

Death of a salesman: overview

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Everyone goes through suffering at some point in life. Some suffer from diseases and physical pain, while others suffer from emotional and mental pain. Sometimes, the suffering stops, in others it just keeps on going. As stated by Jimmy Wales, the founder of Wikipedia, "suffering is an individual's basic affective experience of unpleasantness and aversion associated with harm or threat of harm." In other words, no one likes to suffer, yet, when life makes you, there is nothing you can do about it.

In the play, "Death of a Salesman," by Arthur Miller, Biff Loman, Willy Loman's son suffers the most from Willy's illusions and imaginations by having Willy lack parental guidance since the beginning, Willy thinking appearance in the key to success, and Biff wanting to be like his father, Willy, an Adonises. Biff grew up with no parental control or support, causing him not to know the difference between what's right and what's wrong. In addition, Willy had the wrong conception of the American Dream; he nursed Biff with the taught that appearance is what counts the most in life, not the brain.

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Moreover, at first Biff wanted to be a hero, just like his father, however, as soon as he found out Willy was living in his own fantasy world, there was nothing Biff could have done to change his life around and live in reality. Arthur Miller, the author of this play, made it more clear in the second act that Biff, Willy Loman's son, suffers the most, both mentally and emotionally from Willy's delusions. Biff was always the center of Willy's attention, as a result Biff was always forgiven for all the sins he ever committed.

Willy was never a strict father; he would always encourage them and boost their self esteem instead of punishing them for their wrong actions. He would always support Biff and Happy, even if they were on the immoral path. He did not provide them with proper parental guidance as a good father should. Willy thought he was teaching them the correct way, however, he defiantly wasn't. Furthermore, he couldn't even teach Biff, from the beginning, proper manners and unacceptable behavior. In the play, Biff would steal things, not knowing that stealing is a very bad habit and should not be done.

He once stole a baseball from his school to practice his skills. Yet, when Willy found out about it, he was not mad, he, on the other hand, encouraged him and stated " Willy: Sure, he's gotta practice with a regulation ball, doesn't he? To Biff: Coach'll probably congratulate you on your initiative! " (Miller 30). This dialogue shows how Willy always boosts Biff's confidence, to make it seem as if Biff is doing the right thing, and should continue in that direction. In addition, it proves that Willy never took the time to teach his sons what's right and what's wrong to do.

Biff grew up thinking that stealing is a great thing, and he will get congratulated for his actions, that is why he stole, at the age of 34, a fountain pen from Oliver. When Biff was explaining what he did in Oliver's office to Happy, his brother, he said " Well, he left, see. And the secretary went out. I was alone in the waiting-room. I don't know what came over me, Hap. The next thing I know I'm in his office—paneled walls, everything. I can't explain it. I—Hap, I took his fountain pen" (Miller 104). This quote

confirms that Biff, at the age of 34, thinks that stealing is an okay thing because Willy said it was.

If Willy took his time, and explained to his kids the difference between what's right and what's wrong, Biff wouldn't suffer as he does in the play, however, Willy having the wrong idea about the American dream made Biff suffer too. Being successful in life is what every person wants, even Willy Loman, however, he thought the key to success was appearance instead of intelligence. Willy taught his sons the perfect success formula, which persuaded his sons into thinking the world revolves around looks and being liked.

The boys were confident they will be successful in life because Willy would always say the doors are opened for their success, however, when they tried to find themselves in the world, they were shocked by the answer they got from the society. When Bernard, Willy's next door neighbor, came to study with Biff, so he will not fail math, Willy called him an anemic worm that will not be successful in life because he lacks in appearance. He stated " Willy: 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, in the man who gets ahead. Be liked and you will never want. " (Miller 33). This monologue demonstrates how Willy only cares about the appearance and not academicwise. He tells his sons that grades mean

nothing in the business world, which is complete false. He made his sons become confident in themselves, that resulted in Biff being too certain in himself and failing in the real world.

Furthermore, Willy's wrong idea about the American Dream confused Biff and made him suffer by having him think he will become successful, just because he has amazing looks. However, the American Dream is not based on only the appearance. Therefore, when Biff started to work, he found himself switching from job to job, and unsuccessful, the opposite of what his father, Willy, promised him. All in all, Willy's misunderstanding of the American Dream played a huge role when it came to Biff's suffering, however, Willy living in a fantasy world and not realizing it made Biff suffer even more.

Biff looked up to his father and wanted to grow up and be just like him, however that was when he did not know Willy was living in his fantasy world that had no future, and no success, just extreme imaginations. Whenever Willy talked to the boys, he would always over exaggerate, and make up random things in order for the boys to look up to him and be proud. He was a man that wanted everyone to think he was the best and the most liked, however, mostly everything he was saying was from his imaginations, and none from the real world.

When Willy was talking to his sons, he stated, making the boys feel proud about their father, " Willy: ...I can park my car in any street in New England, and the cops protect it like their own. " (Miller 31). This quote proves that Willy tried to show how important and well recognized he is in every

province/country he traveled to. He wanted his sons to look up to him, yet, everything he stated was unrealistic because the police never guard someone else's car. Furthermore, in another scene of the play, during Willy's and his sons' dialogue Willy said " 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. " (Miller 33). This quote verifies that Willy lives in his own imaginary world, because all the facts he's claiming are false. He described himself as a well recognized human being, when in reality, everyone laughs at him. In addition, it shows how he makes himself look like he is the most popular and liked in front of his family. Moreover, in this statement he's over exaggerating because the play reveals that Willy does not make a good amount of sales, meaning, he is not well recognized or liked. When hearing this from Willy, Biff believed everything he stated.

As a result, Biff thought if his father is so liked and successful in his career, then he must be too. Unfortunately, when he tried to follow his father's footsteps, he realized that everything that his father was talking about was a fairy tale. In the process of becoming successful, Biff does not accomplish anything, except for switching from job to job and coming home at the age of 34 with absolutely no future ahead of him. By the age of 34, mostly all men should be married and flourishing however, Biff achieved neither of them; he cannot find a stable job or find the love of his life and start a family, which explains his suffering.

All those years, Biff looked up to his father thinking he was successful, however, it turned out that it was all his illusions. Willy wanted only the best

for his sons; however, his best was different compared to others. In Arthur Miller's play, "Death of a Salesman," Willy Loman's delusions made Biff Loman his oldest son, suffer the most by Willy not being a proper parent since the start, thinking success revolves around appearance, and Biff looking up to his father, and wanting to be just like him in the future.

Since the start of the play, Willy lacked in parenthood, causing Biff suffer by not knowing which actions he could proceed in and in which he cannot. Furthermore, Biff was taught by Willy the success formula which consists of; if a person looks good and is well liked, they will be provided with one hundred percent guarantee on becoming successful in life and pursuing the American Dream. In addition, Biff wanting to be like Willy and believing his false statements about how well recognized and well liked he is made him, at the age of 34, to fall in a trap with no future ahead of him.

In Willy's imaginary world, he was successful; therefore, he wanted his sons to follow his dreams and not theirs. Yet, he did not understand that his life, in reality, was not successful at all. He thought, with all the knowledge he gave them, and with their incredible appearance they will for sure become successful, but in the end, both sons were the opposite of successful. Have you ever wanted something so badly, but in the end, that something came out to be the complete opposite of what you really wanted? Well that is the story of Willy's life.