



# Arthur Miller's **DEATH OF A SALESMAN**

## Character Descriptions

### **Willy Loman**

60, a traveling salesman who has survived on charm rather than smarts, Willy suddenly finds himself in a world where that showmanship is no longer valuable. Willy suffers from mental health issues, and regularly finds the past haunts him with visions and dream-like states. He is finding it more and more difficult to navigate the world, at times being optimistic about his future and his sons' future, and then desperate and angry that he and Linda are so trapped by bills and the buildings blocking sunlight to their little house. He regularly lies to his wife about his unsuccessful sales trips, taking money loans from a friend to pay his bills. Willy is full of pride and regret, and lately, his wife has found clues that he is considering suicide. There is a growing rift between him and his sons, especially Biff, who feels his father is delusional and has set them all up for failure with his unrealistic ideas of their abilities. He is a man whose ideas of America remain unfulfilled.

### **Linda Loman**

Wife of Willy Loman, Linda is his cheerleader and advocate. She sees how hard and earnestly he works, and understands his hopes and dreams for their sons. She wants everyone to continue deluding Willy to preserve his current delicate state, and will side with her husband over her sons every time.

### **Biff Loman**

The eldest of the two Loman brothers, Biff was the popular, football-playing all-American type in high school and the apple of his father's eye. Biff had a bright future, with a college football scholarship, but threw it away when he deliberately failed high school math. Since then, he has gone from job to job, taking classes and trying to find himself. He struggles under the pressure to be everything his father dreams of, while also asserting himself as a man.

### **Happy Loman**

Where Biff is wandering and lost, Happy has chosen a life of modest success and convenience. He works as a clerk in an office, and is content with his rented apartment and the pocket change that allows him to go



out on the town with many different women. Like Willy, Happy lies about how important he is at work and how much everyone loves him. He believes the family should just tell Willy what he wants to hear to keep the status quo.

### **Bernard**

The neighbor Charley's son, Bernard is studious and serious compared to Biff and Happy, who were popular and didn't work hard at school. Despite Willy making fun of him, Bernard tries to help Biff when he's failing math.

### **The Woman**

A secretary at an office in the northeast, this woman and Willy have a romantic affair. Discovering this affair sends Biff's life down a downward spiral of cynicism.

### **Charley**

A neighbor who lends money to Willy in secret. He is a quiet, hard worker, a direct contrast to Willy. Charley is kind to Willy, plays cards with him, and helps when Willy is delirious.

### **Uncle Ben**

Willy's older brother who comes to Willy in dream-like flashbacks. Willy idolizes his older brother, who tells Willy how successful and adventurous his life is. It may or may not be true, but Willy believes it, and is filled at regret that he didn't rise to Ben's level of success.

### **Howard Wagner**

The owner and boss of the company where Willy works as a salesman. Howard inherited the business from his father, for whom Willy worked his whole career. Howard wants to modernize the company, leaving Willy and his kind of traveling sales behind.

### **Jenny**

Charley's secretary. She can barely tolerate Willy, telling us he comes to Charley's office often to ask for money.

### **Stanley**

A waiter at the restaurant where Happy and Biff meet Willy.

### **Miss Forsythe**

A beautiful "call girl" at the restaurant, who distracts Happy from his dinner with Biff and Willy. She spends time with men for money.

### **Letta**

Miss Forsythe's friend who comes to spend the evening with Miss Forsythe and Biff and Happy. With the two women present, Happy and Biff abandon their father at the restaurant.

