

Sunday evening

Dear Family -

I will start this while waiting for supper in answer to yours which arrived late Friday - we were really worried because we had not heard from you in so long, & were almost wondering whether or not to phone you to see if anything was wrong. So you can see how glad we were to get your letter when it came. The coffee we have been looking forward to but it has not yet arrived. Could it possibly have been sent to N. Y. by error? And before I forget, did you receive the books which we sent for your birthday - hope it arrived. Also while I am on the subject of things being sent, the candleabra was a gift from Elms to you for your generous hospitality.

He enjoyed the contents of your letter & the enclosures - especially the check, as we were indeed in desperate need. That found our credit in this friendly town to be good - It should be!

Well, the studio is under way & certainly we do wish you were here to lend a hand. Fritz

✓ Tong prove to be real laborers & capable of a great deal more physical work than I had ever supposed either could do! Already they both look like farmers, tanned from the sun - ✓ for a couple of artists, they sure can handle the shovel! They excavated a space 20 x 24 ft. which runs from a ft. deep <sup>in</sup> one corner to about 3½ ft. deep in the opposite (because of a slight hill). Now they have removed all the sod & sand & have spent 2 days already on the cement footings. He did not get the mixer, so they are mixing all the cement by hand, panning it, & leveling it correctly for the footings, which will run around the 4 sides, & are 16 inches wide. The cement work is difficult because it is so heavy & again I say I am surprised that they can manage to do it all day long.

The hard part is that we all get so dirty & are still without a hot water heater so cannot use the shower, & we are finding the dishpan a trifle small. Oh well, all these things become unimportant in this glorious spot. Spring has not yet come - only a touch of green here & there, but

the trees have not yet come out. We have had a few cold days, but in general it has been nice & sunny & good for working.

Just finished dinner so will continue while Fritz is doing the dishes, then perhaps he can write some.

Well, we are truly well settled in this wonderful place & happy to wake each morning & find ourselves here. Are keeping extremely busy, with the building - I have been painting places that need touching up, & the steps, this week the porch.

Fritz says perhaps in N. O. you might possibly be able to find a good second hand kerosene hot water heater - we have the tank - only the heater is necessary. Also keep a look out for an icebox. Things here look impossible to get, as with the Navy in town, everything is over-crowded & consequently items such as this are grabbed up fast.

Also when you get time could you send some red beans & rice? I said this is the first time since our marriage we have been without a red bean in the house! Usually have at least 5 lbs. around. But here especially where meat is to be had at the most, once a week, we

must really appreciate red beans + rice.  
Fritz says also some orange wine,  
+ anything else that's lying around  
(whatever that is).

Mig has returned to N.Y. thank  
goodness - she does not expect to  
come up until May 1st.

I opened an account at ~~the~~ Oyer's  
hardware store so we could get a  
few tools to work with.

The were glad to hear that  
the lamps finally arrived. Seemed  
to take so long! The had our lovely  
tin lady statue sent up, + will  
place it on top the bill when we  
arrange a proper sort of pedestal or  
thing to set it on.

Fritz, like Pauline, howled  
at your sawing the lovely table  
in two - Says if you don't have  
enough furniture to fiddle with  
you have to cut up what you've got!  
Swears he will be forced to re-  
do the entire house upon our  
arrival next fall - Incidentally, as  
we see things now this will un-  
doubtedly be in middle of October.

Are you possibly coming up  
here in May? We hope you can  
arrange it if possible.

Fritz & I are very sorry to hear that Muriel seems to be going thru "a very disturbed state of mind", because we ate dinner with her the night before we left & she was truly in the best of spirits - seemed happy, at ease, & a great deal more relaxed than she generally is. Many of our friends remarked of late that she has seemed less nervous & in better spirits.

The poison ivy is already picking its little green leaves above ground. Tony, like Fritz, gets it dreadfully, while I'm more fortunate. So they are taking extreme care, but with Maene dashing thru it, & their touching her - who can tell? We have sent again for the "Ammate". Hope we can get it this year.

It is time to have the garden started so off I go tomorrow to find a man to plow it, & some manure.

You never said more true words than those regarding the arrangement we have with Tony, etc. "A rich experiment in human behavior" & "fringed with danger" is putting it mildly! Indeed, you are right! But with Fritz's level head, & diplomacy, we are sure, to all benefit! Yes, I am confident we will all work together happily. Tho' I do think any sort of a business arrangement becomes more difficult when it is between friends

I think I had better rescue Fritz from the kitchen & let him continue the letter instead -

I have just read the preceding pages - Pa Jeanne is the only person to compete with you in the letter writing business - she gives all the news - sidelights, personal comments, in such a homey fashion - that to read is like being here. It was almost two weeks between letters and your not answering was beginning to worry us. We have worked like dogs as Jeanne has told you and I think you will enjoy the results when you see them - Tony plans to make a drawing sometime soon to send you - By the end of a day we are both too exhausted to move much - even the brain is tired. We rest on Sundays - just to break the week - It is not only the work it is the sudden abundance of fresh air and sun that tires the body. There is so much to do here and it is so beautiful to live so close to the sea and to nature. I can never thank you enough for presenting us with this spot.

Dad if you haven't had that table cut please don't - It is so much nicer having things as they were - in their original state - It is too much like Peter or Elmo taking one piece to make two and painting it up. You have the beautiful pair of swan consoles and too much gold will not be too good - ~~It is not necessary~~ If the table is not cut - save an old antique from an interior

decorators fall - Meters dont let that ax fall on  
mah old patene, listen if you have ants  
in your pants why dont you put your hand to  
the 3rd floor after all you have a couple of  
tenants next fall -

Monday -

Since Fritz is back at work with  
Tony & your second letter arrived, I'll  
answer before going to P.O. It was a  
nice letter & we all enjoyed it. Also the  
coffee just arrived - Many thanks! We  
just finished off the last this morning!

Sorry to hear no electric refri-  
available - seems to be everywhere, tho'  
we watch the Boston papers. But prices  
are high & the risk is great on a second  
hand article such as that. So I think  
we will relax & look for one not electric.  
Your suggestion of the drunk waiter  
is indeed a good one! "For ice, groceries,  
and baby" - Not a bad idea -  
which kind do you want - boy or  
girl? Just let us know!!

She welcomed also today a  
package from Muriel containing 3  
pair of work gloves! Murray - It's  
like gold - none here - so we  
asked her, & she sent them post  
haste! Very sweet of her - Now Tony  
& Fritz can relieve their blistered  
hands, ~~so~~ I will tackle the roses.

Maeve is good as gold, after  
numerous beating when she left  
home for hours & returned full of  
garbage. She is learning fast.

The cement work is progressing slow but sure - those boys sure do mix it up - batch after batch - 8 hours a day!

We just heard with great interest our new president Truman speak while we had lunch, & he seems to be a good simple & most Christian man. It was the first speech of any value of all the things said since Roosevelt's death.

Our lovely spring weather has taken a turn for the north, a strong wind coming up & looks like rain. It will be a late spring up here.

We enclose clippings of Tennessee's play which various friends have sent us from N.Y. - We pass them onto you - We were fortunate to see the play - thanks to Marjorie's getting us tickets the last night before we left - & it is indeed a wonderful play. Tennessee is having unheard of success & he deserves it. Incidentally he wrote the play up here last summer on my typewriter.

Looks as tho' I have written far too much already, so I will stop & take this on my trip to town. With every good wish for you both, & hoping you are in the best of health -

Love from us both,  
Jeanne & Fritz

4/16/45



# 'GLASS MENAGERIE'

## Laurette Taylor's Great Performance in Mr. Williams' New Play

By LEWIS NICHOLS

ON a Sunday in January of 1939, Mr. Atkinson was remarking in a first paragraph here that for all practical purposes time had stood still since Laurette Taylor last had been on Broadway. He was referring to a revival of "Outward Bound," which a few days before had brought her back to the local theatre. From the end of that engagement until a week ago last night, time again stood still. During the intervening years, there were rumors of her return, and plans, but nothing happened until Tennessee Williams' "The Glass Menagerie" fell into her hands. Possibly the word "fell" suggests too strongly an accident, for fate must have had a part in it. As *The Mother* in Mr. Williams' tenuous little story, Miss Taylor has one of the best roles of her life, and in it she is giving a performance that is all but incredible. Time is dancing now. Miss Taylor has made this a warm and eminently pleasant spring, and one that will lengthen through summer, the autumn and on indefinitely as long as she likes. The Playhouse is the hub of good-will.

New York had warning of its impending fortune, but as usual it had been a little suspicious. Some months ago "The Glass Menagerie" opened in Chicago, but for the first week or so there, the audience was composed mainly of drama critics returning to see the drama again. Eastward came the thought that it might be a "critics' play," an expression used to describe something no one understands, including the reviewers, and which carries with it the connotation of doom. Presently, however, the Chicago public began to crowd out the reviewers, and returning travelers brought to Broadway reports that generally were glowing. "The Glass Menagerie" began to lose its local reputation for preciousness, although it never reached the stature of "Good Night Ladies," also a Chicago product which definitely was not a "critics' play." When it opened here on Easter Eve, the full truth came out. "The Glass Menagerie," primarily because of Laurette Taylor's part in it, is a play for everyone. The public—and the critics—stayed around for a long while after the curtain had come down in order to tell her so.

### A "Memory Play"

Mr. Williams calls his drama a "memory play." Like "I Remember Mama," it has a commentator who also acts a role. Standing in the present, the commentator glances back, and as he sets the scene the action unfolds. The place is a small apartment on an alley in St. Louis, the time is the Thirties. The characters are *The Mother*, a one-time Southern belle; a crippled daughter and a son. The mother looks back from her poverty to the days of splendor before she married the wrong man—a telephone lineman "who fell in love with long distance" and vanished. The daughter, because of her deformity, has become shy and in-

grown; she never has finished school and she cannot face the world. She spends her time polishing her collection of glass animals—*The Glass Menagerie*—and playing old phonograph records. The son had wanted to be a poet, but in order to support the family, he works miserably in a warehouse. What action the play has consists in the arrival of a Gentleman Caller, and his departure. *The Mother* feels the daughter should get married and prevails upon her son to bring home a friend, but as the first Gentleman Caller to set foot in the house he is a failure. He is engaged to another girl.

### The Mother

Miss Taylor's warm painting of *The Mother* is superb. Mr. Williams' script carries the suggestions of faded grandeur, the fight for the children, the bitterness and hope, and Miss Taylor's elaboration is perfect. *The Mother's* thoughts jump from the seventeen suitors who once called upon her in a single afternoon to the miserable estate in which she now finds herself. She is a scold, she feels sorry for herself, she alternately is ambitious for her children and angry at them. By a monotone, Miss Taylor suggests that *The Mother* has been talking thus for years; by underplaying, she makes it obvious that the arrival of the Gentleman Caller is but one of a series of such hopeless incidents. The whining accent of a shrew offers the reason why the husband has been driven to drink—and long distance—and why the son presently is to follow. Some of the portrait is funny, but always it carries an undercurrent of pathos. *The Mother* easily could be overdramatic or drawn in caricature, but Miss Taylor's art makes her entirely real.

### Mr. Dowling

As the son and commentator, Eddie Dowling also is giving a good performance. Mr. Williams' use of a commentator is not necessary to his story; some of the remarks are literary and unduly pretentious for the simple play. But when he has ceased speaking for the author and has come inside to join the family, Mr. Dowling is his easy and quiet self. He shows the unhappiness of the son and the fight between his wish to roam and his sense of loyalty to the family, above all to his sister. Julie Haydon is the sister, giving the part a shy helplessness, a desire to be liked, especially by her first Gentleman Caller. This last is extremely well played by Anthony Ross in his first engagement since leaving the Army. Like all the others, the Gentleman Caller has been defeated; in high school he had been the big man, but things have not been so easy since. *The Gentleman Caller* has begun to understand himself, however, he still is ambitious. Mr. Ross plays him with a gum-chewing exuberance which should take both of them to distant and successful places.

Williams play of life in a St. Louis tenement, which was chosen yesterday by the New York Drama Critics' Circle as the best American play of the 1944-'45 season. This was the tenth award of the group

## 'Glass Menagerie' Receives Award of N. Y. Drama Critics

Winsin One Ballot; 'Harvey,' 'Adano' and 'I Remember Mama' Also Get Votes

"The Glass Menagerie," Tennessee Williams's nostalgic drama of life in a St. Louis tenement, won the New York Drama Critics' award yesterday as the best American play of the 1944-'45 season.

Nine of the fourteen critics at a meeting in the Hotel Algonquin voted for the play on the first ballot, thereby achieving a majority, in what was conceded to be the record time of twenty minutes.

Other plays which received votes were "Harvey," two, and "I Remember Mama" and "A Bell for Adano," one each. Louis Kronenberger, of PM, did not record a choice. The critics passed a resolution that no award be made to a foreign play.

A scroll, signifying the critics' award, will be presented to Mr. Williams on April 22 at a dinner given by the group.

Following the award meeting—the tenth since the Drama Critics' Circle was revived in October, 1935—George Freedley, critic for "The Morning Telegraph" and secretary of the circle, said the gathering had been "all peaceful" and unmarred by the wrangling and electioneering of other years. Under the circle's current voting procedure, a secret ballot is taken first, a discussion period follows, and then as many as five signed ballots may be cast to reach a simple majority for the winner.

### Protest Vote for "Trio"

During the discussion period, said Mr. Freedley, Wolcott Gibbs, of "The New Yorker," admitted he had voted for "Trio" on the secret ballot, "just to embarrass Commissioner Moss." "Trio" was obliged to close in March after License Commissioner Paul Moss called the play lewd and lascivious, and refused to restore the license of the Belasco Theater until the drama was removed.

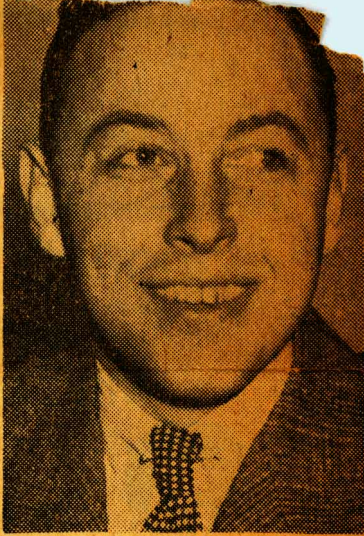
The nine critics voting for "The Glass Menagerie," now at the Playhouse Theater, Forty-Eighth Street, east of Broadway, were Rosamond Gilder, of "Theater Arts Monthly"; John Chapman, of "The Daily Necks"; Ward Morehouse, of "The Sun"; Kelcey Allen, of "Women's Wear Daily"; Wilella Waldorf, of "The New York Post"; John W. Gassner, of "New Direction"; T. H. Wenning, of "Newsweek"; Mr. Gibbs and Mr. Freedley.

Howard Barnes, drama critic of the New York Herald Tribune, and Joseph Wood Krutch, of "The Nation," voted for "Harvey," the Mary Chase comedy starring Frank Fay at the Forty-Eighth Street Theater. Mr. Barnes, who is president of the circle, is in Europe and voted by proxy. He did not review "The Glass Menagerie."

### Backs "I Remember Mama"

Lewis Nichols, of "The New York Times," voted for "I Remember Mama," the dramatization by John van Druten of Kathryn Forbes's novel, "Mama's Bank Account." Arthur Pollock, of "The Brooklyn Eagle," cast his ballot for "A Bell for Adano," Paul Osborn's dramatization of John Hersey's novel.

"The Glass Menagerie" opened in New York on March 31, after



Tennessee Williams

playing to capacity houses from Dec. 25 to March 24, at the Civic Repertory Theater in Chicago. The play was produced by Eddie Dowling and Louis J. Singer and was staged by Mr. Dowling and Margo Jones, with a setting by Jo Mielziner. In the cast are Mr. Dowling, Laurette Taylor, Julie Haydon and Anthony Ross. In his review of the play in the Herald Tribune April 2, Otis L. Guernsey jr., said the elements of the drama "come together for passages of sheer theatrical brilliance. . . ."

Mr. Williams, who is thirty-one years old and lived in St. Louis during his school days, is the author of eight full-length plays, twelve one-act plays and numerous poems. "The Glass Menagerie" is his Broadway debut. His other plays, except "The Battle of Angels," which closed in Boston in 1940 when the Theater Guild decided not to bring it to New York, have been produced by community theaters in various parts of the country.

Picked as Season's Best American Play by Crit

