

Willy's dream

Business



Willy Loman is the main character of Arthur Miller's classic drama *Death of a Salesman*. An enthusiast and a dreamer, Willy did not really succeed in his business.

He believed that personal relationships were above everything and were more important in life than business. Willy had a divided personality: in reality, he was a sixty-year-old salesman, who was not doing too well in his business, and in his imaginary life he was young and successful man who had all doors open to him. He really wanted his sons Biff and Happy to prosper. However, Biff, who had done well at school, suddenly changed and lost his confidence. That apparently happened after he has caught his father with "the woman".

Happy was also walking in his father's steps - simply day-dreaming, hoping that optimism and a good smile would make him rich. Willy Loman thought that his sons hated him, and, when he finally figured that his son Biff loved him, he committed suicide so that Biff and his family would inherit insurance money for a fresh start. At Willy's funeral Biff said: "He had the wrong dreams"(p. 103) and then added: "He never knew who he was." Charley disagreed with him, saying that nobody had the right to blame Willy. Then he went on to explain in his own words that Willy did all he could.

In fact, he did more than average people did because did not have the right to make a mistake. And Charley finished with a very strong statement: "A salesman is got to dream, boy. It comes with the territory." (p. 104). By that he meant that the life of fantasy that Willy had was a tool to help him to move forward his business.

If, in his opinion, Willy slightly exaggerated, then it was excused by the fact, that it helped him to operate and earn money. "It came with the territory" - that was how he explained it. It is difficult to judge who is right and who is wrong since they both came from different angles. Biff's belief in his father's immaculate image had been shattered greatly because his affair with "the woman". He viewed the whole situation from the point of view of his own misery and broken trust.

Charley, who was an outsider, saw the situation differently. He saw the house that was finished by Willy and his family and he saw the world that Willy built around himself and he was aware of his aspirations. So Charley's understanding of the situation came out in a single phrase: "No man only needs a little salary." That meant that everybody wanted something bigger than his daily routine and a paycheck at the end of the week. At first glance it seems that Willy's dream was somewhat similar to what the American dream had to offer: to become successful, earn money, pay for a house, a car, a refrigerator.

However, looking at his desires closer presented another picture: he tried to reconcile his hopes and ideas that he had for this world with the man-eat-man reality. As it turned out by the end of the play, he failed to do it. His life became an agony and, to aggravate it, he felt very bad due to the fact that he thought he had shattered his son's life by having an affair with another woman. So he really felt relieved when he finally saw that his son had forgiven him. That caused him to make the final step to make his son happy - leave him with a good amount of money as insurance payment for his death.

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As we are trying to formulate what “ success” means, it is important to see what it takes to become “ successful”. It took Willy a life to produce an appearance of successful man but in reality he never became one. Success is something that makes a person both fulfilled and fruitful. Different people may see it differently but the person, who experiences it, knows if it is true for him or not.