

## Study Questions

Complete the following questions.

### Question 1

Develop a statement summing up your perception of how each of the following special effects contributes to the building of the narrative, theme, reinforcement of characterization, and/or dramatic intensity of *A Streetcar Named Desire*:

- the Blue Piano
- the polka music
- the “Varsouviana”
- Blanche’s long baths
- The naked light bulb
- the Chinese paper lantern
- the locomotive
- the poker game
- various aspects of Blanche’s wardrobe (flowered dresses, crumpled white satin gown, etc.)
- the lurid shapes on the wall and the “inhuman voices like cries in the jungle”

### Question 2

One particularly compelling aspect of the play is Williams’ encasement of the narrative and dialogue so firmly within the “raffish charm” of the section of New Orleans in which the action takes place. The “lyricism”, graceful “atmosphere of decay” and “warm and easy” feeling of the surroundings somehow sustain even when the action and dialogue are harsh.

Identify specific devices Williams uses, after his first description, to surround the movement of the play in the atmosphere of this section of New Orleans (Some possible student responses: the upstairs noises; the inside-outside set design; the insistent piano music; the vendor; the references to bowling and the hot tamale man; the poker game; the prostitute/drun kard incident; the Mexican flower vendor)

### Question 3

Reach a conclusion about the implication of the following images and quotes as each relates to the development of some aspect of the play:

- “There is something about her uncertain manner, as well as her white clothes, that suggests a moth”
- “all the burden descended on my shoulders”
- “Poker shouldn’t be played in a house with women.
- “I am not in anything I want to get out of.”
- “Don’t-don’t hang back with the brutes!”
- “I have always depended on the kindness of strangers”
- “This game is seven-card stud” (particularly its significance as the last line of the play)

#### Question 4

Construct a one-sentence statement of what you consider to be the primary theme of the play.