

A Streetcar named Desire

Scene Twelve

It is the beginning of spring. Blanche spent the whole winter in the mental institution. She speaks to her reflection in the bathroom of her small residential care room. She is not expecting anyone, but is still dressing up. Stella is let in by the matron. The matron leaves the room, giving Stella a pitiful look straight in her eyes. The blue piano is played by the performers at the end of the street, the sound of the play is slightly heard, as the windows are wide open. Stella moves towards the bathroom door, hears Blanche speaking to herself and decides to not interrupt her. She starts listening to Blanche talking.

Blanche: Oh Blanche... what have you done to yourself? Oh Blanche, poor, poor Blanche...

She takes the pad of her powder-box and taps the oil off her face. The powder settles in her wrinkles and strengthens them

Blanche: *(getting angry)* Why is it so bright in here? What kind of light is that? I do not like this mirror. I really do not like it. They ought to buy a new one. As soon as possible! Oh Blanche, poor Blanche. Is it the lights? *(She starts to whisper)* Is it the lights? It is the lights! A new mirror and new lights. Don't you dare to forget Blanche, a new mirror, and new lights. I need to take a bath! *(She lets water into the bathtub)*

Stella struggles to understand what Blanche is saying. She presses her ear on the door. Her dangling earrings hit the door and a short, high-pitched sound can be heard. The sound of the blue piano is getting louder. Blanche winches. In panic, she holds the door shut with all her strength.

Blanche: *(screaming)* Who is that? I asked to be undisturbed for the next hour. Get out immediately! Who is this?

Stella: *(trying to calm her down)* It is me, sister! It is me, Stella. I came to visit you. Please open the door. I came for you Blanche, open the door.

The sound of the blue piano subsides

Blanche: *(relieved)* Stella! My precious little sister! *(Opens the door excitedly)* Oh Stella, my Baby! Stella! Stella for Star! I was not expecting you honey. Please excuse my behavior.

Stella is overwhelmed and tries to find the right words as she is trying to not exaggerate the situation any further. Blanche behaves unusual. Her body language shows she is in a state of fear, but her facial expressions and the way she speaks express boldness.

Blanche: *(getting ready to step out of the bathroom)* Oh Stella, Stella for Star! I am so happy that you came to visit me! I heard some weird stuff from the French Quarter darling. I overheard the nurses saying that people think I am insane! Could you imagine honey? They think I am Insane! *(Laughs hysterically)* Oh Stella... You know I am fine, do you? Just don't look at me Stella, not now darling. It is the lights Stella, they ought to buy new ones! Well, now you talk. Open your pretty mouth and talk. How have you been? Why wouldn't you visit me earlier? Don't you worry, I am not mad at you. Was it the nurses? They didn't let you in, right? Was it Stanley? He doesn't let you out of the house. Oh Stella, my precious Stella...

Stella: It wasn't Stanley, Blanche. I wanted to come, I tried honey! I tried coming on Christmas. They wouldn't let me in. They said it was for the best... for me and the baby... Well, they treat you well in here, don't they?

Blanche: They do honey, don't you worry about me. But Stella, tell me more. Why wouldn't they let you in? They don't know what is best for me! I waited, honey. But no one came. All I had was the doctor. Oh Stella! I haven't told you about the doctor. You saw him, didn't you? The handsome young gentlemen, that once was a stranger and still helped me out. You know Stella, I have always depended on the kindness of strangers. But why Stella? Why would they assume I wasn't good for you? Or your child? Did they tell you I would hurt your son? I wouldn't, you know that darling. I neither would hurt him nor do anything bad to him! *(As she gets nervous trying to explain herself, the blue piano reappears with a slow beat and the curtains on the window are set in motion by the light wind)*

Stella: I never said you would Blanche. But now I can tell why they wouldn't let me in.

Blanche: What do you mean Stella? I love you and my nephew. It's just...it's just... he is a boy darling. He is the child of Stanley Kowalski. Your child has the genes of this animal. They don't know what's best for me and neither do you! You already got hurt by your disgusting husband; a son of his will be your end in the future. But I do love both of you Stella, I really do! You have to understand Stella, my precious little sister, finding good men is a rarity. You will have two of the bad kind by your side – forever, my little star. Did I tell you about the doctor Stella? I did! He is a good man, Stella; I would like you to meet h-

Blanche is interrupted by the windows slamming. The entertainers go on playing, but only a dull tone reaches the interior of the room. Both look away from the window and look deep into each other's eyes. An uncomfortable silence fills the room before Stella breaks it

Stella: I don't understand Blanche. They told me you were getting better. They told me it was safe to visit you, even bring my child. I have to admit I am happy I didn't bring him. And you keep talking about that damn doctor! I don't care about the doctor, Blanche! You don't care either! You just like the attention. I talked to the nurses. The doctor is married. You must stop acting the way you do. You are ruining families, Blanche. I do love you; I really do. You are my sister, and you have always protected me, but you have to start protecting yourself. I don't need to be protected, not from Stanley and neither from my baby! Maybe I should give you more time.

Blanche: Oh Stella, don't leave me now. I need you more than ever. All I want is someone whom I needn't be afraid of. I wouldn't hurt him! I am just afraid, but I wouldn't hurt him so bad that, so, ... so that you lose him! So that I could protect you forever, and you me – forever!

Stella: *(speaking slowly)* I am starting to get scared of you. Look, Blanche, I know you. I know you better than I know myself. This is not who you are. This is not you. This is not the Blanche I grew up with. I will visit you more often. But not now and not in near future. You must become the Blanche I knew. The Blanche I grew up with. The Blanche I fully trust and that wouldn't lie to me in any way!

The door is slowly opened by the doctor. He steps in. Blanche seems absent minded.

Doctor: *(speaking to Stella only, leaning towards her direction)* Hello Mrs. Kowalski. The matron told me you would be in here. Could you tell me how your conversation with Blanche went?

Stella: *(turned to the doctor, trying to not speak in a way Blanche would notice)* I don't think I should come again. At least for the next few weeks.

Doctor: I am sorry about that Mrs. Kowalski. I thought she was ready for you to visit her. She still is in denial of her mental state, and she refuses to tell the truth about that night with Stanley. Maybe after seeing you, she will realize that she misses you more than she thought, and the progress of her health will increase. I truly hoped she was ready, and I apologize for bringing you in this situation.

Stella: No doctor, don't apologize. It is not your fault. You already do your best. I must apologize for the times she brings you in trouble with your wife.

Doctor: It is okay. I just want to help, not because it is my job, but because I want to. We know how her brain works. After you have told me, that she lied about your husband raping her, I could start to understand why she is so flirty with me all the time. She has this self-doubt, that she overplays by proving herself, she could have everyone, even if she has to destroy families. I know it is sad to accept that your own sister wants to destroy your happiness, but don't forget she is ill. Yes, she is in denial, but we will keep fighting until she accepts her illness and learns that lying will not bring her forward in life.

As Stella and the Doctor are speaking about her, Blanche is moving towards the windows. They don't realize Blanche is listening to everything they say. She looks out. Even though it is the beginning of spring, and all sorts of flowers and plants bloom at every corner, her world is dull. She notices how every day has been the same in the past few weeks. There is only black and white. Even the most beautiful red tulip appears bland. She understands that Stella will forever believe Stanley. She understands that the doctor won't believe her. She understands that everyone around her will forever think she is this mad person destroying happiness. She can't protect her little sister. Her days at the mental institution seem to not find an end. That doesn't seem to be as bad of a thing because the doctor will forever look after her.

Blanche: *(with tears in her eyes to Stella)* You are right Stella. Maybe I am insane. Maybe I deserve to be here. I keep destroying people and families *(looking at Stella, then at the Doctor)*. Oh, Stella. My precious little star. *(She slowly walks back into the bathroom, giving herself a look in the mirror. She starts wiping off the powder of her face while trying to hold back her tears. Stella follows every move she makes; the Doctor leaves the room. After wiping her face, she turns the bright light off and takes out the candles from the drawer.)* If you will excuse me now honey, I would like to take a bath.

CURTAIN