

The Glass Menagerie
Tennessee Williams

LAURA
AMANDA

Amanda, Laura's single mother, wants what is best for her daughter but goes about it in all the wrong ways. Laura is a very shy young woman who lets her handicap get in the way of her happiness.

AMANDA. How old are you, Laura?

LAURA. Mother, you know my age.

AMANDA. I thought you were an adult, it seems that I was mistaken. (She crosses slowly to the sofa and sinks down and stares at LAURA.)

LAURA. Please don't stare at me, Mother. (AMANDA closes her eyes and lowers her head. Count ten.)

AMANDA. What are we going to do, what is going to become of us, what is the future? (Count ten.)

LAURA. Has something happened, Mother? (AMANDA draws a long breath and takes out a handkerchief.) Mother, has — something happened?

AMANDA. I'll be all right in a minute, I'm just bewildered — (Count five) by life . . .

LAURA. Mother, I wish that you would tell me what's happened.

AMANDA. As you know, I was supposed to be inducted into my office at the D.A.R. this afternoon. But I stopped off at the Rubicam's Business College to speak to your teachers about you having a cold and ask them what process they thought you were making down there.

LAURA. Oh . . .

AMANDA. I went to the typing instructor and introduced myself as your mother. She didn't know who you were. She said "We don't have any such student enrolled at the school!" I assured her she did, that you have been going to classes since early in January. "I wonder," she said, "if you could be talking about the terribly shy little girl who dropped out of school after only a few days' attendance?" She took the attendance book out and there was your name, and all the dates you are absent until they decided that you had dropped out of school. Fifty dollars' tuition, all of our plans — just gone up like that.

LAURA. Oh! (She sits.)

AMANDA. Laura, where have you been going when you've gone out pretending that you were going to business college?

LAURA. I've just been going out walking.

AMANDA. That's not true.

LAURA. It is. I just went walking.

AMANDA. Walking? Walking? In winter? Deliberately courting pneumonia in that light coat? Where did you walk to, Laura?

LAURA. All sorts of places — mostly in the park.

AMANDA. Even after you'd started catching that cold?

LAURA. It was the lesser of two evils, Mother. I couldn't go back up. I — threw up — on the floor.

AMANDA. Every day, you mean to tell me you walked around the park, because you wanted me to think that you were still going to Business College?

LAURA. It isn't as bad as it sounds. I went inside places to get warmed up.

AMANDA. Inside where?

LAURA. I went in the art museum and the birdhouses at the Zoo. I visited the penguins every day! Sometimes I did without lunch and went to the movies. Lately I've been spending most of my afternoons in the Jewel-box, that big glass house where they raise the tropical flowers.

AMANDA. You did all this to deceive me, just for deception?
(LAURA looks down.) Why?

LAURA. Mother, when you're disappointed, you get that awful suffering look on your face, like the picture of Jesus' mother in the museum!

AMANDA. Hush!

LAURA. I couldn't face it!

AMANDA. So what are we going to do the rest of our lives? We won't have a business career — we've given that up because it gives us nervous indigestion! Of course — some girls do *marry*. (LAURA twists her hands nervously.) Haven't you ever liked some boy?

LAURA. Yes. I liked one once. I came across his picture a while ago.

AMANDA. (With some interest) He gave you his picture?

LAURA. No, it's in the year-book.

AMANDA. (Disappointed) Oh — a high school boy.

LAURA. Yes. His name was Jim. He used to call me — Blue Roses.

AMANDA. Why did he call you such a name as that?

LAURA. When I had that attack of pleurosis — he asked me what was the matter when I came back. I said pleurosis — he thought I said Blue Roses! (Fondly) So that's what he always called me after that.