**The Glass Menagerie- Tennessee Williams- Scene 7**

**Context:**

* The gentleman caller Jim came over for dinner, turned out to be engaged which upset Amanda, feeling that she had been deceived and let down by Tom- fight broke out- Tom, in anger, left over the fire escape

**Setting:**

1. Wingfield Appartment
2. The Fire Escape
3. Street

**Summary:**

* + Tom was fired from his job
  + Tom left his family
  + Travelled for a long time, pursuing something unidentifiable
  + Tom has troubles finding a route of escape

**Theme:**

* + Toms desire to pursue his dreams while still being imprisoned by the thoughts of his family

**Analysis of Theme:**

* Toms final monolog describes his life after he left Laura and Amanda and therefore he actually fulfilled his dream of leaving the apartment and all forces behind him to experience the world on his own. However, you can tell that he is not totally satisfied and happy with his escape.
* “ The cities swept about me like dead leaves” (20) This statement shows that something is missing in his life that keeps him from being happy. It is the thought about his family. He knows that his decision to leave was wrong and therefore he will never truly gain freedom because he is always imprisoned by the thoughts of his sister.

**Analysis of Characters:**

Tom:

* Searching for something that he cannot identify- “I was pursued by something” (21)
* “I travelled around a great deal” (19)- fulfilling his dream of adventure and seeing places, getting away from home
  + This escape is what Tom dreams of aloud in Scene Four, and it is Tom’s chosen means of pursuing the “adventure” that he discusses with Amanda in Scene Four and Jim in Scene Six
  + However, not clear whether it really made him happy
* No matter where he goes, some piece of glass or quality of light makes it seem as if his sister is at his side- “Then all at once my sister touches my shoulder” (26)
* Cannot let go of Laura and thoughts of her chase him-
  + “I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be!” (27)
  + Quote shows that Tom is fully aware that deserting his family was a faithless and morally reprehensible act, and the guilt associated with it may have something to do with his inability to leave Laura fully behind
  + “Faithful” (27)- he still loves her
  + These thoughts confine him, exactly like the apartment did
  + Shows that he cares about his family and feels like he betrayed them to some extent
* Acts similar to his father:
  + Leaves the family alone- “in my father’s footsteps” (18)
* Tom does all the things which he did during the nights when he lived at home
  + “I run into the movies or a bar, I buy a drink,…” (28)
* Tom has trouble finding a satisfactory route of escape.
  + Movies are not a way to escape reality as he realises- “anything that can blow your candles out” (29)
* “Blow out your candles, Laura- and so good-bye…” (33)
  + Long awaited release from her grip
  + May well be his final goodbye
* Tom writes to rid himself of the guilt and to free his mind
  + Catharsis effect through creation

Laura:

* Laura snuffs her dreams when she blows out the candle
  + “She blows the candles out” (35)

**Mood, Imagery and Tone:**

* Beginning:
  + Tense, loud, climatic (1)- „smashes his glass“, „plunges out on the fire escape“, „slamming the door“, „screams in fright”
* Middle:
  + Hectic: “I reach for a cigarette, I cross the street, I run into the movies or on a bar, I buy a drink, I speak to the nearest stranger…” (Line 27)
* End:
  + Hopeful, poetic, emotional: “Blow out your candles Laura – and so good-bye…” (Line 33)
* Music: “Dance-hall music becomes louder” (2) 🡪 freedom from apartment and controlled life- Eden/heaven on earth

**Stylistic Devices (Structure, Diction, Writing Style):**

* + Passionate closing monologue that reveals his strong emotions towards his family, especially Laura
    - “Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind, but I am more faithful than I intended to be!”
  + Repetition of the word “Perhaps” (Line 22, 23)
    - Underlines the uncertainty of his actions – he is not confident with what he is doing (comparison to his father, who seems to not have looked back as much)
  + Descriptive adjectives – unusual diction for Tom: “tiny transparent bottles in delicate colors, like bits of a shattered rainbow.” (Line 25)
    - Allows reader to imagine the situation better
    - Delicate – could refer to her character and confidence
    - Shattered rainbow – could stand for the disappointment Laura experienced and thus her shattered hopes

**Symbols:**

* Fire-escape
  + Symbolizes an exit, a possibility to escape and leave the apartment – entering the ‘other world’
* Fathers picture
  + A visual reminder of the person who was able to ‘escape’ – who was confident enough to leave and had no troubles letting his family down
* Candles
  + Stands metaphorically for hopes (Laura’s)
  + When Tom says: “Blow out your candles” it probably refers to him exhorting her to say goodbye to her hopes and her dependency of him

**Links:**

* This extract links to other parts of the book as it represents Tom´s desire to explore the world and leave the apartment behind.
* This escape is what Tom dreams of aloud in Scene Four, and it is Tom’s chosen means of pursuing the “adventure” that he discusses with Amanda in Scene Four and Jim in Scene Six.
* Although he successfully escaped, he didnt escape completely. His close and intense relationship to his sister never let him go and the thoughts of her haunted him wherever he went.

**Final Thoughts:**

The paradox that is illustrated through Tom's heartfelt speech in Scene 7 describes his long sought after adventure as if it were a prison. Throughout the play he tried to distract himself from his unhappy life that is dominated by the movies. He drank a lot of alcohol and went to the movies to forget about his pain. However, after he finally left his family he still didn’t reach his desired freedom. He is imprisoned by his memory of his sister.

Tennessee Williams experienced similar things to Tom:

* Ghosts haunting Williams from his past eventually led him to drug addiction and a mental hospital
* For Williams and Tom, art may be an attempt to erase all pain