

Analysis of drama the glass menagerie

[Literature](#), [Play](#)



The Glass Menagerie is a four chapter memory play written by Tennessee Williams that reflects upon his own unhappy and dysfunctional family. With this being said, the narrator in the play, Tom Wingfield, resembles Tennessee Williams himself. The setting takes place in the winter and spring of 1937 in St.

Louis and symbolically reflects the conflicts faced by the characters because it is Tom Wingfield's recollections from his childhood. This setting, however, prevents the characters of The Glass Menagerie, Tom in particular, from obtaining what they desire in life. In this essay, I will discuss the various reasons that prevented Tom from achieving his desires and how the play resolves the conflict between desire and reality for him.

The play is from the perspective of Tom's memories by addressing the audience directly, but also participating in it as a character within his own recollection as well. As a child, Tom and his father did not spend much time together, which resulted in an unpleasant relationship between the two of them. He eventually found himself the only man supporting his family when his father abandoned him, his mother and sister. He supported his family by working in a shoe factory. While all he could think about was the day that he would get to leave home and pursue his dream of being a play writer. This leaves Tom feeling trapped in a battle between wanting to run off and abandon his family like his father did and staying to support his broken family. Amanda, Tom's mother senses that Tom wants to leave home, which results in conflict between the two of them because she believes it is his duty to support their family since her husband left. She illustrates this when she says What right have you got to jeopardize your job? Jeopardize the <https://assignbuster.com/analysis-of-drama-the-glass-menagerie/>

security of us all? How do you think we'd manage if you were- (Williams, 2013, Scene 2, p. 1044). The love that Tom has for his shy sister, Laura, and the guilt that he feels because of his mother is what kept Tom from running off like his father did for a long time.

At this point, Tom becomes a more selfish character when he begins doing everything that he can to avoid his family and going home. He does this by escaping into fantasy and adventure through the movies he sees in the theater to briefly experience what he longs to have in his life. He feels that the actors in the movies are having all the adventures while he is trapped taking care of his family. Amanda eventually begins to nag Tom by calling him selfish for constantly escaping to the movies and drinking instead of taking care of his family like he should be doing. This causes Tom to lose his patience and intentionally hurt his family by spending this money on the movies and smoking rather than paying the electric bill. Laura encourages them to resolve their issues and make up, but he realized that he had put himself in a position of no turning back. It was clear that he intended on leaving at this point. Amanda later expresses a desire for Laura to marry and eligible bachelor so that not only Laura can be taken care of if Tom leaves, but herself. Due to Laura's painfully shy nature, Amanda ask Tom to find a gentleman for his sister which he does in an effort to please his nagging mother and help out his sister. This is where one of the conflicts in the play arises.

Towards the end of the play, Tom introduces Laura to a friend from work that turns out to be a guy that she had once had a crush on resulting in her

hiding in their living room until Jim, Tom's friend, eventually talks her out. Jim gets Laura to open up throughout the night and they begin to bond which later led to a goodnight kiss that left Laura hopeful until they find out that Jim is engaged to be married to someone else. This upsets Laura and causes Amanda to blame Tom because she believes that he purposely tried to embarrass her when really he did not have any idea Jim was engaged. Along with the feeling of entrapment is the feeling of guilt that his mother makes him feel by constantly blaming him for not helping his sister find an eligible bachelor. This is ultimately what caused Tom to abandon his family shortly after that night in hopes of finding the happiness and adventure that he had been waiting so long for. He ends the play by telling his family that he is going to the movies like he always did, however, this time he didn't return back home. He later reveals that he could never shake the memory of how he left Laura behind just like his father once did.

Williams related almost every aspect of the play back to his childhood with different characters and conflicts. We have learned various reasons why Tom was unable to achieve his desires for so long. The conflict between Tom and his mother was established quickly when she learned that he wanted to leave. She called Tom selfish because she believed that it was his duty to support the family because her husband abandoned them which caused Tom to lose his patience with her. This also causes the issue of the missing father and the effect it had on Tom's constant battle between wanting to leave and not wanting to abandon them like his father did. Lastly, it was the thought of leaving Laura behind that limited him the most. In conclusion, the play resolves the conflict between desire and reality for Tom by making him

realize that he did the wrong things to push himself into a corner so that he would feel that he only had one way to go because now all he feels is regret for leaving Laura the way that he did and has never been able to let it go.

References

Williams, T., Gioia, D. (10/2012). The Literature Collection, 1st Edition. [South University]. Retrieved from [https:// digitalbookshelf. southuniversity. edu/#/books/9781269582674/](https://digitalbookshelf.southuniversity.edu/#/books/9781269582674/)