page 26, stage directions)
- Symbolises the New America: hard work
  - “Stanley’s the only one of his crowd that’s likely to get anywhere.” – Stella (page 27, to Blanche)
  - “It isn’t genius […] it’s a drive that he has.” – Stella (page 27, to Blanche)
    - Stanley isn’t the brightest → contrasts with Blanche being educated
    - Drive → primal, animal-esque

**Poker: “Seven Card Stud” (Steve, page 25)**

- Name of the poker game
  - Stud = sexually attractive, has a lot of partners
  - Stud → mostly used for men → masculinity
- “Could I kibitz?” – Blanche (page 26)
  - Needs permission from the men / Stanley to just watch the poker game
  - Male-dominated game
- “Poker shouldn’t be played in a house with women.” – Mitch (page 32, says it twice, after Stanley goes off on Stella)
Steve’s Joke: Chicken
- A joke about how a rooster was so hungry it gave up going after a hen
- Joke about rape → unpleasant, and reflects the nature of the men
  - Everyday talk, the neighbourhood jokes about these things
  - Contrasts with Blanche, who is too refined for crudeness
- "You hens cut out that conversation in there!" – Stanley (page 27, to Stella and Blanche as they speak in the bedroom)
  - Misogynistic, and reinforces how Stanley sees women as just sex
  - Metaphor, and foreshadowing → Stanley is the rooster, Blanche the hen
  - Also links back to how Stanley was characterised as a "a richly feathered male bird among hens" in Scene I

Blanche
- “Wait till I powder before you open the door.” – Blanche (page 25, to Stella)
  - Powder → like a mask → she’s trying to hide her true features, her aging
- “I think I will bathe.” – Blanche (page 26, after seeing Stanley hit Stella on the high)
  - Cleansing, and a form of comfort for her

Mitch: Characterised
- Polite, unlike the other men
  - "How do you do, Miss Dubois." – Mitch (page 26)
- Less crude
  - "That one seems – superior to the others. [...] I thought he had a sort of sensitive look.” – Blanche (page 26, to Stella)
    - Sensitivity → more feminine and refined
    - Superiority = sensitivity → Blanche values softness

Blanche: The Light
- "Stella: You’re standing in the light, Blanche!
  Blanche: Oh, am I!" (page 27)
  - Undresses in the light, is she naive or flirtatious?
  - She is in the light, so the men can see her get undress
- “Blanche moves back into the streak of light. [...] She raises her arms and stretches.” (page 28, stage directions)
  - As the play progresses, it seems like an addiction
  - She seems to be afraid of the light, yet she can’t help but go back to it
    - How she misses her ex-husband?
    - Or because there are curtain drapes between her and the men, it doesn’t allow them to really scrutinise her → that is what she is most afraid of, having her flaws uncovered (a shadow only shows so much)

Stanley x Blanche
- “She returns [Stanley’s] look without flinching.” (page 28)
  - Contrasts with their first encounter, where she was “drawing involuntarily back from his stare.” (page 14, stage directions in Scene I) → is Blanche gaining the upper hand now?
Tension is building between the two protagonists of the play.

- “Blanche waltzes to the music with romantic gestures. [...] Stanley stalks fiercely [...] and snatches [...]. With a shouted oath, he tosses the instrument out of the window.”
- Stanley's juxtaposition vs Blanche's refined nature

**Blanche x Mitch**

- **Common ground**
  - Both have dead partners
  - Both are single, and lonely
    - Only reason that they get together, as everyone else is already taken
    - They are ill-matched
- **Bad fit**
  - “Blanche waltzes to the music with romantic gestures. Mitch is delighted and moves in awkward imitation like a dancing bear.” *(page 31)*
    - “Waltzes”, “romantic” VS “awkward imitation”, “bear”
    - Bear → animal-like, primal → not as refined
  - Blanche knows her literature → “Mrs Browning!” *(page 29)*
    - Sonnet: traditional form of the love poetry, symbolic of how they get together
  - Blanche is insincere → “Sick people have such sincere attachments.” *(page 29)*

**Blanche x Mitch: Light / Fantasy**

- Blanche’s fear of being seen: the lantern
  - “I can’t stand a naked light bulb, any more than I can a rude remark or vulgar action.” – Blanche *(page 30)*
    - Genteel, well-mannered → contrasted by Stanley
  - Blanche’s innocent persona
    - “I’m not accustomed to having more than one drink.” – Blanche *(page 29)*
      - She pretends she doesn’t drink much, even though she actually does
    - Romanticises her name → DuBois
      - “It’s a French name.” *(page 30)* → French = romance and love
      - “Like an orchard in spring!” *(page 30)* → implicit youth and beauty
    - “It’s touching to notice [my students] making their first discovery of love!” – Blanche *(page 31)*
      → this could allude to her relationship with 17 y/o boy
- “Never arithmetic, sir; never arithmetic!” – Blanche *(page 31, to Mitch)*
  - Arithmetic → logical, reasonable, possibly down to earth
  - She teaches English instead → fiction, escapism
- “I call [Stella] little in spite of the fact that she’s somewhat older than I.” – Blanche *(page 30)* → delusional, living in a makeshift world

**Stanley x Mitch: Juxtaposition**

- “Blanche: Thank you, sir! I appreciate your gallantry! [...] Stanley [bellowing]: Mitch!” *(page 30)*

**Stanley x Stella**

- Stanley is animal-like
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- “Drunk – drunk – animal thing, you!” – Stella (page 31, at Stanley)
- “Stanley charges at Stella.” (page 31, stage directions)
- “[Stanley] advances and disappears” after Stella, who has gone out of sight (page 31, stage directions)
  - Offstage → violence between Stella and Stanley is all offstage and shown through sound imagery
  - “Sound of a blow. Stella cries out.” “Something is overturned with a crash.”

- Interesting relationship
  - “Lunacy, absolute lunacy!” – Blanche (page 32, reacting to the above)
  - ^Ironic, because she’s depicted as the crazy one

Stanley: Power
- “Men [feebly]: Take it easy, Stanley.” (page 32, stage directions) → the men cannot stand against him
- “Stanley is forced, pinioned by the two men […] he nearly throws them off.” (page 32, stage directions)
- “Let’s get quick out of here!” – Steve (page 32) → the men are scared of Stanley

Men // Women
- Men are with each other
  - “They speak quietly and lovingly to him and he leans his face on one of their shoulders.” (page 32, stage directions)
    - The men are really nice to Stanley
    - Stanley sounds almost sounds like a subdued beast / angry dog
- Women are with each other
  - “With her arms around Stella, Blanche guides her to the outside doors and upstairs.” (page 32, stage directions)
    - Upstairs → morally superior
  - “I want my sister’s clothes! We’ll go to that woman’s upstairs!” – Blanche (p32)

Stanley: Possessive
- Paper Doll is playing (page 33, stage directions) → objectification of women
- “Stella! My baby doll’s left me!”
  - “I want my baby!” – Stanley (page 33) → very similar to how Helmer perceives and treats Nora, as his possession; both Helmer and Stanley fear that their wife will leave them; Nora leaves Helmer, but Stella doesn’t leave Stanley

Stanley: Emotional
- “The ‘blue piano’ plays for a brief interval.” (page 33, stage directions)
  - Stanley → lonely for Stella
- “He breaks into sobs. Then he goes to the phone and dials, still shuddering with sobs.” (page 33, stage directions)
- Beast-like / primitive
  - “Stanley stumbles half-dressed out to the porch […] he throws back his head like a baying hound and bellows his wife’s name.”
  - “Quit that howling […]!” – Eunice (page 33)
Stanley x Stella: Reconciliation

- Very sexual (page 33, stage directions)
  - "The low-tone clarinet moans." → moan: sexual undertones
  - "[Stella’s] hair loose about her throat and shoulders."
  - "They come together with low, animal moans."
- "Stella slips down the rickety stairs in her robe." → “slips” from moral high ground
- Stanley and Stella’s relationship is weird but it’s normal for them
  - "Blanche: She ran downstairs and went back in there with him.
    Mitch: Sure she did.
    Blanche: I’m terrified!
    Mitch: Ho-ho! There’s nothing to be scared of. They’re crazy about each other."

Blanche x Mitch

- "I’m not properly dressed." – Blanche (page 34, to Mitch, as they sit on the steps)
  - Respectability, dignity
- "Thank you for being so kind! I need kindness now." – Blanche (page 34)
  - Highlights her loneliness, and she’s relying on Mitch
  - Stella is going back to Stanley even though he’s violent → Blanche is so lonely

Scene IV

Early May → time of hope
It is the following morning, after the Poker night. Stella and Stanley slept together.

Initial Stage Directions (page 34-35)

- Morning after is depicted pleasantly
  - “Early morning sunlight”
    - "[Stella’s] belly, rounding slightly with new maternity”
    - "a book of coloured comics"
    - "a sky of summer brilliance."
- Contrasts with Blanche:
  - “sleepless night”
  - "presses her knuckles nervously"

Stanley: Stereotypical Man

- "[Stanley’s] gone to get the car greased." – Stella (page 35)
- "He wears an undershirt and grease-stained seersucker pants." (page 40, stage directions)

Stanley x Stella

- Stella makes excuses for his behaviour (page 36, to Blanche)
  - “He didn’t know what he was doing...”
  - “When men are drinking and playing poker anything can happen.”
    - Men: excusing their behaviour
“Stanley’s always smashed things.” → as if this justifies his violence

**Lunacy and violence**
- “In my opinion? You’re married to a madman!” – Blanche (page 36) → ironic
- “On our wedding night [...] he snatched off one of my slippers and rushed about the place smashing the light-bulbs with it.” – Stella (page 36)
  - Juxtaposition: wedding night vs violence
  - Wedding night → their relationship has always been like this

**Stella is happy**
- “I’m not in anything I want to get out of.” – Stella (page 36)
- “Stella laughs uncertainly and picking up the broom, twirls it in her hands.” (page 37, stage directions)
  - Twirls → she is happy
  - Uncertainly → hmm...

**“Why you must have slept with him!” – Blanche** → articulating what the audience is thinking

**Money**
- Juxtaposition
  - “We’ve got to get hold of some money, that’s the way out!” – Blanche (p 37)
  - “I guess that money is always nice to get a hold of.” – Stella (p 37)
- **Power**
  - “Stanley doesn’t give me a regular allowance.” – Stella (page 38)

**Blanche: Shep Huntleigh**
- Blanche is relying on men for financial help
- Does Shep Huntleigh even exist?
- Juxtaposition
  - After Blanche builds up a romantic image of Shep Huntleigh, Stella just says “I should think it would have been – inconvenient in traffic!” (page 37)
- **Blanche – fantasy**
  - “I took the trip as an investment, thinking I’d meet someone with a million dollars.” – Blanche (page 37) → delusional
  - “On Biscayne Boulevard, on Christmas Eve, about dusk... [...] Cadillac convertible!” – Blanche (page 37) → fantastical, (Christmas → unreal magic)
  - “Honey, would I be here if the man weren’t married?” – Blanche (page 38)
    - Blanche thinks Shep will save her, but he’s married so he’ll probably not → it’s like Blanche is still in a make-believe
- **Blanche is really stressed** (page 38, stage directions)
  - “Blanche suddenly springs up”, “she speaks shrilly”, “bites the pencil”, “smashes the pencil.”
  - She uses “a sheet of Kleenex and an eyebrow pencil for writing equipment.”
  - She can’t get her message together

**Desire**
- “What you are talking about is brutal desire – just – Desire! – the name of that rattle-trap street-car that bangs through the Quarter, up one old narrow street and down another...” – Blanche (page 40)
  - “rattle”, “trap”, “bangs” → harsh sounds
Desire → Stanley
Bangs → double entendre...
- “old narrow street” = Stella
- “down another” = when Stanley rapes Blanche

Stanley: Beast-like (stage directions, page 40, pre-Blanche’s speech)
- “Outside a train approaches […] Under the cover of the train’s noise, Stanley enters from outside. He stands unseen by the women [...]”
  - Unseen → theatrical device, predatory
  - Williams connects the train (locomotive) to Stanley

Blanche: Speech // Stanley Animal (page 40-41)
- Lots of exclamatives and dashes → showing how emotional Blanche
- Extended metaphor for Stanley’s ape-like behaviour
  - Ironic – ‘new America’ vs the stone age
    - “Stanley Kowalski – survivor of the stone age!”
  - Beast-like
    - “There’s something downright – bestial – about him!”
    - “He acts like an animal, has an animal’s habits!”
    - “There’s even something – subhuman […]!”
  - Alludes to things that have happened
    - “Bearing the raw meat home from the kill in the jungle!”
    - “Maybe he’ll strike you or maybe grunt and kiss you!”
    - “His poker night!” → “this party of apes”
  - Sets herself apart from Stanley through her knowledge and intellect
    - “I’ve seen in – anthropological studies!”
    - “Such things as art – as poetry and music – such kinds of new light have come into the world since then!”
    - Light → her husband, these are the things that make her happy
    - She is refined
  - Primal imagery
    - Sexual dominance → “grunt”, “kiss”, “swilling”, “hulking”
    - Beastly → “gnawing”, “growls”, “brutes”
  - “Don’t – don’t hang back with the brutes!”
    - Exclamative, and italicised in the book → emphasis

Stanley: Beast-like (stage directions, page 41, post-Blanche’s speech)
- Predatory
  - “Stanley hesitates, licking his lips.”
  - “[…] suddenly he turns stealthily about [...]”
- Stella embraces Stanley in front of Blanche, and then “[Stanley] laughs and clasps her head to him. Over her head he grins through the curtains at Blanche.”
  - This happens just after Blanche’s tirade about Stanley’s inferiority, showing how Stella will stay loyal to Stanley → perhaps, he has won?
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- “Over her head he grins” → sinister, triumphant, and more importantly, Stella cannot see this exchange happening!
- “Clasps her head to him” → possessive

**Scene V**

*August → very hot, steamy time of the year*

**Blanche: Escaping Reality**
- She is writing a made-up letter to Shep

**Eunice x Steve**
- Almost mirrors Stanley and Stella’s argument
- But also contrasts with it, because Eunice doesn’t passively let Steve hit her
  - “I’m gonna call the police” – Eunice *(page 42)*
- Domestic violence is pervasive
  - Why no one was shocked about Stanley and Stella
  - “I’m going to call the police!” – Eunice *(page 42)*
    BUT THEN...
    “Stella: She and Steve had a row. Has she got the police?
    “Stanley: Naw. She getting’ a drink.
    Stella: That’s much more practical!” *(page 43)* → they accept it
- The violence is heard offstage → sound imagery
  - “A clatter of aluminium”, “a man’s angry roar, shouts and overturned furniture”, “crash”, “relative hush.”
- From violent to loving
  - “Steve’s arm is around Eunice’s shoulder and she is sobbing luxuriously and he is cooing love-words.” *(page 44, stage directions)*
  - Same as what happened to Stella and Stanley
- “There is a murmur of thunder” – *(page 44, stage directions)*
  - Pathetic fallacy, forewarning

**Astrological Signs**
- Blanche = Virgo → virgin, irony
- Stanley = Capricorn → hard-headed etc.
- Blanche originally thought Stanley was an Aries
  - “They love to bang things around! You must have had lots of banging around in the army […]!” – Blanche *(page 43)* → bang, double entendre...

**Stanley x Blanche**
- “Shaw must’ve got you mixed up. He goes in and out of Laurel all the time, so he can check on it and clear up any mistake.” – Stanley *(page 44)* → threatening

**Blanche: Being Soft (page 45)**
Creating pathos for her situation
- "One night’s shelter!" – euphemism for one night stand
- "I’ve run for protection, Stella, from under one leaky roof to another leaky roof – because it was storm – all storm, and I was – caught in the centre…"
  - Storm → “murmur of thunder” (from page 44, stage directions)

Men
- "[...] men don’t –don’t even admit your existence unless they are making love to you." → how Stanley "sizes women up" (page 14, stage directions)

Duties of being a soft person
- "[Soft people] have got to be seductive – put on soft colours, the colours of butterfly wings, and glow – make a little – temporary magic [...]"
  - "Soft colours" → contrast with the men at the poker night described to be as "coarse and direct and powerful as the primary colours."
  - "Butterfly wings" → implying herself, but she was previously described to have something that "suggests a moth" (page 5, stage directions)
  - "Temporary magic" → euphemism for sexual pleasure ; but this also shows how she is not the only one trying to escape reality
  - "Soft people have got to [...] – put a – paper lantern over the light..."
    - "Paper lantern" → distorting reality, hiding the truths
    - Mitch hanging the paper lantern for her
  - "You’ve got to be soft and attractive. And I-I’m fading now!"
    - “The afternoon has faded to dusk.” (stage directions) → plastic theatre
    - Importance of physical appearances

Blanche x Stella: Soft People
- "I don’t listen to you when you are being morbid!" – Stella (to Blanche)
  - Proves the point of soft people needing to fulfil a certain role of softness, attractiveness, and “temporary magic"
- "[Stella] holds a bottled soft drink in her hand.” – mirrors Blanche’s ‘soft’ character
  - But Blanche wants to put alcohol into the coke

  - The coke “foams over and spills” onto Blanche’s white skirt (page 46, stage directions)
    - Euphemism for sexual imagery → sex takes away one’s innocence

Blanche: Lunacy / Unnerved (page 46, stage directions)
- She speaks “hysterically” to Stella
- “Laughs shrilly”, “a piercing cry” → and then “I don’t know why I screamed!”
- “Sits down shakily”, “continuing nervously”, “talk rapidly and breathlessly”

Blanche x Stella: About Mitch (page 47)
- “He hasn’t gotten a thing but a goodnight kiss... men don’t want anything they get too easy.” – Blanche (to Stella)
  - Then right after she’s kissing a random young man
- “I want to rest!” – Blanche (after Stella asks her if she wants Mitch)
  - This is why Blanche wants Mitch → not real romance
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- Only by her third sentence does she say, “Yes – I want Mitch... very badly!”
  - Ellipsis → it’s an afterthought, as if she’s trying to convince herself

**Blanche: Loneliness**
- Everyone else belongs somewhere – Blanche is alone
  - “Hey Steve! Hey Eunice! Hey Stella!” – Stanley (page 47, just after Blanche says she wants Mitch) → she is intentionally ignored
  - “Steve bounds after [Eunice] with goat-like screeches [...] Stanley and Stella twine arms [...]” (page 47, stage directions)
- “Dusk settles deeper. The music from the Four Deuces is slow and blue.” (page 47, stage directions)
  - “Dusk settles deeper” → plastic theatre, the darkness highlights loneliness

**Blanche x Young Man**
- Blanche is hella desperate / lonely
  - “The ‘blue piano’ is heard.” (page 48, stage directions)
- **Escapism / Fantasy**
  - “[...] these long rainy afternoons in New Orleans when an hour isn’t just an hour – but a little bit of Eternity dropped in your hands [...]” – Blanche (p 48)
  - Blanche describes the young man as “a young prince out of the Arabian Nights.” (page 49) →
    - Arabian nights = folk tales, magical
  - “She stands there a little dreamily after he has disappeared.” (page 49, stage directions)
    - Blanche sounds like she is in a trance
    - “After he has disappeared” → clinging onto the past
- “You make my mouth water.” – Blanche (page 49) → sexual, or referring to the soda
- **Age difference / youth (page 49)**
  - “A cherry soda!” – Young Man → cherry = virgin
  - “Young man! Young, young, young, young – man!” – Blanche
  - “Young prince” – Blanche
  - The Young Man “stands like a bashful kid.” (stage directions)
  - “[...] I’ve got to [...] keep my hands off children.” – Blanche

**Blanche x Mitch**
- “My Rosenkavalier!” – Blanche (page 49)
  - Rosenkavalier = Knight of the Rose → Blanche is using Mitch as an escape

**Scene VI**

August → very hot, steamy time of the year
2:00 am the same night as Scene V (the young man and then Mitch appearing)

**Stage Directions (page 50)**
- “Mitch is bearing, upside down, a plaster statuette of Mae West.”
  - “Plaster statuette” → tacky compared to Stanley’s bloody red meat
  - “Mae West” → a sex symbol → Blanche
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- "Upside down" → Mitch is incompetent
- Blanche and Mitch are incompatible (stage directions)
  - Blanche – “stopping lifelessly”, “laughing grimly”
  - Mitch – “laughs uneasily” twice, “heavily” (voice direction)

Getting Lost
- “[...] a girl alone in the world, has got to keep a firm hold on her emotions or she’ll be lost!” – Blanche (page 51)
  - Desire can cause one to lose oneself → she lost her mind over Allan
- “I guess you are used to girls that like to be lost.” – Blanche (page 51)
  - Ironic → she is constantly ‘losing’ herself

Blanche: Escapism / Fantasy
- “[...] my search for some liquor.” – Blanche (page 52)
- “I’m looking for the Pleiades, the Seven Sisters, but these girls are not out tonight.” – Blanche (page 51)
  - Pleiades → she’s cultured, and educated
- “Samson!” – Blanche (page 53, when Mitch lifts her) → allusion to the Bible

Blanche: Escapism / Creating A False Reality
- “Let’s leave the light off. Shall we?” – Blanche (page 51) → building up an atmosphere
- “I want to create – joie de vivre!” – Blanche (page 52)
  - Joie de vivre = exuberant enjoyment of life → ironic, clearly a façade because she and Mitch are not compatible at all
- “We are going to pretend that we are sitting in a little artists’ café on the Left Bank in Paris!” – Blanche (page 52)
  - Paris → symbol of love
- “She lights a candle stub and puts it in a bottle.” (page 52, stage directions)
  - Blanche must make do → sad attempt at a false reality

Blanche: Playing Mitch
- She speaks French to Mitch, knowing that he doesn’t understand anything
  - French = language of love → Blanche and Mitch are not compatible
  - “Voulez-vous couches avec moi ce soir? Vous ne comprenez pas? Ah, quell dommage!” → Would you sleep with me tonight? You do not understand? Ah, what a pity! (Blanche to Mitch, page 51)

Blanche x Mitch: Incompatible
Blanche is trying to create a romantic atmosphere, but Mitch is being boring
- Talking about his sweat
  - “I am ashamed of the way I perspire.” (page 52)
- Talking about his physique
  - “...but now my belly is hard.” (page 53)
  - “I weight two hundred and seven pounds and I’m six feet one and one half inches...” (page 53)
IN CONTRAST: Stanley doesn’t talk about his own physique, because his presence is already sufficient

• “He fumblingly embraces her.” (page 53, stage directions)
  o Mitch is clumsy, unsure
  o IN CONTRAST: Stanley is more clear / driven with Stella

➢ “Of course there is such a thing as the hostility of – perhaps in some perverse kind of way [Stanley] – No!” – Blanche (page 55, to Mitch about Stanley)
  o Foreshadowing what actually happens

Blanche: Façade

• “Mitch: How old are you?
  Blanche: Why do you want to know?” (page 55)
  o Blanche has done well hiding her age → diverting the topic too

Mitch: Momma’s Boy

• He’s only asking Blanche how old she is, because his mother wants to know
• “I told my mother how nice you were, and I liked you.” – Mitch (page 55)
• “She wants me to be settled down before she […]” – Mitch (page 55)
  o He is child-like, trying to please his mother before she dies

Blanche: Past Love Speech // General (page 56-57)

• Allan Grey was homosexual
  o “Something different about the boy, a nervousness, a softness and tenderness which wasn’t like a man’s […]” – Blanche (page 56)
    ▪ Softness → CONTRASTS with Stanley and Mitch
    ▪ Softness → suggests that it is a feminine quality
  o “I’d suddenly said – ‘I know! I know! You disgust me...’” – Blanche (page 57)
    ▪ Implicit homophobia in her recall of what happened
• “He was in the quicksands and clutching at me [...] I was slipping in with him!” (p 56)
  o Quicksands – neither are in control
  o Perhaps Allan went mad / emotional turmoil, and now Blanche has descended into lunacy as well

Blanche: Past Love Speech // The Light (page 56-57)

When she fell in love for the first time → now she hides from the light (not just hiding from aging, but she’s trying to forget her past)

• “It was like you suddenly turned a blinding light on something that had always been half in shadow, that’s how it struck the world for me.” (page 56)
• “And then the searchlight which had been turned on the world was turned off again and never for one moment since has there been any light that’s stronger than this – kitchen – candle...” (page 57, after she tells of Allan’s suicide)
  o Pathos: this was when she was 16, and now she’s in her 30s
  o Pathos: “never” → final, intense
  o Search light → her first love
Blanche: Past Love Speech // Escapism (page 56-57)

- “I didn’t know anything except I loved him unendurably…” (page 56)
  - In a fantasy → only understands herself (also egocentric)
  - She failed to understand that he could not love her
- “But I was unlucky. Deluded.” (page 56) → ironic, she’s still deluded

Blanche: Past Love Speech // Locomotive (page 56, stage directions)
“A locomotive is heard approaching outside. She claps her hands to her ears and crouches over. The headlight of the locomotive glares into the room as it thunders past.”

- “Crouches over”, “claps her hands to her ears” → Blanche is physically pained by the real world, and so tries to hide / avoid it
- Synthetic imagery: sound (thunder), visual (headlight)
- Locomotive: last time it was associated with Stanley (helping him creep on their conversation) → menacing, foreshadowing his rape
  - Moreover, the “headlight” suggests that Stanley is revealing truths about Blanche that she wants to keep hidden, and constantly bringing up her past which pains her

Blanche: Past Love Speech // The Varsouviana (page 57)

- “Polka music sounds, in a minor key faint with distance.” (stage directions)
  - The Polka music is only in Blanche’s head → plastic theatre
  - “Minor key” → sad, lonely
  - “Faint with distance” → this is the past, but also it is quieter, pre-Allan’s death
- “We danced the Varsouviana!” – Blanche
  - Now we know why it triggers her
- “Blanche: …a few moments later – a shot! The Polka stops abruptly.”
  - Polka music is linked to Allan – he’s dead
  - Creates suspense and tension → COMPLETE SILENCE
- “Then the Polka resumes in a major key.” (stage directions)
  - Now it is post-Allan’s death

Blanche x Mitch: Loneliness (page 57)

- “You need somebody. And I need somebody, too. Could it be – you and me, Blanche?”
  - Similar to how Krogstad and Linde were drawn to each other partly out of loneliness and dependency for helping each other
- “[Blanche’s] breath is drawn and released in long, grateful sobs.” (stage directions)
  - “Grateful” → she’s not in love with him, just relieved she’s not alone
- “He kisses her forehead and her eyes and finally her lips. The Polka tune fades out.” (stage directions) → Mitch is able to save her from her past
- “Sometimes – there’s God – so quickly!” – Blanche
  - Religious imagery → she’s placing Mitch on a pedestal
    - She’s still stuck in her fantasies
    - LINK: “Samson!”
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

The idea of religion = method of coping and feeling safe

Scene VII

15th September → Blanche's birthday. The beginning of “fall” (autumn)
Late afternoon.

- Is Stanley just being a dick – or is he just trying to help Mitch?
- Will Stella side with Blanche or Stanley?
- Stanley and Stella are together all the time → highlights Blanche’s loneliness

Blanche: Escapism
- Throughout this scene we hear Blanche, but, we never see her until the end.
  - Metaphor for how she is removed from the real world – her lunacy

Blanche: Singing
- As Stanley and Stella are talking “Blanche is singing in the bathroom a saccharine popular ballad which is used contrapuntally with Stanley’s speech.” (page 59, stage directions)
  - Williams’ technique to make sure we are aware of Blanche’s presence
  - Ibsen does not do this
  - The song lyrics are all very fantastical
- “Say, it’s only a paper moon, Sailing over a cardboard sea – But it wouldn’t be make-believe If you believed in me!” – Blanche (page 57, just as Stanley is saying how Blanche is not innocent and has lied to Mitch about only being kissed before)
  - Reference to her and Mitch’s relationship, perhaps
  - Juxtaposed (intersperses) against Stanley’s deconstruction of Blanche’s past
- “Without your love, it’s a honky-tonk parade!
Without your love,
It’s a melody played In a penny arcade…” (page 60)
  - Dramatic irony → Blanche doesn’t know the significance and irony of the lyrics she’s singing

Stanley: Destroying Blanche
- Stanley’s pleasure from retelling Blanche’s dirt is distasteful, but at the same time, her past is distasteful
  - Uses a lot of exclamatives → his pleasure / emotions
  - Everything he says is true → side with Stanley or Blanche?
- “You’re goddam right I told him!” – Stanley (p 62, to Stella after revealing everything)
  - He has already told Mitch about Blanche’s past
  - Cruelty: Stanley has destroyed Blanche’s last and only escape route

Lie Number One: Blanche is not sexually innocent
- “Blanche is no lily!” – Stanley (page 57)
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

- She was so promiscuous at the Flamingo in Laurel that she was kicked out
- Stanley mocks her and tries to take the moral high ground
  - “[...] as if she was the President of the United States, only she is not respected by any party!”
  - “Dame Blanche” → dame = elderly or mature woman
- Blanche’s Facades
  - “And as time went by she became a town character. Regarded as not just different but downright loco–nuts.” – Stanley (page 60)
    - Town character → façade, false reality
    - Loco-nuts → Stanley starts to question Blanche’s sanity
  - Blanche was kicked out of Laurel, which is why she is now here at Stella’s “putting on all this act.” – Stanley (page 60) → hiding her past

Lie Number Two: Blanche is not teaching
(fired because she had a relationship with a 17 year old boy)
- We believe Stanley because we’ve seen her seduce the young man in Scene VI
- Blanche: Escapism // The Past
  - The fact that she was with the 17 year old, and seduced the young man, it’s like she’s trying to stay in the past → this also contrasts with her birthday
  - “In the bathroom... little breathless cries and peals of laughter are heard as if a child were frolicking in the tub.” – (page 60, stage directions about Blanche)
    - Innocent atmosphere → child-like
    - Juxtaposes against what Stanley is saying about her

Blanche’s Birthday
- “Stanley: How many candles you putting in that cake?
  Stella: I’ll stop at twenty-five.”
  - Blanche is old, or representing how Blanche is at a standstill – plateaued

Stanley x Blanche
- Stanley has bought a bus ticket for Blanche already → he is in control
- “[...] as Stanley crosses past her, a frightened look appears in her face, almost a look of panic.” (page 63, stage directions. Blanche is exiting the bathroom, Stanley entering)
  - Power → Stanley clearly has the upper-hand now
  - ^CONTRASTS with Scene III, when Blanche met his gaze “without flinching”
- “[Blanche] stares fearfully at Stella, who pretends to be busy at the table.” (page 63, stage directions)
  - Role reversal → Stella is the one pretending now
  - ^“You’re lying!” – Blanche (page 63, to Stella)
- The distant piano goes into a hectic breakdown. (page 63, final stage directions)
  - Piano (probably the blues) → deterioration of Blanche’s mental stability, as well as foreshadowing her increasing state of loneliness and alienation from the community (Stella, then Mitch etc.)
  - Also the relationship between Blanche x Stella, Blanche x Mitch etc.
Scene VIII

15th September → Blanche’s birthday. The beginning of “fall” (autumn)
It is the same day as Scene VII. 45 minutes after Stanley roasted Blanche.

Initial Stage Directions (page 64)
- “A torch of sunlight blazes on the side of [… an] oil drum […].”
  - Torch → fire → oil drum → foreshadowing disaster
- “[… ] pierced by pin-points of lighted windows or windows reflecting the sunset.”
  - Pin-points of light → a little bit of hope left
- “There is a fourth place at the table which is left vacant.”
  - Mitch’s seat: symbolic of loneliness
- Gloomy, tense, awkward atmosphere
  - “A dismal birthday supper.”
  - “Blanche has a tight, artificial smile on her drawn face.” → allusion to façade
  - “Stanley looks sullen.”
  - “Stella is embarrassed and sad.”

Stanley x Blanche
- “I don’t know any [jokes] refined enough for your taste.” – Stanley (page 64)
  - Class difference
  - Stanley is also salty
- “Stanley pays no attention to her story […]” (p 65, stage directions) → doesn’t care

Blanche
- “I love parrot stories!” (page 64)
  - She’s fine with the same things, over and over again
  - Like how she may have plateaued → trapped
  - Alternatively → façade, she is not authentic
- “White cake.” (page 66, stage directions) → referring to her birthday cake → ironic

Stanley: Outburst
- Animal-like
  - [Spears] his fork into the remaining chop which he eats with his fingers.” (page 65)
  - “Stanley stalks out…” (page 65, stage direction)
  - “He grunts…” (page 66, stage directions. In response to Stella)
- Violent (page 65, stage directions)
  - “He hurls a plate to the floor.”
  - “He hurls a cup and saucer to the floor.”
  - “He seizes [Stella’s] arm.” → domestic abuse

Stanley: Entitled (also the patriarchy)
- “Don’t ever talk that way to me!” (page 65, Stella just asked him to “wash up and then help [her] clear the table.”)
• “Every Man is a King! And I am the king around here, so don’t forget it!” (page 65)

**Stanley: Patriotic**

• “But what I am is one hundred per cent. American, born and raised in the greatest country on earth and proud as hell of it, so don’t ever call me a Polack.” – Stanley (page 67)
  o People at the time would have loved this

**Blanche: The Light**

• “[...] candles aren’t safe, [...] candles burn out [...] and after that happens, electric light bulbs go on and you see too plainly...” – Blanche (page 66)
  o Candles aren’t safe, not because of the fire hazard, but because it could lead to stronger light being used → revealing the truth
  o “Plainly” → reality is too dull, she wants to be deluded (fantasy)
• JUST BEFORE THAT... Blanche says, “Oh, don’t burn [the candles], Stella.” And Stella responds, “I certainly will.” (page 66, Stella is lighting the birthday candles)
  o Foreshadowing how Stella essentially condemns Blanche to the asylum and has her loyalties with Stanley

**Stanley x Blanche: The Phone Call**

• “The phone rings. Blanche rises expectantly.” (page 67, stage directions)
  o But it’s actually for Stanley → he is social
  o “Expectantly” → but is rejected → highlights Blanche’s loneliness
• “She sinks back in her chair with a frightened look.” (page 67, stage directions)
  o When Stanley stares at her → he is in power
  o Contrasts with Scene III when Blanche stared back at him unflinchingly

**Stanley x Blanche: The Ticket (page 68)**

• “Ticket! Back to Laurel! On the Greyhound! Tuesday!” – Stanley
  o Blanche can’t run from her past, she is forced to go back
  o Exclamatives → Stanley is relishing in her misery, reinforcing the situation
  o “The **Varsouviana music** steals in [...]” (stage directions, right after Stanley^)
• “Blanche tries to smile. Then she tries to laugh. Then she gives both up...” (s. d.)
  o She fails to hide her true feelings → reflective of the same way her life is falling apart + her lies / deceptions are crumbling
• Her past physically hurts her
  o “Coughing, gagging sounds are heard.” (stage directions)
  o “She clutches her throat...” (stage directions)

**Stanley x Stella**

• “I pulled you down off them columns and how you loved it, having them coloured lights going!” – Stanley (page 68)
  o Stanley dragged Stella down to his level, but reinforces how Stella liked it
  o Coloured lights
    ▪ Tacky → associated with the Quarter → also the ‘bold primary colours’
    ▪ Contrasts with Belle Reve’s whiteness
• Stella feels the first movements of childbirth, and she and Stanley go to the hospital
  o The baby cements the bond between Stella and Stanley
  o Blanche can’t rely on Stella, as Stella’s loyalties are with Stanley → loneliness

**Blanche: Insanity (page 69, stage directions)**
Stella and Stanley have gone to the hospital.

• “The Varsouviana is heard, its music rising with sinister rapidity [...]” (stage directions)
  o Sinister rapidity → foreshadowing how her past will consume her
  o “Rising”, “rapidity” → building tension and suspense

• “[Blanche] begins to whisper the words as the light fades slowly.” (stage directions)
  o Light fades → no more hope
  o Whisper the words → trance-like connotations

• “El pan de mais, el pan de mais, El pan de mais sin sal…” – Blanche
  o “Corn bread, corn bread, / Corn bread without salt…”
  o Makes no sense, Blanche has gone crazy

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**Scene IX**

15th September → Blanche’s birthday. The beginning of “fall” (autumn)
Later on in the evening following Scene VII, and Scene VIII.

**Initial Stage Directions (page 69)**

- **Blanche: Escapism** → trying to hide and deny reality
  o “[...] a chair that she has re-covered with diagonal green and white stripes”
  o “She has on her scarlet satin robe.” → scarlet, satin → fantastical
  o “a bottle of liquor”, “drinking to escape [the music]”

- **Blanche: Insanity**
  o “The rapid, feverish polka tune... is heard.”
  o “The music is in her mind [...]”
  o “[...] the sense of disaster is closing in on her [...]”
  o “She seems to whisper the words of the song.”

- Mitch
  o “Blue denim shirt and pants. He is unshaven.”
    - Mitch is not well dressed
    - His relationship with Blanche have deteriorated

**Blanche: Loneliness**

• “The polka tune stops.” (page 69 stage directions, just after Mitch turns up)
  o Mitch’s presence is supposed to save her from her past
  o Her loneliness is temporarily alleviated

• “I forgive you because it’s such a relief to see you. You’ve stopped that polka tune that I had caught in my head” – Blanche (page 70, to Mitch)
  o She’s only keeping him in her life because he offers her relief
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

- “The polka tune starts up again.” (page 70, stage directions, when she notices something is different about Mitch → he doesn’t want her anymore)

Blanche: Facades
- Blanche is still trying to hide (page 70, stage directions)
  - “hiding the bottle”
  - “dabbing her face with cologne and powder”
- She pretends to look for the bottle she was drinking from previously (page 71)

Blanche: Lunacy
- Mitch’s arrival sends her into a frenzy (page 70, stage directions)
  - “Rushes about frantically”, “dashes about”
  - “She is so excited that her breath is audible”
- Both Mitch and Blanche make allusions to her going crazy
  - “Are you boxed out of your mind?” – Mitch (page 71, when Blanche talks about the music)
  - “[...] I am boxed out of my mind!” – Blanche (page 71)
- “[Blanche] throws back her head with convulsive, sobbing laughter. Then she [...] gasps, and drinks.” (page 73, stage directions, after she mentions her relationship with the 17 year old teenager)

Blanche x Mitch: Falling Apart
- Mitch is really cold towards Blanche, after knowing what she has done
  - “He ignores [her lips] and pushes past her [...]” (page 70, stage directions)
  - “My, my, what a cold shoulder!” – Blanche (page 70)
- “I wasn’t going to see you anymore.” – Mitch (page 71, when Blanche asks if he had forgotten the supper invitation)
- Blanche finds “Southern Comfort” liquor but Mitch refuses it (page 71)
  - Blanche is from the southern area
  - Mitch refuses it → he’s rejecting her
- “He tears the paper lantern off the light bulb.” (page 72, stage directions)
  - Mitch was the one who hung it up → he’s no longer going to be there for her
- “Mitch stares at her dumbly.” (page 73, stage directions, after Blanche retells her past)
  - He’s so useless, inability to empathise or understand Blanche’s past
  - Also shows how they are incompatible

Mitch: Turning Into Stanley
- “He stalks into the bedroom.” (p 70, stage directions, after pushing past upon arrival)
- “Mitch grunts.” (page 71, stage directions) → primal
- “[Mitch] turns the light on and stares at her. She cries out and covers her face.” (page 72, stage directions)
  - Mitch is intentionally hurting her, the same way Stanley did
  - Blanche reacts very similarly to when the locomotive passed by

Blanche: Escapism // Avoiding the Truth
- “I’ll just – pretend I don’t notice anything different about you!” – Blanche (page 70)
“Wait a minute. I can’t hear what you’re saying [...]” – Blanche (page 71, when Mitch tells her he doesn’t want to see her again)

Blanche: Escapism // Fantasy

- “I don’t want realism. [...] I’ll tell you what I want. Magic!” – Blanche (page 72)
- “I don’t tell truth, I tell what ought to be truth. And if that is sinful, then let me be damned for it!” – Blanche (page 72)
  - Tragic aura, she’s authentic and genuine (somehow) → pathos
  - We feel sympathy → she has never intentionally hurt anyone, in contrast to Mitch right now, and Stanley’s treatment towards her

Blanche: The Light

- “I like it dark. The dark is comforting to me.” – Blanche (page 72)
  - She’s hiding her age, and running from the light
  - Similar to Doll’s House → Nora leaves the light

Blanche: Lies x Her Past

- “I stayed at a hotel called The Tarantula Arms!” – Blanche (page 73)
  - Tarantula → web of lies, unpleasant, nothing appealing
  - The brothel is called the Flamingo, but she sarcastically calls it such, showing her awareness of how repulsive it is
- “[...] at last, in a seventeen-year-old boy [...]” – Blanche (page 73)
  - We hear her past from Blanche herself → shocking, confirms Stanley’s words
- “Kiefaber, Stanley and Shaw have tied an old tin can to the tail of the kite.” – Blanche (page 73)
  - “Old tin can” → her lies, her past; it grounds the kite, reality
  - “Tail of the kite” → her façade of youth and innocence; her fantasies
- Pathos
  - “[...] intimacies with strangers [...] to fill my empty heart [...]” – Blanche (p 73)
  - “[...] just panic, that drove me from one to another, hunting for some protection.” – Blanche (page 73) → fragile, lonely, defenceless?
  - “[...] you seemed to be gentle – a cleft in the rock of the world that I could hide in! [...] But I guess I was asking – hoping too much!” – Blanche (page 73)
    - She’s not asking for a lot, yet she can’t even have it
    - “gentle” → her fragility
    - “rock of the world” → hard colours
  - “Never inside, I didn’t lie in my heart...” – Blanche (page 74) → authenticity

Blanche x Mitch: RIP // Mexican Woman

- A blind Mexican woman is selling “flowers that lower class Mexicans display at funerals” (page 74, stage directions)
  - Blind → Blanche’s lies led to her demise
  - Funerals → Mitch x Blanche; her sanity
- Regarding Death, Blanche says “the opposite is desire.” (page 74)
  - Desire is what keeps her alive → allows her to avoid her loneliness
Mitch: Attempts Rape
Attempts to rape her → he doesn’t want her for romance, just for sex
- “Mitch rises and follows her purposefully.” (page 74, stage directions, after the Mexican woman has gone and Blanche goes to her dresser)
  - Then “the polka music fades away.” → He can still save Blanche from her past
- “Mitch [fumbling to embrace her]: What I been missing all summer. Blanche: Then marry me, Mitch!
  Mitch: I don’t think I want to marry you anymore. [...] You’re not clean enough to bring in the house with my mother.” (page 75)
  - He’s still thinking about his mother, like a child

Blanche: Screaming Fire (page 75)
- “She suddenly rushes to the big window with its pale blue square of the soft summer light and cries wildly.” (stage directions)
  - Plastic theatre → her last attempt to escape insanity
  - “Rushes”, “wildly” → foreshadowing her descent into insanity
- Then Blanche “falls to her knees.”
  - She has lost the fight against loneliness (Mitch is leaving for good)
  - Physical representation of her powerlessness and vulnerability
  - It is also repeated in the next two scenes
- The scene ends with: “the distant piano is slow and blue.” → Blanche’s loneliness

Scene X

15th September → Blanche’s birthday. The beginning of “fall” (autumn)
A few hours after Scene IX (same day as Scene VII, and Scene VIII).
Climax of the play – and this is the scene where Stanley rapes her.

Initial Scene Setting (page 75-76, stage directions and Blanche’s self-talk)
- Blanche: Escapism // Fantasy
  - “She has been drinking fairly steadily since Mitch left.”
  - She is wearing “soiled and crumpled white satin evening gown”, “scuffed silver slippers”
    - Her make-believe world is no longer untouched, damaged by Mitch’s leaving etc.
    - Reflective of her reputation as well
- Blanche is murmuring excitedly as if to a group of spectral admirers.
  - Insanity
    - “Spectral admirers” → ghost-like, there is no one → loneliness
- Talking to herself (page 75)
  - “How about […] a moonlight swim at the old rock-quarry?”
    - “Moonlight” → still avoiding strong light, trying to hide in fantasy
    - “Old” → going back to her past??
  - She says how it is the “best way […] to stop your head buzzing!”
    - Metaphor for curing loneliness / running from the past
Perhaps, this was Mitch

- “Only you’ve got to be careful to dive where the deep pool is – if you hit a rock you don’t come up until tomorrow…”
- Ominous foreshadowing of her mental stability
- If swimming = Mitch; then this could allude to how his leaving has affected Blanche’s sanity

Upon inspecting herself, Blanche “slams the mirror face down with such violence that the glass cracks.” *(page 76)*

- Breaking a mirror → superstition that it brings bad luck → foreshadowing
- Very violent → unlike the softness that Blanche spoke of
- A result of her descent into insanity??

**Stanley’s Arrival (page 76)**

- He’s still wearing his “vivid green” shirt
  - Bold colours, powerful, masculine
  - Contrasts with Blanche’s appearance
- Upon seeing Blanche, “he gives a low whistle” → sexual

**Blanche: Lies**

- Shep Huntleigh – a last desperate attempt by Blanche to avoid loneliness
  - “Improvising feverishly.” *(p78, stage directions, talking to Stanley) → lunacy*
  - “Having great wealth sometimes makes people lonely!” – Blanche *(p 78)*
    - Irony → refers to herself, because just after she calls herself a “very, very, rich woman”
  - She tries to convince Stanley and herself of her worth → tragic
    - “How strange that I should be called a destitute woman! I think of myself as a very, very rich woman!” – Blanche *(page 78)*
  - She tries to get in touch with ‘Shep Huntleigh’ *(page 79)*, but it doesn’t work, and this highlights her loneliness
    - “Please understand, I – No! No, wait! ... One moment! Someone is – Nothing! Hold on, please!” → pathos, desperation

- Mitch
  - She lies to Stanley, saying that Mitch “returned with a box of roses to beg [her] forgiveness!” *(page 78)*
  - “We have to be realistic about such things.” – Blanche *(page 78, to Stanley about her and Mitch parting due to differences) → ironic*
  - Blanche falls into the traps of her own lies, when Stanley asks if Mitch’s apology came before or after Shep’s telegram. She initially responds, “What telegram?” before trying to salvage it
    - Stanley is the catalyst for Blanche’s lies falling apart

**Stanley x Blanche: Sexual Tension**

- “The bottle cap pops off and a geyser of foam shoots up.” *(page 77, stage directions)*
  - Sexual imagery – like the coke foaming over onto Blanche’s dress in Scene V
  - Foreshadowing the end of this scene
“Shall we [...] make it a loving-cup? [...] Well, it’s a red letter night for us both.” – Stanley (page 77, to Blanche)

“Red” → connotations of passion, sex, prostitution

Deliberate Cruelty

“Deliberate cruelty is not forgivable. [...] it is the one thing of which I have never, never been guilty.” – Blanche (page 78)

‘Never’ is repeated

Contrasting against Stanley and Mitch’s actions

Deliberate Cruelty: Stanley

After her slip-up about the telegram, Stanley attacks the rest of her lies

“There isn’t a goddam thing but imagination! [...] And lies and conceit and tricks!” – Stanley (page 79)

Each accusatory statement is interspersed with Blanche saying “Oh!”

Blanche is speechless → Stanley’s cruelty is destroying her sanity, as she is often not speechless

“Take a look at yourself in that worn-out Mardi Gras outfit, rented for fifty cents from some rag-picker! And with that crazy crown on! What queen do you think you are!” – Stanley (page 79)

humiliating her

“You come in here and sprinkle the place with powder and spray perfume and cover the light-bulb with a paper lantern [...]” – Stanley (page 79)

He attacks the things she’s done in an attempt to make the world better → he makes it sound sordid, unromantic, and fragile

^Blanche’s world is fragile, in contrast to him

Stage Directions: Tense Atmosphere

As Stanley enters the bedroom, lurid reflections appear on the walls around Blanche. The shadows are of a grotesque and menacing form.” (page 79)

Light = truth, so shadows = lies

“Grotesque and menacing” → her lies are going against her, threatening her

“Lurid reflections” → plastic theatre, a visual representation of her fear

After she fails to reach Shep Huntleigh, auditory and visual imagery create a very sinister atmosphere (page 79)

“The night is filled with inhuman voices like cries in a jungle.”

The night is dangerous → Blanche is trapped inside with Stanley

“Inhuman”, “jungle” → resembles Stanley’s “party of apes”

“Jungle” – Darwinian notion of survival of the strongest – and Blanche is often likened to a moth, whilst Stanley is likened to an ape

“The shadows and lurid reflections move sinuously as flames along the wall spaces.”

“Sinuously” → sinister, snake-like

“ Flames” → symbolic representation of hell, foreshadowing her doom

“[...] the back wall of the rooms [...] have become transparent.” (page 79)

Plastic theatre → the transparency perhaps reflects Blanche’s increasing vulnerability to the outside world
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

- Outside world (page 79-80): “a prostitute has rolled a drunkard”, and “there is a struggle” between the two. “A policeman’s whistle breaks it up.” Then a Negro woman is “rooting excitedly” through a bag the prostitute has dropped.
  - ‘Rolled’ means seduced
  - Foreshadowing what will happen to Blanche
  - Blanche = prostitute; Stanley = drunkard
- After Stanley exits the bathroom, “he stares at her for a count of ten. Then a clicking becomes audible from the telephone, steady and rasping.” (page 80)
  - Ten seconds of pure silence, until the phone noise interrupts → tension

Stanley is wearing his silk wedding pyjamas throughout, while Stella is in the hospital for childbirth, and he eventually rapes Blanche
- Makes audience uncomfortable
- Pathos and empathy for Blanche

Blanche: Trapped
- She “returns slowly to the phone”, after seeing the outside world (page 80, s. d.)
  - Her last escape, she is desperate
- “In desperate, desperate circumstances! Help me! Caught in a trap. Caught in –” (p 80, what she says to the telephone operator)
- “The barely audible ‘blue piano’ begins to drum up louder. The sound of it turns into the roar of an approaching locomotive. Blanche crouches, pressing her fists to her ears until it has gone by.” (page 80, stage directions)
  - Locomotive → represents Stanley, as well as the New America (industrialisation) → both are destroying her

Deliberate Cruelty: Stanley
- Stanley “crosses to [the phone] deliberately and sets it back on the book.” (p 80, s. d.)
  - “Deliberately” → cruelty, deliberate
  - Also afterwards, “his mouth slowly [curves] into a grin”
  - Blanche’s last hope / connection to the outside world is gone → highlights her vulnerability and trapped situation / loneliness (no one is there for her)

Animalistic
- “Roar of an approaching locomotive.” (page 80, stage directions)
- “The inhuman jungle voices rise up. [Stanley] takes a step towards her, biting his tongue which protrudes between his lips.” (page 80, stage directions)
  - Taking a step towards her → trapping her
- “He springs towards her [...]” (page 81, stage directions)
- “Tiger – tiger!” – Stanley (page 81, to Blanche)
  - “[Blanche] sinks to her knees.” (page 81, stage directions)
  - She has lost the fight against Stanley, who partially represents the destruction of her lies and her past as well
Scene XI

October / November, end of autumn → some weeks later after the rape.
Winter → death

Initial Stage Directions (page 81)
- Takes us back to Scene III using an atmosphere with "the same raw, lurid one of the disastrous poker night."
- Everyone is on stage – similar to a Shakespearean drama, where everyone comes together. Except Shakespearean is usually a harmonious celebration

Poker Game
- "Drew to an inside straight and made it, by God." – Stanley (page 82)
  - Stanley is in a triumphant situation, contrasts with the other night
  - Reflects how he has won / beaten Blanche
- At this stage, Blanche doesn’t know what is going on, but neither do we. This differs from A Doll’s House, where we know more than the characters (page 83)
  - “I – just told her that – we’d made arrangements for her to rest in the country.” – Stella (page 82, to Eunice) → clearly Blanche doesn’t know what is actually happening, but neither do we → the ambiguity here creates tension

Blanche: Escapism // Loss of Reality
- Blanche talks about the clothing items she will wear: "yellow silk", "silver and turquoise pin in the shape of a seahorse", "artificial violets" (page 82)
  - Very romantic imagery, reflects how out of touch with reality she is
  - There is a sense of foreboding, yet she is ignorant to it

Choices x Lies
- “I couldn’t believe her story and go on living with Stanley.” – Stella (page 83)
- “Don’t ever believe it. Life has got to go on.” – Eunice (page 83)
  - As if she is telling Stella it’s better to just live a lie, instead of allowing herself to be destroyed by the truth
    - ^IRONIC, Stanley tore down Blanche’s lies and fantasies
    - Yet, looking at the consequences, it seems that living a lie seems to have more desirable outcomes for both Blanche and Stella (Blanche was actually okay until Stanley started tearing her down; Stella can continue to be in love)
  - Contrasts with A Doll’s House – Nora leaves Helmer and their artificial life in search for the truth; Stella just lives a lie because it’s comfortable
A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

Stella: Guilt-ridden
- “I don’t know if I did the right thing.” – Stella (page 83, to Eunice in)

Blanche: Her Past
- “The Varsouviana rises audibly as Blanche enters the bedroom.” (page 83, stage directions, after she has showered)
  - She’s described to have a “tragic radiance” → romanticising
  - Stanley violating her is also now a part of her past, in addition to Allan

Blanche: Religious Imagery
- “It’s [...] the blue of the robe in the old Madonna pictures.” – Blanche (page 84, to Eunice and Stella about her jacket)
  - The colours of her clothes contrast with the very first scene, where Blanche is dressed in a “white suit”, “earrings of pearl”, “white gloves and hat” (page 5)
  - Madonna → Jesus’ mother, Mary → epitome of innocence
  - ^This level of Innocence is infinitely greater than the innocence connoted by the colour white → emphasising how it is Stanley who is in the wrong
- “Those cathedral bells – they’re the only clean thing in the Quarter.” – Blanche (p 84)

Blanche: Sea Speech // Escapism (page 85)
- Romanticising her own death → tragic irony
- The cathedral chimes intersperse her speech
  - Reinforces Blanche’s innocence
  - Also represents the passage of time → running out of time
- “I’ll be [...] sewn up in a clean white sack and dropped overboard [...] into an ocean as blue as my first lover’s eyes!” – Blanche
  - “Clean white” → innocence; alternatively, a cyclical ending (she was wearing white clothing in the beginning)
  - “first lover” → allusion to Allan, perhaps showing how it was her past that destroyed her mental health

Stage Directions: Doctor x Matron Arrival (page 85)
Contrasts completely with Blanche’s romantic speech, and at this point, we start to figure out what is happening.
- “gravity of their profession” → in contrast to the lightness of Blanche’s speech
- “state institution”, “cynical detachment” → cold, lack of compassion

➢ “There is a moment of silence – no sound but that of Stanley steadily shuffling the cards.” (page 86, stage directions) → we are aware of Stanley’s presence

Matron: Characterised (page 87, stage directions)
- “The matron advances on one side.” → menacing
- She is a “peculiarly sinister figure in her severe dress”, and does not have the “softer properties of womanhood.”
• “Her voice is bold and toneless as a fire-bell.” → contrasts with cathedral bells

Blanche x Stanley x Matron
• “Lurid reflections” appear on the walls in old, sinuous shapes. The Varsouviana is filtered into weird distortion, accompanied by the cries and noises of the jungle.” (page 87, stage directions)
  o Reminds us of what happened in the previous scene, foreshadowing that what ensues here is equally as repulsive
  o Menacing auditory and visual imagery
• “The greeting is echoed and re-echoed by other mysterious voices behind the walls, as if reverberated through a canyon of rock.” (page 87, stage directions, referring to the Matron saying “Hello, Blanche.”)
  o Blanche is trapped, outnumbered
  o “Echoed and re-echoed” → emphasis on the repetition and insistency

Deliberate Cruelty: Stanley
• “You left nothing here but spilt talcum and old empty perfume bottles.” – Stanley (page 87, when the Matron is telling Blanche she needs to leave, but Blanche says she has forgotten something) → accusatory, there’s no need for him to be such a dick
• Stanley goes to the lantern, “tearing it off the light bulb.” (page 87, stage directions)
  o Unnecessary → exposing both the harsh light and destroying her fantasies which she uses to protect herself
  o Similar to how Mitch does the same in Scene IX

The Men
• First time we see the men genuinely shocked and concerned
  o “All the men spring to their feet.” (page 87-88, stage directions)
  o “Pablo: This is a very bad thing. Steve: This is no way to do it. She should’ve been told. Pablo: Madre de Dios! Cosa mala, muy, muy mala!” (page 88)

Blanche x Matron x Doctor
• Blanche “slips to her knees.” (page 88, stage directions, when the Matron “pinions her arms” during their struggle)
  o She has lost the fight to the Matron, who represents the mental health institution → complete descent into insanity
  o Motif of “falling to her knees” and “[sinking] to her knees” (Scene XI and X, Mitch and Stanley, respectively)
• “These fingernails have to be trimmed.” – Matron (page 88)
  o First sign that the mental health institution will change her

Stella: Guilt-ridden
• “Oh, God, what have I done to my sister?” – Stella (page 88, whilst Blanche is in the apartment with the Matron and Stanley)
  ➢ “I have always depended on the kindness of strangers.” – Blanche (page 89)
Ending: Everyone Else (page 89-90)

- “Stella accepts the child, sobbingly.” (stage directions)
  - Child = her bond to Stanley → solidifying Stella’s choice to side with Stanley and betray Blanche
- “[Stella] sobs with inhuman abandon.” (stage directions)
  - Inhuman → much like the “inhuman voices” (page 79) from the jungle
  - Stella is in part, responsible for Blanche’s downfall and tragic ending
- The play concludes with Stanley going to make love with Stella again, whilst there is the “swelling music of the blue piano” (page 90)
  - Blue piano → Blanche’s loneliness; now she is truly alone and trapped with no more hope in the mental asylum
  - Physical nature of Stanley and Stella’s relationship → primitive

- “This game is seven-card stud.” – Steve (page 90, final line of the play)
  - Even as Blanche is being taken away, the men are starting a new poker-game
  - Symbolic of how no one really cares about her / how life will go on regardless of what happens, similar to how Eunice says “life has got to go on.” (page 83)