

arena's page

miller festival study guide

contents

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

The Play
Characters at a Glance

contents

DEATH OF A SALESMAN

The Play
Characters at a Glance

Meet the Playwright

Arthur Miller & Arena Stage

What is Rotating Repertory?

The Common Man as Tragic Hero

Title Words

Issues of His Day and Ours

Additional Resources

the play

Eddie Carbone is a simple dockworker trying to provide for his wife, **Beatrice**, and niece, **Catherine**. When Beatrice's cousins **Rodolpho** and **Marco** immigrate illegally to the United States, he takes them in without a

second thought. Catherine immediately falls in love with Rodolpho despite Eddie's disapproval. As Eddie rapidly loses control over his family, his behavior becomes dangerous, and events teeter on the brink of explosion.

CHARACTERS AT A GLANCE

Eddie Carbone— a hardworking longshoreman, whose suppressed love for his niece drives him to jealousy, betrayal and violence

Alfieri— Eddie's lawyer, who serves as the narrator for the play and acts as a bridge between American law and Italian culture

Catherine— Eddie's smart, beautiful young niece, who falls in love with Rodolpho

Beatrice— Eddie's wife, a warm woman who cares for all the people in her life

Marco— Beatrice's cousin from Italy, who has come to the United States illegally as a **bird of passage**

Rodolpho— Marco's brother who has come to the United States for a new life and is the object of Catherine's affections

■ **Bird of Passage**—Italian men, usually in their 20s, who immigrated to the United States, often leaving wives and children behind in Italy, with the intention of making money quickly and then returning home.



The Arthur Miller Festival

March 14 – May 18, 2008

Now showing at Arena Stage in Crystal City

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

by Arthur Miller
directed by Daniel Aukin



miller festival study guide

contents

DEATH OF A SALESMAN

The Play
Characters at a Glance

contents

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

The Play
Characters at a Glance

Meet the Playwright

Arthur Miller & Arena Stage

What is Rotating Repertory?

The Common Man as Tragic Hero

Title Words

Issues of His Day and Ours

Additional Resources

the play

Willy Loman has lived his life on a shoeshine and a smile. A traveling salesman in the 1940s, Willy believes that being well-liked is the key to life and teaches his sons to believe this too. But Willy's life is coming apart at the seams. His sons are disappointments—the oldest, **Biff**, is an unmotivated drifter; the younger, **Happy**, a

compulsive liar. Willy is no longer earning a salary and must borrow money from his neighbor **Charley** to pay the bills each month. His wife, **Linda**, can only stand by and watch. As Willy's life unravels, so does his mind. The play becomes a tangled web of reality and memories, propelling Willy to a drastic, final decision.

CHARACTERS AT A GLANCE

Willy Loman— an aging salesman who finds his dreams for himself and his sons constantly frustrated, causing him to dwell increasingly in the past

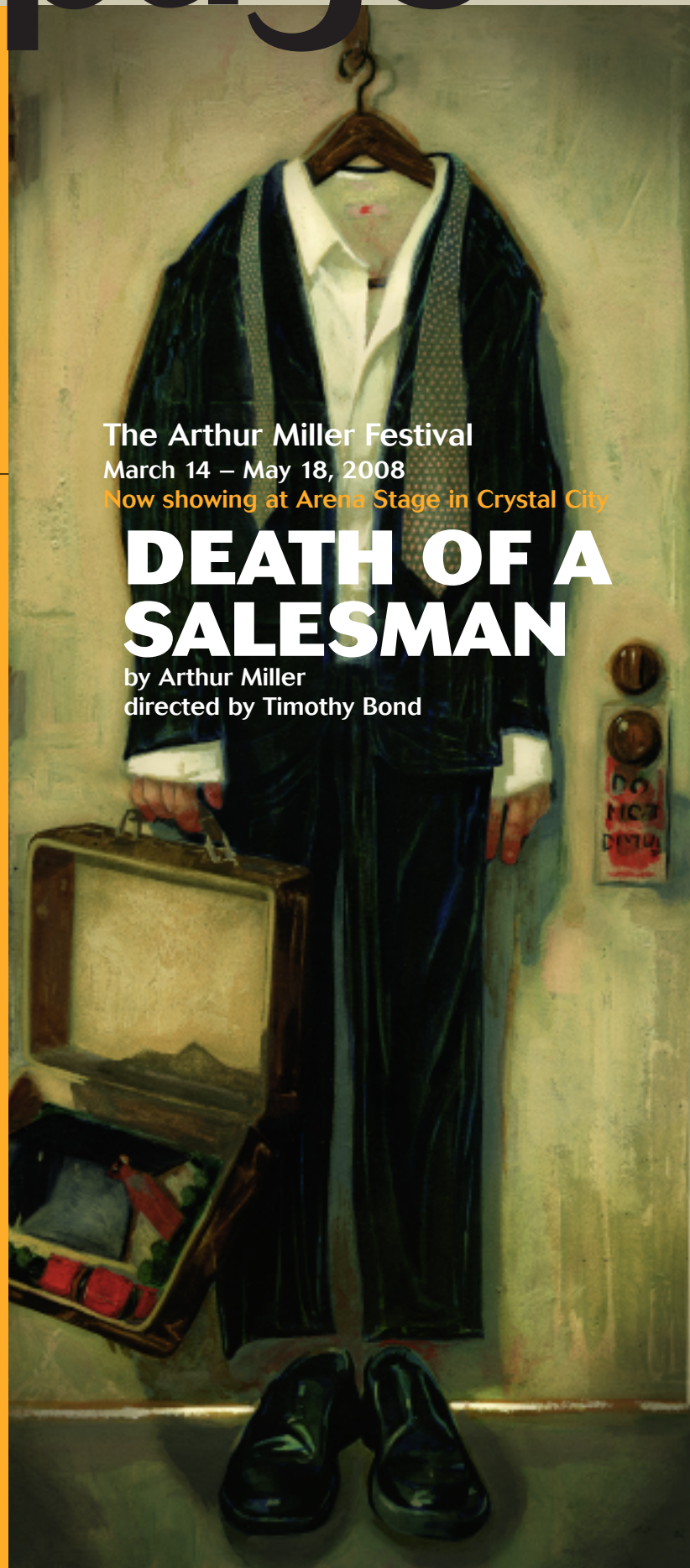
Linda— Willy's dedicated and long-suffering wife, she strives to hold the family together but finds herself unable to save Willy

Biff— Willy's older son; since his early success as a high school football star, he has given up on his life, becoming Willy's greatest disappointment

Happy— Willy's younger son; he womanizes and exaggerates his own importance to win his father's approval

Charley— Willy's only friend; his success and that of his bookish son Bernard contrast with the failure of Willy's dreams

Uncle Ben— Willy's more successful brother, whose early success with diamond mines in Africa and lumber ventures in Alaska has haunted Willy all his life



The Arthur Miller Festival

March 14 – May 18, 2008

Now showing at Arena Stage in Crystal City

DEATH OF A SALESMAN

by Arthur Miller

directed by Timothy Bond