

The glass menagerie is a memory play

[Literature](#), [Drama](#)



The Glass Menagerie is a memory play "The Glass Menagerie" by Tennessee Williams is a play, which effectively illustrates a character, Tom who struggles with his principles. The Glass Menagerie is one of Tennessee Williams most renowned piece of work. Often referred to as a 'memory play', both the style and content of The Glass Menagerie are shaped and inspired by the memory of the play's narrator, Tom Wingfield. The Glass Menagerie deals with a strong mix of emotions, including sadness, loneliness, anger and pride. This is especially true for the character of Tom. Williams uses many different ways of portraying Tom's feelings. According to Tom, due to the play's origins in memory, 'it is sentimental, it is not realistic' and may be presented with unusual freedom from convention. Therefore, the play is subject to numerous peculiarities, such as dim lighting, frequent use of music and symbolism. Most fictional works are products of the imagination, which attempt to convince the audience of its realism, through realistic conflict, drama and setting. The Glass Menagerie, however, although drawn from memory, is not attempting to escape its responsibility of dealing with reality', but rather, is drawn from real experience and does not need to be constrained by the conventions of realism to convey truth. The despair of this character's circumstances clearly illustrates the theme of imprisonment. Williams makes it obvious that Tom is trapped from the exposition of the play as Tom is both narrator who escaped character and character in conflict. As narrator it is evident Tom's situation was complicated. "I give truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion" This shows that he doesn't like to believe the reality. He would rather just leave everything behind and get away far as possible from the Wingfield apartment. Williams also creates

tension when Amanda focuses her attention on her so she knows that Tom is unhappy, but instead of helping him she decides to "turn a blind eye" and act as though he is going through a phase. But deep down she is terrified that he is turning into his father. "I see you taking after his ways!" She also makes him promise that he will never turn out to be an alcoholic. This puts Tom under enormous expectation. Both Amanda and Laura know that he could easily leave them in the same way ----- According to Tom, The Glass Menagerie is a memory play—both its style and its content are shaped and inspired by memory. As Tom himself states clearly, the play's lack of realism, its high drama, its overblown and too-perfect symbolism, and even its frequent use of music are all due to its origins in memory. Most fictional works are products of the imagination that must convince their audience that they are something else by being realistic. A play drawn from memory, however, is a product of real experience and hence does not need to drape itself in the conventions of realism in order to seem real. The creator can cloak his or her true story in unlimited layers of melodrama and unlikely metaphor while still remaining confident of its substance and reality. Tom—and Tennessee Williams—take full advantage of this privilege. The story that the play tells is told because of the inflexible grip it has on the narrator's memory. Thus, the fact that the play exists at all is a testament to the power that memory can exert on people's lives and consciousness. Indeed, Williams writes in the Production Notes that "nostalgia . . . is the first condition of the play." The narrator, Tom, is not the only character haunted by his memories. Amanda too lives in constant pursuit of her bygone youth, and old records from her childhood are almost as important to Laura as her glass animals.

For these characters, memory is a crippling force that prevents them from finding happiness in the present or the offerings of the future. But it is also the vital force for Tom, prompting him to the act of creation that culminates in the achievement of the play. | Why is The Glass Menagerie a memory play? | | The Glass Menagerie is a memory play — both its style | become an independent and separate individual. | | and its contents are shaped and inspired by memory. Tom, | The play is also a memory of Laura's infancy. She is | | who is the narrator and also a character in the play, | like a little girl living in her own world of dreams and | | states clearly that the play " is sentimental, it is not | illusions. The glass menagerie, to which she is entirely | | realistic". As he implies in the beginning the truth | devoted, stands for this infantile world. She is timid | | appears in the pleasant disguise of illusion. All the | and immature, she refuses to go to school and doesn't | | characters live in the past, they " turn back time". In | take responsibility. Only playing and walking around make | | isolation from the outside world they are somehow set | her happy. Being in love with a picture and having | | apart from reality. Existing in their memories they are | immature attitude towards men, she doesn't want to become | | trying to escape from the responsibility of dealing with | a woman. | | the present. | Another memory is of the father, who had left the | | The mother, Amanda, is haunted by the memory of her | family to travel long distances. On account of this there | | youth. She was an extremely popular and pretty young lady | is no strong male presence in the play. Only his | | but she lost her chances. Now she refuses to understand | photograph stays over the mantel to remind them of the | | life and reality. She doesn't accept the fact that she is | past. Thereby,

love in the play becomes also a memory — | | already old and repeats the same story to her children | the lost love of Amanda and the children for the father, | | over and over again, trying to protect them. | Laura's failed love. | | Another thing that gives the impression that Amanda | | In a play created by memory and nostalgia, the | | lives in the past is the way she treats Tom and Laura. | characters don't live, they simply watch life go by. Thus | | For her they are still small children and she ignores the | they cannot be conscious human beings. For Tom, Amanda | | fact that they have grown up. She doesn't let them face | and Laura memory is the crippling force that prevents | | reality like adults. With this denial of the truth she | them from finding happiness in the present. | | prevents Tom from becoming a man. Furthermore, she hopes | | | to recreate the glamour of her own youth through her | | | daughter, but it is impossible. She doesn't even accept | | | the fact that Laura is crippled. Because of that the | | | young girl cannot | |