

# Death of a salesman – happy loman

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Happy shares none of the poetry that erupts from Biff which is buried in Willy- he is the stunted version of Willy's worst qualities and the personification of the lie of the happy American Dream. As such, Pleased is a hard character with whom to understand. He is one-dimensional and static throughout the play. His empty vow to avenge Willy's death by lastly "beat [ing] this racket" offers evidence of his important condition: for Pleased, who has actually resided in the shadow of the inflated expectations of his bro, there is no escape from the Dream's indoctrinated lies.

Delighted's infected condition is irreversible- he does not have even the tiniest spark of self-knowledge or capability for self-analysis. He does share Willy's capacity for self-delusion, trumpeting himself as the assistant buyer at his store, when, in reality, he is only an assistant to the assistant buyer. He does not have a hint of the latent curiosity that proves Biff's salvation.

Pleased is a doomed, entirely fooled figure, predestined to be engulfed by the force of blind aspiration that fuels his pressing libido.

Character Analysis Delighted might too be Willy Jr., due to the fact that this apple hasn't fallen far from the tree. Though he is fairly effective in his job, he has his father's completely unrealistic confidence, and his grand dreams about getting abundant quick. Like Biff, however to a lesser degree, Happy has actually experienced his dad's expectations. Mainly, though, his daddy doesn't pay that much attention to him. Willy was constantly a bigger fan of Biff. Happy, possibly since he constantly felt second best, has more of a desire to please his dad. Regardless of his reputable accomplishments in

company, and the lots of, many notches on his bedpost, Delighted is extremely lonesome.

Delighted is competitive and enthusiastic, however these sensations are misdirected. Not able to compete on his own terms in business world, Happy blindly pursues females- taken females- simply for the sake of doing so. Appears like he's taken his sense of competitors to the realm of sex. Obviously, this, much like the world of service, fails to satisfy him.

Most disturbing for Happy is the fact that he can't figure out why all this isn't working. He's followed the rules, done all the right things, yet Happy just isn't happy. His name highlights the irony of his predicament. If you consider the fact that parents name their children, you could say that Willy foolishly bestowed the nickname on his son in yet another display of misguidance and delusion. Nice.

Just as the saddest part of Willy's suicide is his continued delusion, the saddest part of Happy's ending is his own persistent misbelief. Still driven by what he feels he should want (money, a wife), he sticks to Willy's foolish dreams to the bitter end.

Happy Loman Hap is the Loman's youngest son. He lives in an apartment in New York, and during the play is staying at his parent's house to visit. Hap is of low moral character; constantly with another woman, trying to find his way in life, even though he is confident he's on the right track.

Hap has always been the "second son" to Biff and tries to be noticed by his parents by showing off. When he was young he always told Willy, "I'm losin'

weight pop, you notice?” And, now he is always saying, “ I’m going to get married, just you wait and see,” in an attempt to redeem himself in his mother’s eyes. Hap also tries to be on Willy’s good side and keep him happy, even if it means perpetuating the lies and illusions that Willy lives in.

In the end of the play, Hap cannot see reality. Like his father, he is destined to live a fruitless life trying for something that will not happen. “ Willy Loman did not die in vain,” he says, “...He had a good dream, the only dream a man can have – to come out number one man. He fought it out here, and this where I’m gonna win it for him.”

Death of a Salesman By Arthur Miller Character Analysis Happy Loman

Happy is a young version of Willy. He incorporates his father’s habit of manipulating reality in order to create situations that are more favorable to him. Happy grew up listening to Willy embellish the truth, so it is not surprising that Happy exaggerates his position in order to create the illusion of success. Instead of admitting he is an assistant to the assistant, Happy lies and tells everyone he is the assistant buyer. This is Willy’s philosophy all over again.

Happy also relishes the fact that “ respectable” women cannot resist him. He has seduced the fiancées of three executives just to gain a perception of pleasure and power. He thrives on sexual gratification, but even more than that, Happy savors the knowledge that he has “ ruined” women engaged to men he works for and also despises. He states, “ I hate myself for it. Because I don’t want the girl, and, still, I take it and — I love it!” Happy is similar to Willy in two ways. Both deny their positions and exaggerate details in order

to aggrandize themselves, and sexual interludes are the defining moments of both of their lives. Willy's life revolves around his attempt to forget his affair with the Woman, while Happy's life revolves around an active pursuit of affairs with many women.

Death of a Salesman addresses loss of identity and a man's inability to accept change within himself and society. The play is a montage of memories, dreams, confrontations, and arguments, all of which make up the last 24 hours of Willy Loman's life. The three major themes within the play are denial, contradiction, and order versus disorder.

Each member of the Loman family is living in denial or perpetuating a cycle of denial for others. Willy Loman is incapable of accepting the fact that he is a mediocre salesman. Instead Willy strives for his version of the American dream — success and notoriety — even if he is forced to deny reality in order to achieve it. Instead of acknowledging that he is not a well-known success, Willy retreats into the past and chooses to relive past memories and events in which he is perceived as successful.

For example, Willy's favorite memory is of Biff's last football game because Biff vows to make a touchdown just for him. In this scene in the past, Willy can hardly wait to tell the story to his buyers. He considers himself famous as a result of his son's pride in him. Willy's sons, Biff and Happy, adopt Willy's habit of denying or manipulating reality and practice it all of their lives, much to their detriment. It is only at the end of the play that Biff admits he has been a "phony" too, just like Willy. Linda is the only character

that recognizes the Loman family lives in denial; however, she goes along with Willy's fantasies in order to preserve his fragile mental state.

The second major theme of the play is contradiction. Throughout the play, Willy's behavior is riddled with inconsistencies. In fact, the only thing consistent about Willy is his inconsistency. From the very beginning of Act I, Scene 1, Willy reveals this tendency. He labels Biff a "lazy bum" but then contradicts himself two lines later when he states, "And such a hard worker. There's one thing about Biff — he's not lazy." Willy's contradictions often confuse audiences at the beginning of the play; however, they soon become a trademark of his character. Willy's inconsistent behavior is the result of his inability to accept reality and his tendency to manipulate or re-create the past in an attempt to escape the present. For example, Willy cannot resign himself to the fact that Biff no longer respects him because of Willy's affair. Rather than admit that their relationship is irreconcilable, Willy retreats to a previous time when Biff admired and respected him. As the play continues, Willy disassociates himself more and more from the present as his problems become too numerous to deal with.

The third major theme of the play, which is order versus disorder, results from Willy's retreats into the past. Each time Willy loses himself in the past, he does so in order to deny the present, especially if the present is too difficult to accept. As the play progresses, Willy spends more and more time in the past as a means of reestablishing order in his life. The more fragmented and disastrous reality becomes, the more necessary it is for Willy to create an alternative reality, even if it requires him to live solely in

the past. This is demonstrated immediately after Willy is fired. Ben appears, and Willy confides “ nothing’s working out. I don’t know what to do.” Ben quickly shifts the conversation to Alaska and offers Willy a job. Linda appears and convinces Willy that he should stay in sales, just like Dave Singleman. Willy’s confidence quickly resurfaces, and he is confident that he has made the right decision by turning down Ben’s offer; he is certain he will be a success like Singleman. Thus, Willy’s memory has distracted him from the reality of losing his job.

Denial, contradiction, and the quest for order versus disorder comprise the three major themes of *Death of a Salesman*. All three themes work together to create a dreamlike atmosphere in which the audience watches a man’s identity and mental stability slip away. The play continues to affect audiences because it allows them to hold a mirror up to themselves. Willy’s self-deprecation, sense of failure, and overwhelming regret are emotions that an audience can relate to because everyone has experienced them at one time or another. Individuals continue to react to *Death of a Salesman* because Willy’s situation is not unique: He made a mistake — a mistake that irrevocably changed his relationship with the people he loves most — and when all of his attempts to eradicate his mistake fail, he makes one grand attempt to correct the mistake. Willy vehemently denies Biff’s claim that they are both common, ordinary people, but ironically, it is the universality of the play which makes it so enduring. Biff’s statement, “ I’m a dime a dozen, and so are you” is true after all.

Miller often experiments with narrative style and technique. For example, Miller includes lengthy exposition pieces that read as stage directions within *The Crucible*. At first glance, it seems that an audience must either read the information in the program or listen to a long-winded narrator. Upon further inspection however, it becomes apparent that Miller's inclusion of background material allows actors and directors to study character motivation and internalize the information, thereby portraying it in the performance.

Miller provides audiences with a unique experience when it comes to *Death of a Salesman*. In many ways, the play appears traditional. In other words, there are actors who interact with one another, there is a basic plot line, and the play contains standard dramatic elements such as exposition, rising action, conflict, climax, and so forth. However, Miller's manipulation of time and space creates a very non-traditional atmosphere that is unsettling but effective because it mirrors Willy's mental state, thereby allowing the audience to witness his mental instability and take part in it.

Stage directions call for a complete house for the Lomans. An audience will not simply watch the action take place in the kitchen but can observe several rooms within the home. This sounds as if it would be distracting since an audience can view several things at once. After all, what should the audience look at? If more than one character is on stage, whom should the audience pay attention to? Miller solves this problem through lighting. Only characters that are talking or involved in direct action are lit on stage, all other rooms, characters, and props remain in shadow.



The result is a vast number of rooms and props that can be utilized immediately. The audience does not have to wait while a new set is erected or an old one torn down, but instead moves directly and instantaneously into the next scene. Such movement without the benefit of time delays or dialogue transitions produces a disjointed and fragmented sequence of events, much like a dream. In fact, the stage directions in Act I describe the house as follows: “ An air of the dream clings to the place, a dream arising out of reality.”

Miller does not stop there. Even though the action of the play can shift from one part of the house to another without delay, the action is still limited to the present. Willy’s dreams, memories, or recollections of past events must be revealed in a manner that is distinct from actions taking place in the present. This is important for two reasons: First, the audience must be able to differentiate between the present and the past in order to follow the action of the play; second, Willy’s increased agitation must be apparent to the audience, and there is no better way to reveal it than to have the audience observe his inability to separate the past from the reality of the present.

Miller achieves this effect by manipulating the space and boundaries of the rooms. When action takes place in the present, characters observe wall boundaries and enter and exit through the doors. During Willy’s recollections of the past, characters do not observe wall boundaries, and the action generally takes place in the area at the front of the stage, rather than inside the house. As a result, the audience can distinguish present events from

Willy's memories. For example, in Act I, Scene 3, Willy pours a glass of milk in the kitchen, sits down, and begins to mumble to himself. He is in the present. He then remembers a past conversation with the teenage Biff and resumes the conversation. Since this is a past event, Willy directs his speech through the wall to a point offstage. This cues the audience that Willy is digressing in the past.

Sound is also used to create a dreamlike state for both Willy and the audience. A flute melody is associated with Willy, Ben has his own music, laughter cues the Woman, and so forth. Once the sound is introduced with the appropriate character, the audience automatically associates the sound with that same character. As a result, Miller is able to prompt reactions and expectations from the audience, whether they are aware or not. For example, in Act II, Scene 14, it appears that things have finally been settled between Willy and Biff. Even though Biff is leaving in the morning, he and Willy have reconciled. This puts the audience at ease, but once Ben's music is heard, it is evident that the play has not reached its final conclusion. In fact, Ben's appearance may create anxiety for the audience because it suggests an alternate, more disturbing, end to the play.

As the play progresses, the action shifts to the front of the stage. In other words, the audience becomes increasingly aware that the majority of the action is taking place inside Willy's head. It is difficult enough to watch an individual lose his or her identity. It is extremely unsettling and disturbing to be forced to experience the individual's memories, illusions, or perhaps delusions resulting in mental instability. Miller takes that into consideration

and then pushes his audiences to the extreme. As Willy's mental state declines, the audience is forced to watch and to react. As a result, the play may be called Death of a Salesman, but it is a death observed and experienced by every member of the audience.