

The death of a salesman by arthur miller – linda

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



Ms. Woods ENG 252 Sec 400 October 29, 2012 Linda - A Pillar of Strength and Balance In the Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller My question for discussion is what I think of Linda, the wife of Willie Lohman in the play "The Death of a Salesman". This is my response. I feel that Linda is the strongest character in the play. Everyone around her has major issues, her sons and her husband. Even in the reflections of the past her brother-in-law had his issues - greed being one of them. She represents stability, goodness and balance in this story.

She can be looked at as the foundation of this family, like most strong women. This story takes place in the 1940's when the environment or way of living was the woman stayed home and tended to the family and the husband was the provider. And we also have a male dominated, sort of male chauvinist society at that time. So being that the man was the provider, a man had a sense of being the King of his home. Because of this general idea, it reduced the importance or view of women and their roles. Meaning a woman's role was less than important because the man was King.

Therefore, we see the questionable, forceful and harsh tones that Willie uses sometimes when speaking to Linda which can be interpreted or misinterpreted in different ways. And when this happens we see Linda back down or just close her mouth. But it also should be noted that Willie is losing everything around him, at home he feels that is the only place he can control what is going on. Then we see Willie's dementia coming to a serious level of illness. This is not mentioned in the story but we see something wrong with Willie's mental state.

By the evidence given in the story, we can conclude many things - guilt, dementia, pressure and stressor just getting old and not wanting to face it. We are not given a reason for this deterioration. But it is evident by the reflections Willie has and how he is stuck in the past and/or stuck in a fantasy that something very deep is going on. This story is very male dominated with the symbolic theme of women are just extra's. We hear this thru Willy Jr and Biff. They don't seem to respect women either. Thru out the story no one seems to listen to her, her sons and neither Willie her husband.

Linda is a faithful wife, playing her role. She stands and supports her husband. You never hear her say a bad word about her husband other than him being sick. She knows what's wrong but I don't think she knows how to handle it. At a time when medically no one really knew about mental illness, I think she viewed it as stress driven. Willis has been reduced at his job, he doesn't want to face he's getting old and his sons not being productive are just a few issues that contribute to the unrest in this household.

She tries to explain to her sons what is going on but the fact that Willie probably was traveling salesmen for a long time and has been away so much that he has no real relationship with his son's. Therefore they feel no pity for him, especially Willy Jr. who lost faith in his father a long time ago. So part of them being worthless and non productive can be contributed to not having their father around while they were growing up. So they do not have any attachment to him or what is going on with him nor does Willie Jr. care because of what he discovered when his father was having an affair.

They only have attachment to their mother, Linda. She loves her boys regardless and her husband but she feels her duty first is to her husband. We

also conclude that Linda does not know about the affair Willie had nor does she know that Willy Jr. knew about it. All she knows is the relationship between big Willie and junior Willy has been severely altered. Clinging to the suspicion that Willie (husband) is suffering from mental deterioration she wants to do whatever it takes to let him just grow old gracefully and peacefully, even if it means turning her back on her children.

This is not to be taken as rejection or meanness because they are grown and are not contributing anything positive to the situation or conditions that are evolving. That is evident when they leave Willie in the bathroom at the restaurant and he suffers a severe breakdown and they don't even come back to check on him. I feel that when she unloaded on her sons and voiced all the truths that were said is her finally being fed up with all the confusion going on around her. She is fighting to stay strong, guide and stay dedicated to her husband while moving all negatives out of the way.

That is a sign of strength and dedication. This is symbolic of how she is truly the foundation and the balance of this family. Willie is losing control of everything, his job, his mind, his finance, his pride, his youth, etc. and Linda sees all of this. Thus his harsh treatment of her I do not feel is meant to hurt her. Remember a woman's value in this era is reduced so she has no voice, no say and she abides by that. But in today's time we would consider that disrespectful. I am considering the era of this story.

But Linda stays strong and is always positive. Willie does realize he loves his wife and she loves him because at the end before he leaves to commit suicide he sends her to bed because he knows she would try to stop him from going out. And he knows she would do that out of love for him.

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Even though in his mind he sees this as a way of taking care of her and his sons. So in conclusion, the question remains do I believe that Linda was a disgrace? No I do not. Linda was the epitome of a good wife, supportive, grounded, sacrificial and wise.

She knew when to back down and when to be strong and speak out. She held Willie together as long as she could, until it was out of her hands. As she stated at his grave site, she truly did not understand how deep Willie's issues really were. Through all the symbolism of this story, good and bad (the sons), rich and poor (the environment and Willie's associates), young and old (his reflections back to his younger days) Linda was the central figure in this story representing neutrality, balance and humbleness.