

American dream
expressed in all my
sons



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Throughout literature writings of tragedy that have been important, such as the play Hamlet. Their plots were usually tragic however the themes established, such as the tragic hero, brought up ideas that were intense and that could be talked about and thought about widely. I've noticed throughout many plays I have read in modern literature, that there are very little tragedies that have been written. I know that Arthur Miller is one of many authors that did write plays of tragedy. Miller wrote a lot of tragedies that made him very successful in receiving many awards and respect from his fellow peers. One of the many tragedies Miller wrote was the play " All My Sons," that was about lies and corruption of a man and the punishment of consequential events. Miller also showed the American Dream by revealing some deep tragedies in the lives of his characters. According to the modern idea of tragedy, the characters should be responsible for their actions while facing any kind of moral problem. They create several wrong choices and results for themselves which directs them on the border of the worst kind of tragedy. The themes presented corruption and dishonesty which strengthened the terrible atmosphere that the play had. These topics in the play were developed because of the events of Mr. Keller, in which could also be well thought-out to be a terrible guy.

It was hard for me to choose just one theme for this paper, so I included some themes that I felt were most important in this play. The themes in " All My Sons" are mostly from the idea of principles, the laws that man follows through our sense of right and wrong. One of the themes that come out from these morals is the values of an individual's existence. The topic is obvious once it is associated with the Keller family, wherever an argument between

loss and morals was talked about between one another. Joe Keller was in charge of the distribution out defective cylinder heads during World War II, in which the deaths of twenty-one fighter pilots became the end result of it. Keller thought the deaths of the fighter pilots were reasonable since his business was kept by him, in which kept his family financially stable and healthy. A quote from the play is, " You lay forty years into a business and the knock you out in five minutes, what could I do...Chris, I did it for you...For you, a business for you" (Miller, 69&70)! The wife of Joe, Kate Keller, supported him for the reason that if Joe was in charge of the deaths of the fighter pilots, then he might have been guilty for his sons death who was a fighter pilot, his name Larry Keller " Your brother's alive, darling, because if he's dead, your father killed him" (Miller, 68). Kate was just like Joe her husband. She didn't see the full degree of his crime. She was only concerned about the family. Keller's explanation and Kate's lack of knowledge of the kills were intended to help the family's foundation such as the failure of morals to be manifested throughout the people in the family. The two children of the family have their own sights on morals that are different from their parents. When the crimes of Chris's father were brought out to the light, Chris ordered a justification for his father's actions " Then you did it. To the others...you killed twenty-one men...You killed them, your murdered them" (Miller, 68-69)! Chris was very surprised that his father had done this, and once Joe tried to give good reason for it, he was surprised and angry, " For me! I was dying everyday and you were killing my boys and you did it for me?...You're not even an animal, no animal kills his own, what are you?...I ought to tear the tongue out of your month" (Miller, 71). Chris's outlook on morals began the argument with his father, but once Larry's outlook was

revealed, this conflict rises “ I read about Dad.. How could he have done that?...if I had him here now I could kill him...I can't bear to live anymore” (Miller, 83). Larry committed suicide because he was embarrassed of his father's crime that he committed. The Keller family's sons had a diverse vision on morals from their parents setting a very high standard for them to live on. These conflicting observations among the children and the parents had cause Joe Keller to commit suicide. Keller's morals covered only his family, therefore when he recognized that the crime he committed was the product of his sons death, he then committed suicide by not being capable to bear the moral crime he committed. The end result of the argument resulted in suicide, creating this a tragic theme.

Another theme that comes from morals is honesty. This theme is important because every character in the play is mostly involved in it. Joe Keller is one character that is important in it. His friends and family members were lied to by him when he told them that he was not involved with the making of the defected cylinder heads. The revelation and truth about his crime was discovered when his Kate didn't continue to be dishonest with people, when people thought he was sick during the war “ Well, sure...I meant except for that flu. Well, it slipped my mind; don't look at me that way (Miller, 65). It was only when Chris cross-examined Joe, that he revealed the truth about his crime. Keller lied to Herbert after informing him, that he would receive the responsibility for the defected cylinder heads. As soon as the time came to confess that he was the one that prearranged the shipment of the defected cylinder heads, he denied any association with it, which caused Herbert to go to jail. The failure within truthfulness did multiply to other characters in the

play. Dr. Jim Bayliss was not warmhearted toward Chris, however, it was never mentioned to him. It was revealed to the readers because Sue, Jim's wife, told Ann, Chris's fiancée " My husband is unhappy with Chris around... Every time he has a session with Chris he feels as though he's compromising by not giving up everything for research" (Miller, 44). The neighbors' deceitfulness was above all directed at Joe, believing that he was accountable for the defected cylinder heads, from Sue " Everybody knows Joe pulled a fast one to get out of jail"(Miller, 45) to Jim " What'd Joe do, tell him?...Don't be afraid, Kate, I know. I've always known" (Miller, 74). This dishonesty covered a lot of the people in the play, making it a tragic theme.

A description of the American Dream is to grow up with tons of wealth and valuable property. But there are different interpretations of the American Dream, but that is the common gist of it. At the end of the play in " All My Sons," the American Dream is portrayed awkwardly in the play, where it is described how someone lives happily even after growing up, owing lots of property and becoming prosperous financially. Joe Keller had become wealthy and fortunate in his life financially but his life turned into a tragic life as the story moves towards a final end. All characters are displayed with self-satisfaction and wealth due to prosperous business, but at the end of the play Keller shoots himself to complete the nightmare. The Americans are suffering from such tragic and panic situations which come their way in the quest of financial growth and prosperity. The people have become so selfish and ethically empty that they don't have any sense of right and wrong in their hearts while committing crimes with the self dishonesty and with denial approaches how they think that they are doing rightfully rather than

confessing their crimes (American Dream, 2010). The family is also portrayed as a unit within the society and it is unclear or damaged by the personal actions. But despite the fact that the play is linked with the past, but the past helps out, to form a present and a future for the individuals. It is inescapable to ignore or forget crimes. The characters speak such words or dialogues in the play which reveals the different secrets about the current history of the Keller family. Arthur Miller displays how such past secrets of life have influenced the lives of his character in the play who keep themselves in the past always (All My Sons Study Guide, 2010). In the play, Arthur Miller has defined ideal family characters which seems outwardly very good and satisfied but secretly there is nothing good, having many dark characteristics of American life, which seems very appealing in media interpretation.

Arthur Miller's principle was to convey the beauty of tragedy to modern literature, showing that it wasn't only intended for the upper classes of nobility. He succeeded, making a modern tragedy partly based on the form of saving the loss of the tragic hero near the end of the play for instance. All the arguments among the Keller family and with all the characters conveyed tragic themes. Those themes, in combination with the plot, had made Joe Keller a tragic hero, or in Miller's case, a tragic man. This tragic man fits the play entirely with the themes linked to him. "All My Sons" is capable of being well thought-out to be a modern tragedy since the construction of the tragic man and how his proceedings formed some tragic themes. These events resulted in Joe's death, which happens to nearly all tragic men and heroes in big misfortunes.