

Boston hotel – death of a salesman



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In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Biff and Willy had a complicated relationship along these years. This all happened and started when Biff caught Willy having an affair with another woman. From that moment, Biff gave up on his future and his dream of getting into the University of Virginia, and his relationship and admiration to his father. The Boston hotel room retreat scene late in Act 2 is significant because it changed Biff's goals, his relationship with Willy and between family, and revealed Willy's true characteristics under the surface.

Biff burned the shoes that he used to love and adore after the Boston hotel retreat. Relationship between Biff and Willy broke down and became unfixable, which gradually influenced the atmosphere in the house, the entire family. In the Boston hotel room, the woman mentioned about the stockings that Willy promised to give her, which were supposed to be given to Linda. Biff saw his father as a liar, unfaithful, and phony man. The stockings symbolized the betrayal of Willy to Linda, which reminded him of the woman, and the fact he was caught by Biff in the hotel room.

Willy couldn't handle to see stockings in Linda's hands because it reminded him of the woman, the fact he was caught cheating by Biff, and betrayal to Linda, and indirectly causing Biff turning into his greatest failure. For example, the conversation Willy and Linda had in Act 1 on page 31 showed how much Willy was disgusted because of the stockings.

Willy: [noticing her mending] What's that? Linda: Just mending my stockings. They are so expensive. Willy: [angrily, taking them away from her] I won't have you mending stockings in this house! Now throw them out!

The complicated relationship between Willy and Biff along this years since the hotel event was about to end by the time Biff finally understood that he wasn't a salesman, and he didn't want to be a salesman. The following quotes from Act 2 on page 105 indicated the fact that Biff finally understood his whole life and his family had been living in lies and dishonesty.

Willy (directly to Biff): You vengeful, spiteful mut! [Biff breaks from Happy. Willy, in fright, starts up the stairs. Biff grabs him.] Biff [at the peak of his fury]: Pop, I'm nothing! I'm nothing, Pop. Can't you understand that? There's no spite in it anymore. I'm just what I am, that's all. [Biff's fury has spent itself, and he breaks down, sobbing, holding on to Willy, who dumbly fumbles fro Biff's face.]

Referring to page 58 in Act 1, the pair of sneakers that Biff cherished was once the symbol of his future, his success, and his dream. Indirectly, everything fell apart after what happened in the hotel at Boston. Biff respected and admired his father, but he just recognized his father was phony, in which he fell into a personal conflict that influenced and shaped his future and his career for the rest of his life. He understood there's no more meaning for him to try so hard after he lost his faith and what he believed in his father.

Upon returning from the trip, Bernard says, Biff burned his own sneakers, the ones on which he had written " University of Virginia," which was the college Biff had wanted to attend. Biff fought and cried with Bernard for some unexplained reason, which is why Bernard now wants to know " What happened in Boston, Willy?"

In conclusion, the Boston hotel scene had brought huge impact to the family. Biff trusted his father, but he betrayed Linda, and lied to the family, which Biff burned his sneakers and gave up on attending the university and his dream. The scene was certainly one of the most significant scene out of the entire play because it revealed the reason why Biff and Willy had a complicated relationship, Willy's true character, why and how Biff turned into a failure, the breakdown of family, and eventually caused the entire family living in dishonest lies and the wrong dream. After all, things changed.