

P.12: "She's getting..... We've got to say it to her."

Comment fully

These words are quoted from "All My Sons", a play written by the American playwright Arthur Miller. Throughout the play, Miller tries to discuss some important themes such as; the individual versus the community, crime versus punishment, the American dream and the father-son relationship. The play is mainly about the effect of the acts of every individual on society as a whole and the family responsibilities.

Throughout the extract, a conversation takes place between Joe Keller and his son Chris at the backyard of Keller's home. They talk about the apple-tree having been damaged by the wind and Kate's, Chris' mother, grief over it. Kate has cried all night as she has seen the broken tree. She is opposed to the idea that Larry, her son, is reported missing and she waits for him. She believes that her son will come back and that he is not dead. Keller and Chris keep up the illusion in order not to upset her. However Chris wants to tell her the truth about her son's death, he does not have the courage to do so. Keller gives up the idea that his son will come back, because nobody comes after three years. Furthermore, nobody around Kate shows her that there is no hope for his arrival; hence Kate still has hope. Chris accuses himself and his father of making a terrible mistake by letting his mother think that "Larry is still alive". In other words, he admits that it was dishonest on his part and on his father's part to continue letting her believe Larry will come back.

Joe Keller is a man of about sixty years, old, strong, and well-built. He lives on selling defective cylinders heads during the war, and twenty-one pilots died as a result. He tries to live a normal life but past catches up with him. He is clever and his experience comes from his work. Chris has great respect and admiration for his father. He shows love and affection toward him and has a great sense of self sacrifice. Kate Keller seems always to be tense and believes in Larry's return which will dispel doubts of her husband's guilt. She is a very disturbed woman and she hardly gets sleep.

Throughout the excerpt, the idea of the American dream is concise in the character of Kate Keller. Kate is opposed to the idea that Larry will come back. Keller and Chris keep up the illusion that Larry will come back in order not to upset Kate and this reflects the idea of dishonesty. They have not informed her of Larry's death as they have not the courage to do so. On the symbolic level, the

names of the protagonists of the play are significant. For example, Joe is a popular name, but if Keller changes into Killer, the name suggests his crime. In addition, Chris is another example; if "T" is added at the end, this suggests the character's idealism and his moral uprightness.

To sum up, Miller is very successful in conveying his themes and expressing Keller's dishonesty toward his wife, Kate.