P1: Lina

P2: James

P2: What is success? (Hook question) Views vary from person to person.

P1: Today, our podcast is going to tell you issues about success in Death of a salesman. My name is Lina and this is my partner James.

P2: Hey everyone.

P1: Okay, let’s get started, So in the play, “Death of a Salesman” takes place in a post world war society and is about a salesman named Willy Loman, and his daily struggles. These struggles include success, family, dreams, and money.

P2: Throughout the play, you get to see into Willy and his American dream, his tragic story of success and how he interacts with people around him.

P1: So, what is the definition of success for you, James?

P2: Success for me to say, well, my idea of success means to have a goal, plan the steps to achieve the goal, implement the plan, and finally achieve the goal. Surround by those that I love, and having the freedom to do what I love. (For sure) Speaking of success, in Willy’s perspective, being well-liked, getting well-paid working in a big city, become popular, that’s the stereotypical American dream he’s chasing, a dream that wasn’t really his. (s)

P1: Yea, Willy believes that personality, not hard work and innovation, is the key to success. Does Willy achieves the American Dream, or does the American Dream fail him?

P2: This is of course unrealistic. Willy believes that a man is only successful if he is well-liked and attractive. It does not matter if they work hard as long as he is very well-liked. However, Willy’s version of the American Dream never pans out. His downfall is that he does not equate success with hard work and perseverance. This is the type of thinking keeps him from achieving his personal goals of wealth and status.

P1: In the play, Willy’s being a younger son with an absent father. Does this have a certain impact on his success?

P2: I think yes, in the play, Willy is a younger son without an absent father. He lacks the teaching and care of his father. He can only rely on himself for anything. In the process, his brother Ben has influenced him a lot. He feels that success means having money and getting people's love, but he has not got the right guidance. This is one of the reasons why he failed to succeed.

P1: Absolutely, I think that is also one of the reasons why he has difficulty communicating with Biff afterward. Biff’s and Willy’s relationship was very strained because Willy always had high expectations for Biff and expected him to follow in his footsteps, but Willy never let Biff decide what he wanted to do. (Yea, that’s true) And he places so much pressure on his sons to get out into the world and stake their claim—as he's been unable to do. Willy seemed to be absent from his home and as years dragged on his job affected his mental health, which brought him to his downfall. (Q10)

P2: Yea, and I think that their differences opinion of success also leads them to the argument. Biff is pulled by two different dreams. One dream is his father’s world of business and sales. But another dream is to work with his hands. However, by the end of the play, Biff realizes that his father had the “wrong” dream.  During the funeral of his father, Biff decides that he will not allow that to happen to himself. He turns away from Willy’s dream and returns to the countryside to work with his hands.

P1: Q5 In addition, I think Linda as Biff’s mother and Willy’s wife has also played a role in that. An example of a female gender role is when Linda comes in and talks to Willy about the future of Willy. On page 65, she said “Oliver always thought the highest of him -” And Willy interrupted her “Will you let me talk?” And when Linda wanna talked to Willy, Willy interrupted her once again with impatient mood “ Don’t take his side all the time, goddammit!”

P2: Uh I see, you mean gender has played a part at this point.

P1: Definitely, speaking of gender role in this play, Arthur Miller has been criticized for his portrayal of women. Then how do gender roles are displayed in Death of a salesman in your thoughts?

P2: Oh well, under Arthur Miller’s descriptions of women in this play, they are treated as objects as we can tell.

P1: For sure.

P2: It seems that Linda pays attention to reconciliation between her husband and her son, and selflessly help them solve the problem. No matter what Willy says to Linda, she never strays from his side. She always has an excuse or a reason why Willy is the way he is.

P1: Exactly, and you can see in history, women, for the most part, did not work, but instead were the homemakers who cooked and cleaned. Women had little or no value to the business world because they were not expected to be of any value. This way of thinking is completely old-fashioned, but it happened all the time.

P1: However, I wonder if gender can really affect a person's success?

P2: I think it may be. Nowadays, there are still some inequalities in gender. The United States once conducted a survey and asked the passing people to think that it is a male business mind. Or is the female business mind good? The results were surprising, with 70% of the public thinking that men are better than women's business acumen. 30% of these 70% of the citizens are women. Therefore, in order to get a business, women can only get a higher-quality instrument and accept a higher level of education in order to be recognized.

P1: After you say this, I also think that happens in most cases. People think that women's ability to paint and cook is better than men because women will be more draw and ingenious. In all cases, the same academic qualifications go to work, and the admission rate may be higher for women. But I don't think this can be a sign of success or not.

P2: Yea, you’re right. We can't deny the success and efforts of others because of gender, we must have the same treatment and attention.

P1: This is the main content of our podcast today, thank you for your listening, hope it can help you better understand the death of a salesman, but also make you aware of the importance of gender equality.

P2: That’s all for today. Thank you and Bye-bye.