

## ENGLISH: WHOSE REALITY

### Street Car Named Desire

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We all wake up in the morning with a different view of the world to the person next to us. We may seem the same in a crowd, but the only thing we have in common is that we all have our own individual perceptions. To make the world a more beautiful, attractive place to live in, some of us create our own fantasy world to cover the harsh realities of life. This own fantasy world acts as our mask that protects us and enables us to live the reality we have planted in our minds.

Like me, you too have perhaps created your own truth and hold onto an illusion or illusions to cope with the problems you face each day. In Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire", the protagonist, Blanche Du Bois is a real culprit. She creates her own fantasy world and lives by "magic" which helps her cope. The mask she puts on covers her psychologically from the departure of Alan, Stanley's vulgar actions, and her promiscuity, as well as physically, as she hides from the light. This tries make it seem more believable that she is younger than Stella, not exposing herself to a "naked" light bulb, "no, don't turn that light on".

Blanche, a beautiful, vulnerable woman, misrepresents things to people. She declares this is not a lie, but simply "magic," which is more important than the truth itself. For this reason she claims, "Inside I never lied", which is something that Mitch, who is hurt, or Stanley who is perhaps shallow, cannot see the higher truth in. Creating beauty in the world is a part of Blanche's reality which helps her cope with her surroundings.

Stanley himself holds onto illusions and puts a mask on to hide the truth which enables him to cope with reality. His reality is that he is "king" and not only on top of things such as the Napoleonic Code, but also "everything around here". Stanley's mask covers his insecurities, for instance "I've got a friend or two that can help price them jewels", when trying to make Stella believe that Blanche is a fake, after the loss of misfortune of Belle Reve. His proud and confident demeanour is only ever challenged by Blanche whom for this reason, and the fact that Blanche suggests that her and Stella and more superior to his "polka" background, does Stanley seek revenge. This leads to the climax of the play, the rape. The illusion that Stanley holds, claiming he values truth and honesty, is crushed here, as he tells the biggest lie of all trying to conceal the rape. He seeks control, which makes him feel more comfortable, and his second nature is violence, where he strikes Blanche, Stella and Mitch. Like Blanche, Stanley too is a deluded character in Williams' play.

Many of us feel as though holding onto illusions will get us through life in perhaps a less harsh way, and that creating a beautiful world will block out the harshness of the world. Stella, in Williams' play, is a prime example of this. A quiet and perhaps even vulnerable woman like her sister, she acts as Stanley's lover, and in some cases, his punching bag. She ignores Stanley's violent ways and mistreatment towards her and Blanche, claiming that Blanche doesn't understand their type of love when she tries to convince Stella that Stanley is "no good". Her reality revolves around Stanley's view of the world. She, unlike Blanche, allows him to feel as though he is "king". She longs for their sexual relations, and puts this before truth and honesty. Betraying her sister when deep down she knows Stanley raped Blanche, adds to her delusion and shows a sense of selfishness perhaps, as all she is keen on is her passionate love life.

As much as our masks help us to cope with the harshness of the world, they too create problems. The truth lies deeper within us and the more ignorant we are, the more damage we cause to ourselves. Williams' characters who create their own reality, Blanche, Stanley and Stella all cope in their different ways however they higher truth stands. Blanche is delusional, vulnerable and has lost her sense of control. Stanley is insecure, violent and belittles others to make himself feel better. Stella lives in a dream where sex and passion are higher in value than the fate of her sister. Williams demonstrates that the illusions her hold onto help us, however the harsh realities of life cannot be that simply overcome.