Chloe de Beaupre

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Mr. Barazzuol

Setting of the Loman’s House

Setting is used to describe the location and to initiate the mood of a story. Having knowledge of the setting is very important to understanding the story because it allows the reader to visualize where it takes place. The play, “Death of a Salesman,” written by Arthur Miller is about Willy Loman and his struggles as he grew older. The story was placed in the 1950’s, an era of hope and change. Willy and his wife, Linda, bought a small house in Brooklyn, New York to raise their two sons, Biff and Happy. As time went on, development started in their neighbourhood and as the house grew older it would be blockaded in by tall apartments and industrial buildings. Willy was not happy about the removal of nature in his neighbourhood as he complained to Linda, “The street is lined with cars. There’s not a breath of fresh air in the neighborhood. The grass don’t grow any more, you can’t raise a carrot in the back yard” (Miller 15). Brooklyn was changing into a busy city instead of the quiet suburb Willy knew and loved. The Loman’s were not poor, but they did not live comfortably which the inside of their house reflected. The house was not spacious, “Behind the kitchen, on a level raised six and a half feet, is the boys’ bedroom, at present barely visible. Two beds are dimly seen, and at the back of the room a dormer window. At the left a stairway curves up to it from the kitchen” (Miller 11). The house was one level with two split levels for the bedrooms. Willy and Linda had one bedroom and Biff and Happy shared the second. The house was only furnished with necessities as there was no space or money for anything else. Natural light was rare, came from directly above the house, orange industrial lights shone through the windows lighting up the entire house. The atmosphere was suffocating as there was no fresh air let into the house due to the massive infrastructure surrounding it. There was always desire and expectations, but no satisfaction. Partly due to his mental illness, Willy was not able to bring home enough to cover weekly expenses even though he continued to work with ambition. He would come home to Biff, his thirty-four-year-old son, who had potential, but lacked enthusiasm. Everyone inside the house and the house itself never felt fulfilled. The Loman house played a crucial role in the story as most of Willy’s memories were created there. Setting impacts the reasoning of how the story unravels and how the audience feels. Authors can use setting to manipulate or lift the narrative.

Works Cited

Miller, Arthur. *Death of a Salesman*. 1952.