



DEATH OF A SALESMAN

TEACHER PACK



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ABOUT THIS PACK

This pack supports the RSC's 2015 production of *Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller's Pulitzer Prize-winning play. Written in 1948, and first performed in 1949, it tells the story of an American salesman called Willy Loman.

This production is directed by RSC Artistic Director Gregory Doran and designed by Stephen Brimson Lewis for the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in the centenary year of Miller's birth.

For more information see <http://www.rsc.org.uk/whats-on/death-of-a-salesman/>

The activities provided are specifically designed to support KS4 students studying the play, with some extension activities for older or more able students.

At the RSC we see direct parallels between teaching and learning in the classroom and the way our theatre company works, making discoveries through collaborative enquiry. Throughout this resource you will find notes which link the activities here to those conducted in the rehearsal room.

These symbols are used throughout the pack:



READ

Notes from the production, background info, extracts, or references for script work



ACTIVITY

A practical or open space activity



WRITE

A classroom writing or discussion activity



LINKS

Useful web addresses and research tasks

EXPLORING THE STORY

The play takes place over the last 24 hours of Willy Loman's life. During this time, Willy's mind moves between the present and the past as he plays out scenes from his memory, in an attempt to understand his life, his relationship with his son Biff, and what went wrong.

Miller explains how wonderful he thought it would be to write a play that could "cut through time like a knife through a layer cake, or a road through a mountain revealing its geological layers, and instead of one incident in one time-frame succeeding another, display past and present concurrently, with neither one ever coming to a stop" (Arthur Miller, *Timebends: A Life*, Bloomsbury).



SYNOPSIS

A full synopsis of the play is available, while the production is on, at <http://www.rsc.org.uk/whats-on/death-of-a-salesman/synopsis.aspx>



ACTIVITY 1: BECOMING A SALESMAN

NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

After the initial read-through, one of the first things that the company did was to create a timeline for the events that happen in this play.

The company were asked: "When is the present day in the play set? And in what year are the memory scenes?"

- In rehearsals, the company created a timeline detailing world events along with events that happen, have happened, or are referred to in the play.
 - With students, go through the play, using the timeline at the end of this pack, and decide what year the events happen in the play. (A completed timeline is also included for your reference.) What are their reasons for giving these dates?
- Now ask students to make a list of consumer objects, people and places that are mentioned in the play: some examples are Hastings refrigerator, whipped cheese, Chevrolet, stockings, Red Grange, Ebbets Field.
 - Where possible, ask them to find adverts for the objects on their list, dating from the time periods they have decided upon.
 - Ask students to choose one of the products they have found, to create an advert for it, and to act it out in a small group.

- Ask students to decide what you think Willy Loman is selling. What are the samples he has in his valises?
 - Using the product they have chosen, invite students to write and perform a sales pitch for the buyers.
 - Read aloud Willy's contrasting advice on selling (see quotes below), then encourage students to try selling their product using his advice in their pitch. Try it one way and then the other. Which one works better? Why?

When Warren Mitchell played Willy he asked Miller what was in the suitcases and he said "Dreams – all Willy's dreams"

Pitching Advice from Willy (Act One):

- "Walk in very serious. You are not applying for a boy's job. Money is to pass. Be quiet, fine, and serious. Everybody likes a kidder, but nobody lends him money."
- "Walk in with a big laugh. Don't look worried. Start off with a couple of your good stories to lighten things up. It's not what you say, it's how you say it – because personality always wins the day."



Antony Sher as Willy and Alex Hassell as Biff. Photo by Ellie Kurtz © RSC

““The Salesman is close to being the universal occupation of contemporary society—not only in America, but everywhere. Everybody is selling and everything is for sale.”

Arthur Miller, in ‘Death of a Salesman at Fifty: An Interview with Arthur Miller’, Colby H. Kullman, Michigan Quarterly Review, Fall 1998



ACTIVITY 2: SEQUENCING THE STORY

In rehearsals, the company spent the first few days reading the play. To understand the structure of the play and storyline better, they broke the play up into sections and gave each section a title. (This scene breakdown is included in the Resources at the end of this pack, with a blank column for students to create their own scene names – see below.)

- Ask students to go through the scene numbers the company used and make up their own name for each scene: a name that clearly identifies each section. They should put in the date of each scene too.
- Discuss: How does this exercise help their understanding of the play? Can they figure out what triggers Willy's memories? Why do they think the scenes happen in this order?

ACTIVITY 3: DESIGN CHALLENGE

- Ask students to read the stage directions at the start of Act One.
- Invite students to make a list of all the locations in the play, and to indicate if these are in the present time or are memories. Miller didn't like these memory scenes being referred to as 'flashbacks'.

The locations that the students might identify are:

- Loman house (present day): Kitchen, Boys' Bedroom, Master Bedroom, Back Yard
- Loman house (memory scenes): Kitchen, Boys' Bedroom, Master Bedroom, Back Yard
- Hotel room
- Howard's office
- Frank's Chophouse

- Ask students to decide what kind of theatre space they are designing for: thrust, proscenium arch, in the round, etc.

DESIGN NOTES (Stephen Brimson Lewis)

"This play was written for a proscenium stage - almost like a landscape painting, long and wide - for those American theatres that are like a letterbox opening.

"You can play a scene in the middle, a scene to the right, and a scene to the left; they don't get in the way of one another, you just take the lights up and down and you can tell you are in different locations.

"But at the RST we don't have that; we are more portrait, more up and down. That means you have to have everything set out in front of you. Very often you are going to be looking from the hotel room in 1932 to a restaurant in 1948 and then back into the Loman kitchen in 1932, simultaneously on stage. It is a real challenge trying to focus the spaces and to let the audience see the action as much as possible."

- Now encourage students to work out where they will place each location on the stage, and to show their ideas either as a sketch or by creating a mini model box of the set.
- Reflect with students on how different their design ideas are for the locations in the present days and the locations in the memory scene. Discuss with them how a designer, and the actors, might convey these two different 'types' of scene. How might a memory scene be presented differently on stage?

- Ask students to read through a scene in the play that moves from one location to another. There are many scenes they could choose. Some possible suggestions are given below:



SCRIPT REFERENCE

Example 1:

- Act One, scene 2a – 3b
- Biff and Happy in their bedroom
- From – BIFF: Let's go to sleep.
- To – HAPPY: I'm losing weight, you notice, Pop?

Example 2:

- Act Two, scene 5a – 5j
- Chophouse, moves to Loman kitchen with Bernard and Linda, back to Chophouse and Hotel room
- From – HAPPY: Dad is never so happy as when he is looking forward to something!
- To – BIFF: Why didn't you answer?

- Now encourage students to work out which locations they need to show. For each one:
 - Work out which year each location is in.
 - Think about where they want the audience's focus to be. How can they direct the audience's attention?
 - How would they light the past? How would they light the present?
 - How might they use music, projections, or costume to help their design?



Antony Sher as Willy and Harriet Walter as Linda. Photo by Ellie Kurtz © RSC

LIGHTING DESIGN NOTES (Tim Mitchell)

“With lighting most of it comes from the script, times of day, location etc., so you are asking yourself those questions when you read it. With *Salesman* there are of course the flashbacks of Willy.

“There are also challenging locations without physical scenery, for example, the hotel room with a bathroom and a door for Biff to knock at to disturb Willy. Because of the nature of the RST this will have to be created as much with lighting as with the set.

“I recently discovered Vivian Maier, a street photographer from America who took photographs from the late 30s through to the 70s. Her photographs from the 1940s are a great reference: the brownstone buildings and the general feeling of the period and her use of light and shade. Willy makes a point about being closed in by the other buildings around him so her photographs of New York buildings of the period are very useful.

“My personal favourite artist is Edward Hopper and there are many of his paintings that can be translated into lighting, with blocks of colour and shafts of light through buildings or windows, and his general use of lonely figures within a city or out on the road like Willy.”

- Ask them to show their ideas on paper / computer and explain the reasons for their decisions.

ACTIVITY 4: ACTING/DIRECTING CHALLENGE

You will need floor tape for this activity and you will need to be in a drama studio or hall.

- Divide students into small groups and ask each group to choose one of the design ideas from the previous Activity.
- Encourage students to mark out the different areas on the floor using tape and basic furniture (e.g. chairs, benches, tables).
- Ask the actors to read the scene through, and together to work out where they start, and then how they move from one location to another.
- Discuss with students some of these questions:
 - What are the acting challenges?
 - How do the actors get from one location / time zone to another?
 - What are the rules of each location?
 - How old are the characters in the memory scenes?
 - How can the actors help the audience to understand that we have moved from one reality to another?
 - What can the actor communicate through his or her physicality, energy, focus, voice?

- What can we learn from the descriptions of the characters in the stage directions?

■ Invite students to share their ideas and their performance with the group.

Discuss:

- What were the biggest challenges?
- What did they learn?
- What worked?
- How would they change it to make it better if you were to do it again?
- How useful did they find the stage directions?

ARTHUR MILLER AND THE AMERICAN DREAM



Antony Sher as Willy. Photo by Ellie Kurtz © RSC

Arthur Miller was born in New York City in October 1915. He began his playwriting career as a student at the University of Michigan, and his first great play, *All My Sons*, was written in 1947. A year later, he wrote *Death of a Salesman*, taking just six weeks to write it. It won the Pulitzer Prize and was described as the first great American tragedy.

Miller was one of a number of post-war American artists and writers who were disturbed by what they saw around them: an obsession with materialism and the pursuit of happiness, along with a refusal to look below the surface. They were influenced by ideas from psychoanalysts, such as Freud, and existentialist philosophers, such as Jean-Paul Sartre.

This play was partly inspired by Miller's own relationship with his uncle, Manny Newman, a salesman who would not accept failure on the part of anyone in his family. In his youth, Miller wrote a short story about an unsuccessful salesman; in later life, this story became one of the most successful American plays ever written. *Death of a Salesman* struck a chord with many people.

Directing a production of the play in China, Miller commented:

"[This play is] really a love story between a man and his son and their relationship with America." Miller, *Salesman in Beijing*, Viking Press

The play continues to resonate because Willy and the rest of his family are more than just 'types'; they are also compelling individual characters.

"Miller writes so thematically, and yet so specifically about people" Alex Hassell



ACTIVITY 5: DREAMS OF SUCCESS

“A salesman is got to dream, boy. It comes with the territory” Charley

Death of a Salesman is the tragedy of one man and one family, but it is also a critique of the American Dream, and of the myth of an American ‘golden age’ that glorified capitalism and materialism while ignoring the country’s internal conflicts: the fear of Communism, racial conflict, and the economic gulf between rich and poor.

“I knew that the Depression was only incidentally a matter of money. Rather, it was a moral catastrophe, a violent revelation of the hypocrisies behind the façade of American society” Miller, Timebends

- Invite students to place themselves on an imaginary percentage line from 0-100 down the middle of the room in relation to the following questions:
 - Is it important to have a dream?
 - Is money important to be successful?
 - Does it matter how you become successful?
 - Are ‘things’ (e.g. cars, etc.) important as a measure of success?
 - Is it important to be well liked?
- Ask students for the reasons behind their choices.

WAYS TO EXTEND THIS WORK

- Ask students, in pairs, to discuss what they think of as ‘success’.
- Then, ask them to create an image of what success looks like.
- Discuss: what would they do in order to achieve that dream? Where do they think that idea of success comes from?



ACTIVITY 6: CHARACTER BATTLES

- Invite students to look at the character lines in the attached Resource.
- Divide students into small groups, and assign a character to each group.
- Ask students to build a statue of their character.
- Using the lines in the Resource, give each group the task of persuading the other groups that their character’s point of view is the right one, and that everyone should listen to them. (Students may if they wish find their own lines from the text to back up their point of view.)
 - Ask each group to bring their character to life, and then to try putting their point of view across.
 - Set up a competition between pairs of characters, pitting one against the other: for example Biff vs. Happy, Willy vs. Charley, Linda vs. Ben.
 - Ask the rest of the students to vote on who wins each round and to give their reasons why.
 - Then pit the winners against each other, and play until you have just one character left.
- Discuss: What was so persuasive about that particular view of the American Dream? Why?

BUILDING LAYERED CHARACTERS

NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

Brodie Ross, who plays Bernard, talks about playing subtext:

“Layers have to be there. It is the work you do in the rehearsal room; you develop a subconscious, you develop a set of givens, because we all have baggage. It is just there. Miller writes that. You have to somehow feed the subconscious.”



ACTIVITY 7 BUILDING CHARACTER - BIFF

“The older Biff is in so much pain you have to plumb the depths.”

Alex Hassell

When building his character, Biff, Alex went through the play and wrote down all of Willy’s parenting advice:

“The lessons that Biff has been taught are to be nice and make everyone love you, but at the same time screw them over if it means you can get ahead. They are taught these contradictory lessons all the time; they can’t take on all of those teachings and live happily and successfully because they are so contradictory.” Alex Hassell

- Encourage students to go through the text like Alex and to write down all the parenting advice from Willy.
- Discuss the findings: What lines do they find the most useful / interesting? Why?

WAYS TO EXTEND THIS WORK

- Alex also explains that in order to concentrate on the sense of physical prowess, he used a punchbag and looked at images from the period, for example pictures of American football players such as Gene Tunney.
- Ask students to research images of American football players and bring in any they find useful
- What other images of physical prowess can they find?



ACTIVITY 8: CHARACTER EMOTIONS – BIFF

NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

Alex explains how during rehearsals he explored and focused on different aspects of Biff's character in the early weeks:

Week one: the focus was exploring the depth of his ANGER

Week two: the focus was LOVE for his family and the desire to save them

Week three: the focus was his COLDNESS, a darker side of Biff, callous and lonely

This exercise encourages students to understand how differently a scene might play out with each of these different emotions emphasised.

- Ask students to play a small section of text between Biff and Hap. (See Script Extract 1 in the Resources at the end of this pack.)
 - Encourage students to play the scene:
 - The first time with ANGER
 - Then LOVE
 - Then CALLOUSNESS
 - What did they learn from doing this?
- Now, invite students to look at the second script extract (in the Resources).
- Ask students to play the scene as follows:
 - Run on the spot for 15 seconds, do 5 star jumps, 5 jump squats
 - Play the scene the first time
 - Then try the scene again, this time as if everybody is trying to impress everybody else
- Discuss the following questions:
 - What do they learn about Biff, Happy and Willy's relationships?
 - Where are the fault lines in the relationships?
 - How does the older Biff/Happy inform the younger Biff/Happy and vice versa?
- Ask students to look again at the first scene between the brothers in the present day. What have they learnt?

WAYS TO EXTEND THIS WORK

- Ask students to create two frozen images, one from each scene, that encapsulate how they see the characters of Biff & Happy: one present day, one memory.
- Discuss: What are the difference between the two images? What lines do they find the most useful / interesting? Why?



ACTIVITY 9: SIMPLE TRUTHS – BERNARD

NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

Brodie Ross explains how he found it helpful to find some ‘simple truths’ about Bernard.

These are the simple truths that Brodie found:

BERNARD

1. Adores Biff
2. Charley - his father allows the child to be who he wants to be
3. Bernard works within the system – does the work, becomes a lawyer
4. A geek
5. Nervous

- Ask students to read the scene indicated below:



SCRIPT REFERENCE

- Act One, scene 1.2a - 1.3b
- Biff and Happy in their bedroom
- From - BERNARD: Biff, where are you? You’re supposed to study with me today.
- To - HAPPY: I’m losing weight, you notice, Pop?

- Now ask them to read the scene again, this time using Brodie’s simple truths about Bernard.
- Discuss: What do they notice?
- Now, invite students to choose a character in the play and to create their own ‘simple truths’ list about that character.
- Then, ask them to find a small section of text with their character in it and let the simple truths inform the way they play the character.
- Share and discuss.

INTERPRETING THE TEXT



ACTIVITY 10: EXPLORING THE CHOP HOUSE SCENE

NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

Alex Hassell, who plays Biff, explained that they rehearsed the Chop House scene as if the meeting with Bill Oliver had been successful.

After doing this exercise, Alex could then see in his head the image of how the meeting could have gone, alongside the reality of what did happen.



SCRIPT REFERENCE

- Act Two, scene 5a
- Stanley, Happy and Biff in the Chophouse
- From - STANLEY: That's all right, Mr. Loman, I can handle it myself.

- Ask students to first read the scene through as if the meeting has been successful, for as long as it makes sense.
- Then, ask them to play the scene again, this time knowing what has really happened.
- Invite students to discuss what differences they notice



ACTIVITY 11: WAYS OF PLAYING THE “BEN IS DEAD” SCENE

NOTES FROM THE REHEARSAL ROOM

The actors rehearsed the first scene between Willy, Charley and Ben with the actor playing Ben silently mouthing the words, so that the actors only heard the dialogue between Willy and Charley: i.e. how Charley perceives the scene.

- Ask the students to start reading the scene indicated below:



SCRIPT REFERENCE

- Act One, scene 4c – 4d
- Willy, Charley and Ben playing cards
- From - WILLY: A man who can't handle tools is not a man. You're disgusting.
- To - CHARLEY's exit.

- Ask the students to first read the scene through as it is written.
- Now, ask them to read it with only Willy & Charley's lines.
- Then, ask them to read it a third time, this time with Ben silently mouthing the lines, so that Willy can look to him if he wants to.
- Finally, ask students to go back and play the scene as it is written.
- Discuss: How were the scenes different? Why?



ACTIVITY 12: EXPLORING A KEY SCENE – WILLY FIRED BY HOWARD

- Ask the students to start reading the scene indicated below:



SCRIPT REFERENCE

- Act Two, scene 2c
- Howard fires Willy
- From - HOWARD: What happened?
- To - HOWARD's exit.

- Ask students to play this scene in the following ways:
 - As if Howard doesn't care / isn't interested
 - Howard trying to be nice
 - Neither Howard or Willy pause: both actors talk over each other, almost afraid of what the other will say
 - Willy trying to charm Howard, to do him a favour
 - Willy alert to every word, expression, movement of Howard, reading him, alert to every move Howard makes
 - Varying the pace: Willy slow, Howard fast. Then swap over.
 - As if Howard's actions and reactions to Willy spur him on and anger him. Which lines spur Willy on?
- Suggest the following questions and physical actions for students to consider in their playing of the scene:
 - When might Willy sit down?
 - When might Howard decide to fire him?
 - Try Willy being absolutely still when Howard says: "I don't want you to represent us"
 - Try Willy grabbing Howard at some point
 - In Gregory Doran's production Willy also knocks something on to the floor during this scene and has to pick it up – just as he instructs Biff not to do. When might this happen?
- Invite students to discuss what differences they noticed.

RESOURCES

POSSIBLE TIMELINE OF EVENTS (COMPLETE)

The following timeline is a suggested sequence of events and timings.

1880s Ben Loman born

1886 Willy Loman Born

1890s

1890 Ben (allegedly) leaves the wagon in South Dakota to look for Dad

1890 Linda Loman born

1896-99 Klondike Gold Rush

1900s

1900-09 Nome Gold Rush (Alaska)

1901 Queen Victoria dies

1904 Willy goes out 'on the road'

1910s

1912 Willy starts working for Wagner Company

1913 Howard Wagner is born

1914 WW1 begins in Europe

1914-15 Lomans get married

1915 Bernard born

1915 Biff Loman born

1917 USA joins WW1

1917 Happy Loman born

1918 WW1 ends

1920s

1924 The Lomans buy house

1924-32 Ben visits, goes to Alaska and then returns through Brooklyn

1926-28 Gene Tunney Heavyweight Champion

1928 Al Smith nominated for President

1928 Willy Loman is promised advancement in the firm. Willy boasts he has had a good year.

1929 Wall Street Crash

1930s

1932 FDR elected President

1932 (Spring) Ebbet's Field All Scholastic Championship

1932 (June/July) Biff goes to Boston

1932 (July) Biff burns sneakers and fights Bernard

1932 Bernard graduates

1932-38 Biff works for Bill Oliver and several other odd jobs in New York including radio courses and television courses

1934 Happy graduates

1936-37 Biff takes correspondence course

1936-37 Bernard graduates college

1938 Biff leaves New York

1938-48 Biff works away from home

1939 WW2 starts in Europe

1940s

1941 Pearl Harbour

1945 (May) VE Day

1945 (August) Hiroshima / Nagasaki

1940-48? Biff is sent to prison for stealing a suit

1948 (Feb) Willy crashes car

Ben Loman dies

Willy Loman dies

POSSIBLE TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Ben Loman born

Willy Loman Born

Ben (allegedly) leaves the wagon in South Dakota to look for Dad

Linda Loman born

Klondike Gold Rush

Nome Gold Rush (Alaska)

Queen Victoria dies

Willy goes out 'on the road'

Willy starts working for Wagner Company

Howard Wagner is born

WW1 begins in Europe

Lomans get married

Bernard born

Biff Loman born

USA joins WW1

Happy Loman born

WW1 ends

Lomans buy house

Ben visits, goes to Alaska and then returns through Brooklyn

Gene Tunney Heavyweight Champion

Al Smith nominated for President

Howard makes a promise to Willy Loman about his advancement in the firm

Wall Street Crash

FDR elected President

(Spring) Ebbet's Field All Scholastic Championship

(June/July) Biff goes to Boston

(July) Biff burns sneakers and fights Bernard

Bernard graduates

Biff works for Bill Oliver and several other odd jobs in New York including radio courses and television courses

Happy graduates

Biff takes correspondence course

Bernard graduates college

Biff leaves New York

Biff works away from home

WW2 starts in Europe

Pearl Harbour

(May) VE Day

(August) Hiroshima / Nagasaki

Biff is sent to prison for stealing a suit

(Feb) Willy crashes car

Ben Loman dies

Willy Loman dies

SCRIPT EXTRACT 1: ACT 1 SCENE 2a

BIFF Why does Dad mock me all the time?

HAPPY He's not mocking you, he . . .

BIFF Everything I say there's a twist of mockery on his face. I can't get near him.

HAPPY He just wants you to make good, that's all. I wanted to talk to you about Dad for a long time, Biff. Something's happening to him. He . . . talks to himself.

BIFF I noticed that this morning. But he always mumbled.

HAPPY But not so noticeable. It got so embarrassing. I sent him to Florida. And you know something? Most of the time he's talking to you.

BIFF What's he say about me?

HAPPY I can't make it out.

BIFF What's he say about me?

HAPPY (*Crosses, kneels on BIFF'S bed.*) I think the fact that you're not settled, that you're still kind of up in the air . . .

BIFF There's one or two other things depressing him, Happy.

HAPPY What do you mean?

BIFF Never mind. Just don't lay it all to me.

HAPPY But I think if you just got started . . . I mean . . . is there any future for you out there?

BIFF I tell ya, Hap . . . I don't know what the future is; I don't know . . . what I'm supposed to want.

HAPPY (*Sits chair.*) What do you mean?

BIFF (*With frustration.*) Well, I spent six or seven years after high school trying to work myself up. Shipping clerk, salesman, business of one kind or another . . . and it's a measly manner of existence. To get on that subway on the hot mornings in summer; to devote your whole life to keeping stock, or making phone calls, or selling or buying. . . . To suffer fifty weeks of the year for the sake of a two-week vacation, when all you really desire is to be outdoors, with your shirt off. And always to have to get ahead of the next fella. . . . And still . . . somehow you build a future.

SCRIPT EXTRACT 2: ACT 1 SCENE 3a

BIFF *(Crossing C. to WILLY)* How's that, Pop, professional?

WILLY *(Looking toward car indicated.)* Terrific. Terrific job, boys. Good work, Biff.

HAPPY *(Who has followed BIFF.)* Where's the surprise, Pop?

WILLY In the back seat of the car.

HAPPY Boy! *(Runs off R. with pail and chamois.)*

BIFF What is it, Dad? Tell me, what'd you buy?

WILLY *(Hugs him and laughs as they walk in a little circle.)* Never mind, something I want you to have. . . .

BIFF What is it, Hap?

HAPPY *(Off R.)* It's a punching bag!

BIFF Oh, Pop!

WILLY It's got Gene Tunney's signature on it! *(HAPPY runs on with punching bag. Holds it up with both hands. Music fades out.)*

BIFF Gee, how'd you know we wanted a punching bag!? *(HAPPY lies down on his back, doing bicycle exercise.)*

WILLY *(Sparring with BIFF)* Well, it's the finest thing for the timing.

HAPPY *(On his back, pedalling.)* I'm losing weight, you notice, Pop?

WILLY *(To HAPPY.)* Jumping rope is good, too. *(HAPPY stops exercise.)*

BIFF Did you see the new football I got?

WILLY *(At C.)* Where'd you get a new ball?

BIFF *(Crossing L., feints passing.)* The coach told me to practice my passing.

WILLY *(Crosses L. to him.)* That so? And he gave you the ball, heh?

BIFF Well, I borrowed it from the locker room. *(Laughs confidentially.)*

WILLY *(Laughing with him at notion of the theft.)* I want you to return that.

HAPPY *(Tagging along behind WILLY)* I told you he wouldn't like it. *(Gets up.)*

BIFF *(Angered.)* Well, I'm bringing it back!

WILLY *(Cuts in. To HAPPY.)* Sure, he's gotta practice with a regulation ball, doesn't he? *(To BIFF.)* Coach'll probably congratulate you on your initiative!

BIFF Oh, he keeps congratulating my initiative all the time, Pop.

WILLY That's because he likes you. If somebody else took that ball there'd be an uproar. So what's the report, boys, what's the report? *(Puts arms around their shoulders and all cross D.)*

BIFF Where'd you go this time, Dad? Gee, we were lonesome for you.

WILLY *(Rumpling BIFF'S hair. Pleased.)* Lonesome, heh?

BIFF Missed you every minute.

WILLY Don't say! Tell you a secret, boys, don't breathe it to a soul. Some day I'll have my own business, and I'll never have to leave home any more.

HAPPY Like Uncle Charley, heh?

WILLY Bigger than Uncle Charley! Because Uncle Charley is not . . . liked. He's liked, but he's not . . . well liked.

BIFF Where'd you go this time, Dad? (*HAPPY flops down on his stomach, D. L. C. BIFF squats above and a little L. of him.*)

WILLY (*Crosses U. R. C.*) Well, I got on the road, and I went north to Providence. Met the Mayor.

BIFF (*Rises, awed.*) The Mayor of Providence!

WILLY He was sitting in the hotel lobby.

BIFF (*Squatting on football.*) What'd he say?

WILLY He said, "Morning!" And I said, "You got a fine city here, Mayor." And then he had a cup of coffee with me. And then I went to Waterbury. Waterbury is a fine city. Big clock city, the famous Waterbury clock. Sold a nice bill there. And then Boston - Boston is the cradle of the Revolution. A fine city. (*Crosses, sits D.C.*) And a couple of other towns in Mass., and on to Portland and Bangor and straight home!

BIFF (*Crossing R. a little.*) Gee, I'd love to go with you some time, Dad.

WILLY Soon as summer comes. . . .

HAPPY Promise?

WILLY You and Hap and I, and I'll show you all the towns. America is full of beautiful towns and fine, upstanding people. And they know me, boys, they know me up and down New England. The finest people. And when I bring you fellas up, there'll be open sesame for all of us, 'cause one thing, boys; I have friends. I can park my car in any street in New England, and the cops protect it like their own. This summer, heh. (*ALL rise.*)

LINES FOR CHARACTER BATTLES

BIFF

"We don't belong in this nut house of a city! We should be mixing cement on some open plain, or - or carpenters."

"And it's a measly manner of existence. To get on that subway on the hot mornings in summer. To devote your whole life to keeping stock, or making phone calls, or selling or buying."

"To suffer fifty weeks of the year for the sake of a two week vacation, when all you really desire is to be outdoors, with your shirt off."

"We could buy a ranch. Raise cattle, use our muscles."

"Men built like we are should be working out in the open"

"Listen, why don't you come out West with me?"

"The Loman Brothers"

"If I could get ten thousand or even eight thousand dollars. I could buy a beautiful ranch."

HAPPY

"I gotta show some of the pompous, self-important executives over there that Hap Loman can make the grade."

"That's fifty-two thousand dollars a year coming through the revolving door, and I got more in my pinky finger than he's got in his head."

"When he walks into the store the waves part in front of him"

"I want to walk into the store the way he walks in"

"He had a good dream. It's the only dream you can have - to come out number-one man. He fought it out here and this is where I'm gonna win it for him."

"I'm losing weight, you notice, Pop?"

CHARLEY

"My salvation is that I never took any interest in anything"

"The only thing you got in this world is what you can sell."

"A salesman is got to dream, boy. It comes with the territory"

"He's a man way out there in the blue, riding on a smile and a shoeshine"

"Willy, nobody's worth nothin' dead"

WILLY

"I realized that selling was the greatest career a man could want. 'Cause what could be more satisfying than being able to go, at the age of eighty-four, into twenty or thirty different cities, and pick up a phone and be remembered and loved and helped by so many different people?"

"that's the wonder, the wonder of this country, that a man can end with diamonds here on the basis of being liked"

"It's not what you say, it's how you say it - because personality always wins the day."

"It's not what you do, Ben. It's who you know and the smile on your face! It's contacts, Ben contacts!"

"They don't need me in New York. I'm the New England man. I'm vital in New England."

"I'm very well liked in Hartford"

"Someday I'll have my own business, and I'll never have to leave home any more."

"the man who makes an appearance in the business world, "the man who creates personal interest, is the man who gets ahead."

"Be liked and you will ever want."

BEN

"William, when I walked into the jungle, I was seventeen. When I walked out I was twenty-one. And, by God, I was rich!"

"Now, look here, William. I've bought timberland in Alaska and I need a man to look after things for me."

"There's a new continent at your doorstep, William. Get out of these cities, they're full of talk and time payments and courts of law.

Screw on your fists and you can fight for a fortune up there. You could walk out rich!"

"What are you building? Lay your hand on it. Where is it?"

"Never fight fair with a stranger, boy. You'll never get out of the jungle that way."

LINDA

"He's got a beautiful job here"

"You're doing well enough, Willy!"

"Old man Wagner told him just the other day that if he keeps it up he'll be a member of the firm"

"Why must everybody conquer the world? You're well liked, and the boys love you"

SCENE BREAKDOWN

Act. Scen e	Scene Name	First line of Scene	Who is in the Scene
1.1		Willy: Oh boy, oh boy!	Willy, Linda, Biff, Happy
1.2a		Happy: Jesus, maybe he smashed up the car again!	Willy, Linda, Biff, Happy
1.2b		Willy: You gonna wash the engine, Biff?	Willy, Happy, Biff
1.3a		Willy: Just Wanna be careful with those girls	Willy, Happy, Biff
1.3b		Bernard: Biff, Where are you?	Willy, Bernard, Happy, Biff
1.3c		Happy: I'm losing weight	Willy, Linda, Bernard, Happy, Biff, (Voices)
1.3d		Linda: The way they obey him	Willy, Linda
1.3e		Willy: Ah, no, Linda.	Willy, Linda, Women
1.3f		Linda: You are, Willy.	Willy, Linda, Bernard
1.4a		Happy: Let's go now,	Willy, Happy
1.4b		Willy: Christ's sake, I couldn't get past Yonkers	Willy, Happy, Charley
1.4c		Charley: Couldn't sleep good.	Willy, Happy, Charley
1.4d		Willy: That's funny.	Willy, Charley, Ben
1.4e		Willy: Ben! I've been waiting for you so long!	Willy, Linda, Bernard, Charley, Ben, Happy, Biff
1.5a		Willy: ...Was Rich!	Willy, Linda, Happy, Biff
1.5b		Biff: What is he doing out there?	Willy, Linda, Happy, Biff
1.5c		Willy: Even your grandfather was better	Willy, Linda, Happy, Biff
1.5d		Happy: Wait a ...	Willy, Linda, Happy, Biff
1.5e		Linda: What'd you have to start that for?	Willy, Linda, Happy, Biff

2.1		Willy: Wonderful coffee	Willy, Linda
2.1b		Linda: Be Careful	Willy, Linda, Howard
2.2a		Willy: Pst! Pst!	Willy, Howard
2.2b		Howard: Willy, I gotta see some people.	Willy, Howard
2.2c		Howard: What happened?	Willy, Howard, Ben
2.3a		Willy: Oh, Ben, how did you do it?	Willy, Linda, Ben
2.3b		Linda: Oh you're back	Willy, Linda, Ben
2.3c		Willy: Why am I wrong?	Willy, Linda, Ben, Happy, Biff
2.3d		Bernard: oh, gee, I was...	Willy, Linda, Bernard, Charley, Happy, Biff
2.4a		Willy: Put up your hands	Willy, Linda, Bernard, Biff, Jenny
2.4b		Willy: Jenny...Jenny	Willy, Bernard, Jenny
2.4c		Willy: Well, don't...don't talk to me that way!	Willy, Bernard, Charley
2.4d		Willy: The Supreme Court	Willy, Charley, Happy, Stanley
2.5a		Stanley: That's all right	Happy, Stanley
2.5b		Stanley: Ah, no, there's no	Happy, Miss Forsyth, Stanley
2.5c		Happy: You know what they say in France,	Happy, Biff, Miss Forsyth, Stanley
2.5d		Happy: Isn't that a shame	Happy, Biff, Stanley
2.5e		Happy: Dad is never so happy as when he is...	Willy, Happy, Biff, Stanley
2.5f		Bernard: Mrs Loman...	Willy, Linda, Happy, Biff, Bernard
2.5g		Operators Voice: Standish Arms, good evening!	Willy, Happy, Biff, Women, Operator
2.5h		Happy: Hello, girls, sit down.	Willy, Women, Letta, Happy, Miss Forsyth, Biff, Stanley
2.5j		Stanley: Mr Loman!	Willy, Women, Biff, Stanley
2.5k		Stanley: Hey, Let's pick it up, Mister Loman.	Willy, Stanley, Other Waiter
2.6a		Happy: Heh, What're you doing up?	Willy, Linda, Happy, Biff
2.6b		Willy: Carrots. . .	Willy, Linda, Ben, Happy, Biff
2.6c		Ben: Yes, outstanding,	Willy, Linda, Bernard, Charley, Ben, Happy, Biff
2.7		Charley: It's getting dark, Linda.	Linda, Bernard, Charley, Happy, Biff