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蓝星双语名著导读

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## A Streetcar Named Desire

〔美〕 Tennessee Williams 原著

Jesse Lichtenstein 导读

Deirdreo Dwyer

张蕾 翻译

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# 致读者

亲爱的读者，在这个多元文化的世界里，渴望知识，钟情文学，热爱英语的你是否想过站在巨人的肩膀上摘星呢？

你手上这本蓝色小册子正是风行全美的哈佛蓝星笔记，是哈佛学生们将名著阅读与文学学习融会贯通，编写而成的名著导读本。它们以经典性和流行性并存的名著为素材，以明晰的风格和地道的语言而著称。每一本都包括著作的创作背景，人物分析，主题解析，篇章讲解，重要引文释义，作品档案，并且附有相关的思考题，推荐的论文题，阅读后的小测验，要点注释，以及推荐阅读篇目。

这样的编排使你不仅仅停留在对名著内容上的了解，更可迅速、全面、深入地掌握著作的全部资料，同时也满足了对文化做进一步了解和研究的需求。蓝星精辟、明晰的编写风格将“半天阅读一本名著”的想法变为现实，帮你在有限的闲暇内阅读更多的书，在地道的语言环境中迅速提高英语水平，丰富文学内涵，增加谈资。

天津科技翻译出版公司精挑细选了50本蓝星笔记，由我国外语界资深专家张滨江教授、刘品义教授主持翻译和审校工作，天津外国语学院教授、副教授以及部分优秀青年教师进行翻译，陈法春教授、阎玉敏、常子霞副教授和李晓霞讲师协助部分审校，共同合作、精心制作成为“哈佛蓝星双语名著导读”，既保留了原书特点，并对文中的知识要点做了注释，更加适合你的需要。

蓝星闪耀，照你前行！

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## CONTEXT

**T**ennessee Williams was born Thomas Lanier Williams III in Columbus, Mississippi, in 1911. His friends began calling him Tennessee in college, in honor of his Southern accent and his father's home state. Williams's father, C. C. Williams, was a traveling salesman and a heavy drinker. His mother, Edwina, was a Mississippi clergyman's daughter prone to hysterical attacks. Until Williams was seven, he, his parents, his older sister, Rose, and his younger brother, Dakin, lived with Edwina's parents in Mississippi.

In 1918, the Williams family moved to St. Louis, marking the start of the family's deterioration. C. C.'s drinking increased, the family moved sixteen times in ten years, and the young Williams, always shy and fragile, was ostracized and taunted at school. During these years, he and Rose became extremely close. Edwina and Williams's maternal grandparents also offered the emotional support he required throughout his childhood. Williams loathed his father but grew to appreciate him somewhat after deciding in therapy as an adult that his father had given him his tough survival instinct.

After being bedridden for two years as a child due to severe illness, Williams grew into a withdrawn, effeminate adolescent whose chief solace was writing. At sixteen, Williams won a prize in a national competition that asked for essays answering the question "Can a good wife be a good sport?" His answer was published in *Smart Set* magazine. The following year, he published a horror story in a magazine called *Weird Tales*, and the year after that he entered the University of Missouri to study

## 来龙·去脉

田纳西·威廉斯原名托玛斯·拉尼尔·威廉斯，1911年出生于美国密西西比州的哥伦比亚市。大学期间，因为他祖籍是田纳西州，又有浓重的南方口音，朋友们开始叫他田纳西。他的父亲C·C·威廉斯是个推销员，有酗酒的恶习，母亲埃德温娜出身于圣公会牧师家庭。田纳西早年和父母、姐姐罗斯、弟弟达金以及外祖父母一起生活在密西西比州。

威廉斯8岁那年，全家迁往圣路易斯，家境随之每况愈下。父亲酗酒更加没有节制，10年内一家人被迫16次搬家。幼时的威廉斯生性腼腆，个性柔弱，不善交际，在学校受到同学们的排斥。而他和姐姐罗斯关系亲密，母亲和外祖父母的宠爱伴他度过了童年时代。威廉斯曾经对父亲充满怨恨，成年后决定接受治疗时才对他稍微有所了解，他意识到自己从父亲那儿继承了顽强的求生欲望。

童年时代，威廉斯曾经因为身患重病两年卧床不起。长大后，生性腼腆、体质纤弱的他只能从写作中得到慰藉。16岁时，威廉斯参加一次全国作文比赛获奖（要求以“贤妻是否胸怀磊落？”为题），获奖作品被刊登在《时髦人物》杂志上。第二年，他又在一本名为《怪异故事》的杂志上发表了一篇恐怖故事。转年，威廉斯进入密苏里大学学习新闻专业。大学期间，他开始进



journalism. While in college, he wrote his first plays, which were influenced by members of the southern literary renaissance such as Robert Penn Warren\*, William Faulkner, Allen Tate, and Thomas Wolfe. Before Williams could receive his degree, however, his father forced him to withdraw from school. Outraged because Williams had failed a required ROTC\* program course, C. C. Williams made his son go to work at the same shoe company where he himself worked.

After three years at the shoe factory, Williams had a minor nervous breakdown. He then returned to college, this time at Washington University in St. Louis. While he was studying there, a St. Louis theater group produced two of his plays, *The Fugitive Kind* and *Candles to the Sun*. Further personal problems led Williams to drop out of Washington University and enroll in the University of Iowa. While he was in Iowa, Rose, who had begun suffering from mental illness later in life, underwent a prefrontal lobotomy (an intensive brain surgery). The event greatly upset Williams, and it left his sister institutionalized for the rest of her life. Despite this trauma, Williams finally managed to graduate in 1938.

In the years following his graduation, Williams lived a bohemian life, working menial jobs and wandering from city to city. He continued to work on drama, however, receiving a Rockefeller grant and studying playwriting at the New School\* in New York. His literary influences were evolving to include the playwright Anton Chekhov and Williams's lifelong hero, the poet Hart Crane\*. He officially changed his name to Tennessee Williams upon the publication of his short story "The Field of Blue Children" in 1939. During the early years of World War II, Williams worked in Hollywood as a scriptwriter and also pre-



行戏剧创作，早期的作品受到包括罗伯特·佩恩·沃伦、威廉·福克纳、艾伦·卡特和托玛斯·沃尔夫一些南方文艺复兴作家的影响。在他大学三年级时，因为没有通过后备军官训练队课程的考试，父亲大为光火，不让他继续读书，把他送到一家自己曾经工作过的制鞋公司工作。

在制鞋公司工作了三年，威廉斯患了轻微的精神衰弱症。于是他重返校园，进入圣路易斯的华盛顿大学就读。在这期间，圣路易斯一个剧团上演了他的两部剧本《逃亡者》和《徒劳》。由于种种个人原因，威廉斯离开华盛顿大学，进入依阿华大学。这时，一直饱受精神分裂症折磨的露丝，接受了前脑叶切除术治疗（一种脑部大手术）。这让威廉斯深感不安。手术后，露丝被送到精神病院，在那儿度过了她的余生。尽管威廉斯为此受到很大的精神打击，但他最终还是设法于1938年完成了学业。

毕业后，威廉斯过着不拘于传统的生活。他周游各地，同时干些杂活维持生计。尽管这样，威廉斯依然坚持戏剧写作，并在洛克非勒基金资助下到纽约的新学院学习戏剧写作。他后来的创作又受到了剧作家安东·契诃夫以及诗人哈特·克兰的影响，尤其是后者，成为他一生崇拜的英雄。1939年，威廉斯发表短篇小说《蓝孩田野》时，开始正式使用“田纳西·威廉斯”这个名字。二战早期，他受雇于好莱坞写脚本，同



pared material for what would become *The Glass Menagerie*.

In 1944, *The Glass Menagerie* opened in New York and won the prestigious New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, catapulting Williams into the upper echelon of American playwrights. *A Streetcar Named Desire* premiered three years later at the Barrymore Theater in New York City. The play, set in contemporary times, describes the decline and fall of a fading Southern belle named Blanche DuBois. *A Streetcar Named Desire* cemented Williams's reputation, garnering another Drama Critics' Circle Award and also a Pulitzer Prize\*. Williams went on to win another Drama Critics' Circle Award and Pulitzer for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in 1955.

Much of the pathos found in Williams's drama was mined from the playwright's own life. Alcoholism, depression, thwarted desire, loneliness, and insanity were all part of Williams's world. His experience as a known homosexual in an era and culture unfriendly to homosexuality also informed his work. William's most memorable characters, many of them female, contain recognizable elements of their author, Edwina, and Rose. His vulgar, irresponsible male characters, such as Stanley Kowalski, were likely modeled on Williams's own father and on other males who tormented Williams during his childhood.

Williams's early plays also connected with the new American taste for realism that emerged following the Depression and World War II. The characters in *A Streetcar Named Desire* are trying to rebuild their lives in postwar America: Stanley and Mitch served in the military, while Blanche had affairs with young soldiers based near her home.

Williams set his plays in the South, but the compelling manner in which he rendered his themes made them universal,



时为《玻璃动物园》准备素材。

1944年《玻璃动物园》在纽约上演，荣获著名的纽约剧评奖，使田纳西·威廉斯一跃成为美国最令人瞩目的剧作家。三年后，《欲望号街车》在纽约巴里摩尔剧院上演。这部剧作以同时代为背景，描写了一位名叫布兰奇·杜波伊斯的人老珠黄的南方美人堕落的悲惨故事。它巩固了威廉斯作为剧作家的地位，使他再次获得纽约剧评奖并第一次获得普利策奖。《热铁皮屋顶上的猫》（1955年）使他又一次获得这两个奖项。

威廉斯在戏剧中描写的许多凄凉悲哀的情节都取材于他的亲身经历。酗酒、沮丧、挫折、孤独以及精神失常都是威廉斯世界的一部分。作为一个众所周知的同性恋者，威廉斯生活在对这个特殊群体充满敌意的社会里，这一点在他的作品中也有所反映。威廉斯塑造了许多令人难忘的人物，他们中大多数是女性，从她们身上我们可以看到威廉斯的母亲、姐姐和他本人的影子。他还描写了一些粗俗、不负责任的男人形象，比如斯坦利·柯瓦爾斯基，他们可能都以威廉斯的父亲和童年时代曾经带给他苦难的男人们为原型。

威廉斯早期的作品也反映出30年代大萧条和第二次世界大战之后，现代美国社会中的务实精神。《欲望号街车》里的人物都努力在战后的美国重新建立自己的生活：斯坦利和密奇在部队服役，而布兰奇则和驻扎在她家附近的士兵约会。

威廉斯的作品都以南方为背景，但他令人信服的写作技巧使作品的主题具有了普遍意义，也为他在全



winning him an international audience and worldwide acclaim. However, most critics agree that the quality of Williams's work diminished as he grew older. He suffered a long period of depression following the death of his longtime partner, Frank Merlo, in 1963. His popularity during these years also declined due to changed interests in the theater world. During the radical 1960s and 1970s, nostalgia no longer drew crowds, and Williams's explorations of sexual mores came across as tired and old-fashioned.

Williams died in 1983 when he choked on a medicine-bottle cap in an alcohol-related incident at the Elysée Hotel in New York City. He was one month short of his seventy-second birthday. In his long career he wrote twenty-five full-length plays (five made into movies), five screenplays, over seventy one-act plays, hundreds of short stories, two novels, poetry, and a memoir. The mark he left on the tradition of realism in American drama is indelible.

### **A Note on the Epigraph**

The epigraph to *A Streetcar Named Desire* is taken from a Hart Crane poem titled "The Broken Tower." Crane was one of Williams's icons. Williams' use of this quotation is, as Crane himself often employed epigraphs from his own icons, including Melville\*, Whitman, Dickinson, and Blake. Williams felt a personal affinity with Crane, who, like himself, had a bitter relationship with his parents and suffered from bouts of violent alcoholism. Most important, Williams identified with Crane as a homosexual writer trying to find a means of self-expression in a heterosexual world. Unlike Williams, Crane succumbed to his demons, drowning himself in 1932 at the age of thirty-three.



世界范围内赢得了观众和赞誉。然而，多数批评家都一致认为随着年龄的增长，他的作品质量在下降。他长期的伴侣弗兰克·梅洛于1963年去世，威廉斯很长一段时期都沉浸于失去密友的痛苦中。随着人们对戏剧兴趣的转变，他的受欢迎程度也大不如以前，在上世纪六七十年代激进、动荡的岁月里，怀旧情绪已不能吸引观众，威廉斯对性道德的探索也已过时，让人感到厌倦。

1983年，威廉斯在纽约市埃利泽酒店喝醉后，被一只药瓶盖儿塞住喉咙，与世长辞。还有一个月，他就要度过他72岁生日。在他长期的创作生涯中，威廉斯共完成25部戏剧（有5部改编成电影），5个剧本，20多个独幕剧，几百篇短篇小说，两部长篇小说以及两部诗集和一本回忆录。他给美国戏剧的现实主义传统带来的影响是不可磨灭的。

## 引言注释

《欲望号街车》前面的引言节选自哈特·克兰的一首诗歌《破塔》。他是威廉斯崇拜的人物之一。哈特本人也经常引用一些偶像的作品，包括麦尔维尔、惠特曼、狄更斯和布莱克。威廉斯有意模仿哈特的做法，他个人认为他们很相似：和父母不和，大量饮酒经常给他们带来痛苦，更重要的是，两人同是同性恋作家，在崇尚异性恋的世界里，努力寻求着表达自我的途径。与威廉斯不同的是，哈特在不幸面前屈服了。1932年，年仅33岁的他投海自尽。





Williams was influenced by Crane's imagery and by his unusual attention to metaphor. The epigraph's description of love as only an "instant" and as a force that precipitates "each desperate choice" brings to mind Williams' character Blanche DuBois. Crane's speaker's line, "I know not whither [love's voice is] hurled," also suggests Blanche. With increasing desperation, Blanche "hurls" her continually denied love out into the world, only to have that love revisit her in the form of suffering.

