

NOTES FOR A STEETCAR NAMED DESIRE

Scene 2

I. Plot Summary:

II. Blanche and baths: (Motif #1)

- A. To cool herself in the heat of New Orleans
- B. To soothe her nerves
- C. A private place
- D. To cleanse herself literally and figuratively
- E. To irritate Stanley since it makes the apartment hotter (and costs \$?)

*Bedroom Stanley
A form of self-purifying*

III. The Battle of the Sexes (Theme #1)

A. Blanche's Methods of Winning the War

1. Flirtation (She's the coquette)

- a. Asking for help buttoning her dress
- b. The request for a drag on his cigarette
- c. Fishing for compliments
- d. Complimenting his virility
- e. Whispery/sexy voice
- f. Sprays him with perfume

Wrong for Stanley

Blanche: "You're simple, straightforward and honest, a little bit on the primitive side I should think. To interest you a woman would have to--"
Stanley (slowly): "Lay...her cards on the table"

Blanche: "...when you walked in here I said to myself--'My sister has married a man!'"

2. Errors in the Battle

- a. Referring to him as less than she is (not a fitting opponent)
 - i. "What's in that little boy's mind of yours? That I am absconding with something, attempting some kind of treachery on my sister?"
 - ii. "The touch of you hands insults them [her old love letters]...Now that you've touched them I'll burn them!"
- b. Attempts the symbolic seduction of her sister's husband (the man who is providing for her)

B. Stanley's Methods of Winning the War

1. Attack (He's the MAN!)

- a. Belle Reve/Napoleonic Code: French civil law used in Louisiana governed laws about inheritance and property (a wife's property becomes her husbands; therefore, if Stella has lost the plantation, so has Stanley)
- b. Goes through Blanche's trunk; accuses her of using the money from Belle Reve to buy furs and jewels
- c. Aware of her flirtations ("If I didn't know that you was my wife's sister I'd get ideas about you!")
Maybe even turned on?
Not impressed by Blanche's flirtations ("Now let's cut the re-bop!")

2. Errors in the Battle

- a. Attack is not the way to get Blanche who is used to the finer things in life

III. Stella's in the middle

A. Between Blanche and Stanley

- 1. Belle Reve issue
--furs/jewelry
- 2. Physical Attraction
- 3. Blanche's imposing on their hospitality/ Stanley's poker party
- 4. She's pregnant

IV. Reality vs. Illusion (Theme #2)

A. Blanche: "I know I fib good deal. After all, a woman's charm is fifty percent illusion, but when a thing is important I tell the truth..."

V. Blanche's past:

A. Married: the love letters are "poems a dead boy wrote. I hurt him the way that you would like to hurt me, but you can't! I'm not young and vulnerable any more. But my young husband was and I..."
"Everyone has something he won't let others touch because of their-- intimate nature."

B. Belle Reve lost "...piece by piece [as] our improvident [male relatives] exchanged the land for their epic fornications...The four-letter word deprived us of our plantation..."

VI. The Future:

A. "...maybe he's what we need to mix with our blood now that we've lost Belle Reve."

VII. Tragic Hero: