

Character analysis of willy loman

Business



Death of a Salesman In the play Death of a Salesman, by Arthur Miller; the characters Willy and Linda Loman fail their sons Happy and Biff by putting their selfish needs before that of their boys. The story begins with Willy, an irritable older man who is very demanding of his family.

Willy also suffers from mental illness, depression and is frequently talking to himself. Linda on the other hand is stable but very quiet and reserved. Willy and Linda are constantly arguing with their sons. Both parents try to give off the impression that they have the perfect life when in reality, their life is far from perfect.

Throughout the play, Willy gets angry very easily.

Even in flashbacks, he has outbursts where he howls at his family. In Act 1, in a flashback Linda is mending her stockings and Willy shrieks at her "I won't have you mending stockings in this house! Now throw them out! (Miller Pg39)" Act 2 opens with Willy enjoying the breakfast Linda has prepared for him, everything seems calm. Willy cheerfully thinks about the future, then he suddenly becomes angry again about his expensive appliances. Minutes later the phone rings.

Linda chats with Biff, reminding him to be nice to his father at the restaurant that night. By Linda telling Biff to be nice to his father she is sweeping their problems under the rug instead of having Willy and Biff talk it out.

Happy is troubled by Willy's habit of talking to himself. Most of the time, Happy notices, Willy talks to the Biff (who isn't really there) about his

disappointment in Biff's unsteadiness. Biff went from job to job after graduating high school and is afraid that he has "wasted his life."

When in fact, Willy is somewhat to blame for Biff's current situation. One afternoon Biff stole a football from the locker room at the high school. When Willy became aware of Biff's actions, Willy did not punish Biff.

Instead, he told Biff that the coach was probably going to congratulate Biff for his show of initiative. At another point in the play, Biff and Happy steal lumber from a nearby construction site. Instead of teaching his sons a lesson in principles, Willy was proud of his sons. In fact, he boasted about the amount of construction materials the boys stole.

Willy allowed the boys to steal, which is wrong and just one example of poor parenting. Worse yet, Willy's praise for their actions made Biff and Happy unaware that stealing was an immoral act. Biff was the high school football star, the handsome popular guy.

However, he never put much energy into his schoolwork and failed math as a senior. A lot of this was due to the fact that Willy let him get away with everything and never encouraged him to do well in school. Without the math credit, Biff couldn't graduate, so he couldn't accept his football scholarship to college.

Willy compares Biff to Bernard, their neighbor. Willy tells the boys that although Bernard is smart, he isn't "well liked" so he will not get very far in life.

Willy states " Bernard can get the best marks in school, Yunderstand, but when he gets out in the business world, Yunderstand, you are going to be five times ahead of him. (Miller Pg33)" Bernard ends up being a lawyer in his adulthood and goes off to argue a case before the Supreme Court. Clearly he is more successful than both Biff and Happy. Things still might have worked out for Biff even though he failed the math class.

He could've taken a summer course and been able to accept the scholarship, but right around that time Biff caught his dad cheating on Linda. This was very upsetting to Biff because he trusted and believed in his father. He looked up to Willy, so to see his father betray his family was devastating. Biff ended up not going to summer school because of this. From there, Biff headed out West, possibly to avoid his father and to not have to look at his oblivious mother.

Once again, Willy had a bad effect on his son's life. In the play, Biff is 34 years old and has finally realized just how bad

Willy's laxity affected his future. Though Linda is not an awful parent, she is an enabler to a certain degree. Linda has information from all sides of the situation but still plays the submissive wife to Willy. We do understand the financial burdens that Linda would be taking on if she left Willy, but her strategies to keep the peace for the family are fainthearted.

Linda hides behind the truth because she doesn't want to hear it. By looking at Linda's position in the family, we can see that she has allowed Willy to become a tragic figure and that results in the downfall of their parenting.