



Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*

Symbolism

By

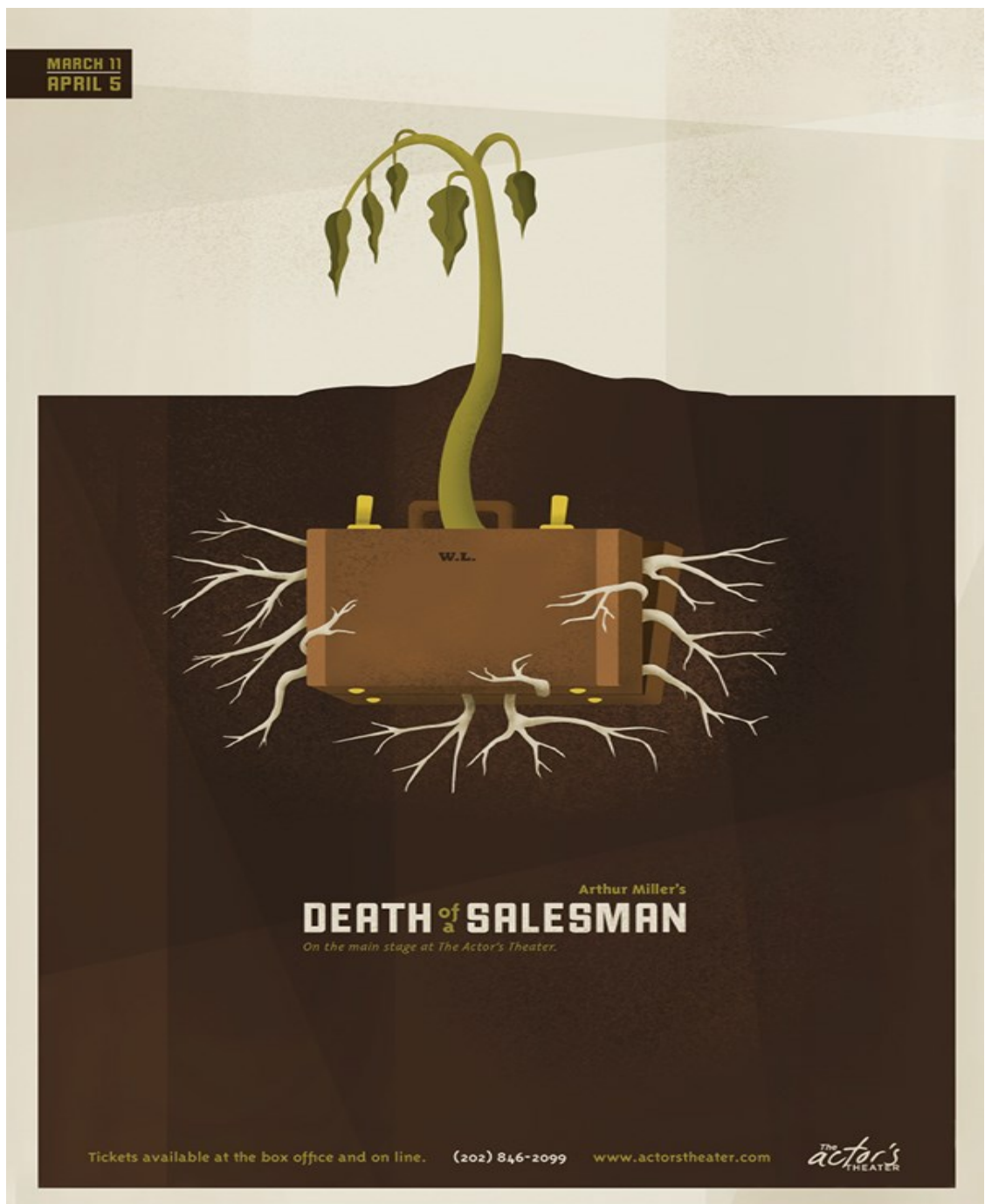
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The Seeds

The Seeds represent for Willy the opportunity to prove the worth of his labor, both as a salesman and a father.

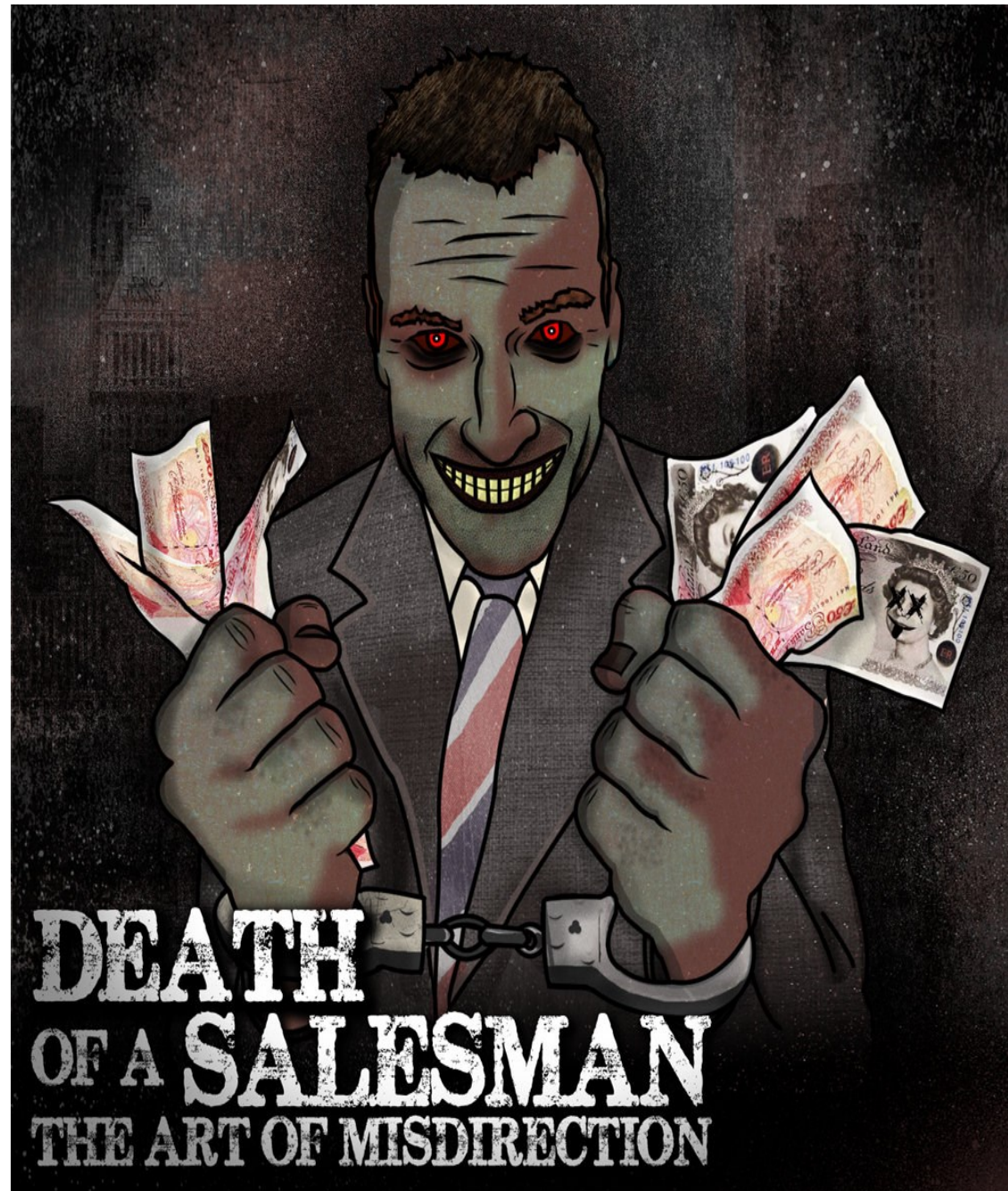




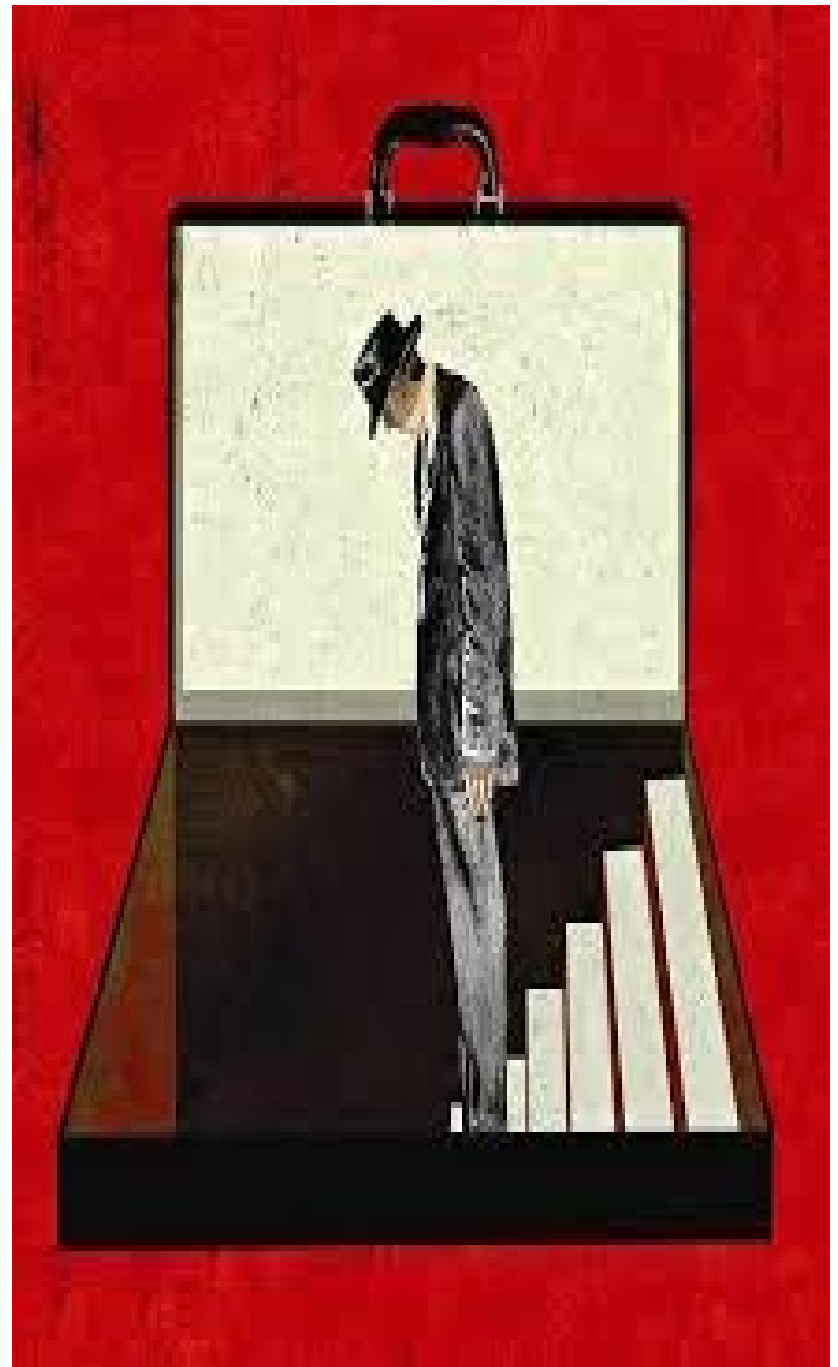
Willy's desperate,
nocturnal attempt to
grow vegetables
signifies his shame
about having nothing to
leave his children when
he passes. The seeds
also symbolize Willy's
sense of failure.

Diamonds

To Willy, diamonds represent tangible wealth and the ability to pass material goods on to one's offspring, two things that Willy desperately craves.



Diamonds, the discovery of which made Ben a fortune, symbolize Willy's failure as a salesman. At the end of the play, Ben encourages Willy to enter the jungle finally and retrieve the diamond—that is, to kill himself for insurance money in order to make his life meaningful.



Stockings

When he discovers
Willy and The Woman
in a Boston hotel room,
the teenage Biff
accuses his father of
giving away Linda's
stockings to The
Woman.



Stockings assume a metaphorical weight as a symbol of betrayal and sexual infidelity. They symbolize Willy's inability to ease his guilt about, and suppress the memory of, his betrayal of Linda and Biff.



Willy suffers from pangs of guilt and anger when he sees Linda mending her stockings. Willy's affair with the Woman is further evidence of his shortcomings, and illustrates how he has failed to live up to his own image of himself as the ideal husband and father.

