

The Glass Menagerie Literary Device

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Symbols

Glass Menagerie/Glass Animals: The glass animals represent Laura's fragile nature and her retreat into an illusory world. Her self-confidence is as delicate as the glass animals. She finds comfort in them because she can control them.

Glass Unicorn: The glass unicorn, Laura's favorite animal, symbolizes how Tom sees Laura: delicate, beautiful, and unique, almost magical. When Jim accidentally breaks the unicorn, it loses its uniqueness. It becomes ordinary. This symbolizes Laura's fragility in trying to fit into the real world. This moment occurs just before Jim kisses Laura. This incident indicates that a relationship between Jim and Laura is impossible.

Fire Escape: Tom often stands on the apartment's fire escape. It symbolizes his escape from the restrictions of his everyday life. By smoking there, he distances himself from the pressures of home. For Tom, it is an escape route from his suffocating home life. His frequent retreats to the fire escape hint at his eventual departure. For Laura, the fire escape represents her difficulty in stepping into the real world. This is shown when Laura stumbles on the fire escape while going to the shop.

Gentleman Caller: Jim O'Connor is the Gentleman Caller. He symbolizes the promise of the future and the potential for change.