1. BIOGRAPHY OF TENNESSEE WILLIAMS’ (1911-1983)

Playwright, poet, and fiction writer, Tennessee Williams left a powerful mark on American theatre. At their best, his twenty-five full-length plays combined lyrical intensity, haunting loneliness, and hypnotic violence. He is widely considered the greatest Southern playwright and one of the greatest playwrights in the history of American drama.

Born Thomas Lanier Williams on March 26, 1911, he suffered through a difficult and troubling childhood. His father, Cornelius Williams, was a shoe salesman and an emotionally absent parent. He became increasingly abusive as the Williams children grew older. His mother, Edwina, was the daughter of Southern Episcopal minister and had lived the adolescence and young womanhood of a spoiled Southern belle. Williams was sickly as a child, and his mother was a loving but smothering woman. In 1918 the family moved from Mississippi to St. Louis, and the change from a small provincial town to a big city was very difficult for Williams' mother. The young Williams were also influenced by his older sister Rose's emotional and mental imbalance during their childhood.

In 1929, Williams enrolled in the University of Missouri. After two years his father withdrew him for flunking ROTC, and he took a job at his father's shoe company. He despised the job but worked at the warehouse by day and wrote late into the night. The strain was too much, and in 1935 Williams had a nervous breakdown. He recovered at his grandparents' home in Memphis, and during these
years he continued to write. Amateur productions of his early plays were produced in Memphis and St. Louis.

Rose's mental health continued to deteriorate as well. During a fight between Cornelius and Edwina in 1936, Cornelius made a move towards Rose that he claimed was meant to calm her. Rose thought his overtures were sexual and suffered a terrible breakdown. Her parents had her lobotomized shortly afterward.

Williams went back to school and graduated from the University of Iowa in 1938. He then moved to New Orleans, where he began going by the name Tennessee, a nickname he'd been given in college thanks to his southern drawl. After struggling with his sexuality through his youth, he finally entered a new life as a gay man, with a new name, a new home, and a promising new career.

In the early 40s, Williams moved between several cities for different jobs and playwriting classes, also working at MGM as a scriptwriter. In 1944 came the great turning point in his career: The Glass Menagerie. First produced in Chicago to great success, the play transferred to Broadway in 1945 and won the NY Critics Circle Award.

While success freed Williams financially, it also made it difficult for him to write. He went to Mexico to work on a play originally titled The Poker Night. This play eventually became one of his masterpieces, A Streetcar Named Desire. It won Williams a second NY Critics' Circle Award and a Pulitzer Prize in 1947, enabling him to travel and buy a home in Key West as an escape for both relaxation and writing. 1951 brought The Rose Tattoo and Williams' first Tony
award, as well as the successful film adaptation of A Streetcar Named Desire, starring Vivian Leigh.

Around this time, Williams met Frank Merlo. The two fell in love, and the young man became Williams' romantic partner until Merlo's untimely death in 1961. He was a steadying influence on Williams, who suffered from depression and lived in fear that he, like his sister Rose, would go insane.

These years were some of Williams' most productive. His plays were a great success in the United States and abroad, and he was able to write works that were well-received by critics and popular with audiences, including The Rose Tattoo (1950), Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1955), Night of the Iguana (1961), and many others. Cat on a Hot Tin Roof won Williams his second Pulitzer Prize.

He gave American theatergoers unforgettable characters, an incredible vision of life in the South, and a series of powerful portraits of the human condition. He was deeply interested in something he called "poetic realism," the use of everyday objects which, seen repeatedly and in the right contexts, become imbued with symbolic meaning. His plays also seemed preoccupied with the extremes of human brutality and sexual behavior: madness, rape, incest, nymphomania, as well as violent and fantastic deaths. Williams himself often commented on the violence in his own work, which to him seemed part of the human condition; he was conscious, also, of the violence in his plays being expressed in a particularly American setting. As with the work of Edward Albee, critics who attacked the "excesses" of Williams' work often were making thinly veiled attacked on his sexuality. Homosexuality was not discussed openly at that
time, but in Williams' plays the themes of desire and isolation show, among other things, the influence of having grown up gay in a homophobic world.

The sixties brought hard times for Tennessee Williams. He had become dependent on drugs, and the problem only grew worse after the death of Frank Merlo in 1961. Merlo's death from lung cancer sent Williams into a deep depression that lasted ten years. Williams was also insecure about his work, which was sometimes of inconsistent quality, and he was violently jealous of younger playwrights.

His sister Rose was in his thoughts during his later work. The later plays are not considered Williams' best, including the failed Clothes for a Summer Hotel. Overwork and drug use continued to take their toll on him, and on February 23, 1983, Williams choked to death on the lid of one of his pill bottles.

He left behind an impressive body of work, including plays that continue to be performed the world over. In his worst work, his writing is melodramatic and overwrought, but at his best Tennessee Williams is a haunting, lyrical, and powerful voice, one of the most important forces in twentieth century American drama.
1. SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

The play open by describing the exterior of two story corner building on street in New Orleans which is named Elysian Fields and runs between the L & N tracks and the river. The section is poor, but unlike corresponding sections in other America cities. It has a raffish charm.

The houses are mostly white frame, weathered grey, with rickety outside stairs and galleries and quaintly ornamented gables. This building contains two flats, upstairs and down stair. Faded white stairs ascends to the entrances of both. The building are dwelled by various races such as Negros, Mexican, Western people and a polish one, named Stanley Kowalski. Stanley is with his wife named Stella Dubois. Stella is an aristocratic woman. She has a quite different background from her husband, Stanley. Kowalski, even though they are different, but they live happily.

Stanley and his friend, Mitch has just come back from work, wearing the dirty work uniform. Stanley calls his wife Stella and heaves the package of meat to her. After keeping the package into the house, Stanley and Mitch as well as go out for bowling. Just as they go out, a young beautiful woman in tidy and neatly dressed comes to the house carrying a valise with her. She comes around, and then she looks at a slip of paper on her hand. Then she looks at the building. Her expression is one of shocked disbelief. Her appearance is uncourageous to this setting.

She is daintily dressed in a white suit with a fluffy bodice, necklace and earrings of pearl, white gloves and hat, looking as if she were arriving at a
summer tea or cocktail party in the garden district. She is about five tears older than Stella. Her delicate beauty avoids a strong light. There is something about her uncertain manner, as well as her white clothes that suggest a month. She is Blanche Dubois Stella’s sister.

Blanche Dubois, a middle aged Southern spinster comes to stay with her sister’s house, Stella and her husband Stanley Kowalski at Elysian Fields in New Orleans. Blanche and Stella are sitters and used to live in a family property called Belle Reve (Beautiful Dream), in Mississippi. Stella leaves their home place and makes her own living with Stanley while, Blanche remains in Belle Reve and has a job as an English teacher.

At Elysian Fields, the person whom she meets first is Eunice, who occupies the upstairs of the department of their living. Eunice tells that Stella is watching her husband bowl. At the same time, colored woman goes to tells Stella about the arriving of Blanche.

Waiting for Stella’s return, Blanche and Eunice have a relative talk each other. Blanche tells about their home-place until they finally stop their talking. Blanche asks Eunice to be left alone.

After a few hours, Stella comes quickly around the corner of the building and runs to the door of the downstairs. Looking at Blanche, Stella calls out joyfully and Blanche herself with her happiness springs up with a wild cry. She begins to speak with feverish vivacity as if she fears for either to them to stop and think until she hardly gives Stella a chance to speak to.
During the conversation, Blanche tells much about her existence, how she happens to get away from the school before the spring term ends. She is so exhausted by all she’d been through her nerves-broke. Mr. Graves, the high school superintendent suggests her to take a leave of absence.

Actually, Blanche hasn’t recognized her brother in-law yet. For this reason she asks Stella how her husband’s type. She is afraid whether Stanley will like her coming or not. But Stella, Even though Blanche blames her to live in a background quite different from him and always gives comment to Stanley’s behavior that convinces Blanche that she will get along fine together if she’ll just try not to compare him with another man.

Then, Blanche tells Stella how she struggle through a hard life. After her other close relatives have died and her losing of the family property, she is so disappointed to find her sisters looks out for herself, makes her own living with her husband now, while she stays and struggles to keep it, fight for it, bleed for it almost die for it.

Stella hears and sees all of that as if there is a struggle for breath and bleeding. Of course, she doesn’t want to accuse Blanche for the loss of Belle Reve since that is expensive. All of those deaths, father, mother, Margaret, that dreadful way, Belle Reve has paid for all the sickness and death. That is all how Belle Reve slips through her fingers. Stella at the same time goes to the bathroom to wash her face when the sound of man’s voice is heard. Blanche also realizes such condition and tries to address the coming of Stanley. As Stella’s sister, Blanche introduces herself to Stanley and then they talk to each other especially about Blanche’s marriage and occupation.
Stella and Stanley are in the kitchen when Stella tells her husband that they have lost the Belle Reve. Stanley doesn’t believe that it is lost just because of paying the sickness and dying of his parents’ in-law. He has a suspicion that Blanche has sold the plantation and wastes the money for enjoyment herself. Stanley finds a suspicion from a few details of Blanche who always wears expensive dresses, feathers and furs. Therefore, he demands Blanche to show him the related papers as evidence for the bill.

Poker is fascinating and Stanley is a poker player. He often plays with his friends Steve, Mitch and Pablo until midnight. One night, when Stanley enjoys drinking, he is in a half drunk. He makes a terrible row that frightens Stella and Blanche who is talking with Mitch at that time. Since that, Blanche begins to hate him and thinks that his action is like an animal.

Blanche has no idea of returning to Laurel and Stanley smells about this reason. Blanche goes to new Orleans, visiting royalty, putting on all her act. She is not going to teach school because the owner of the school kicks her out of the school. She’s often mixed up with seventeen years old boy and the boy’s dad learns about it. He gets in touch with the high school superintendent.

After hearing her husband’s stories about Blanche, at first she doesn’t believe all of those. But Stanley tries to convince her by saying that he can prove it from his supply man, Shaw who knows the fact of stories about Blanche to go back to Laurel. Furthermore, he has influenced Mitch who loves Blanche and wants to marry her. Mitch is his friend. They work on the same plant and now on the same bowling. Therefore, he can’t let his best friend gets caught.
Now, Blanche has to recover her past life. She must tell the truth to Mitch. She tells all of her journey in the past. She says that she ever stays at Flamingo as the place where she has many intimacies with strangers. After the death of Allan, her husband commits suicide by striking the revolver into his mouth caused this man is a degenerate one. She does the prostitution because it is just the way to fill her empty heart. She thinks she feels panic, just panic that drives her from one to another until at last she has affair with a seventeen years old boy. But somebody writes the superintendent about it. The prostitution is all seems to fill her empty heart with.

Blanche also tells Mitch after she has been played out and there is no where else she could go; she comes to this New Orleans until she meets Mitch. Mitch has told her that he needs somebody and she needs too. Her wanting now is that Mitch will marry her. In contrast, Mitch doesn’t want to see her anymore because Blanche has told a lie to him. Lie, inside and outside. Mitch says that she is a big liar and she is not clean enough to bring into his house. Hearing Mitch’s confession, Blanche feels to fall to peaces again.

It is some weeks later. Stella is packing Blanche’s things. There is no place for her anymore in her house. Stella doesn’t want to express her plan directly to her because she is afraid if Blanche knows it. She has an arrangement to rest her in the country. That’s only the reason to go on a trip to bring Blanche into an asylum. Blanche must be cared by the doctor who can not bear her guilty feeling. She feels guilty to let people hurt Blanche and feels that she can not improve her sister condition. As they go out, Stella cries out her sister name. But
Blanche, she walks on without turning which followed by the doctor and the Matron.