

Biff Ioman and Tom Wingfield analysis

[Literature](#), [Play](#)



Growing up is a major part of human life. For males, a strong father figure is imperative during childhood and adolescence. This is needed for the child to develop their father's characteristics by learning from them and following in their father's footsteps. However, two characters, lack a strong father figure and it affects them negatively. These two characters are Biff Loman, from *Death of a Salesman* and Tom Wingfield, from *The Glass Menagerie*. Both are affected differently by the deficiency of a father whom has favorable traits that would be salutary to both characters development.

Instead they form the same unfavorable characteristics as their father. These traits cause them to begin to live in a fantasy world that their fathers also had lived in. For both characters, the lack of a strong father figure leads them to develop detrimental personality traits that ultimately distance them from their families and the ones that they love.

In *Death of a Salesman*, the main character, Willy Loman is consumed by his false pretenses of what a real man should be.

These illusions include how he believes that a real man is measured by how big his bank account is and how popular he is. Willy feeds these falsities into the mind of his eldest son, Biff, who believes them to be true since he looks up to his father so much. Biff would do anything to appease his father, but his whole world comes crumbling down when he realizes that his father has been unfaithful and has cheated on his wife. At this time Biff realizes that he has been living a fantasy due to all the hot air that his father has been feeding him, but it is too late and the damage has already been done.

Biff has developed all of the same unwanted traits that his father had. Biff cannot work for anyone as he feels it makes him unsuccessful as his father had been. Also the confinement that his father has caused him leads him to want to escape from it all and he deserts his family to go out West. During the play he comes back but his meeting his father brings back up Biff's upbringing and he realizes that he needs to escape from all the bad pretenses that Willy has fed him. In the sense Biff did not physically lack a father, but the fact that Willy's characteristics were so detrimental to Biff show that Biff did in fact lack a characteristically sound father.

In *The Glass Menagerie*, Tom Wingfield experiences a similar predicament as Biff. In the play, Tom and his family are deserted by Tom's father when Tom was young. This lack of a father shows to be nothing but detrimental to Tom's development as a man. Tom begins to feel trapped in by his handicapped sister and over-bearing mother. He then realizes why his father left, to escape the unwanted pressure that the family has caused. Tom then begins to develop these same characteristics as his father. He wants to live his life like the ones that he sees in movies but he realizes that, like his father he needs to first escape from his current life, so he deserts his family in search for a better life for himself. Unlike his father though, he stayed as long as he could to try to put them in a better position and then he was going to leave. Even still, the characteristics he developed due to the lack of a father caused him to desert his family.

Biff and Tom both lack a strong father figure in their lives. As a result they know nothing better and they are forced to develop the same unfavorable traits as their fathers. The results for both characters are different as both

fathers have unique faults, but the main result is the same. This ultimate result is that both characters fall quickly from their fantasy world that have been instilled onto them by their fathers and they come to face the harshness that is reality. They cannot face this and they have to escape from it and desert their family.

Glass Menagerie, Tennessee Williams
Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller