

P.32: "The man was a fool..... ain't right"

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 several important themes such as; the American dream, crime versus punishment and the father-son relationship. The play is mainly about how people try to build themselves in order to fulfil the American dream regardless of the means they take.

Throughout the extract, Joe Keller addresses his son Chris. Joe Keller talks about Steve, Ann's father, and the crime. Ann blames her father for covering and sending cracked cylinder heads to the army during the war. She believes in law and judge and as a result accuses her father of being a murderer. In fact, Keller has been responsible for the factory during the war. Upon this act, twenty-one pilots have died. He also denies producing and covering up the cylinder heads and hence Steve is found guilty. Although Keller blames Steve, he finds excuses for him. Not only has Keller blamed Steve, but also calls him a fool. He attempts to give an acceptable explanation for what has happened and that is not a crime. The war has put a great deal of pressure upon people. He believes that his family and his business are the only responsibilities he has. His vision is very narrow. He lies to Ann in order to make her forgive him to release the sense of guilt. In other words, Keller defends his self of morality. The whole is only a human mistake.

Joe Keller is selfish, coward, and unaware of responsibilities as his vision is very limited. He is a factory owner; he sells defective cylinder heads to the army during the war. He is convicted and sent to prison but released. He tries to live a normal life but past catches up with him. He justifies his conduct because of his concern for family's future and economic security. He fails to take his responsibilities as an individual to the community. Chris has great respect and admiration for his father. He shows love and affection towards Ann. He also informs his father of his plan but is concerned with his mother's reaction because of her insistence that Larry is still alive. He cares about other people, gives things up for others, and has a great sense of self-sacrifice. Ann, Larry's girlfriend, is a pretty girl and the daughter of Steve who has been sent to prison. She is sure that Larry is dead despite Kate's insistence. She thinks that her father is guilty of the crime which he is sent to prison for.

In the extract, the idea of lack of responsibility is clear in Keller's character. He is forced to send cylinder heads to the army during the war. He tells Steve, his

partner, to cover it up and to send it to the army. Steve is convicted and sent to prison as Keller tries to deny his responsibility of the whole thing. Keller tries to give up everything for the sake of his business and family. The idea of sense of morality is clear in Keller's character as well. He tries to defend himself by lying and laying the blame on Steve. He also tries to convince Ann to forgive her father as the whole is a human mistake. This will make him feel that he is not guilty.

To sum up, Miller is very successful in conveying his themes and expressing Keller's responsibility.

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This is an extract from "All My Sons", written by the Arthur Miller. The play depicts the American society during the World War and the Great Depression period. People have become more materialistic. They care about nothing except their own business. Everyone blames the other for his own sins. Each one wants to survive without caring about anyone else. Rare persons do not walk away from their problems and face them without a compromise and without lying to themselves or to anyone else.

These words are a part of a conversation between Joe Keller and his son Chris. Keller here describes the situation back then inside the factory. He said that the factory was like a mad house. The army was in bad need of cylinder heads and they had to give them what they needed quickly. Unfortunately, they have manufactured cracked ones. It was a very thin hair like a crack. Steve, Keller's partner, has been so foolish and he covered the cylinder heads in order not to ruin the business. Covering them was wrong but it is just what a little foolish man does. He was afraid but meant no harm. Thus, he should not be regarded as a criminal or a murderer. It is part of human nature but does not make a murderer out of him.

Keller is a businessman who was once a boss and worked as a machine shop worker. However, he is uneducated and this is seen in the way he concentrates on things as he reads, speaks and listens. As an uneducated man, he is amazed of many things that are common. All his judgements are according to his experience as well as "a peasant like common sense" which means that his logic is just as common and simple as that of any peasant. Keller regards himself as a hero in a cinematic way. After his return from the trail, none of his neighbours believed that he is innocent. But 14 months later, he has become a great business man and everyone treats him well as if nothing has happened. Keller's philosophy is to forgive and forget. He has the ability to forget and ignore whatever he wants. He fully blames Steve for the crime that he has committed himself. This shows how materialistic he is and also shows that he cares about no one except himself.

On the contrary his son Chris is a kind hearted man who is always worried about people. He sacrifices in order not to make others feel sad. He thinks highly of his father. He does not want to believe that his father has committed such a crime. He always calls him Joe McGuts which means man of courage. He loves

Ann who was considered to be his brother's fiancé. Although he is sure about Larry's death, he does not want to marry Ann except after the agreement of his mother who still believes that Larry is not dead and is going to come back. Chris is so realistic. He wants his mother to know all about Larry's death but his father does not want him to do so as he wants her to live in her illusions. Chris wants to fulfil the American dream; he wants to get married and to have a family in order to look after and live happily with.

The passage sheds light upon one of the main themes of the play which is responsibility towards others. Keller does not feel responsible for what he has done. He throws all the responsibility upon Steve. He does not feel guilty about the death of 21 pilots because of the cracked cylinder heads. Steve who is looked upon as a murderer has gone to prison instead of Keller who is the real murderer. This shows that nobody cares about the other anymore.