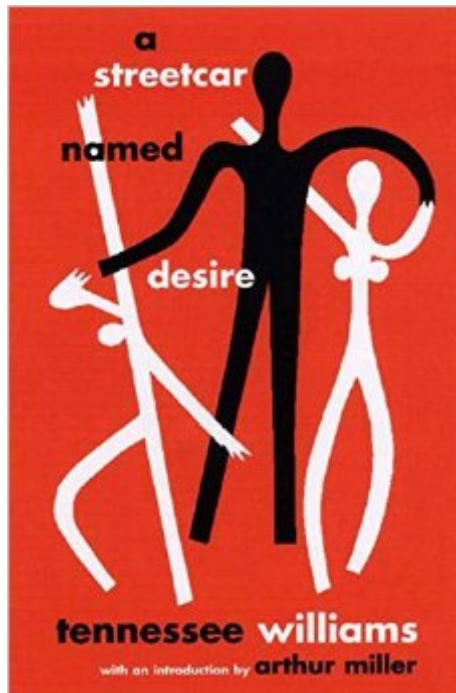


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A Streetcar Named Desire (New Directions Paperbook)



Synopsis

The Pulitzer Prize and Drama Critics Circle Award winning play is reissued with an introduction by Arthur Miller (Death of a Salesman and The Crucible), and Williams' essay "The World I Live In." It is a very short list of 20th-century American plays that continue to have the same power and impact as when they first appeared 57 years after its Broadway premiere, Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire is one of those plays. The story famously recounts how the faded and promiscuous Blanche DuBois is pushed over the edge by her sexy and brutal brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski. Streetcar launched the careers of Marlon Brando, Jessica Tandy, Kim Hunter and Karl Malden, and solidified the position of Tennessee Williams as one of the most important young playwrights of his generation, as well as that of Elia Kazan as the greatest American stage director of the '40s and '50s. Who better than America's elder statesman of the theater, Williams' contemporary Arthur Miller, to write as a witness to the lightning that struck American culture in the form of A Streetcar Named Desire? Miller's rich perspective on Williams' singular style of poetic dialogue, sensitive characters, and dramatic violence makes this a unique and valuable new edition of A Streetcar Named Desire. This definitive new edition will also include Williams' essay "The World I Live In," and a brief chronology of the author's life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is another classic from my high school days that seems wasted on youth. How can a fifteen-year-old in prep school appreciate the desperation and human frailty of Blanche DuBois? Or the dichotomy inherent in Stanley Kowalski's passionate brutality?=====

=====BLANCHE: What you are talking about is brutal desire--just--Desire!--the name of that rattle-trap street-car that bangs through the Quarter, up one old narrow street and down another...STELLA: Haven't you ever ridden on that street-car?=====

=====Many will have seen either the stage or film versions of Streetcar, but reading through Tennessee Williams' Pulitzer Prize-winning play allows for the depression to really set in. Readers may even recognize qualities in friends and family members approximating those of alcoholism or domestic violence.=====

=====BLANCHE: A hot bath and a long, cold drink always give me a brand new outlook on life!=====

=====There are so many great dialogue exchanges here, outside of the classic "kindness of strangers" quote. I'll snip a few of my favorites.=====

=====MITCH: You ought to lay off his liquor. He says you been lapping it up all summer like a wild-cat!BLANCHE: What a fantastic statement!

Deception seems to be one of the most salient themes. As Goleman writes, "We are piloted in part by an ingenious capacity to deceive ourselves, whereby we sink in obliviousness rather than face threatening facts."Blanche buries her devious past with a new start in New Orleans and skirts questions with a swift wit in conversation. She waters down the pains and frustrations of the past with concealed drinking and shrouds her aging face from gentleman callers in a soft light. She delusionally and openly believes that a fictional Texas oil magnate will arrive to whisk her away from yet another prison she finds herself in.Blanche maintains a very interesting relationship with Stanley, the bane of her existence in the French Quarter. While Stanley is ostensibly boorish and untamed, Blanche poorly masks these same latent characteristics in her own personality with a ladylike charm, frequent bathing, and heavy perfume. Her attacks on Stanley are actually projections, effectively assaults on the qualities she hates most about herself. Her outward disdain for her

sister's husband is likely an aggressive reaction to what is better known as jealousy. What's more, this behavior runs in the family (another universal Williams theme). Stella convinces herself that an abusive relationship is fit to raise a child in. And at one point, the sisters recall their mother's refusal to accept her own mortality and her imploration to her young daughters to participate in this shared collusion. In the final scenes of the story, as Stella is giving birth to their son, Stanley finishes what he started, defeating Blanche completely in a territorial act of rape.

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