

[Don't Let This Streetcar Pass You By](#)



Sorry to break it to you, but Stanley Kowalski isn't the main character in *Streetcar Named Desire*. This came as a surprise to me, too; montage tribute clips of the 1951 film have always shown that Brando's Kowalski is the central focus.

And to an extent he is, but Blanche Dubois (Anna Reed), Stanley's sister-in-law, is the star here. Though an aging Southern belle, she looks young enough to pull in a man 10 years her junior, and she often does. This habit, coupled with constant boozing, make Stanley (Arjun Pande) suspicious of her motives even before she arrives to stay at the Kowalski's New Orleans apartment.

Her presence upsets the relationship between Stanley and his wife Stella (Sarah Gage). Together they share a weird understanding of Stanley's physically abusive nature, something he tries to make up to Stella with raw, passionate love making.

As the situation between the three evolves, Blanche takes up with one of Stanley's bowling buddies, Mitch (Skylar Fox), a kind-hearted soul with genuine affection for Blanche. But Stanley's distaste for Blanche's hypocritical personality reaches a breaking point and a choice must be made.

Playwright Tennessee Williams' work usually deals in the motifs of emotionally damaged, working class Southerners forced to deal with their baggage under duress. It colors his plays with a heavy, brooding atmosphere, deep with pathos and only relieved by black humor. Unfortunately, Brown University's production only flirts with this moodiness.

There are a couple of production design missteps here. The Kowalskis are a down-in-the-dirt, working class couple with unstable emotional lives, but the set colors and lighting reflect a stable, inviting household. Missing here is an atmosphere of sweat, grease and smoke. We feel too much at home in a place we should be on edge to leave, but can't tear ourselves away long enough to do so.

However, this setback shouldn't ward anyone off from going; there is still much to be enjoyed in the cast performances. Despite being much younger than the part realistically calls for, Anna Reed shows a deep understanding of Blanche's temperament and reasoning. After a mild first act, Arjun Pande, whose looks alone recall Marlon Brando in his 1950s prime, taps into some of the Stanley's raw violence and puts scare into his co-stars and audience. Sarah Gage's Stella keeps an even keel as the quiet, suffering middle who bounces between trying to calm Stanley and assure Blanche. Finally, Skylar Fox adds a subtle comic touch as the everyman, Mitch.