

To whom and where does *A Streetcar Named Desire* stop?

Nano Csaba- 10th July, 2017 | ERDÉLYI NAPLÓ

The streetcar named Desire arrives in New Orleans, the mesmerizing Blanche DuBois steps out and the life of many changes drastically. This is the premise of Tennessee Williams' play, and we are still not fully aware how many tragedies, sufferings, and secrets await us.

Will this strangely named streetcar ever reach its destination? Or does it exist only in us? Can a man find out who he really is? May he tell one day that he found his place under the sun? The question already arises from where Blanche comes from, what does she want in the little apartment of her sister, Stella. What does this southern belle want from her sister, as she is seemingly successful, and the other just simply lives her life by the side of his macho husband.

The differences are enormous between the siblings: Stella and her husband of Polish origin Stanley await a baby. They love each other much, even though their standard of living is rather low. We learn that Blanche's husband committed suicide when it is made public that he is homosexual (the play was written in 1947, when this wasn't as accepted as today), and the wife slowly but surely descends to madness. (The character of the ill woman was based on the author's own sister who was a schizophrenic). She is hunting for dreams, pleasures, right on the slippery slope, but she tries to keep up the appearances.

Two worlds clash, if we simplify that: the real and the unreal. The husband, wife and their friends represent the everyday folks who are fighting for the survival, the newly arrived family member lives for her dreams, suffers from the reality, and increasingly becomes unwell. The irreconcilable differences are apparent from the start, and the playwright shows the way masterfully, tells the story of the characters, and leads the viewers through as it unravels.

Stanley quickly realizes that the appearance of Blanche is a real threat to his marriage. He feels that the sister of his wife is phony in all possible ways, she lies about who she is, what happened to her, with whom she got involved. Stanley is the first character who becomes aware that behind the mask of a dame, a lewd, aging woman hides, and all her words are false. Blanche mocks the husband, tries to drive a wedge between the couple, which is partly successful. Then Mitch appears on the scene, he is single, takes care of his sick mother, he could support all Blanche's caprices if only... Her past wouldn't come to light.

The notes about the performance tell us an interesting story: Williams started to write the *Streetcar Named Desire* in a Mexican Church while he believed he'd die soon and that it will be his ultimate work. He thought his stomach aches were a clear indication of cancer, but he had appendix rupture. Ultimately, from this pain a very important piece of world literature was born.

The American director has already worked with the troupe in Kolozsvár, he knew their extraordinary capabilities—this is probably why he opted to direct this play—and the casting was spot-on.