

# Death of a salesman: universal themes essay



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Death of a Salesman: Universal Themes “ Death of a Salesman,” by Arthur Millier addresses many of literary fiction’s universal themes. In general two themes can be constantly seen throughout the play, abandonment and betrayal. Willy Loman, a man set on reaching the American dream, lives in a state of delusion and altered perception on what really matters.

The play itself switches from flashbacks to other flashbacks to let the reader understand how and why Willy Loman decides to commit suicide. To initiate, a central theme focused was abandonment. The beginning of this abandonment issue is seen in Willy’s father, a man who had left him with very little at a young age, and his brother who decided to head towards Alaska.

Willy in turn believed the American dream would take him out of a mediocre life. Eventually this hope becomes into an altered reality for Willy, failing to see his reality as a failure. Important to note, Willy’s past and determination to achieve the American dream could be seen as of way to coping with his abandonment issues. Willy enforces his desire to obtain a perfect life by raising his sons in a model way. Biff, one of his sons, is popular in school and varsity player for his football team. Willy, facing this abandonment issue also commits adultery.

This ultimately causes Biff to question his father’s ambitions and confront him at the Chop House. It is there where he shatters any hopes for Willy and his so called “ American Dream” At the same time, the universal theme of betrayal can be seen throughout this story. Willy thinks of Biff as his golden boy, the son who will further bring the American Dream closer. However,

when Biff decides he will not continue with his father's diluted goals, Willy takes it as a betrayal. He fails to see why Biff would reject him. In like manner, Biff considers his father as betraying him with false aspirations and a selfish nature. Again, Willy remains oblivious to his errors and believes his son is acting like this because of the betrayal he has inflicted on his mother.

To conclude, in "Death of a Salesman" centered on to key themes abandonment and betrayal. Both themes impacted the lives of the Loman's and it resulted in the death of Willy Loman who convinced himself he was worth more dead than alive. The resolution was a unfulfilling one because in the end Happy, his other son, falls into the same trap his father fell in, beginning to shape his life around the "American Dream."