

# Themes in Death of a Salesman

Arthur Miller ((1949  
American Tragedy

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# The American Dream

- Central theme: Willy Loman's belief that success comes from being well-liked.
- Critiques the dream as shallow, materialistic, and destructive.
- Willy confuses popularity with achievement.

# Reality vs. Illusion

- Willy escapes into memories and daydreams to avoid facing failure.
- Delusions contrast sharply with harsh reality.
- Example: Willy convinces himself he is well liked when he isn't.

# Family and Betrayal

- Father-son relationships drive the play.
- Biff feels betrayed when he discovers Willy's affair.
- Willy pressures Biff and Happy to pursue his failed dream.

# Identity and Self-Worth

- Willy ties his identity to his career as a salesman.
- When his work declines, his sense of self collapses.
- Tragedy: he measures worth by material success, not love or fulfillment.

# The Cost of Capitalism

- Exposes the dehumanizing nature of a capitalist system.
- Willy is discarded after decades of work.
- System values productivity, not loyalty or humanity.

# Death and Sacrifice

- Willy's suicide meant to leave insurance money for family.
- Reflects his misguided belief that death can achieve what life couldn't.
- Raises the question: sacrifice or escape?

# Generational Conflict

- Willy vs. Biff: illusion vs. truth.
- Biff seeks authenticity: 'I'm a dime a dozen, and so are you'!
- Willy clings to false dreams.



# Conclusion

- Tragedy of an ordinary man destroyed by false dreams and illusions.
- Critique of the American Dream and capitalist pressures.
- Universal exploration of identity, family, and failure.