



## [Death of a Salesman](#), by Arthur Miller

### In A Nutshell

This play is a tragedy about the differences between a New York family's dreams and the reality of their lives. An immediate hit on Broadway, Arthur Miller's play won a Pulitzer Prize in 1949. The play is a scathing critique of the American Dream and of the competitive, materialistic American society of the late 1940s. The storyline features Willy Loman, an average guy who attempts to hide his averageness and failures behind delusions of grandeur as he strives to be a "success."

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### Big Picture Study Questions

- 1 What does each major character in *Death of a Salesman* seem to want? How do their interests align or conflict? How does what each character wants differ from what each has or gets?
- 2 Consider Willy's assertion that being well liked is tantamount to success. Does this philosophy hold true? What is the relationship between friendships, popularity, and success in *Death of a Salesman*?

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3 Is Willy a failure?

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