APPENDIX I

SUMMARY DEATH OF A SALESMAN

Willy loman, a mercurial sixty-years old salesman with calluses on his hands, returns home tired and confused. His wife Linda greets him, but worries that he has smashed the car. He reassures her that nothing has happened, but tells her that he only got as far as Yonkers and does not remember all of the details of his trip, he kept swerving into the shoulder of the road, and had to drive slowly to return home. Linda tells him that he needs to rest his mind, and that he should work in New York, but he feels that he is not needed there. He thinks that if Frank Wagner were alive he would be in charge of New York, but his son, Howard, does not appreciate him as much. Linda tells him how Happy, his younger son, took Biff, his oldest son, out on a double-date, and it was nice to see them both at home. She reminds Willy not to lose his temper with Biff, but willy feels that there is an undercurrent of resentment in Biff. Linda says that Biff is crestfallen and admires Willy. They argue about whether or not Biff is lazy, and Willy believes that Biff is a person who will get started later in life, and Willy believes that biff is a person who will get started later in life, like as Edison or B.F. Goodrich.

Biff loman, at thirty-four, is well-built but not at self-assured. Happy, two years younger, is equally tall and powerful, but is confused because he has never risked failure. The two brothers discuss their father, thinking that his condition is deteriorating. Biff wonders why his father mocks him, but Happy says that he merely wants Biff to live up to his potential. Biff claims he has had twenty or thirty different jobs since he left home before the war, but has been fired from each. He reminisces about herding cattle and wistfully remembers working outdoors. Biff worries that he is still merely a boy, while happy says that despite the fact that he has his own car, apartment, and plenty of woman he is still unfulfilled. Happy believes that he should not have to take orders at work from men over whom he is physically superior. He also talks about how he has no respect for the woman he seduces, and really wants a woman with character, such as their mother. Biff thinks that he may try again to work for Bill Oliver, for whom he worked years ago but quit after stealing a carton of basketballs from him.
The play shifts in time to the loman house years before, when Biff and Happy were teenagers. Willy reminds the teenage Biff not to make promises to any girls, because they will always believe what you tell them. I too young to consider them seriously. Happy brags that he is losing weight, while Biff shows Willy he took from the locker room. Willy claims that someday he’ll have his own business like Charley, their next door neighbor. His business will be bigger than Charley’s, because Charley is “liked, but not well-liked.” Willy brags about meeting the mayor of Providence and knowing the finest people in New England. Bernard, Charley’s son, enters and tells Willy that he is worried that Biff will fail math class and not to be able to attend UVA. Willy tells Bernard not to be a pest and to leave. After Bernard leaves, Willy tells his sons that Bernard, like Charley, is liked but not well-liked. Willy claims that, although Bernard gets the best grades in school, in the business world it is personality that matters and that his sons will succeed. After the boys leave, Linda enters and Willy discusses his worry that people don’t respect him. Linda reassures him and points out that his sons idolize him.

Miller returns to the more recent past for a short scene that takes place in a hotel room in Boston. A nameless woman puts on a scarf and Willy tells her that he gets lonely and worries about his business. The woman claims that she picked Willy for his sense of humor, and Willy promises to see her the next time he is in Boston.

Willy, back in the kitchen with Linda, scolds her for mending her own stockings, claiming that she should not have to do such menial things. He goes out on the porch, where he tells Bernard to give Biff the answers to the regents exam. Bernard refuses because it is a state exam. Linda tells Willy that Biff is too rough with the girls, while Bernard says that Biff is driving without a license and will flunk math. Willy, who hears the voice of the woman from the hotel room, screams at Linda that there is nothing wrong with Biff, and asks her if she wants her son to be a worm like Bernard. Linda, in tears, exits into the living room.

The play returns to the past, where Willy introduces his sons to Ben, whom he calls a great man. Ben in turn boasts that his father was a great man and inventor. Willy shows off his sons to Ben, who tells them never to fight fair with a stranger, for they will never get out of the jungle that way. Charley reprimands Willy for letting his sons
steal from the nearby construction site, but Willy says that his kids are a couple of “fearless characters”. While Charley says that the jails are full of fearless characters, Ben says that so is the stock exchange.

The play returns to the present, where Happy and Biff ask Linda how long Willy has been talking to himself, Linda claims that this has been going on for years, and she would have told Biff if she had an address at which she could contact him. She confronts Biff about his animosity toward Willy, but Biff claims that he is trying to change his behaviour. He tells Linda that she should dye her hair again, for the doesn’t want his mother to look old. Linda asks Biff if he cares about Willy for if he doesn’t he cannot care about her. Finally, she tells her sons that Willy has attempted suicide by trying to drive his car off a bridge, and by hooking a tube up to the gas heater in the basement. She says that Willy is not a great man, but is a human being and “attention must be paid” to him. Biff relents and promises not to fight with his father. He tells his parents that he will go to see Bill Oliver to talk about a sporting goods business he could start with Happy. Willy claims that if Biff had stayed with Oliver he would be on top by now.

The next day, Willy sits in the kitchen, feeling rested for the first time in months, Linda claims that Biff has a new, hopeful attitude, and the two dram about buying a little place in the country. Willy says that he will talk to Howard Wagner today and ask to be taken off the road. As soon as Willy leaves, Linda gets a phone call from Biff. She tells him that the pipe Willy connected to the gas heater is gone.

At the office of Howard Wagner, Willy’s boss. Howard shows Willy his new wire recorder as Willy attempts to ask for a job in New York. Howard insists that is a road man, but Willy claims that it is time for him to be more settled. He has the right to it because he has been in the firm since Howard was a child, and even named him. Willy claims that there is is no room for personality or friendship in the salesman position anymore, and begs for any sort of salary, giving lower and lower figures. Willy insists that Howard’s father made promises to him. Howard leaves, and Willy leans on his desk, turning on the wire recorder. This frighten Willy, who shouts for Howard. Howard returns, exasperated, and fires Willy, telling him that he needs a good, long rest and should rely on his sons instead of working.
Willy hallucinates that Ben enters and Linda, as a young man, tells Willy that he should stay in New York. Not everybody has to conquer the world and Frank Wagner promised that Willy will someday be a member of the firm. Willy tells the younger versions of Biff and Happy that it’s “who you know” that matters. Bernard arrives, and begs Biff to let him carry his helmet to the big game at Ebbets Fields, while Willy becomes insulted that Charley may have forgotten about the game.

The play returns to the present day, where the adult Bernard sits in his father’s office. His father’s secretary, Jenny, enters and tells Bernard that Willy is shouting in the hallway. Willy talks to Bernard who will argue a case in Washington soon and whose wife has just given birth to their second son. Willy wonders why Biff’s life ended after the Ebbets Field game, and Bernard asks why Willy didn’t make Biff go to summer school so that he could go to UVA. Bernard pinpoints the timing of Biff’s failure to his father in New England, after which Biff burned his UVA Sneakers. He wonders what happened during that visit. Charley enters, and tells Willy that Bernard will argue a case in front of the supreme court. Charley criticizes Willy for thinking that personality is the only thing that matters in business. Willy remains that a person is worth more dead than alive, and tells Charley that, eventhough they dislike one another, Charley is the only friend he has.

At the restaurant where Willy is to meet his sons, Happy flirts with a woman and tells her that Biff is a quarterback with the New York Giants. Biff admits to happy that he did a terrible thing during his meeting with Bill Oliver. Bill did not remember Biff, who pocketed his fountain pen before he left. Biff insists that they tell their father about this tonight. Willy arrives and tells his sons that he was fired. Although Biff tries to lie to Willy about his meeting, Biff and Willy fight. Biff finally gives up and tries to explain. As this occurs, Willy hallucinates about arguing with the younger versions of Biff. Miss Forsythe, the woman with whom Happy was flirting, returns with another woman and prepares to go out on a double date with Happy and Biff. Happy denies that Willy is their father.

Willy imagines being back in the hotel room in Boston with the woman. The teenage Biff arrives at the hotel and tells Willy that the failed math class and begs his father to talk to Mr. Birnbaum. Biff hears the woman, who is hiding in the bathroom.
Willy lies to Biff, telling him that the woman is merely there to take a shower because she is staying in the next room and her shower is broken. Biff realizes what is going on. Willy throws the wooman out, and she yells at him for breaking the promises he made to her. Willy admits the affair to Biff, but promises that the woman meant nothing to him and that he was lonely.

At the restaurant, the waiter helps Willy and tells him that his sons left with two woman. Willy insists on finding a seed store so that he can doo some painting. When Biff and Happy return home, they give their mother flowers. She asks them if they care whether their father lives or dies, and says that they would not even abondon a stranger at the restaurannt as they did their father. Willy is planting in the garden. He imagines talking to ben about his funeral, and claims that people will come from all over the country to his funeral, because he is well known. Ben says that willy will be a coward if he commits suicide. Willy tells Biff that he cut his life downn for spite, and refuses to take the blame for Biff’s failure.

Biff confronts him about the rubber to be atteached to the gas heater, and tells his mother thhat it was he, not Willy., who took it away. Biff also admits that his parents could not contact him because he was in jail for three months. Biff insists that men like he and willy are a dime a dozenn, but Willy claims otherise. Biff cries for his father, asking him to give up his dreams, but willy is merely amazed that he would cry his father. Happy view to get married and settle down, while everybody but Willy goes to sleep. Willy talks to Ben, then rushes out of the house and speeds out away in his car. Happy and Biff coome flowers on Willy’s grave.

Only his wife, sons and Charley attend Willy’s funeral. Linda wonders where everybody else is, and says that they have made their final house payment and are free and clear after thirty-five years. Biff claims that Willy had the wrong dreams, but Charley says that a salesman must dream, and that for a salesman there is no rock bottom in life. Biff asks Happy to leave the city with him, but Happy views to stay in new york and prove that this his father did not die in vain. Everybody leaves but Linda, who remains at the grave and talks about how she made the final house payment.