All my sons symbols chart free printable worksheets

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AN EXAMPLE OF THE BEAUTY OF DRAMATIC LITERATURE: Mother's destruction of Joe in the climax of Act II is one of the great passages of dramatic literature. Under Chris' threat to leave the business, Joe has made the mistake of ridiculing Kate's belief that Larry is alive. ("[For] three and a half years you've been talking like a maniac." Act II, p
Chris, I've never said no to you in my life, now I say no! CHRIS: You'll never let him go along — MOTHER, with no less force, but turning from him: Then let your father go. Pause. Chris stands transfixed. KELLER: She's out of her mind.
MOTHER: Altogether! To Chris, but not facing them: Your brother's alive, darling, because if he's dead, your father killed him. Do you understand me now? As long as you live, that boy is alive. God does not let a son be killed by his father. Now you see, don't you? Now you see. Beyond control, she hurries up and into the house. KELLER — Chris has
not moved. He speaks insinuatingly, questioningly: She's out of her mind. CHRIS in a broken whisper: Then . . . you did it? (Act II, pp. 144 – 145.) Mother's statement outing Joe is, at the same time: (1) a neurotic fixation of the character because at one level she maintains the fiction that Larry is dead and she is asking Chris to abandon reality and
maintain the fiction with her; (2) a statement that Joe killed the 21 pilots because she knows at another level that Larry is dead and she also knows that Chris believes that Larry is dead; (3) an excellent example of non-logical emotional thinking revealing a deep human truth, i.e., if Joe killed the 21 pilots, he has joined in the killing of pilots and he is
therefore partially responsible for Larry's death; (4) the playwright's statement of a moral truth that "they were all my sons", that we are all one community and killing any one of us is a crime against us all; (5) a dramatic device to explicate the theme that not telling the truth warps family relations; (6) a dramatic device that advances the plot, (7) a
statement about Mother herself, because of her complicity in the crime (you can substitute the word Mother for the word Mother for the word that the crime (you can substitute the word Mother for the word Mother for the word that the crime (you can substitute the word Mother for the word Mother for the word Mother for the word Mother for the word father" in her statement and it works just as well); and (8) a monumental irony because, as we find out in Act III, Mother's statement is literally true: Joe did cause Larry's death by driving his son to suicide when Larry heard that
Joe had been convicted. STRUCTURE: "All My Sons" has the basic structure of the universe occurred before the curtain rises. They are revealed to the audience piecemeal during the play as the effects of the originating events ripple outward
and take over the action of the play leading to the crisis and restoration of the moral order. Another way of looking at structure is that the play provides the audience with successive, ever deeper glimpses into the reality that is hidden by appearances. Or, to put it another way, reality is successively peeled back to reveal the appearance below. Since
the world itself operates on the levels of appearance and reality, by bringing together the two worlds of [the] manifest and the hidden, Miller creates a realistic world as it exists today and what they are, characterizes the
modern world. The main interest of the play comes from juxtaposition of these paradoxical aspects of the world . . . . The Manifest and the Hidden in Arthur Miller's "All My Sons" by Ramesh K. Srivastava in Perspectives on Arthur Miller edited by Atma Ram THE USE OF LANGUAGE: Joe Keller, Chris Keller and Mother are continually asking
questions. There are different types of questions. Some are just normal dialog. In addition, Joe Keller uses questions are not answered and serve as signals for where the play will go. Here are a few examples. When Chris tells Joe that Mother was up at night, saw
Larry's tree break in the wind, and then cried, Joe says, "She's getting just like after he died. . . . What's the meaning of that?" p. 95; After Mother describes her experiences of the night before as "more than just a dream" and complains about Joe and Chris rushing into planting the tree ("Everybody was in such a hurry to bury him."), Chris says, "Thea meaning of that?" p. 95; After Mother describes her experiences of the night before as "more than just a dream" and complains about Joe and Chris rushing into planting the tree ("Everybody was in such a hurry to bury him."), Chris says, "Thea meaning of that?" p. 95; After Mother describes her experiences of the night before as "more than just a dream" and complains about Joe and Chris rushing into planting the tree ("Everybody was in such a hurry to bury him."), Chris says, "Thea meaning of that?" p. 95; After Mother describes her experiences of the night before as "more than just a dream" and complains about Joe and Chris rushing into planting the tree ("Everybody was in such a hurry to bury him."), Chris says, "Thea meaning of that?" p. 95; After Mother describes her experiences of the night before as "more than just a dream" and complains about Joe and Chris rushing into planting the tree ("Everybody was in such a hurry to bury him."), Chris says, "Thea meaning of that a hurry to bury him."
wind blew it down. What significance has that got? What are you talking about?; p. 101; Mother says to Joe, "You above all have got to believe [that Larry is still alive] . . . ." and Joe responds "Why me above all? p. 103 Mother: "Why did that happen the very night she came back? Laugh but there are meanings in such things. She goes to sleep in his
room and his memorial breaks in pieces. Look at it; look." Act I p. 103 Joe Keller asks, "Well, what have I got to hide? p. 104. When Joe says, "To his last day in court the man blamed it all on me; and this is his daughter. I mean if she was sent here to find out?" p. 117 When Chris
asks, "What's the matter George, what's the matter?" George responds, "The trouble? The trouble?
unanswered question, "That's been your trouble all your life, George, you dive into things. What kind of a statement is that to make?" Ibid. At other comments: "It's so funny . .. everything decides to happen at the same time. This month is his birthday; his tree blows
down, Annie comes. Everything that happened seems to be coming back. I was just down the cellar, and what do I stumble over? His baseball glove. I haven't see that in a century." p. 100 The effect of these questions is to build tension and keep the audience interested. PLOT: The driving force in this play is Chris' intention to marry Ann. This is
unacceptable to Mother because it means that Chris and Ann accept the fact that Larry is dead. When Joe joins Chris in his refusal to live with her neurotic fiction Mother swings into action and destroys Joe. Anton Chekhov, the great Russian playwright, reportedly said that "If in Act I you have a pistol hanging on the wall, then it must fire in the last
act." This is a plot device which occurs several times in "All My Sons" — Chris and Joe talk about their fear of what Kate will do when she finds out that Chris wants to marry Ann. — The horoscope designed to foretell whether the day Larry disappeared was a favorable day for him or not. It is mentioned in Act I and comes back to advance the plot in
Act II. — When Chris comments facetiously that dishonesty pays off and Joe replies "I ignore what I gotta ignore." (Act I, pp. 96 - 97.) — Joe mentions in the first act when talking to Bert that he has a gun. (Act I, pp. 96 - 97.)
commitment to his family, but that very commitment, taken to the exclusion of his obligations to others, that gets him into trouble. Joe Keller commits a crime to keep his business if he can't get his parents' blessing to marry Ann, Joe says, "... what the hell
did I work for? That's only for you, Chris, the whole shootin' match is for you!" (Act I, p. 98) However, Joe loses both of his sons. Larry kills himself when he hears of Joe's conviction and Chris rejects what Joe has built for him. While Chris bears the name of Christ, it is Larry who dies for the sins of others and in so doing leads both Chris and his father
to a deeper moral understanding. November 25 was a "favorable day" for Larry's disappearance was a favorable day according to his horoscope, he couldn't have died. This, of course, doesn't work if Larry had wanted to die. Joe Keller makes several ironic statements. At one point he asks, "Well, what
have I got to hide? (Act I, p. 104.) Talking about Steve he makes several statements that apply to himself, "There are certain men in the world who rather see everybody hung before they'll take blame." (Act II, p. 141) Joe's game with the kids, in which Joe is the jailer, is ironic. It's Joe who should be in jail. Mother cannot stand the game and demands
that Joe stop playing it. Act I, p. 104. Mother says to Chris: "Your brother's alive, darling, because if he's dead, your father killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed him.
Joe had a role in Larry's death. Joe claims that the court paper proves his innocent man knows he's innocent. No court paper is necessary. SYMBOLS: This play is richly endowed with symbols. They include: The names of the characters:
Chris is short for Christopher, a name derived from Christ. Sue (Dr. Bayliss' wife) hates Chris because he "makes people want to be better than it's possible to be." This disturbs her husband who would like to do medical research. Act II, p. 123. Arthur Miller was clearly thinking about Jesus when he wrote this play. As Joe says, "... a man can't be a
Jesus in this world." Act III, p. 156.) Joseph was the father of Christ. The link to Christ was clearly on Miller's mind. See comment above and Chris himself refers to Christ in Act II, p. 143, "That's all, nothing more till Christ comes, about the case or Larry as long as I'm here!" Kate Keller's name, "Katherine", derives from the Greek for "pure" but
Miller never calls her that. The stage directions constantly refer to her as Mother. One reason is that this character is forced into compromises that rob her of her purity. The name "Ann" derives from the Hebrew word for "favour" or "grace". And that is what Ann represents, the graciousness in life that the Keller children are seeking, first Larry and
then Chris. Finally, the surname "Keller" derives from the German word for cellar or basement. In the Keller home, according to the game that Joe plays with the neighborhood children, the jail is located in the cellar of the Keller home. Reading newspapers: Most people read the paper for news about political and social events in their community and
the world. In this play, newspapers are seen as unwanted bringers of bad news or news that stokes Mother's dreams. Joe Keller can't see the importance of reading about politics and the larger issues of the outside world. He reads only the classified ads "to see what people want" Chris reads only the book reviews but never the books. This signals
Joe's focus on the personal and Chris' unwillingness to explore any issue completely and ferret out the truth. Chris can't think for himself but takes at face value what the book reviews say, just like he believes his father's claims without investigating his suspicions. The apple tree: The play begins with a discussion of an apple tree planted in memory of
Larry that was snapped in half by a storm the night before. Mother to face the fact that Larry is dead. The storm: The storm the night before
the play occurs the very night that Ann comes. It blows down the tree that represents Larry. It foretells the storm that will wreck the Keller family. Steve's hat: When George first enters the stage he is wearing his father's case. (See, Act II, p. 130.) Joe's game with the neighborhood children: The
jailer and the director of the police in this game is Joe. This is a symbol of the community in which a man who pulled a fast one to avoid being punished for causing the deaths of 21 men is a respected pillar of the community. FORESHADOWING: These are hints about plot developments that will come later in the play. Here
are some examples. — The storm in the night foreshadows the storm that will wreck the Keller family. The breaking of the tree foreshadows a change in the family's memories of Larry. — Joe remarks: "... That's what a war does. I had two sons, now I got one. It changed all the tallies." Act I, p. 92. In fact, the war is soon to change his life in more
ways than he suspects. — Kate: "Everything that happened seems to be coming back. I was just down the cellar, and what do I stumble over? His [Larry's] baseball glove. I haven't seen it in a century." This tells us that Larry's death is an issue that is rearing its head. Act I, p. 100. — Mother to Joe in Act III, page 150, "... Sit down, stop being mad
You want to live? You better figure out your life." Joe is at risk of dying or of having something even worse happened already. — Joe Keller clearly telegraphs his own death. Speaking of loyalty to family, he says that "... and if there's something bigger than that, I'll put a bullet in my head." Act II, p. 151. Larry's letter
and Chris' agony convinces Joe that there is something bigger, or at least that both his sons believed that there was something bigger. And he puts a bullet through his head. — Joe foretells his death in another passage when speaking to Chris, trying to explain his actions: "It's your money. I'm a dead man. I'm an old dead man."
(Act III, p. 155.) — Shortly before the climactic revelation that destroys the Keller family, Chris says, "That's all, nothing more till Christ comes, about the case or Larry as long as I'm here!" Act II, p. 143. Well, there is more and it comes with the Keller family armageddon. SETTING THE SCENE: The First Act is the morning of a beautiful day, not a
cloud in the sky. Act I, p. 88. The human interactions of the day begin as a peaceful August Sunday in suburbia. The first line, "Where's your tobacco?" focuses on domesticity. However, soon, a complication enters when Chris insists on marrying Ann. The Second Act takes place as twilight falls. The Third Act takes place at two o'clock in the morning,
the dead of night. The time of day follows the progression from complacent normalcy to the dead of night as the darkness resulting from Joe Keller's crime engulfs his family. The scene shows that the story which will unfold is different from the Greek and Shakespearian tragedies. It doesn't take place in castles and on the battlefield and its characters
are not princes or kings. Setting the play in the Keller backyard is a statement by Miller that he is creating a modern tragedy. The first pages of Act I are exposition. The plot starts to move when Chris sits Joe down and reveals his plans to marry Ann. Act I, p. 96. THE PLAYWRIGHT Arthur Miller (1915 – 2005) was one of America's greatest
contemporary playwrights. His other works include "Death of a Salesman" and The Crucible. Miller and his plays have been the recipient of many awards including the Tony Award, the Pulitzer Prize and the New York Drama Critics Awards. Most of Miller's plays concern the responsibility of people to each other in light of the common goals shared by
people in society. Growing up during the Great Depression and coming of age during World War II, Miller's work focused on the American experience and redemption of the times, allowing people an honest view of the direction the country had taken". PBS Web Page on Arthur Miller. Arthur
Miller was born in 1915 in New York City. His father owned a coat manufacturing company and the family led a comfortable life until the stock market and the business was hit hard by the Great Depression. Miller put himself though school at the University of Michigan by working
odd jobs. He graduated in 1938 with a major in English. Upon graduation, Miller turned down a job as a screenwriter for 20th Century Fox to begin his artistic career as a playwright for the Federal Theater Project. The Federal Theater Project required its writers to produce works that were based on reality, portrayed noteworthy stories about the
American people, and were relevant to the current era. In his work Miller did his part for the war effort by working in Navy shipyards. He continued writing, mainly for radio shows and produced some unsuccessful plays and a novel.
(These early works gained greater recognition and acclaim years later as Miller's fame spread.) Miller enjoyed some success in college but his first effort for Broadway, "The Man Who Had All the Luck" was a failure. His next effort was "All My Sons". He continued to write award-winning plays through 1964, most notably, "Death of Salesman" (1949)
and "The Crucible" (1953). He also wrote an autobiography, Timebends. Miller received numerous awards including the Pulitzer Prize for "Death of a Salesman", Five Tony Awards, a Tony Lifetime Achievement Award, and several New York Drama Critics Circle Awards. The House Un-American Activities Committee and McCarthyism: Although a
respected playwright, Miller was not immune to persecution by people with hysterical fears that the U.S. had been infiltrated by Communists. The House Un-American Activities Communists. Hollywood in general was put under the microscope, and
many people's careers were ended prematurely due to HUAC's intervention or the McCarthyite blacklists. One facet of the red scare of the HUAC and required to testify about their political associations. There were two ways to respond to an HUAC
subpoena. One was to confess ties to the Communist party and give the Communist party and give the First Amendment. The second way to respond to
an HUAC subpoena was to refuse to testify on the grounds that the questions sought information about protected political activity. The risk was a contempt citation and a prison sentence. Many people were imprisoned for refusing to testify to the HUAC about his work with the Federal Theater Project. Miller
took the latter course and refused to testify on the First Amendment grounds that the Committee had no right to ask about his political affiliations and activities. He was cited for contempt of Congress and later convicted. However, the convicted was overturned on appeal and Miller was acquitted. In the mid-1950s it became evident that the
Communist hunters had gone too far, that the influence of Communists had been grossly exaggerated, and that many innocent people had been persecuted by the U.S. Senate in 1954. (For more about Miller and the HUAC, see Learning Guide for The Crucible.) The play ran for 347 performances on
Broadway. It received the New York Drama Critics Award and a Special Award at the 1947 Tony Awards. Since that time, the play has been performed in many countries and in many venues in the U.S. The American Dream is a complicated topic. There is no one definition that is accepted by everyone. Entire books have been written about it. Desires
for freedom from oppression and economic advancement are not unique to the United States. However, in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, there were so many more people realizing this dream in the U.S. than in any other country, that upward mobility in a free society became identified with the United States. For a brief introduction to the nature
of dramatic presentations for the stage, see TWM's The Nature of Drama — A Brief Introduction. For a form of the article suitable to be modified or printed as a student handout, click here. If students are reading the play, teachers might want to print the questions on paper and give them to the students. Universal Themes: touch upon the
experiences of many people in many cultures. For example, almost all human societies, from the primitive to the sophisticated, are based upon the family unit. Traditionally, families suffer stress when a male child grows up and seeks to exercise his power. This now applies to increasing numbers of female children, since gender distinctions are
disappearing. The Law of Unintended Consequences applies to all mankind, etc. All My Sons had a long and successful run in the state of Israel in 1977, a country which has had to maintain a strong military to protect itself from hostile neighbors. Arthur Miller was invited to attend one of the performances with Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of
Israel. Miller noted an almost religious quality in the audience's attention. He asked Mr. Rabin why this was so. Rabin replied "Because this is a problem in Israel — boys are out there day and night dying in planes and on the ground, and back here people are making a lot of money. So it might as well be an Israeli play." Timebends" A Life by Arthur
Miller, Grove/Atlantic, Inc., 1987, page 135. Some other ways to state the theme of the assault on the fortress of unrelatedness: Miller wrote that: "Joe Keller's trouble, in a word, is not that he cannot tell right from wrong but that his cast of mind cannot admit that he, personally, has any viable connection with his world, his universe, or his society."
which, evidently, all men have connected in their memories with the idea of family? "The Family in Modern Drama, an Essay by Arthur Miller. This play, written in the 1940s, casts the conflicts of values between any parent
that her father was selling defective machinery to the Army and turned him in. This action tore the family apart. Miller converted the daughter to a son and immediately saw the climax of the play. The "full loathsomeness of anti-social action"; Assaulting the
"Fortress of Unrelatedness" — The Limits of the American Dream — Pursuing Profit at the Expense of Society; Parent/Child Conflict; Appearances vs. Reality — How Refusing to Acknowledge the Truth Warps People and Relationships; The Dangers of Inaccuracies of Self-Image; The Law of Unintended Consequences; The Compromises People Make;
in fact, if he were evil, the play wouldn't work. But by any measure, Joe Keller committed a monstrous crime by denying responsibility and lying under oath to shift
the blame to Steve Deever. Joe Keller knew that it was wrong to ship the defective engine parts and then to throw the blame onto Steve Deever. Joe claimed that his duties to his family (to keep Kate living in the style she wanted and to give his boys a head start so that they would not have to begin at the bottom) justified what he had done. By the ended start so that they would not have to begin at the bottom justified what he had done. By the ended start so that they would not have to begin at the bottom justified what he had done. By the ended start so that they would not have to begin at the bottom justified what he had done. By the ended start so that they would not have to begin at the bottom justified what he had done. By the ended start so that they would not have to begin at the bottom justified what he had done. By the ended start so that they would not have to begin at the bottom justified what he had done. By the ended start so that they would not have to begin at the bottom justified what he had done. By the ended start so that they would not have to begin at the bottom justified what he had done is not start to be a start so that they would not have the bottom justified what he had done is not start to be a start t
fortress which All My Sons lays siege to is the fortress of unrelatedness. It is an assertion not so much of a morality in terms of right and wrong, but of a moral world's being such because men cannot walk away from certain of their deeds." 1957 Introduction The story of Joe Keller and his family shows the limits of the American Dream and the moral
bankruptcy of making a profit at the expense of society as a whole. For other ways to describe this theme, see the description of Joe Keller's fatal flaw in the section on "All My Sons" as a Modern Tragedy. The structure of the modern family sets the stage for conflicts of power and values between parents and children. When children are young
and see themselves as important actors in their own lives with power and moral responsibility. In modern Western society, potential conflicts between parents and children will start their own families at some distance from their parents
home. However, when there is a family business, there can be conflicts if the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to retain. [In the Keller family business, there can be conflicts if the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to retain. [In the Keller family business, there can be conflicts if the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to retain. [In the Keller family business, there can be conflicts if the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to retain. [In the Keller family business, there can be conflicts if the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to retain. [In the Keller family business, there can be conflicts if the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to retain. [In the Keller family business, there can be conflicts if the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to retain. [In the Keller family business, there can be conflicts if the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to retain. [In the Keller family business, there can be conflicts if the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to retain. [In the Keller family business, there can be conflicted in the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to retain. [In the Keller family business, the parents want to be conflicted in the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to be conflicted in the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to be conflicted in the children seek to exercise power which the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to be conflicted in the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to be conflicted in the children seek to exercise power which the parents want to be conflicted in the children seek to be conflicted in the children se
disappointment. Often, to avoid this type of competition, the child will go into a completely different field of endeavor from that of the parents. Sometimes, feelings of failure or inadequacy by a child can lead to risky or illegal behavior as the child is driven to equal or better the parent's achievements. An example of this can be found in the film Quiz
Show. [Again, this is not a problem in the Keller family.] When children are young, it is the parents who set the standards for conduct in the family. Beginning when they are teenagers kids can develop their own ethical concepts. Often, these are absorbed from the outside community. When parents don't live up to ideals their children have learned at
home or which the children have acquired from the outside world, there can be conflict. Usually, the resolution is separation or just not discussing those issues. "All My Sons" presents a situation in which the conflict in values deals with issues of life and death. Larry's suicide is perhaps the most radical rejection of his father's family-obsessed ideals
that anyone could design. Larry wrote "I tell you, Ann, if I had him here now I could kill him -" Act III, p. 157. One way for Larry to strike back at his father was his own death. If Joe Keller worked all his life to give a business to his sons it would hurt deeply if there was no son to give it to. Chris also rejects his father once he knows that Joe was
responsible for shipping the defective engine parts. He decides to leave the family and pursue a separate life. Parent/child conflicts often involve differences among generations; what is called a "generation gap". In this play, Larry, Chris and Ann, represent the younger generation. They have adopted the idealism of those who sacrificed to help the
U.S. and its allies win the Second World War and believe that people have obligations to their community and the nation. Joe believes that the obligations of family are paramount and can justify betraying the community and their nation. Joe says to Chris "I don't understand you, do I?" Act I, p. 98. This are paramount and can justify betraying the community and the nation. He does not understand the younger generation. Joe says to Chris "I don't understand you, do I?" Act I, p. 98. This are paramount and can justify betraying the community and the nation. He does not understand the younger generation. Joe says to Chris "I don't understand the younger generation and can justify betraying the community and their nation. He does not understand the younger generation are paramount and can justify betraying the community and the indicate the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the indicate the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the indicate the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the indicate the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community and the paramount and can justify betraying the community an
is repeated by Kate Keller later in the play. In this play, Miller is sending a strong message that people who close their eyes to the consequences of their actions and to the reality of life suffer for their blindness. A major theme of this play is the perniciousness of the psychological defense mechanism called "denial". This applies to both Kate Keller and
Chris Keller. Kate Keller, referred to as "Mother" in the stage directions, refuses to believe the obvious fact that Larry is dead. This gives rise to all sorts of strange behavior that warps her life and the lives of others. Three years after Larry's death, the wound is still fresh. She cries hard the night his tree is blown over in the storm. Act I, p. 95. In
addition, Mother keeps Larry's shoes shined and his clothes hanging in the closet of his room, waiting for when he returns. She asks her neighbor, Frank, to prepare a horoscope to show that Larry could not have died on the day of his disappearance. However, the most pernicious effect of her refusal to acknowledge the truth is that she opposes her
living son, Chris, in his efforts to marry Ann and find happiness. See, Act I, p. 101. Chris' idealism, forged in battle, would never let him accept Joe's claims of innocence. Deep down he suspects that Joe is guilty, but he loves his father and does nothing. Chris suffers from seeing people
as better than they are. (As Ann says, "As soon as you get to know somebody you find a distinction for them." Act II, pp. 122 & 123. This theme relates to another form of denial, the failure to have an accurate view of one's self. Joe
Keller is a criminal who has caused the death of 21 pilots and the destruction of the Deever family through perjury. Each of these crimes were premeditated. However, Joe thinks that his obligations to his family justified his crimes. He acts like a criminal but doesn't see himself as a criminal. This leads to his self-destruction. An example of Joe's
inability to see himself clearly is his claim that the Court of Appeal exonerated him when it overturned his conviction and that the people in his community believe that he is innocent. (This is one of Miller's indictments of
society as a whole.) Keller doesn't understand that the reversal of his conviction means only that the government didn't present enough evidence to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. As George Deever (now a lawyer) points out, the court paper doesn't prove Joe's innocence. Had Joe understood how much of a criminal he really was, he probably
could have avoided his ultimate fate. Chris's hypocrisy, seeing himself as an upright man, at the same time that he works in his father's factory while ignoring his suspicions of his father ignoring his suspicions has been also as a suspicion of his father ignoring his suspicion his father ignoring his suspicion has been also as a suspicion his father ignoring his suspicion has been also as a suspicion has been also as a suspicion his father ignoring his suspicion has a suspicion his father ignoring his father ignoring his suspicion has a suspicion his father ignoring his father ignori
He has a job with his father's business and, not being married, he lives at home. He doesn't want to believe the worst about his father and his parents help him submerge his doubts. By small degrees his loyalty to his dead comrades in the war has been compromised. The Law of Unintended Consequences states that even if our actions have the effect
that we intend, it will also have effects that we don't anticipate. Several events in this play demonstrate this rule. Joe never expected that his crime would drive his sons away. Chris never expected that his crime would drive his sons away.
of his family. He didn't anticipate that the decision to leave home and reading Larry's letter to Joe would precipitate Joe's suicide. Nor did Ann predict that the result of her trip to the Keller home would be to expose Joe as a criminal and led to his death. The playwright put it this way, "... [W]hat I was after was the wonder in the fact that
consequences of action are as real as the actions themselves, yet we rarely take them into consideration as we perform actions, and we cannot hope to do so fully when we must always act with only partial knowledge of consequences." 1957 Introduction Jim Bayliss wanted to be a research scientist but has become a practicing doctor to support his
family. He always regretted the compromise. When Mother is worried that Chris won't come back, Kate. These private little revolutions always die. The compromise is always made. In a peculiar way, Frank is right. Every man does have a star. The star of
one's honesty. And you spend your life groping for it, but once it's out it never lights again. I don't think he went very far. He probably just wanted to be alone to watch his star go out." Act III, page 149. When Chris returns, neither he nor Arthur Miller are comfortable with Bayliss' complete abandonment to compromise. Chris won't report his father,
but he will deny his father the fruits of the crime. Chris won't work in the family business or take the tainted money. He's going to leave home. He hates himself for his compromise, "... [N]ow I'm practical, and I spit on myself. I'm going away. I'm goi
offers to go to the District Attorney's office, Chris doesn't discourage his father. When Mother orders: "You're not going to take him!", Chris replies, "I'm taking him." Act III, p. 157. The compromise is withdrawn and Chris is back on track with his principles. Let's look at these compromises a little more closely. Jim Bayliss is pretty unhappy about his
compromise and it has caused serious strains in his marriage. However, his wife had put him through medical school and he did have obligations to her. Chris's first compromise of coming into his father's business and burying his suspicions was clearly not the right thing to do. He was not being truthful with himself and he was not being loyal to his
principles. One critic has noted that Bayliss had it wrong. On the long drive, may have been reasonable given his love for both his
parents. By refusing to take the tainted money and moving away, Chris was retaining an element of his principles. Arthur Miller clearly didn't think this was a good compromise after he learned of Larry's lettering polluted and as if he had let his fellow soldiers down. "I spit on myself." Chris quickly rejected his second compromise after he learned of Larry's lettering polluted and as if he had let his fellow soldiers down. "I spit on myself." Chris quickly rejected his second compromise after he learned of Larry's lettering polluted and as if he had let his fellow soldiers down. "I spit on myself." Chris quickly rejected his second compromise. It leaves Chris feeling polluted and as if he had let his fellow soldiers down. "I spit on myself." Chris quickly rejected his second compromise after he learned of Larry's lettering his feeling polluted and as if he had let his fellow soldiers down. "I spit on myself." Chris quickly rejected his second compromise after he learned of Larry's lettering his feeling polluted and as if he had let his fellow soldiers down. "I spit on myself." Chris quickly rejected his second compromise after he learned of Larry's lettering his feeling polluted and as if he had let his fellow soldiers down. "I spit on myself." Chris quickly rejected his second compromise after he learned his feeling his feeli
and when his father appeared willing to go the District Attorney. Ann decided to compromise from the beginning of the play as the revelations about Mr. Keller came out. Her compromise was to ally herself with the Keller family, and later the son of the man who had destroyed her father's life. This compromise is not
criticised in the play and it was probably the right thing to do, especially after Chris made known his intention to leave the business and move away. Chris wasn't responsible for what his father had done. The neighbors compromised their ethics by accepting Joe as a pillar of the community after his conviction was overturned. In the play, this is seen
as a symptom of the cynicism of society. Under the law, people are innocent until proven guilty. However, respect in society is something quite different. Joe is accepted despite the belief that "he pulled a fast one". Frank
Lubey comments when Joe tells him he only reads he want-ads, "What's the difference, it's all bad news anyway." JOE KELLER: Joe Keller is down to earth, not well educated, focused on business, and not concerned with his community or
his nation. Joe's limited interest in the newspapers, he reads only the want-ads, is a symbol of his moral myopia and his failure to understand his connection to the larger community. Joe appears to have achieved the American Dream. As he sees it, his sole achievements are his sons and his business. He struggled and nurtured the business through the
Great Depression and then built it up during the war. But the sole purpose of the business was to provide a good living for his family and as a gift to his sons. Joe has already lost one of his boys in the war and so, for Keller, everything depends on Chris. Most critics do not see Joe Keller as evil and, in fact, for the play to work, the audience must feel a
certain sympathy for him. After all, he did what he had to do to protect his family), cheat, evade responsibility, play the victim, and destroy the lives of others, in order to protect himself and, by
extension, the money that he can pass on to his sons. These actions include: 1) putting the blame onto Steve Deever, destroying the Deever, destroying the Deever, destroying the Deever family and causing untold pain to Deever, his wife, and children; 3) continue manipulating people, including George, Ann and Chris, to avoid blame. Keller has a lot of trouble
with the truth. When Chris first broaches the subject of marrying Ann, Keller's first response is to tell Chris that the decision is just Chris' business. Of course, it's not, because Mother insists that Larry is coming back and Ann was Larry's girl. Later in the play, Joe suggests to Mother that if he offered to go to prison, surely Chris wouldn't demand that
he go. Again, he intends to talk for effect and not telling the cause of his anguish at being the cause of his anguish at being the cause of Larry's death. He could have shot himself because both his sons, his reason for being, had rejected his view of life and condemned him. Joe could
realized the enormity of his crime. Or it could have been a combination of all of these factors piled one upon another. One critic suggested that although Joe acknowledged in his last line that they were "all my sons", it was hard to believe that he could change the way he had thought and felt all of his life in an instant. "He knows only that his sons
think there is something bigger than family, that he has shamed them, one to the point of suicide, that his sons for whom he has lived consider him an act of love. In effect, Joe kills himself so that Chris need not kill himself." All My Sons and the
Larger Context by Barry Gross, Modern Drama, March, 1975. Another view of Joe Keller sees him as a coward: from the time he shipped the defective cylinders rather than face the ruin of his company, to the time he shipped the defective cylinders rather than face the ruin of his company, to the time he shipped the defective cylinders rather than face the ruin of his company, to the time he refused to take the blame and shifted it onto Steve Deever, through to the end when he killed himself to avoid facing the consequences
of admitting guilt. But when Keller put the gun to his head he could very well have been thinking that if he were out of the way, it would be easier for Chris to grieve the loss of his image of his father. MOTHER: Kate Keller, according to the
stage directions, is "... in her early fifties, a woman of uncontrolled inspirations and an overwhelming capacity for love." She is consistently called "Mother" in the stage directions. Mother knew that Joe was guilty from the beginning and has served as his accomplice in evading responsibility for his crime. She has tremendous power in the Keller
family both as the mistress of the house and through her unstated bargain with Joe that Larry is still alive. Mother's insistence that Larry is alive makes sense on at least two levels: social/ethical and psychological. From the standpoint of the moral lessons of the play
Mother's conviction that Larry can't be dead comes from her intuitive understanding that if Larry has died in the war, there is a connection between Joe's crime and Larry's suicide. See her speech outing Joe, Act II, p. 144. (This speech is quoted below.) Mother understands that if the war can
reach into her family and take away her son, people have responsibilities to the wider society to act in ethical ways so that this happens as little as possible to any family. If she accepts the benefits of Joe's crime, she is discarding her son, in Chris' words "like a stone that fell into the water". (Act III, p. 157). (Ann Deever shares this understanding. It
was the news of Larry's death (not Larry's letter) that broke her relationship with her father. Act I, p. 111) In this way, Mother does not share Joe's fatal flaw of failing to understand that people are related. She knows that protecting the business was not a justification for shipping defective parts to the Army. A good way to understand Mother is to
look at her psychological conflicts. She is bound to her husband, perhaps by love, but certainly by the fact that they are husband and wife and have had two sons together. She is also an accomplice to his crime. At several points during the play she helps her husband. Examples are her assistance in neutralizing George's initial anger (Act II) and her
get away with it. She and Joe are among those people who profit by killing serviceman, even if it happens to be her son? But a mother cannot keep from mourning her son. This is why Mother holds so fiercely to the delusion that Larry is alive. On one
level Mother knows that Larry is dead and, so, she becomes almost a split personality. One part of Mother hates herself and her husband for their crimes and the other needs desperately to mourn for her dead son. She tries that hatred by denying that Larry is dead. This is an intolerable situation but there is a way to resolve it: for Mother to expose
Later, her subconscious tries to resolve the conflict that tortures her through her slip of the tongue telling George that Joe was guilty. At that point, only George was listening. Act II, p. 141. Kate's subconscious makes this revelation even though she has
to know that it could destroy what was left of her family. The only explanation is a repressed guilt and hatred for Joe. Further evidence of Mother's hatred for Joe can be found in the dialog and stage directions. In Act III (at page 150) Keller says that he doesn't like it that Jim Bayliss guessed a long time ago that Joe was guilty. Miller
hatred tears Joe's world to pieces, and her world, too. But at least she will be able to grieve for her son. Arthur Miller referred to Mother as a sinister and potent force in the play. In an interview, he commented favorably on one director's interpretation of Mother as a sinister and potent force in the play. In an interview, he commented favorably on one director's interpretation of Mother as a sinister and potent force in the play. In an interview, he commented favorably on one director's interpretation of Mother as a sinister and potent force in the play. In an interview, he commented favorably on one director's interpretation of Mother as a sinister and potent force in the play. In an interview, he commented favorably on one director's interpretation of Mother as a sinister and potent force in the play.
She's both warning him not to go down the road that his older son is beckoning him to go and, rather ambiguously destroying him with her knowledge of his crime." Interview of Arthur Miller by Matthew C. Roudané, Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 112 & 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Miller pp. 113, hereinafter "Michigan Quarterly Review, Summer, 1985 quoted at Readings on Arthur Mil
acknowledge that Larry is dead. Her surviving son, Chris, is disillusioned and is going away. Her husband has shot himself. At a late stage of life Kate Keller suddenly finds herself bereft and alone. But while Mother's life is a tragedy, she is not a tragic hero. Perhaps Miller could have constructed a play in which the tragic flaw was believing that it
was possible to avoid facing the truth. But that is not this play. It is Joe's violation of the moral order of the universe that starts this tragedy and his suicide that is its culmination. It is Joe who, as a successful businessman, has the stature of the tragic hero. As previously suggested, Mother acts as a Chorus in this tragedy. Look at Act III, page 150, ". .
to acknowledge the truth warps thinking, although Chris is also important to this theme. Kate believes in portents and signs. She asks Frank to prepare an astrological chart for the day Larry disappeared. She ends up destroying her family because she can no longer fail to acknowledge the truth. In the end, like many strong women in literature (and
in life) Mother perseveres through horrendous adversity and supports what can live. Released by Joe's suicide from her conflicts, she can now think about what is best for Chris. (Something she hasn't done since the defective engine parts were shipped out.) When Chris confirms that Joe is dead and "comes out of the house, down to Mother's arms ...
He was a real "killer in the war". But the casualties suffered by his unit were very high. From the sacrifices of the other soldiers and the general experience of the war". But the casualties suffered by his unit were very high. From the sacrifices of the war, Chris came to the ethical viewpoint that Miller espouses in the play, i.e., we have obligations to the war". But the casualties suffered by his unit were very high. From the sacrifices of the other soldiers and the general experience of the war, Chris came to the ethical viewpoint that Miller espouses in the play, i.e., we have obligations to the war".
guilt", wondering why he lived to come home and work in a profitable business that got fat on the war, when so many of his friends were dead on the battlefield. Chris Keller is more complex than he seems at first glance. "He is thirty-two, like his father, solidly build, a listener. A man capable of immense affection and loyalty." Stage Directions, Act I,
p. 93.. Chris is a good man and a good son. He always thinks the best of people, including his father. Chris has never gone through the normal process of adolescence and reached a mature understanding that his father is a person, like other people, who has strengths and also weaknesses. When the play begins, Joe is still Chris' hero. After Chris
learns of his father's guilt, he tells Joe, "I know you're no worse than most men but I thought you were better. I never saw you as a man. I saw you as my father". (Act III, p. 156.) Since Chris does not see his father as an independent person, Chris' own sense of self-worth and dignity are tied to his image of his father as an upright man. (Larry had the
        problem, which is why he killed himself rather than live with the knowledge that his father was a criminal.) When Chris finds out that his father is, in fact, responsible for the deaths of 21 pilots and has tried throw the blame for the crime onto another man, the shock is a personal devastation. Chris never felt entirely right about taking part in thou
family business. He always had a suspicion that his father was guilty, but he ignored it and never pursued the question. When he learns the truth, his principles and his solidarity with the men in his company who died during the war, tell him that he should turn his father in to the authorities. His love for his father prevents this and leaves him feeling
cowardly and polluted. Chris' rage at his father is directed partially at himself for betraying the memory of the men who died in the war. Larry's letter brings him around and he is ready to take his father to the prosecutors. Like Ann, Chris is part of the new generation that recognizes and values morals and ethics. Chris protests that, "This is the land
of the great big dogs, you don't love a man here, you eat him. That's the principle; the only one we live by - it just happened to kill a few people this time, that's all. The world's that way... " (Act III, p. 155). It is because of the corruption of the society as a whole and his loyalty to and affection for his father that Chris initially compromises and tells his
father that he won't turn him in. (Chris' compromise, however, is not complete. He will leave the family and the business. They are tainted by the blood of the 21 pilots.) Chris changes his mind when he reads Larry's suicide is like the sacrifices of the soldiers under Chris' command and he cannot ignore its call to the moral order of the
universe. After reading Larry's letter, Chris rejects the compromise he came to on the long drive. Chris, however, has not lost all his affection for his father. He is devastated by Joe's suicide. Mother must tell him to live his life, free of the corruption of the Keller household. Some critics view Chris Keller as the tragic hero of the play. His fatal flaw
would be his failure to recognize the truth when he sees it. As a result, he becomes a hypocrite and loses his father. There are several problems with this approach. First, the entire focus of the play is on Joe. It is to Joe that the chorus, in the person of Mother, speaks. It is Joe that loses the most, all that he has built during his life and life itself.
Moreover, in this play Chris lost his innocence and came to know his father as a flawed man. This is the typical journey of a maturing child not the spiral of a tragic hero. Other critics take a very harsh view of Chris. Like Sue Bayliss, they see him primarily as a hypocrite. According to them, Chris didn't go off to watch the death of the star of his image
of himself as honest, he had already compromised when he took the job with his father and buried his innocence but the lie of his innocence which he has persisted in believing." "All My Sons and the Larger Contest" by Barry Gross in Modern Drama, March, 1975. This is unfair
and by this standard we are all hypocrites. Think of Chris' position. He comes home from the war and the natural place to work is the family business. This is a man who sincerely loves his mother and father. The contradictions and suspicions are in the background. He personally is never asked to do anything wrong. It would take a man who was
extraordinarily sensitive to living an ethical life to detect a problem in that situation. ANN DEEVER: This young woman is possibly the most mature and well-adjusted character in the play. She has confronted the reality that has been presented to her, and, unlike any of the other characters, she has dealt with it and learned from it. She worked
through her father's guilt, the shame it brought her and her family, and her boyfriend's death. Afterwards, she was stronger. Ann is the breath of fresh air in the story. It is through her agency that the winds of change come to the Keller household. She is also very strong and will do what is necessary to remove the road blocks to her marriage. This
includes showing Larry's letter, with all its devastating effects to Mother, to Chris, and to Joe. On the structural level of the play, Ann represents what is gracious".) She is the beauty in life that the Keller children, both Larry and Chris,
seek. Some reviewers have criticized the playwright for making Larry's fiance to be Chris' love interest, claiming that it isn't believable. They also claim that it isn't believable that she would wait for Chris for three years or that Chris would want to ask her to marry him when he hasn't seen her in five years. However, they misunderstand this part of
Ann's function in the play. It is the very improbability of Chris' selection of Ann which tips us off to her role as the symbol of graciousness sought by the Keller children. Chris is 32 years old and hasn't yet moved beyond a child's view of
his father as someone perfect. Chris hasn't even moved out of the family home. Ann has also been seen as representing the "New Woman". Compared to her neighbor, Lydia Lubey, she is independent, strong-willed and very bright. She was living in New York by herself for years. Perhaps the tragic events that came early in her life forced her to
become an independent and self-sustaining woman. She had no one else to rely on. All of the main characters have multiple roles in the play. Ann's steadfast devotion to Chris and her willingness
to see Chris as separated from the corruption of the rest of the Keller family is an important symbol of hope. After the play, Ann and Chris will get married and have a life. This is a statement of belief in the future; a statement of belief in the future; a statement that living according to values is something that works. LARRY KELLER: Larry never appears and speaks only through a few
lines read from his last letter to Ann. However, his presence is felt throughout the pull of compromise and Joe Keller comes to understand the full loathsomeness of his anti-social actions. Like Chris, Larry has not separated himself
from his family and he takes on his father's sin as his own. This is why he commits suicide. Ironically, while Chris bears the name of Christ, it is Larry who dies for the sins of others and, in so doing, leads others to moral understanding. JIM BAYLISS: This character is a foil for Chris. Bayliss has compromised his life away by deciding not to be a
research scientist, his true calling. His wife complains that Chris' idealism disturbs her husband and makes him unhappy. GEORGE DEEVER: George is a foil for Ann. Like Ann he easily falls prey to the nostrums of the Keller family but unlike Ann, he sees Chris as tainted. He cannot forgive Chris for his association with Joe. AN EXAMPLE OF THE
BEAUTY OF DRAMATIC LITERATURE: Mother's destruction of Joe in the climax of Act II is one of the great passages of dramatic literature. Under Chris' three and a half years you've been talking like a maniac." Act II, p. 144.) In response, she
"smashes him across the face" and then: MOTHER: Nothing. You have nothing to say. Now I say. He's coming back, and everybody has got to wait.... CHRIS: How long? MOTHER, rolling out of her: Till he comes; forever and ever till he comes! CHRIS, as an ultimatum: Mother, I'm going ahead with it. MOTHER: Chris, I've never said no
to you in my life, now I say no! CHRIS: You'll never let him go along — MOTHER, with no less force, but turning from him: Then let your father go. Pause. Chris stands transfixed. KELLER: She's out of her mind. MOTHER: Altogether! To Chris,
insinuatingly, questioningly: She's out of her mind. CHRIS in a broken whisper: Then . . . you did it? (Act II, pp. 144 – 145.) Mother's statement outing Joe is, at the same time: (1) a neurotic fixation of the character because at one level she maintains the fiction with
her; (2) a statement that Joe killed the 21 pilots because she knows at another level that Larry is dead and she also knows that Chris believes that Larry is dead; (3) an excellent example of non-logical emotional thinking revealing a deep human truth, i.e., if Joe killed the 21 pilots, he has joined in the killing of pilots and he is therefore partially
responsible for Larry's death; (4) the playwright's statement of a moral truth that "they were all my sons", that we are all one community and killing any one of us is a crime against us all; (5) a dramatic device to explicate the theme that not telling the truth warps family relations; (6) a dramatic device that advances the plot, (7) a statement about
Mother herself, because of her complicity in the crime (you can substitute the word "father" in her statement and it works just as well); and (8) a monumental irony because, as we find out in Act III, Mother's statement and it works just as well); and (8) a monumental irony because, as we find out in Act III, Mother's statement and it works just as well); and (8) a monumental irony because, as we find out in Act III, Mother's statement and it works just as well); and (8) a monumental irony because, as we find out in Act III, Mother's statement and it works just as well); and (8) a monumental irony because, as we find out in Act III, Mother's statement and it works just as well); and (8) a monumental irony because, as we find out in Act III, Mother's statement and it works just as well); and (8) a monumental irony because, as we find out in Act III, Mother's statement and it works just as well); and (8) a monumental irony because, as we find out in Act III, Mother's statement and it works just as well); and (8) a monumental irony because, as well 
convicted. STRUCTURE: "All My Sons" has the basic structure of tragedy invented by the ancient Greeks. As in "Oedipus Rex", events which have disturbed the moral order of the universe occurred before the curtain rises. They are revealed to the audience piecemeal during the play as the effects of the originating events ripple outward and take over
the action of the play leading to the crisis and restoration of the moral order. Another way of looking at structure is that the play provides the audience with successive, ever deeper glimpses into the reality that is hidden by appearances. Or, to put it another way, reality is successively peeled back to reveal the appearance below. Since the world itself
operates on the levels of appearance and reality, by bringing together the two worlds of [the] manifest and the hidden, Miller creates a realistic world as it exists today and what they are, characterizes the modern world.
The main interest of the play comes from juxtaposition of these paradoxical aspects of the world . . . . The Manifest and the Hidden in Arthur Miller edited by Atma Ram THE USE OF LANGUAGE: Joe Keller, Chris Keller and Mother are continually asking questions. There are
different types of questions. Some are just normal dialog. In addition, Joe Keller uses questions to deflect inquiries from other characters. However, on many occasions, the questions are not answered and serve as signals for where the play will go. Here are a few examples. When Chris tells Joe that Mother was up at night, saw Larry's tree break in
the wind, and then cried, Joe says, "She's getting just like after he died. . . . What's the meaning of that?" p. 95; After Mother describes her experiences of the night before as "more than just a dream" and complains about Joe and Chris rushing into planting the tree ("Everybody was in such a hurry to bury him."), Chris says, "The wind blew it down.
What significance has that got? What are you talking about?; p. 101; Mother says to Joe, "You above all have got to believe [that Larry is still alive] . . . ." and Joe responds "Why me above all? p. 103 Mother: "Why did that happen the very night she came back? Laugh but there are meanings in such things. She goes to sleep in his room and his
memorial breaks in pieces. Look at it; look." Act I p. 103 Joe Keller asks, "Well, what have I got to hide? p. 104. When Joe says, "To his last day in court the man blamed it all on me; and this is his daughter. I mean if she was sent here to find out?" p. 117 When Chris asks, "What's
the matter George, what's the matter?" George responds, "The trouble? The trouble? The trouble? The trouble? The trouble? The trouble? The trouble is when you make suckers out of people once, you shouldn't try to do it twice." Chris responds with a question, to which no answer is given, "What does that mean?" Act II, p. 131. When George tells Ann she can't get married, Chris asks another unanswered question,
"That's been your trouble all your life, George, you dive into things. What kind of a statement is that to make?" Ibid. At other times, the query is in the form of a thought, but it's a question nonetheless. Mother comments: "It's so funny . .. everything decides to happen at the same time. This month is his birthday; his tree blows down, Annie comes.
Everything that happened seems to be coming back. I was just down the cellar, and what do I stumble over? His baseball glove. I haven't see that in a century." p. 100 The effect of these questions is to build tension and keep the audience interested. PLOT: The driving force in this play is Chris' intention to marry Ann. This is unacceptable to Mother
because it means that Chris and Ann accept the fact that Larry is dead. When Joe joins Chris in his refusal to live with her neurotic fiction Mother swings into action and destroys Joe. Anton Chekhov, the great Russian playwright, reportedly said that "If in Act I you have a pistol hanging on the wall, then it must fire in the last act." This is a plot device
which occurs several times in "All My Sons" — Chris and Joe talk about their fear of what Kate will do when she finds out that Chris wants to marry Ann. — The horoscope designed to foretell whether the day Larry disappeared was a favorable day for him or not. It is mentioned in Act I and comes back to advance the plot in Act II. — When Chris
comments facetiously that dishonesty pays off and Joe replies "I ignore what I gotta ignore." (Act I, p. 94.) He uses it on himself in Act III. IRONY: Irony is basic to the structure of the play. Joe Keller's great strength as a human being is his commitment to his
family, but that very commitment, taken to the exclusion of his obligations to others, that gets him into trouble. Joe Keller commits a crime to keep his business if he can't get his parents' blessing to marry Ann, Joe says, "... what the hell did I work for?
That's only for you, Chris, the whole shootin' match is for you!" (Act I, p. 98) However, Joe loses both of his sons. Larry kills himself when he hears of Joe's conviction and Chris rejects what Joe has built for him. While Chris bears the name of Christ, it is Larry who dies for the sins of others and in so doing leads both Chris and his father to a deeper
moral understanding. November 25 was a "favorable day" for Larry, Mother and Frank believe that if the day of Larry's disappearance was a favorable day according to his horoscope, he couldn't have died. This, of course, doesn't work if Larry had wanted to die. Joe Keller makes several ironic statements. At one point he asks, "Well, what have I got
to hide? (Act I, p. 104.) Talking about Steve he makes several statements that apply to himself, "There are certain men in the world who rather see everybody hung before they'll take blame." (Act II, p. 141) Joe's game with the kids, in which Joe is the jailer, is ironic. It's Joe who should be in jail. Mother cannot stand the game and demands that Joe
stop playing it. Act I, p. 104. Mother says to Chris: "Your brother's alive, darling, because if he's dead, your father killed him." Act II, p. 144. This is a true statement because Larry killed himself on learning about what Joe did. However, at that point Mother knew nothing of Larry's suicide and had no idea that as a matter of actual causation Joe had a
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role in Larry's death. Joe claims that the court paper proves his innocent man knows he's innocent man knows he's innocent. No court paper is necessary. SYMBOLS: This play is richly endowed with symbols. They include: The names of the characters: Chris is short for Christopher, a name derived from Christ. Sue (Dr. Bayliss' wife) hates Chris because he "makes people want to be better than it's possible to be." This disturbs her husband who would like to do medical research. Act II, p. 123. Arthur Miller was clearly thinking about Jesus when he wrote this play. As Joe says, "... a man can't be a Jesus in this world." Act III, p. 156.) Joseph was the father of Christ. The link to Christ was clearly on Miller's mind. See comment above and Chris himself refers to Christ in Act II, p. 143, "That's all, nothing more till Christ comes, about the case or Larry as long as I'm here!" Kate Keller's name, "Katherine", derives from the Greek for "pure" but Miller never calls her that. The stage directions constantly refer to her as Mother. One reason is that this character is forced into compromises that rob her of her purity. The name "Ann" derives from the Hebrew word for "favour" or "grace". And that is what Ann represents, the graciousness in life that the Keller children are seeking, first Larry and then Chris. Finally,

the surname "Keller" derives from the German word for cellar or basement. In the Keller home, according to play, newspapers are seen as unwanted bringers of bad news or news that stokes Mother's dreams. Joe Keller personal and Chris' unwillingness to explore any issue completely and ferret out the truth. Chris can't think for snapped in half by a storm the night before. Mother hated the tree because for her Larry couldn't be dead. It the very night that Ann comes. It blows down the tree that represents Larry. It foretells the storm that will we	or can't see the importance of reading about politics and the larger issues of the outer for himself but takes at face value what the book reviews say, just like he believes is Chris who drags the downed part of the tree out of the back yard, just as it is Correct the Keller family. Steve's hat: When George first enters the stage he is wearing	utside world. He reads only the classified ads "to see what people want" Chris real his father's claims without investigating his suspicions. The apple tree: The play Chris who pushes the idea that he will marry Ann, which forces Mother to face the ng his father's hat. He has come from his father to argue his father's case. (See, A	ds only the book reviews but never the books. This signals Joe's focus on the begins with a discussion of an apple tree planted in memory of Larry that was fact that Larry is dead. The storm: The storm the night before the play occurs Act II, p. 130.) Joe's game with the neighborhood children: The jailer and the
director of the police in this game is Joe. This is a symbol of the upside down world of the community in which examples. — The storm in the night foreshadows the storm that will wreck the Keller family. The breaking of suspects. — Kate: "Everything that happened seems to be coming back. I was just down the cellar, and what live? You better figure out your life." Joe is at risk of dying or of having something even worse happen to him agony convinces Joe that there is something bigger, or at least that both his sons believed that there was som 155.) — Shortly before the climactic revelation that destroys the Keller family, Chris says, "That's all, nothing	the tree foreshadows a change in the family's memories of Larry. — Joe remarks: do I stumble over? His [Larry's] baseball glove. I haven't seen it in a century." Thi than what has happened already. — Joe Keller clearly telegraphs his own death. See thing bigger. And he puts a bullet through his head. — Joe foretells his death in g more till Christ comes, about the case or Larry as long as I'm here!" Act II, p. 14	" That's what a war does. I had two sons, now I got one. It changed all the tall is tells us that Larry's death is an issue that is rearing its head. Act I, p. 100. — M Speaking of loyalty to family, he says that " and if there's something bigger the another passage when speaking to Chris, trying to explain his actions: "It's your 13. Well, there is more and it comes with the Keller family armageddon. SETTING	lies." Act I, p. 92. In fact, the war is soon to change his life in more ways than he other to Joe in Act III, page 150, " Sit down, stop being mad. You want to an that, I'll put a bullet in my head." Act II, p. 151. Larry's letter and Chris' money. That's not my money. I'm a dead man. I'm an old dead man." (Act III, p. THE SCENE: The First Act is the morning of a beautiful day, not a cloud in the
sky. Act I, p. 88. The human interactions of the day begin as a peaceful August Sunday in suburbia. The first I night. The time of day follows the progression from complacent normalcy to the dead of night as the darkness princes or kings. Setting the play in the Keller backyard is a statement by Miller that he is creating a modern playwrights. His other works include "Death of a Salesman" and The Crucible. Miller and his plays have been society. Growing up during the Great Depression and coming of age during World War II, Miller's work focus born in 1915 in New York City. His father owned a coat manufacturing company and the family led a comfort	s resulting from Joe Keller's crime engulfs his family. The scene shows that the stop tragedy. The first pages of Act I are exposition. The plot starts to move when Chron the recipient of many awards including the Tony Award, the Pulitzer Prize and the sed on the American experience. "His probing dramas proved to be both the conscitable life until the stock market crash of 1929. His father had speculated heavily in	ory which will unfold is different from the Greek and Shakespearian tragedies. It is sits Joe down and reveals his plans to marry Ann. Act I, p. 96. THE PLAYWRIGH New York Drama Critics Awards. Most of Miller's plays concern the responsibilience and redemption of the times, allowing people an honest view of the direction the stock market and the business was hit hard by the Great Depression. Miller	doesn't take place in castles and on the battlefield and its characters are not HT Arthur Miller (1915 – 2005) was one of America's greatest contemporary lity of people to each other in light of the common goals shared by people in in the country had taken". PBS Web Page on Arthur Miller. Arthur Miller was put himself though school at the University of Michigan by working odd jobs. He
graduated in 1938 with a major in English. Upon graduation, Miller turned down a job as a screenwriter for 2 people, and were relevant to the current era. In his work Miller would draw on these themes, as well as on th early works gained greater recognition and acclaim years later as Miller's fame spread.) Miller enjoyed some "The Crucible" (1953). He also wrote an autobiography, Timebends. Miller received numerous awards including respected playwright, Miller was not immune to persecution by people with hysterical fears that the U.S. had many people's careers were ended prematurely due to HUAC's intervention or the McCarthyite blacklists. On	ne themes of morality and responsibility. As World War II took hold, Miller did his a success in college but his first effort for Broadway, "The Man Who Had All the Luing the Pulitzer Prize for "Death of a Salesman", Five Tony Awards, a Tony Lifeting been infiltrated by Communists. The House Un-American Activities Committee (Fine facet of the red scare of the late 1940s through the mid-1950s was that writers.	part for the war effort by working in Navy shipyards. He continued writing, mainluck" was a failure. His next effort was "All My Sons". He continued to write award ne Achievement Award, and several New York Drama Critics Circle Awards. The HUAC) was formed in order to find and intimidate Americans who were thought to, directors, actors and artists were called before the HUAC and required to testify	y for radio shows and produced some unsuccessful plays and a novel. (These d-winning plays through 1964, most notably, "Death of Salesman" (1949) and House Un-American Activities Committee and McCarthyism: Although a be Communists. Hollywood in general was put under the microscope, and about their political associations. There were two ways to respond to an HUAC
subpoena. One was to confess ties to the Communist party and give the Committee names of persons the witr an HUAC subpoena was to refuse to testify on the grounds that the questions sought information about prote took the latter course and refused to testify on the First Amendment grounds that the Committee had no righ Communist hunters had gone too far, that the influence of Communists had been grossly exaggerated, and the Broadway. It received the New York Drama Critics Award and a Special Award at the 1947 Tony Awards. Sing for freedom from oppression and economic advancement are not unique to the United States. However, in the	ected political activity. The risk was a contempt citation and a prison sentence. Many to ask about his political affiliations and activities. He was cited for contempt of that many innocent people had been persecuted by the red-baiters. Senator McCart ce that time, the play has been performed in many countries and in many venues to e 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, there were so many more people realizing this dr	ony people were imprisoned for refusing to testify. Arthur Miller was subpoenaed Congress and later convicted. However, the convicted was overturned on appeal thy was censured by the U.S. Senate in 1954. (For more about Miller and the HUA in the U.S. The American Dream is a complicated topic. There is no one definition ream in the U.S. than in any other country, that upward mobility in a free society.	to testify to the HUAC about his work with the Federal Theater Project. Miller and Miller was acquitted. In the mid-1950s it became evident that the AC, see Learning Guide for The Crucible.) The play ran for 347 performances on that is accepted by everyone. Entire books have been written about it. Desires became identified with the United States. For a brief introduction to the nature
of dramatic presentations for the stage, see TWM's The Nature of Drama — A Brief Introduction. For a form of experiences of many people in many cultures. For example, almost all human societies, from the primitive to disappearing. The Law of Unintended Consequences applies to all mankind, etc. All My Sons had a long and s Israel. Miller noted an almost religious quality in the audience's attention. He asked Mr. Rabin why this was 8 Miller, Grove/Atlantic, Inc., 1987, page 135. Some other ways to state the theme of the assault on the fortress 1957 Introduction. Miller also wrote that the play deals with the issue of: "How may a man make of the outside."	the sophisticated, are based upon the family unit. Traditionally, families suffer str successful run in the state of Israel in 1977, a country which has had to maintain a so. Rabin replied "Because this is a problem in Israel — boys are out there day and s of unrelatedness: Miller wrote that: "Joe Keller's trouble, in a word, is not that h	ress when a male child grows up and seeks to exercise his power. This now applies a strong military to protect itself from hostile neighbors. Arthur Miller was invited d night dying in planes and on the ground, and back here people are making a lot e cannot tell right from wrong but that his cast of mind cannot admit that he, per	s to increasing numbers of female children, since gender distinctions are I to attend one of the performances with Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of of money. So it might as well be an Israeli play." Timebends" A Life by Arthur sonally, has any viable connection with his world, his universe, or his society."
which, evidently, all men have connected in their memories with the idea of family? "The Family in Modern I and any child. With women working outside the home and gender differences blurring, the generational confl that her father was selling defective machinery to the Army and turned him in. This action tore the family aparand white and appears to be dated. It differs substantially from the play. For example, the play has only one backyard. The screen version doesn't develop Chris' character as well as the play. In the play, the main action which also does not dramatize the underlying action of shipping the defective engine parts. In the play, the an	Drama, an Essay by Arthur Miller. This play, written in the 1940s, casts the conflict in "All My Sons" is more properly referred to as a parent/child conflict. Factual art. Miller converted the daughter to a son and immediately saw the climax of the location, the Kellers' backyard. The screen version has several locations: the backy in (delivering defective plane engine parts to the Army) is not shown. This is a tech	ct in terms of father/son. The literary analysis of the play adopts this formulation. It is Sources: The idea for the play came to Arthur Miller when his mother-in-law to second act of "All My Sons" in his mind. It took him another two years to write the yard, the plant, inside the house, the restaurant etc. This is an important change lanique of classic Greek tragedy. The movie shows events occurring as Steve description.	However, the lessons of the play apply to conflicts of values between any parent d him about a family from the Midwest in which the daughter had discovered he rest of the play. Why TWM Doesn't Recommend the Movie: The movie is black because one of the major dramatic devices of the play is the focus on the Keller's ribes them when Chris visited him in prison. There was no such visit in the play
movie. In the film, George and Ann's mother is dead, but in the play, she is referred to as being alive. Dramat that events in the play be based on valid cause and effect: "forcing one event out of the jaws of the preceding character's entire life is put into perspective in the course of a couple of hours on the stage. Ibsen's plays ofte Duck" Miller took the idea of two partners in a business where one is forced to take moral and legal responsil evil he has done, and the conscience of the son in the face of what he has discovered about his father. One co stage direction descriptions of the major characters fit their image of themselves but, because each of them he	tic Sources for All My Sons: Arthur Miller acknowledged a deep debt to the Norwey one". 1957 Introduction He also adopted the idea of a character's idealism being en present a domestic scene and then gradually introduce information about a cribility for the other. In the introduction to Collected Plays, Arthur Miller noted that build say that the problem was to make a fact of morality, but it is more precise, I to	egian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828 – 1906). (Many believe that Ibsen was the most the source of a problem and the dramatic device of the "fatal secret". This struct me and the guilt of the perpetrator, leading to a climactic eruption. Miller employ to the damage done by Joe's crime was irreversible when the play opened: "The stable, to say that the structure of the play is designed to bring a man into the direction."	ost influential playwright of the 19th century.) Miller adopted Ibsen's insistence ure of drama has also been called "the play of the ripe circumstance" in which a red the same structure in "All My Sons". From Henrik Ibsen's play "The Wild akes remaining are purely the conscience of Joe Keller and the awakening to the ct path of the consequences he has wrought." 1957 Introduction. Note that the
horror of the play." Arthur Miller: Portrait of a Playwright by Benjamin Nelson. The importance of Mother to myth of unrelatedness only as long as they themselves have not suffered great loss. They have a false sense of conflicts were intolerable and her subconscious had to change the situation. Another way to describe Kate's of An example of the depth of great art: One of the wonderful things about great art is that you can always come other than Mother is referred to by their biological place in the family. As we have seen, Mother has power. It	this play cannot be underestimated. For example, she is the first character who had invincibility. Those who suffer, generally reach out to others and develop empated illumination is that when people suffer a real tragedy, such as the loss of a loved one, e up with something new. For example, why is Kate Keller called Mother in the standard addition, she eschews logical thinking. (Her situation would be intolerable if Landard in the standard	as a speech above the level of normal conversation. This occurs when she describ hy for the suffering of others. However, Kate cannot do this because of her compl they look to others to share their grief and to provide comfort. But Kate can't do age directions? Names are significant in this play. See the discussion of symbols, try had died in a plane crash in the war. Therefore, Larry didn't die.) Her main loy	es her dream the night of the storm. Act I, p. 101. Most people can maintain the icity in helping Joe hide his crime. Thinking of Kate's dilemma another way, the this because her crime and Joe's crime separate them from the rest of mankind. below. Chris is not called "Son" Joe is not referred to as "Father". No character yalty is to her children. — These are all attributes of a manifestation of the
Goddess, the feminine deity. The Goddess can only be furious at Joe for causing the deaths of 22 of her childr neurotic refusal to acknowledge that Larry is dead, she slaps him and then destroys his relationship with his the play centered on her tragedy, not on Joe's. Chris captures the situation when he says, " we never took recognize his own limitations — and his experiences in the war make him dread that confrontation Havin they did not kill.' Chris desperately wants to escape from this guilt and the anguish it produces. When given to play that relates to its themes and the progress of the plot. One can find selfish motives in some of the minor	remaining child. It's dangerous to cross the Goddess. Of course, there are other recupions up our lives again. We're like at a railroad station waiting for a train that never only watched heroic young men under his command die selflessly in battle to save the chance, he tries to find relief by disguising his disgust with himself as contemporare characters. Ann Deever, the only character who knows about Larry's suicide from	easons to depersonify Kate Keller. She is so strong a character that she could take comes in." Act I, p. 102. Another View of Chris "At some level, Chris fears that, if lear comrades, Chris feels guilty for failing them and surviving the war. His guilt is pt for his father." All My Sons by Steven R. Centola, in The Cambridge Companion the beginning, cannot help but at least suspect Joe Keller's guilt. Nonetheless, sl	e over the play if Miller isn't careful. In fact, it was reported that early drafts of the allows himself to see his father's human imperfections, he will also have to s the guilt of the survivor that derives from knowing that 'no one is innocent to Arthur Miller Note that all of the minor characters have a function in the he is willing to ignore these suspicions in order to ally herself with Chris who is
scheduled to inherit the business tainted with the blood of the 21 pilots and of her former fiancee, Larry. She them not to let George into the yard. The Bayliss' are people of compromise and they take comfort in the com his attitude wouldn't bother Bayliss. All My Sons was Arthur Miller's first successful play. Critics have found, Federal Theater Project: was a New Deal initiative to help artists make a living during the Great Depression. American Activities Committee (HUAC) and others that it was infiltrated by the Communist Party. At its peak Theatre of the Air" reached some 10 million listeners broadcast over all of the major radio networks. Many pe	in the play, evidence of Miller's relative immaturity as a playwright. While much in the storylines of plays developed in the FTP focused on the contemporary America the FTP employed 12,700 theater workers and established units in 31 states. FTF eople who later had stellar film and theater careers got their start in the FTP. Ame	us, Jim Bayliss is not comfortable with Chris' sense of rectitude, because there is a of this comes from a failure to fully understand the play, it is true that "All My So can experience. FTP plays were expected to entertain and raise the morale of the P units gave more than 1,000 performances each month before nearly one million	a core of sincere belief and feeling in Chris. If Chris was a complete hypocrite, ns" is a way station on the road to "Death of a Salesman" and The Crucible. The audience. It was closed down in 1939 based on claims by the House Unpeople — most of the audience was admitted free of charge. The FTP's "Federal
Marshall, Sidney Lumet and, of course, Arthur Miller. New Deal Cultural Programs: Experiments in Cultural I	Democracy by Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard.		

