

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

The Glass Menagerie

by Tennessee Williams

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Scene One

1. In Tom's opening narrative, he tells you that he will give you truth pleasantly disguised as illusions; whereas, a magician will give you illusions that appear to be truth. Advertisements in magazines or on television often sell illusions to attract a customer to purchase a product.

Write an advertisement for a household or personal product, which has the features of magician-selling illusions that appear to be truth. For instance, certain face creams promise you youthfulness regardless of your age or skin condition.

2. Amanda tells Tom, "I understood the art of conversation!" regarding her gentlemen callers who visited her at Blue Mountain. Her dialogue with the gentlemen callers would be of, "things of importance going on in the world! Never anything coarse or common or vulgar."

Compose the dialogue Amanda might have with a gentleman caller speaking of something important happening in the world that speaks of nothing coarse, common, or vulgar.

Scene Two

3. Amanda is told by Laura's typing instructor that Laura has "dropped out of school after only a few days' attendance." Amanda replies, "Laura, my daughter, has been going to school every day for the past six weeks." Laura intentionally lied to her mother about attending classes. Laura's nervousness, and Amanda's persistent nagging, may have been why Laura's chose to deceive her mother.

Write a school newspaper article voicing your opinion about lying and about lying to a parent. In your article, write of a time you have lied, or have known of someone who has lied. Describe the situation and its outcome.

4. Laura often occupied her days walking in parks, visiting museums, watching the animals in the zoo, going to movies, and spending the afternoons at the "big glass house where they raise the tropical flowers."

Write a diary entry for a day in Laura's life as she wanders around and visits one or several of these sights. Describe the setting (her surroundings), what she is seeing, the characteristics of the people she may meet, and her thoughts as she is exploring.

5. When Amanda stands firm in her resolve to see her daughter married, Laura objects and argues that no one will want her because she is a cripple.

Write a journal entry describing a personal experience that involves a time you saw a handicapped or crippled person. What were your thoughts as you viewed this person's disability? How are you different or the same as this person?

Scene Three

6. The scene begins with Tom, as the narrator, describing how the idea of Laura having a gentleman caller became obsessive to his mother. By definition, a gentleman caller visits the home of the woman he is interested in dating. He asks the parents if their daughter will see him, and if she agrees, the dating process begins. If she does not wish to see him, he leaves his “calling” card, thus being a gentleman caller.

Write a brief essay comparing and contrasting dating in Amanda’s time to today. In which era would you rather be dating? Explain your reasons for choosing the past or present dating process.

7. Amanda’s conducts “a vigorous campaign on the telephone, roping in subscribers to one of those magazines for matrons called *The Homemakers Companion*.”

Write a dialogue as a telephone solicitor for a magazine you are trying to sell. Why should people subscribe to your magazine? What features are in the magazine that would entice people to purchase a subscription? What is the name of your magazine?

8. Amanda accuses Tom of lying about going to the movies and suspects that he is involved in actions that are shameful at night. Tom is very angry about her accusations. He explains that going out to the movies is his only escape from his monotonous, dull, and routine life.

Write a couple of paragraphs describing how you “escape” when you are bored or want your own time to think or relax. Where do you go? For example, do you go for a walk, spend time in your room, or listen to music?

Response Journal

9. Tom angrily retorts that the dead are better off than he is, for they do not have to “Rise and Shine” at the command of their mothers.

Write a letter to Tom explaining how you start your school day. Does someone yell to wake you, or does the alarm clock ring? Time sequence your morning routine on school days in your letter to Tom.

10. Tom, who was struggling to put on his coat, takes it off and throws it across the room; in the process he breaks some of Laura’s glass menagerie. Laura shrieks, “*My glass!—menagerie,*” as if she has been personally wounded.

Write a paper as if you were preparing a lecture comparing the frailty of the glass collection to Laura’s personality or her home life. How are the broken pieces of glass similar to some of Laura’s broken dreams?

11. Tom is seen as a prisoner of circumstances. When Tom’s father deserted the family, Tom instantly became the dutiful and responsible man of the house. He is not free to pursue his own life or literary interests. Amanda has failed to recognize either of her children as individuals or accept who they really are. Think briefly about your own interests and future dreams. If you were experiencing overwhelming pressure from family or peers, would you change your hobbies or after-school activities? Would the pressure to change make you angry?

Write an editorial for the school newspaper explaining why one should not succumb to social or family pressure to change personal interests, pursuits, and/or future dreams.

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Scene Four

12. When Tom returns from the movies, it is early in the morning and he is drunk. The movie stubs and bottle fall out of his pocket as proof of his actions. It is obvious that he is trying to numb himself from his daily life by drinking and movie dreaming. Do problems go away just because one chooses to ignore them?

In a letter to Tom, explain to him why it is important to acknowledge his problems and seek solutions instead of pretending they do not exist.

13. Since Amanda is not on talking terms with Tom after the previous night's argument, she addresses her son through Laura. Laura begs Tom to apologize to their mother. At first he refuses, but finally relents.

Write a paragraph or two about a time you needed to apologize to your parent(s) or to a friend. What were the circumstances for which you needed to apologize? How did you feel before and after the apology was made?