

Act One: Scene Twelve

Summary

Linda tells Biff to tell Willy goodnight so that he will end the day on a positive note. Biff borrows money from Happy to buy some new ties. Happy tells Biff to move into his apartment with him. Linda tells Willy the shower needs repair, and he becomes irate. Linda wonders if Bill Oliver will remember Biff, but Willy assures her that he will. Willy proclaims that Biff's experience wandering from job to job will prove valuable. Biff tells Willy and Linda goodnight, and Willy advises Biff to ask for fifteen thousand dollars, and he assures Biff that he (Biff) has "all kinds of greatness" in him. Willy ignores Linda's comments and tells her to quit interrupting. Willy reminisces about one of Biff's football games. Linda asks Willy what Biff knows about his past that he is holding against him, but Willy refuses to answer. Downstairs, Biff finds the rubber tubing behind the heater and removes it.

Analysis

Scene 12 continues the uneasy truce between Willy and Biff. Willy is exhausted, but he seems to be at peace as he anticipates Biff's imminent success. In addition, he feels confident that Howard will give him a job in New York, thereby eliminating the need for travel. He will finally be able to work in town, raise vegetables in the garden, and observe Biff succeed.

Linda's hesitant question suggests that she is not quite convinced that everything is okay. Likewise, Biff does not believe he and Willy have reestablished their relationship. In fact, as he removes the rubber tubing, Biff assumes the peace in the house is only temporary. Linda's uncertainty and Biff's doubt leave the audience with the expectation that the "order" achieved is only short-lived.

Glossary

buck up [Informal]to cheer up.

caliber degree of worth or value of a person or thing; quality or ability.

Hercules in Greek and Roman myth, the son of Zeus and Alcmene, renowned for his strength and courage, especially, as shown in his performance of twelve labors imposed on him.

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