

## CHARACTER BREAKDOWN FOR ARTHUR MILLER'S

### ALL MY SONS

#### **Joe Keller — 60**

Joe, 60, was exonerated after being charged with knowingly shipping defective aircraft engine cylinder heads (for [Curtiss P-40 Warhawks](#)) from his factory to the military during [World War II](#), causing the deaths of 21 pilots. For over three years he has placed the blame on his partner and former neighbor, Steve Deever, although he himself committed the crime. When the truth comes out, Joe justifies his actions by claiming that he did it for his family.

#### **Kate Keller (Mother) — 50**

Kate, 50, knows that Joe is guilty but lives in denial while mourning for her older son Larry, who has been "[missing in action](#)" for three years. She refuses to believe that Larry is dead and maintains that Ann Deever — who returns for a visit at the request of Larry's brother Chris — is still "Larry's girl" and also believes that he is coming back.

#### **Chris Keller — 32**

Chris, 32, returned home from [World War II](#) two years before the play begins, disturbed by the realization that the world was continuing as if nothing had happened. He has summoned Ann Deever to the Keller house in order to ask her hand in marriage, but they're faced with the obstacle of Kate's unreasonable conviction that Larry will someday return. Chris idolizes his father, not knowing initially what he has done.

#### **Ann Deever — 26**

Ann, 26, arrives at the Keller home having shunned her "guilty" father since his imprisonment. Throughout the play, Ann is often referred to as pretty, beautiful, and intelligent-looking and as "Annie". She had a relationship with Larry Keller before his disappearance and has since moved on because she knows the truth of his fate. She hopes that the Kellers will consent to her marriage to Larry's brother, Chris, with whom she has corresponded by mail for two years. Ann is the truth-bearer in the play.

#### **George Deever — 31**

George, 31, is Ann's older brother: a successful New York lawyer, [WWII](#) veteran, and a childhood friend of Chris's. He initially believed in his father's guilt, but upon visiting Steve in jail, realizes his innocence and becomes enraged at the Kellers for deceiving him. He returns to save his sister from her marriage to Chris, creating the catalyzing final events.

#### **Dr. Jim Bayliss — 40**

Jim, 40, is a successful doctor, but is frustrated with the stifling domesticity of his life. He wants to become a medical researcher, but continues in his job as it pays the bills. He is a close friend to the Keller family and spends a lot of time in their back yard.

**Sue Bayliss — 40**

Sue, 40, is Jim's wife: needling and dangerous, but affectionate. She too is a friend of the Keller family, but is secretly resentful of what she sees as Chris's bad idealistic influence on Jim. Sue confronts Ann about her resentment of Chris in a particularly volatile scene in her backyard.

**Frank Lubey — 33**

Frank, 33, was always one year ahead of the draft, so he never served in World War II, instead staying home to marry George's former sweetheart, Lydia. He draws up Larry's horoscope and tells Kate that Larry must still be alive, because the day he died was meant to be his "favorable day". This strengthens Kate's faith and makes it much harder for Ann to move on.

**Lydia Lubey — 27**

Lydia, 27, was George's love interest before the war; after he went away, she married Frank and they soon had three children. She is a model of peaceful domesticity and lends a much-needed cheerful air to several moments of the play.

**Bert — 8**

Bert, 8, is a little boy who lives in the neighborhood; he is friends with the Bayliss' son Tommy and frequently visits the Kellers' yard to play "jail" with Joe. He appears only twice in the play: the first time, his part seems relatively unimportant, but the second time his character is more important as he sparks a verbal attack from mother when mentioning "jail," which highlights Joe's secret.

\*\*\*ALL ROLES ARE OPEN....ACTORS NEED TO CONVINCINGLY BE ABLE TO PORTRAY THE AGES OF THESE CHARACTERS.\*\*\*

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THERE WILL BE COLD READINGS FROM THE SCRIPT

THE TIME PERIOD IS LATE 1940'S

**SYNOPSIS FOR *ALL MY SONS*:**

Joe Keller, a successful businessman, lives comfortably with his wife, Kate, and son, Chris, in a suburban American neighborhood. They have only one sadness in their lives – the loss of their other son, Larry, who went missing in [World War II](#). After three years, Kate still clings to the hope that her son is alive. Chris would like her to give up that hope because he wants to marry Ann, an old neighbor and Larry's former fiancée.

Ann arrives. Kate, sensing the reason for her visit, gets a little touchy. We learn that Ann's father is in prison for a crime he committed while working in Joe's factory. Faced with a batch of defective machine parts, he patched them and sent them out, causing the death of 21 pilots during the war. Turns out that Joe was also accused of this crime and convicted, but he was exonerated (set free) during the appeal. Steve went to prison; Joe returned home and made his business bigger and better.

Soon after Ann's arrival, her brother George follows, straight from visiting his father in prison. He knows what Chris

has in mind and is totally against him marrying Ann. Joe and Kate do their best to charm George into submission, but finally it's Ann who sends him away. She wants to marry Chris no matter what. The marriage of Chris and Ann is becoming a reality – and Kate can't handle it, because it means Larry is truly dead. And if Larry is dead, she tells Chris, it's because his own father killed him, since Larry was also a pilot. Chris finally confronts his father's guilt in shipping those defective parts. But Chris won't do anything about it. He won't even ask his father to go to prison. Ann, who turned her back on her own father for the same reason, insists that Chris take a hard line. Joe Keller goes inside to get his things. A gunshot is heard. He's killed himself.