



# Immanuel College

**Specimen paper for entry into Year 12**

## **Drama and Theatre Studies**

**Time allowed: 1 hour**

**Total Marks: 30**

**Answer BOTH questions on lined paper**

Read the following extract from *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams. Answer both questions.

1. Imagine that you have been assigned to design the set for a production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Explain how you would use set and lighting design to create a particular mood or atmosphere. You can use diagrams and sketches to support your answer.

(15marks)

2. How would you perform one of the roles in the text? You should refer to both physical and vocal aspects of performance.

(15marks)

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### A Streetcar Named Desire:

In the New Orleans house of Stanley and Stella Kowalski, a visitor arrives. Debt has sunk the family home in Mississippi and Stella's fragile sister Blanche is coming to stay. As the summer heat floats up from the sidewalk and the liquor gets poured, Blanche invades her sister's marriage and ignites a dark and violent conflict with the brooding and bullish Stanley.

### Streetcar Named Desire

#### By Tennessee Williams

*And so it was I entered the broken world*

*To trace the visionary company of love, its voice*

*An instant in the wind (I know not whither hurled)*

*But not for long to hold each desperate choice*

*"The Broken Tower" by Hart Crane*

### SCENE ONE

*The exterior of a two-story corner building on a street in New Orleans which is named Elysian Fields and runs between the L & N tracks and the river. The section is poor but, unlike corresponding sections in other American cities, it has a raffish charm. The houses are mostly white frame, weathered gray, with rickety outside stairs and galleries and quaintly ornamented gables. This building contains two flats, upstairs and down. Faded white stairs ascend to the entrances of both.*

*It is first dark of an evening early in May. The sky that shows around the dim white building is a peculiarly tender blue, almost a turquoise, which invests the scene with a kind of lyricism and gracefully attenuates the atmosphere of decay. You can almost feel the warm breath of the brown river beyond the river warehouses with their faint redolence's of bananas and coffee. A corresponding air is evoked by the music of Negro entertainers at a barroom around the corner.*

*In this part of New Orleans you are practically always just around the corner, or a few doors down the street, from a tinny piano being played with the infatuated fluency of brown fingers. This "Blue Piano" expresses the spirit of the life which goes on here.*

*Two women, one white and one coloured, are taking the air on the steps of the building. The white woman is Eunice, who occupies the upstairs flat; the coloured woman a neighbour, for New Orleans is a cosmopolitan city where there is a relatively warm and easy intermingling of races in the old part of town.*

*Above the music of the "Blue Piano" the voices of people on the street can be heard overlapping.*

*[Two men come around the corner, Stanley Kowalski and Mitch. They are about twenty-eight or thirty years old, roughly dressed in blue denim work clothes. Stanley carries his bowling jacket and a red-stained package from a butcher's. They stop at the foot of the steps.]*

**STANLEY** [bellowing]:

Hey, there! Stella, Baby!

*[Stella comes out on the first floor landing, a gentle young woman, about twenty-five, and of a background obviously quite different from her husband's.]*

**STELLA** [mildly]:

Don't holler at me like that. Hi, Mitch.

**STANLEY:**

Catch!

**STELLA:**

What?

**STANLEY:**

Meat!

*[She heaves the package at her. She cries out in protest but manages to catch it; then she laughs breathlessly. Her husband and his companion have already started back around the corner.]*

**STELLA** [calling after him]:

Stanley! Where are you going?

**STANLEY:**

Bowling!

**STELLA:**

Can I come watch?

**STANLEY:**

Come on.

*[He goes out.]*

**STELLA:**

Be over soon.

*[To the white woman]*

Hello, Eunice. How are you?

**EUNICE:**

I'm all right. Tell Steve to get him a poor boy's sandwich 'cause nothing's left here.

*[They all laugh; the coloured woman does not stop. Stella goes out.]*

**COLORED WOMAN:**

What was that package he th'ew at 'er?

*[She rises from steps, laughing louder.]*

**EUNICE:**

You hush, now!

**NEGRO WOMAN:**

Catch what!

*[She continues to laugh. Blanche comes around the corner, currying a valise. She looks at a slip of paper, then at the building, then again at the slip and again at the building. Her expression is one of shocked disbelief. Her appearance is incongruous to this setting. She is daintily dressed in a white suit with a fluffy bodice, necklace and earrings of pearl, white gloves and hat, looking as if she were arriving at a summer tea or cocktail party in the garden district. She is about five years older than Stella. Her delicate beauty must avoid a strong light. There is something about her uncertain manner, as well as her white clothes, that suggests a moth.]*

**EUNICE** [finally]:

What's the matter, honey? Are you lost?

**BLANCHE** [with faintly hysterical humour]:

They told me to take a streetcar named Desire, and then transfer to one called Cemeteries and ride six blocks and get off at--Elysian Fields!

**EUNICE:**

That's where you are now.

**BLANCHE:**

At Elysian Fields?

**EUNICE:**

This here is Elysian Fields.

**BLANCHE:**

They mustn't have understood what number I wanted.

**EUNICE:**

What number you lookin' for?

*[Blanche wearily refers to the slip of paper.]*

**BLANCHE:**

Six thirty-two.

**EUNICE:**

You don't have to look no further.

**BLANCHE** [uncomprehendingly]:

I'm looking for my sister, Stella DuBois. I mean--Mrs. Stanley Kowalski.

**EUNICE:**

That's the party.--You just did miss her, though.

**BLANCHE:**

This--can this be--her home?

**EUNICE:**

She's got the downstairs here and I got the up.

**BLANCHE:**

Oh. She's--out?

**EUNICE:**

You noticed that bowling alley around the corner?

**BLANCHE:**

I'm--not sure I did.

**EUNICE:**

Well, that's where she's at, watchin' her husband bowl.

*[There is a pause]*

You want to leave your suitcase here an' go find her?

**BLANCHE:**

No.

**NEGRO WOMAN:**

I'll go tell her you come.

**BLANCHE:**

Thanks.

**NEGRO WOMAN:**

You welcome.

*[She goes out.]*

**EUNICE:**

She wasn't expecting you?

**BLANCHE:**

No. No, not tonight.

**EUNICE:**

Well, why don't you just go in and make yourself at home till they get back.

**BLANCHE:**

How could I--do that?

**EUNICE:**

We own this place so I can let you in.

*[She gets up and opens the downstairs door. A light goes on behind the blind, turning it light blue. Blanche slowly follows her into the downstairs flat. The surrounding areas dim out as the interior is lighted.]*

*[Two rooms can be seen, not too clearly defined. The one first entered is primarily a kitchen but contains a folding bed to be used by Blanche. The room beyond this is a bedroom. Off this room is a narrow door to a bathroom.]*

**EUNICE** [defensively, noticing Blanche's look]:

It's sort of messed up right now but when it's clean it's real sweet.

**BLANCHE:**

Is it?

**EUNICE:**

Uh, huh, I think so. So you're Stella's sister?

**BLANCHE:**

Yes.

*[Wanting to get rid of her]*

Thanks for letting me in.

**EUNICE:**

Por nada, as the Mexicans say, por nada! Stella spoke of you.

**BLANCHE:**

Yes?

**EUNICE:**

I think she said you taught school.

**BLANCHE:**

Yes.

**EUNICE:**

And you're from Mississippi, huh?

**BLANCHE:**

Yes.

**EUNICE:**

She showed me a picture of your home-place, the plantation.

**BLANCHE:**

Belle Reve?

**EUNICE:**

A great big place with white columns.

**BLANCHE:**

Yes...

**EUNICE:**

A place like that must be awful hard to keep up.

**BLANCHE:**

If you will excuse me. I'm just about to drop.

**EUNICE:**

Sure, honey. Why don't you set down?

**BLANCHE:**

What I meant was I'd like to be left alone.

**EUNICE:**

Aw. I'll make myself scarce, in that case.

**BLANCHE:**

I didn't mean to be rude, but--

**EUNICE:**

I'll drop by the bowling alley an' hustle her up.

*[She goes out the door.]*

*[Blanche sits in a chair very stiffly with her shoulders slightly hunched and her legs pressed close together and her hands tightly clutching her purse as if she were quite cold. After a while the blind look goes out of her eyes and she begins to look slowly around. A cat screeches. She catches her breath with a startled gesture. Suddenly she notices something in a half-opened closet. She springs up and crosses to it, and removes a whiskey bottle. She pours a half tumbler of whiskey and tosses it down. She carefully replaces the bottle and washes out the tumbler at the sink. Then she resumes her seat in front of the table.]*