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"tiara" 1,



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Stanley is presented as cruel through his psychological brutality. As soon as Stanley finds out the 'truth' about Blanche he proceeds to torment her for the rest of the play which leads her to insanity at the end of the play. His desire in finding out the truth stems from his mask of false virtue.

In scene three this is evident when he searched through Blanche's belongings after Stella told him about Belle Reve. After assuming that Blanche sold it off, he uses the "Napoleonic code" to act as though he is protecting Stella from being "swindled" by her sister. However, the Napoleonic code favours him as he would get the money and so Stanley is using this code to assert his patriarchal power over Stella to claim Belle Reve as his own. So, when Stella is presented as the voice of compassion by Williams as she explains that the "diamonds" on Blanche's "crown" (as Stanley states) are actually "rhinestones" on a "tiara", Stanley does not want to believe this as it would go against his fantasies.

Yet again, in scene 5, Stanley acts as though he is trying to find out the truth about Blanche by mentioning "hotel Flamingo", when what he really wanted to do was shame her and get revenge on her to uphold his male dominance. The audience are immediately made to feel sympathy for Blanche by Williams' use of dramatic irony. The fact that Stanley now knows what the audience already knew, Blanche used to be a prostitute, makes the audience feel dread as we know that Stanley would use this information to harm her. Stanley only seeks factual truths rather than the psychological truth which is why, unlike the audience, he is unable to understand her.

Williams is suggesting through Stanley that "all cruel people describe themselves as paragons of frankness" 1. Stanley is not honest because if he was then he would tell the whole truth and not only get facts from other sources but also from Blanche herself. This can be seen in scene seven when he tells Stella about Blanche being a prostitute and getting "mixed up" 1 with a seventeen-year-old boy. As Stanley did not state that the only reason that happened was because Blanche was going through the trauma of her husband's death that happened when he was around that boy's age, show that he was not telling Stella this out of his need of being truthful. This was also the case when he told Mitch this information, Stanley was acting as though he was being a good friend when in fact he only told Mitch to ruin Blanche's life with her one chance at happiness. 1 Tennessee Williams - New York Times - 1975