



 Prestwick House

# Activity Pack

## THE GLASS MENAGERIE

BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS



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Written by Shannon Dow

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**During Reading****Allusion Chart****Objective:** Identifying and analyzing allusion in the play**Activity**

Tennessee Williams uses allusions throughout *The Glass Menagerie* to convey themes and motifs. An allusion is a reference to a person, place, thing, event, or idea drawn from history, mythology, the Bible, literature, or works of art. Allusion is used to deepen the reader's understanding of concepts, characters, setting, and conflict. It can be used to imply a tone or to illustrate a comparison or contrast.

Allusion can be a powerful literary device if the reader can make the connection between the reference and the story. The key to interpreting allusion is identifying the reference and then understanding how the reference supports an idea in the story.

As you read the play, identify as many allusions as you can, and list them on the following chart. Write the allusion in the left column. Include the scene in which you find the allusion. In the middle column, identify what or who is being referenced in the allusion. If you are not familiar with the reference, you may consult the Internet or other sources. Determine the possible significance of the allusion to the story, and write it in the last column. The first one has been done for you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Production Notes – Scene One****Recalling a Memory**

**Objectives:** Understanding the concept of a memory play  
Expressing a memory through writing

**Activity**

Memory is a key component in *The Glass Menagerie*. The protagonist, Tom, states that memories are not reliable records of past events; yet, he also argues that even if a memory is not an exact recording of an event, it is an accurate representation of the emotional content of that event. Tom claims that the memory he presents in the play is “truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion.”

Consider the phrase “truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion” as you remember an important experience from your own life. Write two to three paragraphs in which you describe the experience. Be sure to use descriptive details and express the feelings you had at the time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scene One****Motif****Objective:** Defining memory**Activity**

The role of memory is an important motif in *The Glass Menagerie*: Tom narrates past events based on his memory of them, Amanda repeatedly relives her past with her many gentlemen callers and southern lifestyle, and memories of the father's abandonment still weigh heavily on the family.

In the stage directions, Tennessee Williams notes:

“The scene is memory and is therefore nonrealistic. Memory takes a lot of poetic license. It omits some details; others are exaggerated, according to the emotional value of the articles it touches, for memory is seated predominately in the heart.”

In a journal response, record your reaction to this description of memory. Discuss the parts of this statement with which you agree, as well as the parts with which you do not agree. Then, think about your own concept of the word *memory*, and write your definition.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scene Two****Costume Change****Objective:** Inferring character through costuming**Activity**

In addition to dialogue, actors reveal their characters' personalities and convey emotion through facial expressions and body language. Similarly, costume designers can convey a lot about characters through the characters' clothing and accessories.

In Scene Two, Tennessee Williams describes the facial expressions of Laura and Amanda, how they are dressed, and how they interact. Review the stage directions that begin Scene Two, and examine the clothing Laura and Amanda wear and what Tennessee Williams notes about their actions and facial expressions.

It's common for kids who have disobeyed their parents to try to cover it up, as Laura does. Rewrite the passage, substituting a modern day situation. List what kind of clothes you imagine Laura and Amanda would be wearing today, what their non-verbal communication would be like, and write what thoughts are going through each character's mind. Be as descriptive as possible to convey a clear image of the scene.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scene Three****Advice Column**

**Objective:** Interpreting conflicts in the story and giving personal advice

**Activity**

Tom is in need of some advice about what to do concerning his family situation. He decides to write to an impartial party, an advice columnist from a local newspaper, for guidance. Imagine you are Tom; write a letter to "Dear Abby" asking for advice on how to handle your dilemma. Then, exchange your letter with a classmate's, and write a response (as "Dear Abby") to the letter you received. Address the concerns expressed in the letter, and give your best advice to Tom. Remember, as the advice columnist, you have only the facts that Tom has provided in the letter. However, you need to give him some solid advice.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scene Four****Online Profile**

**Objectives:** Identifying character traits  
Writing Creatively

**Activity**

Amanda is afraid that Laura will never get married. In Scene Four, Amanda pleads with Tom to find a nice young man to introduce to Laura. Due to her shyness and lack of contact with others, it is nearly impossible for Laura to meet eligible men on her own. In today's society, the Internet, particularly online dating sites, provides a way to meet new people and develop relationships that could lead to marriage.

Imagine that Laura lives in the present, and she has asked you to help her create an appealing profile for an online dating service. In developing her profile, supply enough personal details to give potential responders a real sense of who Laura is. In addition, provide a description of the type of man who would be a perfect match for her. Give your profile a catchy title, and include a photograph of Laura. The photograph should represent what you think Laura might look like. It can be computer generated or cut from any print media.

The following is an example of a modern online profile:

**Looking for Adventure**

From the jungles of Africa to the rainforest in Brazil to the pyramids of Egypt—I would go anywhere to find someone who shares my love of adventure. I'm looking for a woman who is down-to-earth and fearless. She won't be afraid to accompany me down the Amazon River or across the Sahara Desert. She won't get annoyed when there's no hot water and will be able laugh when we're snowed in together for a week. She will not only put up with my silly jokes, but she may even think I'm actually funny. A love for rock music is a plus. Like me, she will be fit enough to climb the pyramids or hack through a jungle. I'm six feet tall, and people have called me attractive, smart, and friendly. If you're up for excitement and exploration in foreign lands, let's get together and plan an adventure.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scene Five****Horoscopes**

**Objective:** Inferring character conflicts and motivations through astrology

**Activity**

Astrology is the study of celestial bodies and their influence over natural behaviors, particularly human behaviors. People are born under certain astrological signs (also known as zodiac signs), and there are certain personality traits associated with those signs. Astrology can be used to create horoscopes, which are commonly found in newspapers, magazines, and the Internet. While most people read horoscopes purely for entertainment, others rely on them for daily guidance and forecasts of the future.

Write horoscopes that Tom, Laura, and Amanda might have read before the gentleman caller arrives at the apartment. One should be for Tom, another for Laura, and a third for Amanda. Use the events in the play and the characters' personality traits to predict future events and provide advice to them. Since none of their astrological signs or their birthdays are revealed in the text, you can assign whichever signs to them that you choose.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scene Six****Found Poem****Objective:** Writing a “Found Poem”**Activity**

A “found” poem is a poem made up entirely of phrases, sentences, or quotations found in the text. Go back through Scene Six, and make up a found poem of your own. The poem could tell the reader something about Tom’s, Amanda’s, or Laura’s emotional state, but this is not necessary; it may have direct relevance or be totally unrelated to the action of the story, which is one of the best parts of writing a found poem.

Your poem should be at least 10 lines long. The lines do not need to rhyme, but they certainly may. You can arrange the phrases in any way you like and change the punctuation, but do not deviate from Tennessee Williams’s actual words. You may add *and*, *a*, *the*, or alter the tense of verbs, if necessary. Move adjectives and adverbs to create different images. Give the poem a title, which may or may not come from the play.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Scene Seven

### Character Types

**Objective:** Analyzing characters to determine their type: round or flat and dynamic or static

#### Activity

You have observed each character's motivations, thoughts, actions, and desires. Characters who have more complex motivations, thoughts, and desires are known as *round characters*. Round characters are fully developed so that they seem realistic. The protagonist is usually, but not always, a round character. *Flat characters* are one-dimensional. Often, they seem like caricatures or stereotypes; they may show only one facet of their personalities. A flat character may be in a work to represent one particular trait or idea.

*Dynamic characters* are those who change and develop over the course of the story. They learn something or undergo a revelation that changes them in some fundamental way. The protagonist is often, though not always, a dynamic character. *Static characters* do not change, but remain the same throughout the story.

Determine whether the following characters from *The Glass Menagerie* are dynamic or static and round or flat by circling either DYNAMIC or STATIC and ROUND or FLAT and then providing a reason for your choice. In your explanation, you should cite relevant incidents from the play. Mr. Wingfield has been done for you.