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Chicken Turtles and Bananas

Within A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams uses his literary skills of strong characterizations for all of the characters. However, there is one one character who stands out the most, and that is Blanche DuBois. The direct translation of her name is White Forest, which in time, we learn is not the true meaning of who she really is.

At first, Blanche hits most readers as a character who personifies innocence, purity, and chastity. Throughout the play, Blanche consistently wears white dresses and red kimonos, which yet again symbolize pure innocence and youth. Through her actions throughout the playwright, readers learn she is the complete opposite of what Williams portrays her as. The way she presents herself to males with these dresses imply she is on the hunt for younger men by seducing them similarly to a cougar. According to <urbandictionary.com>, cougar is defined as "An older woman who frequents clubs in order to score with a much younger man"(1).

Blanche's mind is shackled to the illusions of her life and fails to accept the reality of old age and impurity. Because of this, Blanche must trick and deceive in order to survive in a world where her life and looks begin to dwindle. Blanche is considered a character who is trapped within her own walls, having trouble finding her true identity and fails to live up to the expectations she believes is right for the society of the 1950s. Despite Blanche wearing a mask of innocence and purity, she is truly a trickster in human form who cannot stand to the light in fear that she will be exposed for the person she really is. In the movie version of *A Streetcar Named Desire* with Marlon Brando, anytime Blanche is shown, she is in total darkness and flees from any stray light. Blanche also states, "I can't stand a naked light bulb, any more than I can a rude remark or a vulgar action" (123helpme). This line adds to the evidence of how Blanche is unable to stand the naked truth as it would expose her for who she really is. Continuing about hiding her true persona, when nobody is around, Blanche consumes a good amount of Stanley's alcohol, and denies her drinking problem in order to portray herself as a woman of high morals. In the play William's stage directs the following, "*[She goes into the kitchen, finds a glass and pours a shot of whiskey into it.]*" (Williams 79).

As for Blanche's love life, seduction is her number one way of getting with younger men, "I want to deceive him (Mitch) enough to make him want me"(l23helpme). Through this, we are able to see Blanche's deceptiveness and seductive nature. Going back into her past, she was previously married to Allan Grey. They were both in love at a very tender age and married as a teenager. Soon, Blanche later finds that her own husband is a homosexual and is disgusted. She approaches him during a school dance at which point Allan leaves, and shoots himself in the head. "Allan's death, which marked the end of Blanche's sexual innocence, has haunted her ever since"(Sparknotes). More towards the present time of the play, a teenager paperboy arrives at the Kowalski door to collect for the newspaper. Blanche leaves an impression on the boy after "hitting" on him and giving him a very passionate farewell kiss. His paperboy best personifies Blanches obsession with younger innocent men. Another man she comes across while vacationing in Miami, is Shep Huntleigh. Shep is a financially stable man who Blanche believes will provide her and support her to escape from Stanley. "As Blanche's mental stability deteriorates, her fantasy that Shep is coming to sweep her away becomes more and more real to her"(Sparknotes). Through three characters, readers easily memorized by the true nature of Blanche.

Towards the end of the playwright, most readers are able to pick up on the true nature of Blanche. Her seductive, impurity, and corruption leads her to her own downfall when she is forced to attend a mental institution.

Works Cited

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