

Death of a salesman act 2 response paper

Literature



Death of a Salesman Act II: Response Journal. The second act of Death of a Salesman is absolutely packed with raw emotion. As the play builds up to the inevitable death of Willy Loman, the reader is pulled into the feelings of the various characters. Miller makes the reader truly live the life of the Loman family and experience their inner turmoil and emotions.

As the play progresses, the characters move erratically towards a true insight into their lives. Biff is the one who first acknowledges, “ We never told the truth for ten minutes in this house” (1327). Biff realizes that the outdoor life of a ranch is what suits him. He asks, “ Why am I trying to become what I don’t want to be?” (1326). There is hope of redemption for Biff. Willy comes to acknowledge that he may have been wrong in his rearing of his sons. He asks, “ Bernard, Bernard, was it my fault?” (1306). He is finally being forced to confront the part he played in Biff’s failure. Hap, on the other hand, appears to remain unchanged by the incidents of the day and seems set to follow the old course. Linda retains her role as the sheet anchor of the family. She is the one who criticizes the blind pursuit of the American Dream when she asks, “ Why must everybody conquer the world?” (1302).

The father-son relationship between Willy and Biff is the fulcrum of the play. It is pathetic to see how a beautiful, loving relationship deteriorates into one characterized by bitterness and conflict. Biff’s hero and role model is his father. It is Willy who builds this relationship on a shaky foundation. Willy’s boasting creates a false, larger-than-life image of himself in his son’s eyes. It is Willy who closes his eyes to the fact that his son is developing into a kleptomaniac. When the bubble bursts and Biff finds that the father he idealized is actually a philanderer and a cheat, his sorrow moves the reader. He laments, “ You fake! You phony little fake!” (1321). The rest of his wasted

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life can be seen as an act of revenge against his father for the betrayal of his trust.

However, the reconciliation between Willy and Biff in the final scenes of the play is deeply moving. Some part of the love in the relationship endures. In the middle of his dementia, Willy is able to rejoice that his son “ Always loved me” (1329). When Willy has his breakdown in the restaurant, Biff describes his father as “ a hard-working, unappreciated prince. A pal, you understand? A good companion. Always for his boys” (1318). In contrast, Hap rejects his father, saying “ No, that’s not my father.” (1318). The greatest gift of love Biff gives his father is acceptance his final of Willy just as he is. He says, “ Pop, I’m a dime a dozen, and so are you” (1326). Yet, he is willing to let the past die and love his father for what he is.

The greatest change in the reader is towards Willy Loman. The man who appears to be a despicable, vain, totally unsympathetic character in Act I now rouses some pity. He acknowledges Linda’s worth when he admits the “ she’s suffered” (1324). His madness in planting seeds for his wife’s longed-for garden can be seen as a sign of remorse and love for his wife. Even if Willy’s suicide is an act of cowardice, it cannot be denied that it can also be viewed as his ultimate act of sacrifice for his family. The insurance money is the only way he can think of to give Biff a new start in life and to give Linda security.

The exaggeration, the lies and the gilding of facts to suit the occasion, lead the Lomans into disaster. Willy Loman is the main architect of this ruin. But, in the end, the reader cannot but feel that society is also responsible for making the Loman’s what they are. Death of a Salesman is a deeply thought-provoking tragedy

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Works Cited.

Miller, Arthur. Death of a Salesman. Title of Collection. Ed. Editors Name(s).

City of Publication: Publisher, Year. 1262-1331. Print.