

Shine Bright LLCE Cycle Terminal

Pages BAC Rencontres

Document A p. 106

Scene VII

Laura Wingfield, a young woman who is physically handicapped, is nervously awaiting the arrival of a guest. The scene takes place at the Wingfield home.

Laura: Are you sure his name is Jim O'Connor?

Amanda: Yes. Why?

Laura: Is he the one that Tom used to know in high school?

Amanda: He didn't say so. I think he just got to know him at the warehouse¹. [...]

Amanda: Laura, Laura, were you in love with that boy?

Laura: I don't know, Mother. All I know is I couldn't sit at the table if it was him!

Amanda: It won't be him! It isn't the least bit likely. But whether it is or not, you will come to the table. You will not be excused.

Laura: I'll have to be, Mother.

Amanda: I don't intend to humor² your silliness, Laura. I've had too much from you and your brother, both! So just sit down and compose yourself till they come. Tom has forgotten his key so you'll have to let them in, when they arrive. [...]

(TOM and JIM appear on the fire-escape steps and climb to the landing. Hearing their approach, LAURA rises with a panicky gesture. She retreats to the portières. The doorbell. LAURA catches her breath and touches her throat. Low drums.)

Amanda (Calling): Laura, sweetheart! The door!

(LAURA stares at it without moving.)

Jim: I think we just beat the rain.

Tom: Uh-huh. (He rings again, nervously. JIM whistles and fishes for a cigarette.)

Amanda (Very, very gaily): Laura, that is your brother and Mr. O'Connor! Will you let them in, darling?

(Laura crosses toward kitchenette door.)

Laura (Breathlessly): Mother—you go to the door!

(AMANDA steps out of kitchenette and stares furiously at LAURA. She points imperiously at the door.)

Laura: Please, please!

Amanda (In a fierce whisper): What is the matter with you, you silly thing?

Laura (Desperately): Please, you answer it, please!

Amanda: I told you I wasn't going to humor you, Laura. Why have you chosen this moment to lose your mind?

Laura: Please, please, please, you go!

Amanda: You'll have to go to the door because I can't!

Laura (Despairingly): I can't either!

Amanda: Why?

Laura: I'm sick!

Amanda: I'm sick, too—of your nonsense! Why can't you and your brother be normal people? Fantastic³ whims and behavior! (TOM gives a long ring.) [...]

Amanda: Laura Wingfield, you march right to that door!

Laura: Yes—yes, Mother!

(A faraway, scratchy rendition of "Dardanella"⁴ softens the air and gives her strength to move through it. She slips to the door and draws it cautiously open. TOM enters with the caller, JIM O'CONNOR.)

Tom: Laura, this is Jim. Jim, this is my sister, Laura.

Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*, 1944

1. *entrepôt* 2. please sb by doing as they wish 3. unbelievable 4. a popular song from when Laura's parents were young

Document C p. 107

The room occupied by Louise was on the second floor of the Hardy house, and her window looked out upon an orchard¹. There was a stove² in the room and every evening young John Hardy carried up an armful of wood and put it in a box that stood by the wall. During the second month after she came to the house, Louise gave up all hope of getting on a friendly footing with the Hardy girls and went to her own room as soon as the evening meal was at an end.

Her mind began to play with thoughts of making friends with John Hardy. When he came into the room with the wood in his arms, she pretended to be busy with her studies but watched him eagerly. When he had put the wood in the box and turned to go out, she put down her head and blushed. She tried to make talk but could say nothing, and after he had gone she was angry with herself for her stupidity.

The mind of the country girl became filled with the idea of drawing close to the young man. She thought that in him might be found the quality she had all her life been seeking in people. It seemed to her that between herself and all the other people in the world, a wall had been built up and that she was living just on the edge of some warm inner circle of life that must be quite open and understandable to others. She became obsessed with the thought that it wanted³ but⁴ a courageous act on her part to make all of her association with people something quite different, and that it was possible by such an act to pass into a new life as one opens a door and goes into a room.

Sherwood Anderson, "Godliness, a Tale in Four Parts", *Winesburg, Ohio*, 1919

1. verger 2. poêle 3. there lacked 4. only