

# Death of salesman

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Death of a Salesman Arthur Miller INTRODUCTION Arthur Miller has emerged as one of the most successful and enduring playwrights of the postwar era in America, no doubt because his focusing on middle-class anxieties brought on by a society that emphasizes the hollow values of material success has struck such a responsive chord. The recurring theme of anxiety and insecurity reflects much of Arthur Miller's own past. Born the son of a well-to-do Jewish manufacturer in New York City in 1915, Miller had to experience the social disintegration of his family when his father's business failed during the Great Depression of the 1930s. By taking on such odd jobs as waiter, truck driver, and factory worker, Miller was able to complete his studies at the University of Michigan in 1938. These formative years gave Miller the chance to come in close contact with those who suffered the most from the Depression and instilled in him a strong sense of personal achievement necessary to rise above the situation. He began writing plays in the 1930s, but it wasn't until *Death of a Salesman* was performed in 1949 that Miller established himself as a major American dramatist. Winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1949, *Death of a Salesman* has to this day remained a classic. The play's intellectual appeal lies in Miller's refusal to portray his characters as two-dimensional – his refusal to involve himself in a one-sided polemic attack on capitalism. Even critics cannot agree as to whether *Death of a Salesman* is to be categorized as social criticism, a tragedy, or simply a psychological study. Of necessity, each person will have to draw his or her own individual conclusions. The fact that performances of *Death of a Salesman* have met with acclaim throughout the world testifies to its universality: the play's conflicts and themes appear not to be uniquely

American. THE CHARACTERS WILLY LOMAN LINDA BIFF HAPPY BERNARD THE WOMAN CHARLEY UNCLE BEN HOWARD WAGNER JENNY STANLEY MISS FORSYTHE LETTA The action takes place in Willy Loman's house and yard and in various places he visits in the New York and Boston of today. New York premiere February 10, 1949. ACT ONE A melody is heard, played upon a flute. It is small and fine, telling of grass and trees and the horizon. The curtain rises. Before us is the Salesman's house. We are aware of towering, angular shapes behind it, surrounding it on all sides. Only the blue light of the sky falls upon the house and forestage; the surrounding area shows an angry glow of orange. As more light appears, we see a solid vault of apartment houses around the small, fragile-seeming home. An air of the dream dings to the place, a dream rising out of reality. The kitchen at center seems actual enough, for there is a kitchen table with three chairs, and a refrigerator. But no other fixtures are seen. At the back of the kitchen there is a draped entrance, which leads to the living room. To the right of the kitchen, on a level raised two feet, is a bedroom furnished only with a brass bedstead and a straight chair. On a shelf over the bed a silver athletic trophy stands. A window opens onto the apartment house at the side. Behind the kitchen, on a level raised six and a half feet, is the boys' bedroom, at present barely visible. Two beds are dimly seen, and at the back of the room a dormer window. (This bedroom is above the unseen living room.) At the left a stairway curves up to it from the kitchen. The entire setting is wholly or, in some places, partially transparent. The roof-line of the house is one-dimensional; under and over it we see the apartment buildings. Before the house lies an apron, curving beyond the forestage into the orchestra. This

forward area serves as the back yard as well as the locale of all Willy's imaginings and of his city scenes. Whenever the action is in the present the actors observe the imaginary wall-lines, entering the house only through its door at the left. But in the scenes of the past these boundaries are broken, and characters enter or leave a room by stepping » through« a wall onto the forestage. From the right, Willy Loman, the Salesman, enters, carrying two large sample cases. The flute plays on. He hears but is not aware of it. He is past sixty years of age, dressed quietly. Even as he crosses the stage to the doorway of the house, his exhaustion is apparent. He unlocks the door, comes into the kitchen, and thankfully lets his burden down, feeling the soreness of his palms. A word-sigh escapes his lips – it might be » Oh, boy, oh, boy. « He closes the door, then carries his cases out into the living room, through the draped kitchen doorway. Linda, his wife, has stirred in her bed at the right. She gets out and puts on a robe, listening. Most often jovial, she has developed an iron repression of her exceptions to Willy's behavior – she more than loves him, she admires him, as though his mercurial nature, his temper, his massive dreams and little cruelties, served her only as sharp reminders of the turbulent longings within him, longings which she shares but lacks the temperament to utter and follow to their end. LINDA (hearing Willy outside the bedroom, calls with some trepidation): Willy! WILLY: It's all right. I came back. LINDA: Why? What happened? (Slight pause.) Did something happen, Willy? WILLY: No, nothing happened. LINDA: You didn't smash the car, did you? WILLY (with casual irritation): I said nothing happened. Didn't you hear me? LINDA: Don't you feel well? WILLY: I'm tired to the death. (The flute has faded away. He sits on the bed beside her, a

little numb.) I couldn't make it. I just couldn't make it, Linda. LINDA (very carefully, delicately): Where were you all day? You look terrible. WILLY: I got as far as a little above Yonkers. I stopped for a cup of coffee. Maybe it was the coffee. LINDA: What? WILLY (after a pause): I suddenly couldn't drive any more. The car kept going off onto the shoulder, y'know? LINDA (helpfully): Oh. Maybe it was the steering again. I don't think Angelo knows the Studebaker. WILLY: No, it's me, it's me. Suddenly I realize I'm goin' sixty miles an hour and I don't remember the last five minutes. I'm – I can't seem to – keep my mind to it. LINDA: Maybe it's your glasses. You never went for your new glasses. WILLY: No, I see everything. I came back ten miles an hour. It took me nearly four hours from Yonkers. LINDA (resigned): Well, you'll just have to take a rest, Willy, you can't continue this way. WILLY: I just got back from Florida. LINDA: But you didn't rest your mind. Your mind is overactive, and the mind is what counts, dear. WILLY: I'll start out in the morning. Maybe I'll feel better in the morning. (She is taking off his shoes.) These goddam arch supports are killing me. LINDA: Take an aspirin. Should I get you an aspirin? It'll soothe you. WILLY (with wonder): I was driving along, you understand? And I was fine. I was even observing the scenery. You can imagine, me looking at scenery, on the road every week of my life. But it's so beautiful up there, Linda, the trees are so thick, and the sun is warm. I opened the windshield and just let the warm air bathe over me. And then all of a sudden I'm goin' off the road! I'm tellin'ya, I absolutely forgot I was driving. If I'd've gone the other way over the white line I might've killed somebody. So I went on again – and five minutes later I'm dreamin' again, and I nearly... (He presses two fingers against his eyes.) I have such

thoughts, I have such strange thoughts. LINDA: Willy, dear. Talk to them again. There's no reason why you can't work in New York. WILLY: They don't need me in New York. I'm the New England man. I'm vital in New England. LINDA: But you're sixty years old. They can't expect you to keep travelling every week. WILLY: I'll have to send a wire to Portland. I'm supposed to see Brown and Morrison tomorrow morning at ten o'clock to show the line. Goddammit, I could sell them! (He starts putting on his jacket.) LINDA (taking the jacket from him): Why don't you go down to the place tomorrow and tell Howard you've simply got to work in New York? You're too accommodating, dear. WILLY: If old man Wagner was alive I'd a been in charge of New York now! That man was a prince, he was a masterful man. But that boy of his, that Howard, he don't appreciate. When I went north the first time, the Wagner Company didn't know where New England was! LINDA: Why don't you tell those things to Howard, dear? WILLY (encouraged): I will, I definitely will. Is there any cheese? LINDA: I'll make you a sandwich. WILLY: No, go to sleep. I'll take some milk. I'll be up right away. The boys in? LINDA: They're sleeping. Happy took Biff on a date tonight. WILLY (interested): That so? LINDA: It was so nice to see them shaving together, one behind the other, in the bathroom. And going out together. You notice? The whole house smells of shaving lotion. WILLY: Figure it out. Work a lifetime to pay off a house. You finally own it, and there's nobody to live in it. LINDA: Well, dear, life is a casting off. It's always that way. WILLY: No, no, some people- some people accomplish something. Did Biff say anything after I went this morning? LINDA: You shouldn't have criticised him, Willy, especially after he just got off the train. You mustn't lose your temper with him. WILLY: When the hell

did I lose my temper? I simply asked him if he was making any money. Is that a criticism? LINDA: But, dear, how could he make any money? WILLY (worried and angered): There's such an undercurrent in him. He became a moody man. Did he apologize when I left this morning? LINDA: He was crestfallen, Willy. You know how he admires you. I think if he finds himself, then you'll both be happier and not fight any more. WILLY: How can he find himself on a farm? Is that a life? A farmhand? In the beginning, when he was young, I thought, well, a young man, it's good for him to tramp around, take a lot of different jobs. But it's more than ten years now and he has yet to make thirty-five dollars a week! LINDA: He's finding himself, Willy. WILLY: Not finding yourself at the age of thirty-four is a disgrace! LINDA: Shh! WILLY: The trouble is he's lazy, goddammit! LINDA: Willy, please! WILLY: Biff is a lazy bum! LINDA: They're sleeping. Get something to eat. Go on down. WILLY: Why did he come home? I would like to know what brought him home. LINDA: I don't know. I think he's still lost, Willy. I think he's very lost. WILLY: Biff Loman is lost. In the greatest country in the world a young man with such – personal attractiveness, gets lost. And such a hard worker. There's one thing about Biff – he's not lazy. LINDA: Never. WILLY (with pity and resolve): I'll see him in the morning; I'll have a nice talk with him. I'll get him a job selling. He could be big in no time. My God! Remember how they used to follow him around in high school? When he smiled at one of them their faces lit up. When he walked down the street... (He loses himself in reminiscences.) LINDA (trying to bring him out of it): Willy, dear, I got a new kind of American-type cheese today. It's whipped. WILLY: Why do you get American when I like Swiss? LINDA: I just thought you'd like a change...

WILLY: I don't want a change! I want Swiss cheese. Why am I always being contradicted? LINDA (with a covering laugh): I thought it would be a surprise. WILLY: Why don't you open a window in here, for God's sake? LINDA (with infinite patience): They're all open, dear. WILLY: The way they boxed us in here. Bricks and windows, windows and bricks. LINDA: We should've bought the land next door. WILLY: The street is lined with cars. There's not a breath of fresh air in the neighborhood. The grass don't grow any more, you can't raise a carrot in the back yard. They should've had a law against apartment houses. Remember those two beautiful elm trees out there? When I and Biff hung the swing between them? LINDA: Yeah, like being a million miles from the city. WILLY: They should've arrested the builder for cutting those down. They massacred the neighbourhood. (Lost.) More and more I think of those days, Linda. This time of year it was lilac and wisteria. And then the peonies would come out, and the daffodils. What fragrance in this room! LINDA: Well, after all, people had to move somewhere. WILLY: No, there's more people now. LINDA: I don't think there's more people. I think WILLY: There's more people! That's what's ruining this country! Population is getting out of control. The competition is maddening! Smell the stink from that apartment house! And another one on the other side... How can they whip cheese? (On Willy's last line, Biff and Happy raise themselves up in their beds, listening.) LINDA: Go down, try it. And be quiet. WILLY (turning to Linda, guiltily): You're not worried about me, are you, sweetheart? BIFF: What's the matter? HAPPY: Listen! LINDA: You've got too much on the ball to worry about. WILLY: You're my foundation and my support, Linda. LINDA: Just try to relax, dear. You make mountains out of molehills. WILLY: I won't fight with him any more. If



he wants to go back to Texas, let him go. LINDA: He'll find his way. WILLY: Sure. Certain men just don't get started till later in life. Like Thomas Edison; I think. Or B. F. Goodrich. One of them was deaf. (He starts for the bedroom doorway.) I'll put my money on Biff. LINDA: And Willy – if it's warm Sunday we'll drive in the country. And we'll open the windshield, and take lunch. WILLY: No, the windshields don't open on the new cars. LINDA: But you opened it today. WILLY: Me? I didn't. (He stops.) Now isn't that peculiar! Isn't that a remarkable... (He breaks off in amazement and fright as the flute is heard distantly.) LINDA: What, darling? WILLY: That is the most remarkable thing. LINDA: What, dear? WILLY: I was thinking of the Chevvy. (Slight pause.) Nineteen twenty-eight ... when I had that red Chevvy... (Breaks off.) That funny? I coulda sworn I was driving that Chevvy today. LINDA: Well, that's nothing. Something must've reminded you. WILLY: Remarkable. Ts. Remember those days? The way Biff used to simonize that car? The dealer refused to believe there was eighty thousand miles on it. (He shakes his head.) Heh! (To Linda.) Close your eyes, I'll be right up. (He walks out of the bedroom.) HAPPY (to Biff): Jesus, maybe he smashed up the car again! LINDA (calling after Willy): Be careful on the stairs, dear! The cheese is on the middle shelf. (She turns, goes over to the bed, takes his jacket, and goes out of the bedroom.) (Light has risen on the boys' room. Unseen, Willy is heard talking to himself, » eighty thousand miles, « and a little laugh. Biff gets out of bed, comes downstage a bit, and stands attentively. Biff is two years older than his brother Happy, well built, but in these days bears a worn air and seems less self-assured. He has succeeded less, and his dreams are stronger and less acceptable than Happy's. Happy is tall, powerfully made. Sexuality

is like a visible color on him, or a scent that many women have discovered. He, like his brother, is lost, but in a different way, for he has never allowed himself to turn his face toward defeat and is thus more confused and hard-skinned, although seemingly more content.) HAPPY (getting out of bed): He's going to get his license taken away if he keeps that up. I'm getting nervous about him, y'know, Biff? BIFF: His eyes are going. HAPPY: I've driven with him. He sees all right. He just doesn't keep his mind on it. I drove into the city with him last week. He stops at a green light and then it turns red and he goes. (He laughs.) BIFF: Maybe he's color-blind. HAPPY: Pop? Why he's got the finest eye for color in the business. You know that. BIFF (sitting down on his bed): I'm going to sleep. HAPPY: You're not still sour on Dad, are you, Biff? BIFF: He's all right, I guess. WILLY (underneath them, in the living room): Yes, sir, eighty thousand miles – eighty-two thousand! BIFF: You smoking? HAPPY (holding out a pack of cigarettes): Want one? BIFF: (taking a cigarette): I can never sleep when I smell it. WILLY: What a simonizing job, heh? HAPPY (with deep sentiment): Funny, Biff, y'know? Us sleeping in here again? The old beds. (He pats his bed affectionately.) All the talk that went across those two beds, huh? Our whole lives. BIFF: Yeah. Lotta dreams and plans. HAPPY (with a deep and masculine laugh): About five hundred women would like to know what was said in this room. (They share a soft laugh.) BIFF: Remember that big Betsy something – what the hell was her name – over on Bushwick Avenue? HAPPY (combing his hair): With the collie dog! BIFF: That's the one. I got you in there, remember? HAPPY: Yeah, that was my first time – I think. Boy, there was a pig. (They laugh, almost crudely.) You taught me everything I know about women. Don't forget that. BIFF: I bet

you forgot how bashful you used to be. Especially with girls. HAPPY: Oh, I still am, Biff. BIFF: Oh, go on. HAPPY: I just control it, that's all. I think I got less bashful and you got more so. What happened, Biff? Where's the old humor, the old confidence? (He shakes Biffs knee. Biff gets up and moves restlessly about the room.) What's the matter? BIFF: Why does Dad mock me all the time? HAPPY: He's not mocking you, he... BIFF: Everything I say there's a twist of mockery on his face. I can't get near him. HAPPY: He just wants you to make good, that's all. I wanted to talk to you about Dad for a long time, Biff. Something's – happening to him. He – talks to himself. BIFF: I noticed that this morning. But he always mumbled. HAPPY: But not so noticeable. It got so embarrassing I sent him to Florida. And you know something? Most of the time he's talking to you. BIFF: What's he say about me? HAPPY: I can't make it out. BIFF: What's he say about me? HAPPY: I think the fact that you're not settled, that you're still kind of up in the air... BIFF: There's one or two other things depressing him, Happy. HAPPY: What do you mean? BIFF: Never mind. Just don't lay it all to me. HAPPY: But I think if you just got started – I mean – is there any future for you out there? BIFF: I tell ya, Hap, I don't know what the future is. I don't know – what I'm supposed to want. HAPPY: What do you mean? BIFF: Well, I spent six or seven years after high school trying to work myself up. Shipping clerk, salesman, business of one kind or another. And it's a measly manner of existence. To get on that subway on the hot mornings in summer. To devote your whole life to keeping stock, or making phone calls, or selling or buying. To suffer fifty weeks of the year for the sake of a twoweek vacation, when all you really desire is to be outdoors, with your shirt off. And always to have to get ahead of the next

fella. And still – that’s how you build a future. HAPPY: Well, you really enjoy it on a farm? Are you content out there? BIFF (with rising agitation): Hap, I’ve had twenty or thirty different kinds of jobs since I left home before the war, and it always turns out the same. I just realized it lately. In Nebraska when I herded cattle, and the Dakotas, and Arizona, and now in Texas. It’s why I came home now, I guess, because I realized it. This farm I work on, it’s spring there now, see? And they’ve got about fifteen new colts. There’s nothing more inspiring or – beautiful than the sight of a mare and a new colt. And it’s cool there now, see? Texas is cool now, and it’s spring. And whenever spring comes to where I am, I suddenly get the feeling, my God, I’m not gettin’ anywhere! What the hell am I doing, playing around with horses, twenty-eight dollars a week! I’m thirty-four years old, I oughta be makin’ my future. That’s when I come running home. And now, I get here, and I don’t know what to do with myself. (After a pause.) I’ve always made a point of not wasting my life, and everytime I come back here I know that all I’ve done is to waste my life. HAPPY: You’re a poet, you know that, Biff? You’re a – you’re an idealist! BIFF: No, I’m mixed up very bad. Maybe I oughta get married. Maybe I oughta get stuck into something. Maybe that’s my trouble. I’m like a boy. I’m not married, I’m not in business, I just – I’m like a boy. Are you content, Hap? You’re a success, aren’t you? Are you content? HAPPY: Hell, no! BIFF: Why? You’re making money, aren’t you? HAPPY (moving about with energy, expressiveness): All I can do now is wait for the merchandise manager to die. And suppose I get to be merchandise manager? He’s a good friend of mine, and he just built a terrific estate on Long Island. And he lived there about two months and sold it, and now he’s

building another one. He can't enjoy it once it's finished. And I know that's just what I would do. I don't know what the hell I'm workin' for. Sometimes I sit in my apartment – all alone. And I think of the rent I'm paying. And it's crazy. But then, it's what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women. And still, goddammit, I'm lonely. BIFF (with enthusiasm): Listen, why don't you come out West with me? HAPPY: You and I, heh? BIFF: Sure, maybe we could buy a ranch. Raise cattle, use our muscles. Men built like we are should be working out in the open. HAPPY (avidly): The Loman Brothers, heh? BIFF (with vast affection): Sure, we'd be known all over the counties! HAPPY (enthralled): That's what I dream about, Biff. Sometimes I want to just rip my clothes off in the middle of the store and outbox that goddam merchandise manager. I mean I can outbox, outrun, and outlift anybody in that store, and I have to take orders from those common, petty sons-of-bitches till I can't stand it any more. BIFF: I'm tellin' you, kid, if you were with me I'd be happy out there. HAPPY (enthused): See, Biff, everybody around me is so false that I'm constantly lowering my ideals... BIFF: Baby, together we'd stand up for one another, we'd have someone to trust. HAPPY: If I were around you... BIFF: Hap, the trouble is we weren't brought up to grub for money. I don't know how to do it. HAPPY: Neither can I! BIFF: Then let's go! HAPPY: The only thing is – what can you make out there? BIFF: But look at your friend. Builds an estate and then hasn't the peace of mind to live in it. HAPPY: Yeah, but when he walks into the store the waves part in front of him. That's fifty-two thousand dollars a year coming through the revolving door, and I got more in my pinky finger than he's got in his head. BIFF: Yeah, but you just said... HAPPY: I gotta show some of those pompous, self-

important executives over there that Hap Loman can make the grade. I want to walk into the store the way he walks in. Then I'll go with you, Biff. We'll be together yet, I swear. But take those two we had tonight. Now weren't they gorgeous creatures? BIFF: Yeah, yeah, most gorgeous I've had in years.

HAPPY: I get that any time I want, Biff. Whenever I feel disgusted. The only trouble is, it gets like bowling or something. I just keep knockin' them over and it doesn't mean anything. You still run around a lot? BIFF: Naa. I'd like to find a girl – steady, somebody with substance. HAPPY: That's what I long for.

BIFF: Go on! You'd never come home. HAPPY: I would! Somebody with character, with resistance! Like Mom, y'know? You're gonna call me a bastard when I tell you this. That girl Charlotte I was with tonight is engaged to be married in five weeks. (He tries on his new hat.) BIFF: No kiddin'!

HAPPY: Sure, the guy's in line for the vice-presidency of the store. I don't know what gets into me, maybe I just have an overdeveloped sense of competition or something, but I went and ruined her, and furthermore I can't get rid of her. And he's the third executive I've done that to. Isn't that a crummy characteristic? And to top it all, I go to their weddings! (Indignantly, but laughing.) Like I'm not supposed to take bribes. Manufacturers offer me a hundred-dollar bill now and then to throw an order their way. You know how honest I am, but it's like this girl, see. I hate myself for it. Because I don't want the girl, and still, I take it and – I love it! BIFF: Let's go to sleep. HAPPY:

I guess we didn't settle anything, heh? BIFF: I just got one idea that I think I'm going to try. HAPPY: What's that? BIFF: Remember Bill Oliver? HAPPY: Sure, Oliver is very big now. You want to work for him again? BIFF: No, but when I quit he said something to me. He put his arm on my shoulder, and he

said, » Biff, if you ever need anything, come to me. « HAPPY: I remember that. That sounds good. BIFF: I think I'll go to see him. If I could get ten thousand or even seven or eight thousand dollars I could buy a beautiful ranch. HAPPY: I bet he'd back you. Cause he thought highly of you, Biff. I mean, they all do. You're well liked, Biff. That's why I say to come back here, and we both have the apartment. And I'm tellin' you, Biff, any babe you want... BIFF: No, with a ranch I could do the work I like and still be something. I just wonder though. I wonder if Oliver still thinks I stole that carton of basketballs. HAPPY: Oh, he probably forgot that long ago. It's almost ten years. You're too sensitive. Anyway, he didn't really fire you. BIFF: Well, I think he was going to. I think that's why I quit. I was never sure whether he knew or not. I know he thought the world of me, though. I was the only one he'd let lock up the place. WILLY (below): You gonna wash the engine, Biff? HAPPY: Shh! (Biff looks at Happy, who is gazing down, listening. Willy is mumbling in the parlor.) HAPPY: You hear that? (They listen. Willy laughs warmly.) BIFF (growing angry): Doesn't he know Mom can hear that? WILLY: Don't get your sweater dirty, Biff! (A look of pain crosses Biff's face.) HAPPY: Isn't that terrible? Don't leave again, will you? You'll find a job here. You gotta stick around. I don't know what to do about him, it's getting embarrassing. WILLY: What a simonizing job! BIFF: Mom's hearing that! WILLY: No kiddin', Biff, you got a date? Wonderful! HAPPY: Go on to sleep. But talk to him in the morning, will you? BIFF (reluctantly getting into bed): With her in the house. Brother! HAPPY (getting into bed): I wish you'd have a good talk with him. (The light of their room begins to fade.) BIFF (to himself in bed): That selfish, stupid... HAPPY: Sh... Sleep, Biff. (Their light is out. Well

before they have finished speaking, Willy's form is dimly seen below in the darkened kitchen. He opens the refrigerator, searches in there, and takes out a bottle of milk. The apartment houses are fading out, and the entire house and surroundings become covered with leaves. Music insinuates itself as the leaves appear.) WILLY: Just wanna be careful with those girls, Biff, that's all. Don't make any promises. No promises of any kind. Because a girl, y'know, they always believe what you tell 'em, and you're very young, Biff, you're too young to be talking seriously to girls. (Light rises on the kitchen. Willy, talking, shuts the refrigerator door and comes downstage to the kitchen table. He pours milk into a glass. He is totally immersed in himself, smiling faintly.) WILLY: Too young entirely, Biff. You want to watch your schooling first. Then when you're all set, there'll be plenty of girls for a boy like you. (He smiles broadly at a kitchen chair.) That so? The girls pay for you? (He laughs) Boy, you must really be makin' a hit. (Willy is gradually addressing – physically – a point offstage, speaking through the wall of the kitchen, and his voice has been rising in volume to that of a normal conversation.) WILLY: I been wondering why you polish the car so careful. Ha! Don't leave the hubcaps, boys. Get the chamois to the hubcaps. Happy, use newspaper on the windows, it's the easiest thing. Show him how to do it Biff! You see, Happy? Pad it up, use it like a pad. That's it, that's it, good work. You're doin' all right, Hap. (He pauses, then nods in approbation for a few seconds, then looks upward.) Biff, first thing we gotta do when we get time is clip that big branch over the house. Afraid it's gonna fall in a storm and hit the roof. Tell you what. We get a rope and sling her around, and then we climb up there with a couple of saws and take her down. Soon as you finish the car, boys, I



wanna see ya. I got a surprise for you, boys. BIFF (offstage): Whatta ya got, Dad? WILLY: No, you finish first. Never leave a job till you're finished – remember that. (Looking toward the » big trees«.) Biff, up in Albany I saw a beautiful hammock. I think I'll buy it next trip, and we'll hang it right between those two elms. Wouldn't that be something? Just swingin' there under those branches. Boy, that would be... (Young Biff and Young Happy appear from the direction Willy was addressing. Happy carries rags and a pail of water. Biff, wearing a sweater with a block » S«, carries a football.) BIFF (pointing in the direction of the car offstage): How's that, Pop, professional? WILLY: Terrific. Terrific job, boys. Good work, Biff. HAPPY: Where's the surprise, Pop? WILLY: In the back seat of the car. HAPPY: Boy! (He runs off.) BIFF: What is it, Dad? Tell me, what'd you buy? WILLY (laughing, cuffs him): Never mind, something I want you to have. BIFF (turns and starts off): What is it, Hap? HAPPY (offstage): It's a punching bag! BIFF: Oh, Pop! WILLY: It's got Gene Tunney's signature on it! (Happy runs onstage with a punching bag.) BIFF: Gee, how'd you know we wanted a punching bag? WILLY: Well, it's the finest thing for the timing. HAPPY (lies down on his back and pedals with his feet): I'm losing weight, you notice, Pop? WILLY (to Happy): Jumping rope is good too. BIFF: Did you see the new football I got? WILLY (examining the ball): Where'd you get a new ball? BIFF: The coach told me to practice my passing. WILLY: That so? And he gave you the ball, heh? BIFF: Well, I borrowed it from the locker room. (He laughs confidentially.) WILLY (laughing with him at the theft): I want you to return that. HAPPY: I told you he wouldn't like it! BIFF (angrily): Well, I'm bringing it back! WILLY (stopping the incipient argument, to Happy): Sure, he's gotta practice with a regulation ball, doesn't he? (To

Biff.) Coach'll probably congratulate you on your initiative! BIFF: Oh, he keeps congratulating my initiative all the time, Pop. WILLY: That's because he likes you. If somebody else took that ball there'd be an uproar. So what's the report, boys, what's the report? BIFF: Where'd you go this time, Dad? Gee we were lonesome for you. WILLY (pleased, puts an arm around each boy and they come down to the apron): Lonesome, heh? BIFF: Missed you every minute. WILLY: Don't say? Tell you a secret, boys. Don't breathe it to a soul. Someday I'll have my own business, and I'll never have to leave home any more. HAPPY: Like Uncle Charley, heh? WILLY: Bigger than Uncle Charley! Because Charley is not – liked. He's liked, but he's not – well liked. BIFF: Where'd you go this time, Dad? WILLY: Well, I got on the road, and I went north to Providence. Met the Mayor. BIFF: The Mayor of Providence! WILLY: He was sitting in the hotel lobby. BIFF: What'd he say? WILLY: He said, » Morning! « And I said, » You got a fine city here, Mayor. « And then he had coffee with me. And then I went to Waterbury. Waterbury is a fine city. Big clock city, the famous Waterbury clock. Sold a nice bill there. And then Boston – Boston is the cradle of the Revolution. A fine city. And a couple of other towns in Mass., and on to Portland and Bangor and straight home! BIFF: Gee, I'd love to go with you sometime, Dad. WILLY: Soon as summer comes. HAPPY: Promise? WILLY: You and Hap and I, and I'll show you all the towns. America is full of beautiful towns and fine, upstanding people. And they know me, boys, they know me up and down New England. The finest people. And when I bring you fellas up, there'll be open sesame for all of us, 'cause one thing, boys: I have friends. I can park my car in any street in New England, and the cops protect it like their own. This summer, heh? BIFF AND

HAPPY (together): Yeah! You bet! WILLY: We'll take our bathing suits. HAPPY: We'll carry your bags, Pop! WILLY: Oh, won't that be something! Me comin' into the Boston stores with you boys carryin' my bags. What a sensation! (Biff is prancing around, practicing passing the ball.) WILLY: You nervous, Biff, about the game? BIFF: Not if you're gonna be there. WILLY: What do they say about you in school, now that they made you captain? HAPPY: There's a crowd of girls behind him everytime the classes change. BIFF (taking Willy's hand): This Saturday, Pop, this Saturday – just for you, I'm going to break through for a touchdown. HAPPY: You're supposed to pass. BIFF: I'm takin' one play for Pop. You watch me, Pop, and when I take off my helmet, that means I'm breakin' out. Then you watch me crash through that line! WILLY (kisses Biff): Oh, wait'll I tell this in Boston! (Bernard enters in knickers. He is younger than Biff, earnest and loyal, a worried boy). BERNARD: Biff, where are you? You're supposed to study with me today. WILLY: Hey, looka Bernard. What're you lookin' so anemic about, Bernard? BERNARD: He's gotta study, Uncle Willy. He's got Regents next week. HAPPY (tauntingly, spinning Bernard around): Let's box, Bernard! BERNARD: Biff! (He gets away from Happy.) Listen, Biff, I heard Mr. Birnbaum say that if you don't start studyin' math he's gonna flunk you, and you won't graduate. I heard him! WILLY: You better study with him, Biff. Go ahead now. BERNARD: I heard him! BIFF: Oh, Pop, you didn't see my sneakers! (He holds up a foot for Willy to look at.) WILLY: Hey, that's a beautiful job of printing! BERNARD (wiping his glasses): Just because he printed University of Virginia on his sneakers doesn't mean they've got to graduate him. Uncle Willy! WILLY (angrily): What're you talking about? With scholarships to three universities

they're gonna flunk him? BERNARD: But I heard Mr. Birnbaum say... WILLY: Don't be a pest, Bernard! (To his boys.) What an anemic! BERNARD: Okay, I'm waiting for you in my house, Biff. (Bernard goes off. The Lomans laugh.) WILLY: Bernard is not well liked, is he? BIFF: He's liked, but he's not well liked. HAPPY: That's right, Pop. WILLY: That's just what I mean. Bernard can get the best marks in school, y'understand, but when he gets out in the business world, y'understand, you are going to be five times ahead of him. That's why I thank Almighty God you're both built like Adonises. Because the man who makes an appearance in the business world, the man who creates personal interest, is the man who gets ahead. Be liked and you will never want. You take me, for instance. I never have to wait in line to see a buyer. » Willy Loman is here! « That's all they have to know, and I go right through. BIFF: Did you knock them dead. Pop? WILLY: Knocked 'em cold in Providence, slaughtered 'em in Boston. HAPPY (on his back, pedaling again): I'm losing weight, you notice, Pop? (Linda enters as of old, a ribbon in her hair, carrying a basket of washing.) LINDA (with youthful energy): Hello, dear! WILLY: Sweetheart! LINDA: How'd the Chevvy run? WILLY: Chevrolet, Linda, is the greatest car ever built. (To the boys.) Since when do you let your mother carry wash up the stairs? BIFF: Grab hold there, boy! HAPPY: Where to, Mom? LINDA: Hang them up on the line. And you better go down to your friends, Biff. The cellar is full of boys. They don't know what to do with themselves. BIFF: Ah, when Pop comes home they can wait! WILLY (laughs appreciatively): You better go down and tell them what to do, Biff. BIFF: I think I'll have them sweep out the furnace room. WILLY: Good work, Biff. BIFF (goes through wall-line of kitchen to doorway at back and calls

down): Fellas! Everybody sweep out the furnace room! I'll be right down!

VOICES: All right! Okay, Biff. BIFF: George and Sam and Frank, come out back! We're hangin' up the wash! Come on, Hap, on the double! (He and Happy carry out the basket.) LINDA: The way they obey him! WILLY: Well, that's training, the training. I'm tellin' you, I was sellin' thousands and thousands, but I had to come home. LINDA: Oh, the whole block'll be at that game. Did you sell anything? WILLY: I did five hundred gross in Providence and seven hundred gross in Boston. LINDA: No! Wait a minute, I've got a pencil. (She pulls pencil and paper out of her apron pocket.) That makes your commission... Two hundred... my God! Two hundred and twelve dollars!

WILLY: Well, I didn't figure it yet, but... LINDA: How much did you do? WILLY: Well, I – I did – about a hundred and eighty gross in Providence. Well, no – it came to – roughly two hundred gross on the whole trip. LINDA (without hesitation): Two hundred gross. That's... (She figures.) WILLY: The trouble was that three of the stores were half-closed for inventory in Boston. Otherwise I woulda broke records. LINDA: Well, it makes seventy dollars and some pennies. That's very good. WILLY: What do we owe? LINDA: Well, on the first there's sixteen dollars on the refrigerator WILLY: Why sixteen? LINDA: Well, the fan belt broke, so it was a dollar eighty. WILLY: But it's brand new. LINDA: Well, the man said that's the way it is. Till they work themselves in, y'know. (They move through the wall-line into the kitchen.) WILLY: I hope we didn't get stuck on that machine. LINDA: They got the biggest ads of any of them! WILLY: I know, it's a fine machine. What else? LINDA: Well, there's nine-sixty for the washing machine. And for the vacuum cleaner there's three and a half due on the fifteenth. Then the roof, you got

twenty-one dollars remaining. WILLY: It don't leak, does it? LINDA: No, they did a wonderful job. Then you owe Frank for the carburetor. WILLY: I'm not going to pay that man! That goddam Chevrolet, they ought to prohibit the manufacture of that car! LINDA: Well, you owe him three and a half. And odds and ends, comes to around a hundred and twenty dollars by the fifteenth. WILLY: A hundred and twenty dollars! My God, if business don't pick up I don't know what I'm gonna do! LINDA: Well, next week you'll do better. WILLY: Oh, I'll knock 'em dead next week. I'll go to Hartford. I'm very well liked in Hartford. You know, the trouble is, Linda, people don't seem to take to me. (They move onto the forestage.) LINDA: Oh, don't be foolish. WILLY: I know it when I walk in. They seem to laugh at me. LINDA: Why? Why would they laugh at you? Don't talk that way, Willy. (Willy moves to the edge of the stage. Linda goes into the kitchen and starts to darn stockings.) WILLY: I don't know the reason for it, but they just pass me by. I'm not noticed. LINDA: But you're doing wonderful, dear. You're making seventy to a hundred dollars a week. WILLY: But I gotta be at it ten, twelve hours a day. Other men – I don't know – they do it easier. I don't know why – I can't stop myself – I talk too much. A man oughta come in with a few words. One thing about Charley. He's a man of few words, and they respect him. LINDA: You don't talk too much, you're just lively. WILLY (smiling): Well, I figure, what the hell, life is short, a couple of jokes. (To himself.) I joke too much (The smile goes.) LINDA: Why? You're... WILLY: I'm fat. I'm very – foolish to look at, Linda. I didn't tell you, but Christmas time I happened to be calling on F. H. Stewarts, and a salesman I know, as I was going in to see the buyer I heard him say something about – walrus. And I – I cracked him right across

the face. I won't take that. I simply will not take that. But they do laugh at me. I know that. LINDA: Darling... WILLY: I gotta overcome it. I know I gotta overcome it. I'm not dressing to advantage, maybe. LINDA: Willy, darling, you're the handsomest man in the world... WILLY: Oh, no, Linda. LINDA: To me you are. (Slight pause.) The handsomest. (From the darkness is heard the laughter of a woman. Willy doesn't turn to it, but it continues through Linda's lines.) LINDA: And the boys, Willy. Few men are idolized by their children the way you are. (Music is heard as behind a scrim, to the left of the house; The Woman, dimly seen, is dressing.) WILLY (with great feeling): You're the best there is, Linda, you're a pal, you know that? On the road – on the road I want to grab you sometimes and just kiss the life outa you. (The laughter is loud now, and he moves into a brightening area at the left, where The Woman has come from behind the scrim and is standing, putting on her hat, looking into a » mirror« and laughing.) WILLY: Cause I get so lonely – especially when business is bad and there's nobody to talk to. I get the feeling that I'll never sell anything again, that I won't make a living for you, or a business, a business for the boys. (He talks through The Woman's subsiding laughter; The Woman primps at the » mirror «.) There's so much I want to make for... THE WOMAN: Me? You didn't make me, Willy. I picked you. WILLY (pleased): You picked me? THE WOMAN: (who is quite proper-looking, Willy's age): I did. I've been sitting at that desk watching all the salesmen go by, day in, day out. But you've got such a sense of humor, and we do have such a good time together, don't we? WILLY: Sure, sure. (He takes her in his arms.) Why do you have to go now? THE WOMAN: It's two o'clock... WILLY: No, come on in! (He pulls her.) THE WOMAN:... my sisters'll be scandalized. When'll you be

back? WILLY: Oh, two weeks about. Will you come up again? THE WOMAN: Sure thing. You do make me laugh. It's good for me. (She squeezes his arm, kisses him.) And I think you're a wonderful man. WILLY: You picked me, heh? THE WOMAN: Sure. Because you're so sweet. And such a kidder. WILLY: Well, I'll see you next time I'm in Boston. THE WOMAN: I'll put you right through to the buyers. WILLY (slapping her bottom): Right. Well, bottoms up! THE WOMAN (slaps him gently and laughs): You just kill me, Willy. (He suddenly grabs her and kisses her roughly.) You kill me. And thanks for the stockings. I love a lot of stockings. Well, good night. WILLY: Good night. And keep your pores open! THE WOMAN: Oh, Willy! (The Woman bursts out laughing, and Linda's laughter blends in. The Woman disappears into the dark. Now the area at the kitchen table brightens. Linda is sitting where she was at the kitchen table, but now is mending a pair of her silk stockings.) LINDA: You are, Willy. The handsomest man. You've got no reason to feel that... WILLY (coming out of The Woman's dimming area and going over to Linda): I'll make it all up to you, Linda, I'll... LINDA: There's nothing to make up, dear. You're doing fine, better than... WILLY (noticing her mending): What's that? LINDA: Just mending my stockings. They're so expensive... WILLY (angrily, taking them from her): I won't have you mending stockings in this house! Now throw them out! (Linda puts the stockings in her pocket.) BERNARD (entering on the run): Where is he? If he doesn't study! WILLY (moving to the forestage, with great agitation): You'll give him the answers! BERNARD: I do, but I can't on a Regents! That's a state exam! They're liable to arrest me! WILLY: Where is he? I'll whip him, I'll whip him! LINDA: And he'd better give back that football, Willy, it's not nice. WILLY: Biff! Where is he? Why is he



taking everything? LINDA: He's too rough with the girls, Willy. All the mothers are afraid of him! WILLY: I'll whip him! BERNARD: He's driving the car without a license! (The Woman's laugh is heard.) WILLY: Shut up! LINDA: All the mothers... WILLY: Shut up! BERNARD (backing quietly away and out): Mr. Birnbaum says he's stuck up. WILLY: Get outa here! BERNARD: If he doesn't buckle down he'll flunk math! (He goes off.) LINDA: He's right, Willy, you've gotta... WILLY (exploding at her): There's nothing the matter with him! You want him to be a worm like Bernard? He's got spirit, personality (As he speaks, Linda, almost in tears, exits into the living room. Willy is alone in the kitchen, wilting and staring. The leaves are gone. It is night again, and the apartment houses look down from behind.) WILLY: Loaded with it. Loaded! What is he stealing? He's giving it back, isn't he? Why is he stealing? What did I tell him? I never in my life told him anything but decent things. (Happy in pajamas has come down the stairs; Willy suddenly becomes aware of Happy's presence.) HAPPY: Let's go now, come on. WILLY (sitting down at the kitchen table): Huh! Why did she have to wax the floors herself? Everytime she waxes the floors she keels over. She knows that! HAPPY: Shh! Take it easy. What brought you back tonight? WILLY: I got an awful scare. Nearly hit a kid in Yonkers. God! Why didn't I go to Alaska with my brother Ben that time! Ben! That man was a genius, that man was success incarnate! What a mistake! He begged me to go. HAPPY: Well, there's no use in... WILLY: You guys! There was a man started with the clothes on his back and ended up with diamond mines! HAPPY: Boy, someday I'd like to know how he did it. WILLY: What's the mystery? The man knew what he wanted and went out and got it! Walked into a jungle, and

comes out, the age of twenty-one, and he's rich! The world is an oyster, but you don't crack it open on a mattress! HAPPY: Pop, I told you I'm gonna retire you for life. WILLY: You'll retire me for life on seventy goddam dollars a week? And your women and your car and your apartment, and you'll retire me for life! Christ's sake, I couldn't get past Yonkers today! Where are you guys, where are you? The woods are burning! I can't drive a car! (Charley has appeared in the doorway. He is a large man, slow of speech, laconic, immovable. In all he says, despite what he says, there is pity, and, now, trepidation. He has a robe over pajamas, slippers on his feet. He enters the kitchen.) CHARLEY: Everything all right? HAPPY: Yeah, Charley, everything's... WILLY: What's the matter? CHARLEY: I heard some noise. I thought something happened. Can't we do something about the walls? You sneeze in here, and in my house hats blow off. HAPPY: Let's go to bed, Dad. Come on. (Charley signals to Happy to go.) WILLY: You go ahead, I'm not tired at the moment. HAPPY (to Willy): Take it easy, huh? (He exits.) WILLY: What're you doin' up? CHARLEY (sitting down at the kitchen table opposite Willy): Couldn't sleep good. I had a heartburn. WILLY: Well, you don't know how to eat. CHARLEY: I eat with my mouth. WILLY: No, you're ignorant. You gotta know about vitamins and things like that. CHARLEY: Come on, let's shoot. Tire you out a little. WILLY (hesitantly): All right. You got cards? CHARLEY (taking a deck from his pocket): Yeah, I got them. Someplace. What is it with those vitamins? WILLY (dealing): They build up your bones. Chemistry. CHARLEY: Yeah, but there's no bones in a heartburn. WILLY: What are you talkin' about? Do you know the first thing about it? CHARLEY: Don't get insulted. WILLY: Don't talk about something you don't know anything

about. (They are playing. Pause.) CHARLEY: What're you doin' home? WILLY: A little trouble with the car. CHARLEY: Oh. (Pause.) I'd like to take a trip to California. WILLY: Don't say. CHARLEY: You want a job? WILLY: I got a job, I told you that. (After a slight pause.) What the hell are you offering me a job for? CHARLEY: Don't get insulted. WILLY: Don't insult me. CHARLEY: I don't see no sense in it. You don't have to go on this way. WILLY: I got a good job. (Slight pause.) What do you keep comin' in here for? CHARLEY: You want me to go? WILLY (after a pause, withering): I can't understand it. He's going back to Texas again. What the hell is that? CHARLEY: Let him go. WILLY: I got nothin' to give him, Charley, I'm clean, I'm clean. CHARLEY: He won't starve. None a them starve. Forget about him. WILLY: Then what have I got to remember? CHARLEY: You take it too hard. To hell with it. When a deposit bottle is broken you don't get your nickel back. WILLY: That's easy enough for you to say. CHARLEY: That ain't easy for me to say. WILLY: Did you see the ceiling I put up in the living room? CHARLEY: Yeah, that's a piece of work. To put up a ceiling is a mystery to me. How do you do it? WILLY: What's the difference? CHARLEY: Well, talk about it. WILLY: You gonna put up a ceiling? CHARLEY: How could I put up a ceiling? WILLY: Then what the hell are you bothering me for? CHARLEY: You're insulted again. WILLY: A man who can't handle tools is not a man. You're disgusting. CHARLEY: Don't call me disgusting, Willy. (Uncle Ben, carrying a valise and an umbrella, enters the forestage from around the right corner of the house. He is a stolid man, in his sixties, with a mustache and an authoritative air. He is utterly certain of his destiny, and there is an aura of far places about him. He enters exactly as Willy speaks.) WILLY: I'm getting awfully tired, Ben. (Ben's music is heard.

Ben looks around at everything.) CHARLEY: Good, keep playing; you'll sleep better. Did you call me Ben? (Ben looks at his watch.) WILLY: That's funny. For a second there you reminded me of my brother Ben. BEN: I only have a few minutes. (He strolls, inspecting the place. Willy and Charley continue playing.) CHARLEY: You never heard from him again, heh? Since that time? WILLY: Didn't Linda tell you? Couple of weeks ago we got a letter from his wife in Africa. He died. CHARLEY: That so. BEN (chuckling): So this is Brooklyn, eh? CHARLEY: Maybe you're in for some of his money. WILLY: Naa, he had seven sons. There's just one opportunity I had with that man... BEN: I must make a tram, William. There are several properties I'm looking at in Alaska. WILLY: Sure, sure! If I'd gone with him to Alaska that time, everything would've been totally different. CHARLEY: Go on, you'd froze to death up there. WILLY: What're you talking about? BEN: Opportunity is tremendous in Alaska, William. Surprised you're not up there. WILLY: Sure, tremendous. CHARLEY: Heh? WILLY: There was the only man I ever met who knew the answers. CHARLEY: Who? BEN: How are you all? WILLY (taking a pot, smiling): Fine, fine. CHARLEY: Pretty sharp tonight. BEN: Is Mother living with you? WILLY: No, she died a long time ago. CHARLEY: Who? BEN: That's too bad. Fine specimen of a lady, Mother. WILLY (to Charley): Heh? BEN: I'd hoped to see the old girl. CHARLEY: Who died? BEN: Heard anything from Father, have you? WILLY (unnerved): What do you mean, who died? CHARLEY (taking a pot): What're you talkin' about? BEN (looking at his watch): William, it's half past eight! WILLY (as though to dispel his confusion he angrily stops Charley's hand). That's my build! CHARLEY: I put the ace... WILLY: If you don't know how to play the game I'm not gonna throw my

money away on you! CHARLEY (rising): It was my ace, for God's sake! WILLY: I'm through, I'm through! BEN: When did Mother die? WILLY: Long ago. Since the beginning you never knew how to play cards. CHARLEY (picks up the cards and goes to the door): All right! Next time I'll bring a deck with five aces. WILLY: I don't play that kind of game! CHARLEY (turning to him): You ought to be ashamed of yourself! WILLY: Yeah? CHARLEY: Yeah! (he goes out.) WILLY (slamming the door after him): Ignoramus! BEN (as Willy comes toward him through the wall-line of the kitchen): So you're William. WILLY (shaking Ben's hand): Ben! I've been waiting for you so long! What's the answer? How did you do it? BEN: Oh, there's a story in that. (Linda enters the forestage, as of old, carrying the wash basket.) LINDA: Is this Ben? BEN (gallantly): How do you do, my dear. LINDA: Where've you been all these years? Willy's always wondered why you... WILLY (pulling Ben away from her impatiently): Where is Dad? Didn't you follow him? How did you get started? BEN: Well, I don't know how much you remember. WILLY: Well, I was just a baby, of course, only three or four years old... BEN: Three years and eleven months. WILLY: What a memory, Ben! BEN: I have many enterprises, William, and I have never kept books. WILLY: I remember I was sitting under the wagon in – was it Nebraska? BEN: It was South Dakota, and I gave you a bunch of wild flowers. WILLY: I remember you walking away down some open road. BEN (laughing): I was going to find Father in Alaska. WILLY: Where is he? BEN: At that age I had a very faulty view of geography, William. I discovered after a few days that I was heading due south, so instead of Alaska, I ended up in Africa. LINDA: Africa! WILLY: The Gold Coast! BEN: Principally diamond mines. LINDA: Diamond mines! BEN: Yes, my dear. But

I've only a few minutes... WILLY: No! Boys! Boys! (Young Biff and Happy appear.) Listen to this. This is your Uncle Ben, a great man! Tell my boys, Ben! BEN: Why, boys, when I was seventeen I walked into the jungle, and when I was twenty-one I walked out. (He laughs.) And by God I was rich. WILLY (to the boys): You see what I been talking about? The greatest things can happen! BEN (glancing at his watch): I have an appointment in Ketchikan Tuesday week. WILLY: No, Ben! Please tell about Dad. I want my boys to hear. I want them to know the kind of stock they spring from. All I remember is a man with a big beard, and I was in Mamma's lap, sitting around a fire, and some kind of high music. BEN: His flute. He played the flute. WILLY: Sure, the flute, that's right! (New music is heard, a high, rollicking tune.) BEN: Father was a very great and a very wild-hearted man. We would start in Boston, and he'd toss the whole family into the wagon, and then he'd drive the team right across the country; through Ohio, and Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and all the Western states. And we'd stop in the towns and sell the flutes that he'd made on the way. Great inventor, Father. With one gadget he made more in a week than a man like you could make in a lifetime. WILLY: That's just the way I'm bringing them up, Ben – rugged, well liked, all-around. BEN: Yeah? (To Biff.) Hit that, boy – hard as you can. (He pounds his stomach.) BIFF: Oh, no, sir! BEN (taking boxing stance): Come on, get to me! (He laughs) WILLY: Go to it, Biff! Go ahead, show him! BIFF: Okay! (He cocks his fists and starts in.) LINDA (to Willy): Why must he fight, dear? BEN (sparring with Biff): Good boy! Good boy! WILLY: How's that, Ben, heh? HAPPY: Give him the left, Biff! LINDA: Why are you fighting? BEN: Good boy! (Suddenly comes in, trips Biff, and stands over him, the point of his umbrella

poised over Biff's eye.) LINDA: Look out, Biff! BIFF: Gee! BEN (Patting Biff's knee): Never fight fair with a stranger, boy. You'll never get out of the jungle that way. (Taking Linda's hand and bowing.) It was an honor and a pleasure to meet you, Linda. LINDA (withdrawing her hand coldly, frightened): Have a nice trip. BEN (to Willy): And good luck with your – what do you do? WILLY: Selling. BEN: Yes. Well... (He raises his hand in farewell to all.) WILLY: No, Ben, I don't want you to think... (He takes Ben's arm to show him) It's Brooklyn, I know, but we hunt too. BEN: Really, now. WILLY: Oh, sure, there's snakes and rabbits and – that's why I moved out here. Why Biff can fell any one of these trees in no time! Boys! Go right over to where they're building the apartment house and get some sand. We're gonna rebuild the entire front stoop right now! Watch this, Ben! BIFF: Yes, sir! On the double, Hap! HAPPY (as he and Biff run off): I lost weight, Pop, you notice? (Charley enters in knickers, even before the boys are gone.) CHARLEY: Listen, if they steal any more from that building the watchman'll put the cops on them! LINDA (to Willy): Don't let Biff... (Ben laughs lustily.) WILLY: You shoulda seen the lumber they brought home last week. At least a dozen six-by-tens worth all kinds a money. CHARLEY: Listen, if that watchman... WILLY: I gave them hell, understand. But I got a couple of fearless characters there. CHARLEY: Willy, the jails are full of fearless characters. BEN (clapping Willy on the back, with a laugh at Charley): And the stock exchange, friend! WILLY (joining in Ben's laughter): Where are the rest of your pants? CHARLEY: My wife bought them. WILLY: Now all you need is a golf club and you can go upstairs and go to sleep. (To Ben.) Great athlete! Between him and his son Bernard they can't hammer a nail! BERNARD (rushing in): The watchman's chasing Biff! WILLY

(angrily): Shut up! He's not stealing anything! LINDA (alarmed, hurrying off left): Where is he? Biff, dear! (She exits.) WILLY (moving toward the left, away from Ben): There's nothing wrong. What's the matter with you? BEN: Nervy boy. Good! WILLY (laughing): Oh, nerves of iron, that Biff! CHARLEY: Don't know what it is. My New England man comes back and he's bleeding, they murdered him up there. WILLY: It's contacts, Charley, I got important contacts! CHARLEY (sarcastically): Glad to hear it, Willy. Come in later, we'll shoot a little casino. I'll take some of your Portland money. (He laughs at Willy and exits.) WILLY (turning to Ben): Business is bad, it's murderous. But not for me, of course. BEN: I'll stop by on my way back to Africa. WILLY (longingly): Can't you stay a few days? You're just what I need, Ben, because I – I have a fine position here, but I – well, Dad left when I was such a baby and I never had a chance to talk to him and I still feel – kind of temporary about myself. BEN: I'll be late for my train. (They are at opposite ends of the stage.) WILLY: Ben, my boys – can't we talk? They'd go into the jaws of hell for me see, but I... BEN: William, you're being first-rate with your boys. Outstanding, manly chaps! WILLY (hanging on to his words): Oh, Ben, that's good to hear! Because sometimes I'm afraid that I'm not teaching them the right kind of – Ben, how should I teach them? BEN (giving great weight to each word, and with a certain vicious audacity): William, when I walked into the jungle, I was seventeen. When I walked out I was twenty-one. And, by God, I was rich! (He goes off into darkness around the right corner of the house.) WILLY: ... was rich! That's just the spirit I want to imbue them with! To walk into a jungle! I was right! I was right! I was right! (Ben is gone, but Willy is still speaking to him as Linda, in nightgown and robe, enters the



kitchen, glances around for Willy, then goes to the door of the house, looks out and sees him. Comes down to his left. He looks at her.) LINDA: Willy, dear? Willy? WILLY: I was right! LINDA: Did you have some cheese? (He can't answer.) It's very late, darling. Come to bed, heh? WILLY (looking straight up): Gotta break your neck to see a star in this yard. LINDA: You coming in? WILLY: Whatever happened to that diamond watch fob? Remember? When Ben came from Africa that time? Didn't he give me a watch fob with a diamond in it? LINDA: You pawned it, dear. Twelve, thirteen years ago. For Biffs radio correspondence course. WILLY: Gee, that was a beautiful thing. I'll take a walk. LINDA: But you're in your slippers. WILLY (starting to go around the house at the left): I was right! I was! (Half to Linda, as he goes, shaking his head.) What a man! There was a man worth talking to. I was right! LINDA (calling after Willy): But in your slippers, Willy! (Willy is almost gone when Biff, in his pajamas, comes down the stairs and enters the kitchen.) BIFF: What is he doing out there? LINDA: Sh! BIFF: God Almighty. Mom, how long has he been doing this? LINDA: Don't, he'll hear you. BIFF: What the hell is the matter with him? LINDA: It'll pass by morning. BIFF: Shouldn't we do anything? LINDA: Oh, my dear, you should do a lot of things, but there's nothing to do, so go to sleep. (Happy comes down the stair and sits on the steps.) HAPPY: I never heard him so loud, Mom. LINDA: Well, come around more often; you'll hear him. (She sits down at the table and mends the lining of Willy's jacket.) BIFF: Why didn't you ever write me about this, Mom? LINDA: How would I write to you? For over three months you had no address. BIFF: I was on the move. But you know I thought of you all the time. You know that, don't yo