



A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams

Reviewed by Jade



Tragic Drama

Give a summary without spoilers!

A Streetcar Named Desire is a story about a middle aged woman named Blanche who unknowingly is dealing with mental health issues. Since it takes place in the late 40s, there was not much known about mental health, especially how to properly diagnose or treat disorders. Blanche often blamed her behavior on her past traumas, but a lot of the trauma she had was made up in her head to cope with her misfortune. She comes up with many bizarre story lines to excuse her behavior, but in reality she suffers from severe mental health issues. She moves in with her sister Stella and her husband Stanley, to try and reset her life, but things end up taking a turn for the worse. With such a drastic change in environment, and Stanley becoming her arch nemesis, Blanche's downfall happens hard and fast. This story follows Blanche's disorder, but also addresses topics such as assault and gender roles. An eye opening script written by Tennessee Williams shows the challenges that not only women, but people suffering from mental health had to endure just because of the lack of knowledge surrounding psychiatry at the time.

What drew you to this book?

What drew me to this play was Blanche's character development. At first she is recognized as a purely villainous woman, but as the play goes on it is clear that she has suffered from real trauma, and has some serious mental health issues. It is no excuse for most of the behavior she exhibits, but it does give some clarity and allow the reader to have a small amount of empathy for her especially when compared to Stanley.

Did it remind you of something that you've previously read?

No

To whom would you recommend this book?

I would recommend this to a more mature Young Adult audience, because the topic of assault can be a hard read for some. However, aside from that the book is a highly interesting read that gives insight on society's expectations and impact of gender roles during the late 40s.

Overall, did you like it and would you recommend it to others?

At first, I was not a fan of this play, but as I began to read and became more engaged with the plot and characters I thoroughly enjoyed it. It can be difficult to read because of how non-progressive the time period was, but the lessons intertwined in the plot are important and should be acknowledged. Williams did a great job of portraying the woman's role, and grasping the reader's attention/emotions. I also like the fact that he does not try to sugarcoat the views of society during that time, because it is important to the background and development of the story.

Anything else that you would like to add to this review? What made you choose it? Did you like the cover? Was it recommended to you? Did you find it at the library?

I read this play in school and thoroughly enjoyed analyzing it and having open discussions about the deeper meanings.