Text IOC notes:

Context:

The abstract is taken from the end of the memory play the glass menagerie written by tennesse Williams. Before the passage Jim is invited over for dinner at the Wingfield’s apartment as a gentleman caller by Tom. However, Laura recognises him as her former classmate with whom she was in love during high school. She starts feeling sick and leaves next door. After dinner Amanda sends Jim to talk to Laura. After the text passage Jim kisses Laura and Laura finds out that Jim is actually engaged to be married.

Setting:

The setting is the living room of the apartment. Since Tom did not pay, light runs out and candles are lightened. Candle light makes a special atmosphere between the characters and could be a foreshadow for the kiss Jim will give to Laura.

Summary:

Laura shows Jim her glass ornament collection (shows trust) and talks about them. She trusts Jim in holding her favourite one, a glass unicorn although he says that he is very clumsy. Laura talks about favouring one glass ornament over one another, like they are her children. Jim shows interest and tries to relate the glass menagerie to the real world outside of the apartment. Jim recognises the Paradise Dance Hall and is about to ask Laura to dance with him.

Theme:

The theme of the passage is how illusional worlds can become real for people. Lauras glass collection has become her real world, she treats her glass ornaments like her children, talks about being unfair because favouring one over the other. Also her favourite, a unicorn, cannot be found in the real world and can hence be considered t be a symbol for Laura herself. However, when Jim is around Laura enters back into the real world. Also he tries to understand her world view.

Characters:

Laura:

Laura is very shy and lives in her own world, at this point she couldn’t exist in a real world (Ex: falls on fire escape). Up to this point she found it difficult to interact with people except Amanda and Tom. The glass menagerie replaces her sense for the real world (friends etc. ). Laura is represented through the glass unicorn, something that would not exist in the real. During the passage however, Laura develops more and more and overcomes her shyness in front of Jim. She even trusts him to hold her favourite ornament of the glass collection which is one of the most important things for her. She becomes more open minded to new things, talks more about the things that are important to her*.*

Jim:

Jim symbolises a connection to the real world, he is the most realistic character in the play. With him Laura can exist in the real world, which is also later shown when the unicorn breaks and she doesn’t care that much because her illusional world becomes less important with him on her side.

Tom states in the beginning of the play that Jim is the long-delayed but always expected something that we live for. Here Jim is the long expected hope that Laura will be able to live outside of her illusion in the apartment and Tom will be able to leave and live his dreams.

Mood and Imagery:

The mood in the passage is very positive, easy and happy. We can see how Laura is opening up to Jim and how she is developing with him. She shows that she is comfortable in the conversation and company of Jim. The mood is also reflected in Laura’s passion for the glass menagerie, and Jim’s interest in it. Their easy atmosphere is also seen in diction for example love, trust, light, favourite.

Most imagery in the text describes Lauras glass unicorn for example line 4 “most of them are little animals made out of glass, the tiniest animals in the world” or “ you see how the light shines through him” in line 14.

Except for the description of the glass menagerie, there is little imagery. This shows how the emphasis of the abstract is on Laura and her illusions. Jim never uses imagery in this passage which also shows his character as a realist in contrast to Laura’s world in the glass menagerie.

Figurative language:

Onomatopoeia- Mmmmm-hmmm line 20, huh line 19 and oh oh line 32

Shows that Jim is leading the conversation and Laura just gives short answers, he tries to make her speak through talking about her interests. He might also be a little surprised over how engagedlaura is in her “fake” world and how she lost the sense for reality. This impression is also seen because of his constant repetition of “well”, he doesn’t know what to say and his instant topic switch when he starts to talk about his shadow.

Symbols-

Unicorn- the unicorn is an animal that does not exist in the real world, this could be as already said related to Laura in the real world, that she could not exist in the real world, this passage can therefore also be linked to where Laura falls on the fire escape.

Light and shadow- show contrast just as Laura and Jim

The light makes everything more pretty in her fantasy world as seen in line 14, whereas Jim is the shadow that shows reality which might not always be as pretty as the light but is more realistic. So this reflects the contrast in characters.

Personification- Laura talks to the unicorn as talking to a human “I trust you with HIM” line 11, “he loves the light” line 14

Generally you can say that this is a key scene in the development of Laura’s character, because she is opening up to Jim about her favourite things and shows trust in someone she barely knows by holding her favourite glass ornament. Laura’s turning point shows the development from a terribly shy person to someone who is more open for new things which is later seen when she dances with Jim, more and more after this she starts facing reality which she was unable to before.