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This is set in Elysian Fields - why is this ironic?
Research this now

1. New Orleans is a cosmopolitan area and working class. Irony is created by calling the street Stella and Stanley live on Elysian Fields. Elysian Fields is a Greek myth where the heroic are sent in heaven. By calling the street Elysian Fields is irony because new orleans is nothing like a heaven as its 'run down' and 'weathered'.

2. Elysian Fields as a place for the dead is foreshadowing for Blanche's decline, trapped in the apartment in the street of the same name.

Let's read scene 1 together. You will need to make notes as we go along.

Scene 1 – Synopsis.

- Eunice and a Negro woman are on the steps of the building when Stanley and Mitch arrive. Stanley calls for Stella, and she appears on the first-floor landing of their apartment. Stanley tosses her some meat, and announces that he is going bowling. Stella wants to come to watch.
- Just after she leaves, Blanche Dubois arrives on the block; she looks at the address she has and at her surroundings, shocked that her sister Stella lives in such a place.
- She is helped into the Kowalski apartment by Eunice, the landlady. Eunice mentions that she saw pictures of the Dubois home, Belle Reve. Blanche, exhausted and in no mood for small talk, finally says that she wants to be left alone. Eunice goes to fetch Stella.
- Stella and Blanche greet each other with some emotion. Things start out cordially enough, but before long Blanche is irritable.
- They speak about the poor conditions Stella lives in; Stella talks about how much she needs Stanley. Blanche seems to disapprove of the relationship; the Dubois sisters come from Southern aristocracy, and now Stella is married to a "polack."
- Blanche has bad news: *Belle Reve* has been lost. Blanche, with her teacher's salary, couldn't keep the place up. She stayed and fought for Belle Reve, caring for all of their dying relatives, while Stella left.
- Blanche is full of resentment, and her harshness makes Stella cry. While Stella goes to the bathroom to wash her face, Stanley comes home.
- Outside, Stanley, Steve, and Mitch plan their next poker game. Stanley enters, giving Blanche a frank stare.
- They have an awkward conversation. Stanley is coarse and rough compared to delicate Blanche, and he is a very sexual man. Through their conversation, we learn that Blanche had a husband long ago, but the young man died.

Scene 1 – Analysis

- From the beginning, the three main characters of Streetcar are in a state of tension - the apartment is small, confining, the weather hot, oppressive, and the characters have good reason to come into conflict.
- Blanche and her sister come from a dying world. The pretensions of their world are becoming a thing of memory – for example, the family mansion is called "*Belle Reve*". The old life may have been beautiful, but it is gone forever, which is shown by the fact that *Belle Reve* is lost.
- Blanche clings to pretensions of aristocracy. She is as poor as Stanley and Stella, but she looks down on the Kowalski apartment. Stanley tells her that she'll probably see him as "the unrefined type."
- Desire is central to the play. Blanche is unable to come to terms with her desire. She is repelled and fascinated by Stanley at the same time. Though she stayed behind and took care of the family while Stella ran off to find a new life, Blanche is jealous of Stella's choice: she seems fixated on the idea of Stella sleeping with her "Polack." Stella has chosen a life built around her sexual relationship with Stanley. Blanche is both repulsed by and jealous of the choice.
- Stanley is comfortable with desire and satisfying his physical needs. Sex is part of what makes him tick. His appraisal of women is frank and straightforward, and he makes no pretenses of being sexually self-controlled.
- The play is haunted by mortality. Desire and death and loneliness are played off against each other again and again. The setting is one of decay - the dying Old South and the dying DuBois family. Blanche's first monologue is a graphic description of tending to the terminally ill. There is also the specter of Blanche's husband, who died when they were both very young; Blanche still refers to him as a "boy."

Immediate impressions of Stanley and Stella



Possessive
Brute/masculine
Loud/obnoxious
Sport + belting
Primal-hunter
Sexual/sexist
dominant
alpha male



submissive
dependent
some Southern
standards
stands up for
herself.
Quiet
meek

Immediate impressions of Blanche

southern belle

NOUN

(Frequently with capital initial) an attractive, typically upper-class woman from the Southern states of the United States, especially one perceived as having a wild, flirtatious, or steely character concealed beneath an outwardly demure appearance.



High standards
spoilt
superficial
nervous/unstable
defensive
manipulative
insecure

rich
Southern standards
alcoholic
judgmental
Secretive + lies
supercilious
over dramatic

<u>Stanley</u>	<u>Contrasts Between Stanley and Blanche</u>	<u>Blanche</u>
Background •Working class upbringing, an immigrant.		•Remnant of the plantation house era, upper class, WASP.
Appearance •Gaudy, sexual, a 'brightly coloured male bird'. Open and honest – in Scene 1, he takes off his shirt, even though he is sweaty.		•Dressed in white, to represent purity. Concerned with 'powdering her face', flashy jewellery – dishonest, a façade,
Use of Language •Uses a rougher tongue, and pronunciation – uses slang terms like 'little woman'. •'You going to shack up here?'		•Speaks properly (Standard English) with literary references to show her education (Edgar Allen Poe). •'I thought I would if its not inconvenient.'
Vocation/Talents •He was 'never a very good English student'		•English teacher, who uses literary references frequently.
Actions •Stanley recommends that Blanche 'take it easy' •He 'grins at Blanche'.		•She is the nervous type – 'springs up' when a cat outside screeches. •She can not return his smile, she tries 'unsuccessfully to smile back'.

1. Literary works often show men and women struggling to resolve problems and not succeeding very well. To what degree do you find this to be true in the two works you have studied?

Blanche + loss of BR / M on trial

2. Appearances can be deceptive. How is this true of the two texts studied?

B secret alcoholic / Judge on trial


3. How do the writers of the two works you have studied convey a sense of place to their readers and to what purpose?

Description of set / M in prison.

4. Show some of the ways in which the writers of the two works you have studied enable the reader/audience to discern a meaning that is only implied.

Sexual innuendos / Existentialism of M.

What is established in Scene 1?

 <https://www.coursehero.com/lit/A-Streetcar-Named-Desire/scene-1-summary/>

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6TrgQxf3Ik>