



## Death of a Salesman

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# Death of a Salesman

Arthur Miller

**Death of a Salesman** Arthur Miller

**Arthur Miller's extraordinary masterpiece, *Death of a Salesman* changed the course of modern theatre, and has lost none of its power as an examination of American life.**

'A man is not an orange. You can't eat the fruit and throw the peel away'

Willy Loman is on his last legs. Failing at his job, dismayed at his the failure of his sons, Biff and Happy, to live up to his expectations, and tortured by his jealousy at the success and happiness of his neighbour Charley and his son Bernard, Willy spirals into a well of regret, reminiscence, and A scathing indictment of the ultimate failure of the American dream, and the empty pursuit of wealth and success, is a harrowing journey. In creating Willy Loman, his destructively insecure anti-hero, Miller defined his aim as being 'to set forth what happens when a man does not have a grip on the forces of life'.

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Binding: Paperback

Amazon Review

Arthur Miller's 1949 *Death of a Salesman* has sold 11 million copies, and Willy Loman didn't make all those sales on a smile and a shoeshine. This play is the genuine article--it's got the goods on the human condition, all packed into a day in the life of one self-deluded, self-promoting, self-defeating soul. It's a sturdy bridge between kitchen-sink realism and spectral abstraction, the facts of particular hard times and universal themes. As Christopher Bigsby's mildly interesting afterword in this 50th-anniversary edition points out (as does Miller in his memoir, *Timebends*), Willy is closely based on the playwright's sad, absurd salesman uncle, Manny. But of course Miller made Manny into Everyman, and gave him the name of the crime commissioner, Lohmann, in Fritz Lang's angst-ridden 1932 Nazi parable, *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*. The tragedy of Loman the all--American dreamer and loser--works eternally, on the page as on the stage. A lot of plays made history around 1949, but none have stepped out of history into the classic canon as *Salesman* has. Great as it was, Tennessee Williams' work can't be revived as vividly as this play still is, all over the world. (This edition has edifying pictures of Lee J. Cobb's 1949 and Brian Dennehy's 1999 performances.) It connects Aristotle, *The Great Gatsby*, *On the Waterfront*, David Mamet, and the archetypal American movie antihero. It even transcends its author's tragic flaw of pious preachiness (which undoes his snoozy *The Crucible*, unfortunately his most-produced play). No doubt you've seen Willy Loman's story at least once. It's still worth reading.--*Tim Appelo, Amazon.com Review*

"By common consent, this is one of the finest dramas in the whole range of the American theater." Brooks Atkinson, "The New York Times" "So simple, central, and terrible that the run of playwrights would neither care nor dare to attempt it." "Time" From the Back Cover

Willy Loman, the protagonist of *Death of a Salesman*, has spent his life following the American way, living out his belief in salesmanship as a way to reinvent himself. But somehow the riches and respect he covets have eluded him. At age sixty-three, he searches for the moment his life took a wrong turn, the moment of betrayal that undermined his relationship with his wife and destroyed his relationship with Biff, the son in whom he invested his faith. Willy lives in a fragile world of elaborate excuses and daydreams, conflating past and present in a desperate attempt to make sense of himself and of a world that once promised so much.

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