

The Role of the Mother in Miller's *All My Sons*

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Abstract

All My Sons, Arthur Miller's mature success on Broadway, tells about a wealthy manufacturer, Joe Keller, who sold the army faulty cylinder heads during the Second World War causing the death of twenty one American pilots. Keller's elder son, Larry was reported missing during the war. Even after three and a half years, Keller's wife, Kate is firm in opposing the possibility of Larry's death.

Miller makes various drafts for the play, in the first ones he finds much interest to focus on Kate as a strong woman who enjoys supremacy over her household. Her superstitious nature and due belief in astrology receive the playwright's great concern. Even though in the final version, the main focus is on the father - son conflict ; Kate is no less striking as both a loving mother and a faithful wife. As a dramatic creation, Kate is a strange mixture of belief in superstitions, a woman with a strong desire to control and even with a stronger capacity for love. It is Kate's great capacity for love which makes her equally an interesting character as a passionate mother, even for the grown ups around her, and a loving loyal wife. This paper aims at showing the importance of the role which Kate considerably plays as to the life and relations of her family.

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When the lights come up, it is the backyard of the Kellers' home which is " hedged on right and left by tall closely planted poplars " ¹ offering the Kellers no escape from the consequences of Keller's guilt. To one side of the stage is the stump of an apple tree. It is seen at the very beginning of the play that Keller's son, Larry, who is a pilot, was reported missing in an action during the Second World War, three years ago. But, his mother, Kate, still refuses to believe in the possibility of his death. Planted at the news that Larry was missing and "toppled" (Act1,89) by the wind at the outset of the play, the tree becomes increasingly significant as the play develops. It symbolizes Larry who, as a character, never appears on stage

yet his presence is continually felt through the way characters talk about him and refer to the tree as his memorial.

Keller is soon introduced. He is a successful businessman in his sixties. It turns out that he is a self - made man who has worked pretty hard over forty years to make his fortune. As the play opens, Keller sits in his yard reading the want - ads of the Sunday newspaper and talking to Dr. Jim, a neighbour. Frank, another neighbour, comes to join them. Through their conversation, the impression is felt that Keller has not received a good education. Though Keller has managed to keep one of the best factories in the State, he could read no more than the want - ads of the newspaper. Simply, he is an illiterate man who could not avoid showing wonder at the simplest things like make living of old dictionaries and the weekly publishing of new "All different" (Act 1 , 96) books. The three men engaged in simple, casual talk that one usually enjoys to hear among neighbours on a pleasant weekend. The only threat to that peaceful, domestic atmosphere is felt when Kate Keller is mentioned. Frank refers to the broken apple tree and reveals that he is working on Larry's horoscope at Kate's request. Refusing the idea of her son's death, Kate asks Frank to prepare his horoscope and to check out if November 25 was a fortunate day for Larry according to his stars or not, as he is reported missing in that same date. If so, it would have been practically impossible for him to have died on his favourable day.

Miller then provides some introductory notes about the Kellers' neighbours to develop them later on as a parallel and contrast to the Kellers as well as to each other. Dr. Jim asks about Ann Deever and it turns out that Ann is the daughter of Keller's old neighbour and business partner, Steve, who is now in prison for shipping faulty cylinder heads to the Air force during the Second World War. Jim Bayliss and his wife, Sue, are said to live in old Deever's house. Jim remarks that it is something nice to have Ann here since there is not "a damned thing to look at" (Act 1 ,93) in the whole neighbourhood. On seeing his overweight wife, Sue, Jim kiddingly adds "Except my wife, of course" (Act 1 , 93). Through this, it can be noted that Jim is apparently not satisfied with his wife. The Bayliss do not seem to be on good terms with each other. The idea becomes clearer when Jim's wife comes to call him for a patient who needs him on the phone. Sue is

crazed with jealousy at this patient whose perfume, Sue comments, can smell still over the phone. Jim is not satisfied with his vocation even. Seeing Jim's younger son, Tommy, rush in with his father's thermometer, Frank suggests that Tommy would be a doctor like his father. But, Jim immediately dismisses the idea, for according to him working as a doctor is not really rewarding.

Then Lydia, Frank's wife, a girl of twenty seven, comes to tell her husband to come home so as to help her fix the toaster. Later on, it is seen that Frank and Lydia are a happy couple in contrast to the Bayliss. They are content to lead a simple life away from Dr. Jim's high aspirations and idealistic demands.

Intruding upon the "Secluded atmosphere" (Act 1 , 89) of the Kellers' backyard, the neighbours move in and out actively. With the stream of their daily activity and friendly interaction with the Kellers, the action, Miller tells, is set on. It is where one's private feeling of "the warmth, ease and love of family life is extended to encompass a larger area of society".² The neighbours, as will be seen later on, are kindly concerned about the Kellers' family, particularly Kate. Despite their knowledge of Keller's guilt, they are not really bothered about it and they keep their friendship with him.

Chris, Keller's other son, who has come back safely from the war, refers to Larry's tree reporting to his father the way he saw it damaged the night before. Once again, Kate is mentioned. As Keller and Chris talk about the damaged tree, they worry about Kate and the influence of this damage on her. Being worried about Kate's reactions, Keller thus wonders : "What's mother going to say " (Act 1 , 96). About four o'clock that morning, Chris heard it cracked and as he woke up and looked out he found out that Kate was standing there. She shouted high when the tree cracked. Actually, what made Kate stand out at that hour was that she was dreaming about Larry again.

Chris says they have got to say the truth to Kate that they have almost given up waiting for Larry to return anymore. Much is heard about Kate though she is not there which implies that Miller is inviting his readers to

know about this woman who keeps control over the minds of people even in her absence.

It is already noted that Ann Deever who was Larry's fiancée, is staying with the Kellers at Chris's invitation. Chris informs his father that he plans to marry Ann. At first sight, Keller seems to be unconcerned. He is indifferent to Chris's words thinking it is Chris's business alone and he is old enough to decide. Soon, Chris argues with Keller reminding him that it is not his business alone, Kate is involved. As soon as Kate is mentioned, Keller warns Chris that he should give up this intention lest he would ruin his mother's dream about Larry's coming back home one day. But, Chris now is different than before. It comes to be known that after his war experience, Chris becomes fully aware of the growing need to build his character and life in an independent way from his parents' : "I want a family. I want some kids. I want to build something I can give myself to" (Act 1 , 102). He, thus, threatens his father to leave business and take Ann with him to New York. He is ready now to give up business than lose Ann. Keller is annoyed at Chris's rejection of business, which is for Keller, a priority second only to family. The problem then seems to involve the three of the chief characters : Keller, Kate and Chris.

Kate's appearance immediately shows how hard Chris's encounter is going to be. Kate is in her early fifties, " a woman of uncontrolled inspiration and an overwhelming capacity for love " (Act 1 , 102). There is much truth in Miller's description of her. Indeed, the words, "uncontrolled and an overwhelming " are important to understand Kate's character. There is something in Kate which refuses at any point to put her under control and this in turn is partly responsible for her persistence in believing that Larry is still alive. As the play develops, it is seen that it is Kate's "overwhelming capacity for love" which holds her family together and finally enables her to put aside all unpleasant events and thoughts and to live firmly. Yet, she willingly turns a blind eye to many of the realities of her life which she would not like to approve such as the possibility of Larry's death, and Chris and Ann's relationship.

Being a loving and passionate mother, Kate finds it difficult or almost impossible to accept the possibility of Larry's death even after three and a

half years. Thus, she firmly opposes Chris and Ann's marriage for to accept this marriage would be a proof that Larry is really dead. Keller believes that it is "the god dam newspaper" (Act 1 , 100) which encourages Kate to foolishly believe that Larry is still alive. Every time, it is reported that a soldier who had fought in the war and thought dead has, against all expectations, been found safely alive somewhere. So, Kate mistakenly expects Larry to come in the future. Everybody else in the Kellers' family, feels sure that Larry had been killed and it is of no use to keep waiting for him .

When persisting to hold such an illogical belief about Larry, Kate reveals herself as a superstitious character by nature.³ It is her superstitious nature which makes Kate see meanings in things which do not have meaning at all. For instance, Kate connects the destruction of the apple tree with Ann's coming from New York to visit the Kellers that night. She further connects the two incidents with her unexpectedly coming to find Larry's baseball glove somewhere in the cellar even after all these years.

She, thus, comments :

This month is his [Larry's] birthday ; his tree
blows down, Annie comes, Everything that
happened seems to be coming back.
I was just down in the cellar, and what do I
stumble over ? His baseball glove. I haven't
seen it in a century (Act 1 . 104)

She even finds sense to link all she had in mind with Ann's coming though unaware to sleep in Larry's room that night. Kate tells Chris that the night before she saw a dream, a kind of nightmare in which Larry was falling from the sky despite her attempts to save him. This, however, indicates that at some level of her subconscious, Kate knows right well the truth of her son's death. Also, the way she dreamt of him as falling from the sky shows the blame she bears her husband and his faulty cylinder heads for the death of her son.⁴ Yet, she hopes against hope that Larry is still alive somewhere, for this belief is at the crux of her ability to continue supporting her husband. Otherwise, she would have overtly rejected him for shipping the faulty cylinder heads :

Mother : I was first asleep, and _ [Raising her arm over the audience] Remember the way he [Larry] used to fly how past the house when he was training ? When we used to see his place in the cockpit going by ? That's the way I saw him. Only high up, way, way up, where the clouds are. He was so real I could reach out and touch him. And suddenly he started to fall. And crying, crying to me ... Mom , Mom ! I could hear him like he was in the room. Mom ! ... it was his voice ! if I could touch him I knew I could stop him, if I could only [Breaks off, allowing her outstretched hand to fall] I woke up and it was funny. The wind ... it was like the roaring of his engine.

I come out here ... I must've still been half asleep. I would hear the roaring like he was going by. The tree snapped right in front of me – and I like – came awake (Act 1 , 105).

Kate's firm belief in Larry's being still alive is implicit in her original opposition to the planting of the apple tree as a memorial to Larry. Now, the wind blows it down and Kate recalls how she opposed this idea long before. But, much to the Kellers' insistence that the tree had been planted even against Kate's will. When the wind blows it down, Kate starts weeping over that highly meaningful damage. Since Kate strongly believes in omens, she sees in this damage a bad omen. It is a reminder for readers as well, of how her false vision of Larry's coming back will be finally destroyed when the truth of his death comes out. As Kate, then, turns to Keller reprimanding him for the planting of the apple tree, once more "her stubborn superstitiousness comes almost to seem like dignified refusal to be bound by the norms of reasonableness ."⁵

In dismay, Chris makes it clear to Keller that they have to make serious efforts to dislodge from Kate's mind all wrong ideas about Larry. Chris is obviously alarmed at his mother's claim that they were in a hurry to plant the apple tree as a memorial to Larry. He is no less angered at Kate's superstitiousness and due grief over the damage of the apple tree:

Chris : Mother, Mother ! [She looks into his face] The wind below it down. What significance has that got ? What are you talking about ? Mother, please ... don't go through it again, will you ! It's no good, it

doesn't accomplish anything. I've been thinking, Y, know ? – may be we ought to put our minds into forgetting him.

Mother : That's the third time you've said that this week.

Chris: Because it's not right ; we never took up our lives again, we're like at a railroad station waiting for a train that never comes in (Act 1 , 106).

Beside Kate's superstitious nature, she is forcefully driven by her extreme motherly love not to accept the death of her son.⁶ But, not all mothers have such an ability to cherish illusory ideas against existing facts. By exhibiting such exaggerated sense of maternal love, Miller intends to make Kate exceed the limits of being an ordinary mother. At one point, she threatens to commit suicide in case that Larry would not come back. Once again, it is her "overwhelming capacity for love" (Act1, 102) which comes to the surface. Though Kate is not really serious in her threat, it is still an expression of the great grief this woman feels over losing her son. The audience is introduced to a woman of great big heart whose love for her missing son is really touching. It is true that we may find no sense in many of the superstitious remarks Kate makes, still we are moved by the great motherly love this woman displays.

As a wife, Kate is also loving and devoted to her husband though dominating in many instances. Keller, thus once reveals to George laughingly that his wife beats him with his own belt when he is supposed to be the first authority at home. In fact, she does this out of her desire to control and dominate otherwise there is nothing fake in her love and loyalty to Keller. Kate, from the very beginning, knows about her husband's guilt in shipping the faulty cylinder heads. Yet, she does not threaten to burst with his own secret except when she is forced to only to support her persistent belief in Larry's being still alive. As a faithful wife, Kate does her best to protect her husband against any possible harm. She, thus, protests seriously at the game Keller plays with local children a game she calls "a jail business" (Act 1 , 108). Keller affably plays this game with those children by making them believe that "there's a jail in the basement" (Act 1 , 97) and pretending to make them his deputy police officers. There is much irony to be implied in Keller's game. Keller, it turns out, knowingly breaks the law and escapes the punishment by making another one take the blame.

Still, the way Keller views his house as a prison indicates that he lives in one, a restrictive prison where in he deliberately denies the truth of what he has committed.⁷ Kate's belief in omens comes once again to the surface. She sees in this imaginary prison game a reminder of the prison where Keller must be finally led. She, then, asks him to stop, and Keller, who has not realized his guilt yet, "alarmed" and "angered" asks : " What have I got to hide ? " (Act 1 , 108). Kate, in turn, immediately hushes things up declaring that "I didn't say you had anything to hide" (Act 1 , 108).

Through exposition it is revealed that Keller and Ann's father, Steve, had been convicted for shipping defective airplane parts during the Second World War ; an action which caused twenty one American pilots to crash in Australia. But, Keller had managed to get exonerated by claiming to be "laid up" (Act 2 , 153) by the flu the day the parts were shipped. It was his partner, Steve who took the blame for that and thus, remained in jail.

Prone to this incident, Ann turns her back on her father. After her father's imprisonment, this girl takes the burden of working all alone to support herself. Being left alone, unprotected and engaged to the dead Larry, Ann wants to get married yearning for warm companionship. She puts in mind the idea of marrying Chris even before he reveals his intention of marriage to her but is blocked by Kate. Kate is firm in believing that Larry is still alive thus it is no way to discuss such intention with her. Kate mistakenly believes that Ann too is waiting for Larry to return. That is why she has not got married yet. Kate then argues with Keller that "Why is she [Ann] still single ? ... Probably a hundred people told her she's fool, but she's waited" (Act 1 , 107). It is at Kate's repeated enquiry about Larry that Ann reveals the fact ; she has almost stopped waiting for Larry to return. Obviously, Kate is not convinced. She asks Ann instead to " listen to your heart , only your heart " (Act 1 , 113), since, for Kate, it is the heart which one must safely trust.

To refuse the fact about Larry's death, Kate's desire to dominate others and keep control over what they think emerges once again to the surface. She wants to control others not only by forcing her refusal of reality on them but also by making them refuse to face reality too. Further, Kate goes

on to explain the logic she sees beyond her persistence in believing about her son's being still alive :

Certain things have to be, and certain things can
never be.
The sun has to rise and it does rise
This is why people must believe in
the existence of God in the universe.
As there is God in the universe,
Larry could not have died when he was
reported as missing and presumed dead
because certain things can never happen,
and one such thing is the supposed
death of Larry (Act 1 , 113)

It comes to be known that Kate and Keller have not been able to associate their sons with their company of young men. It is proposed to us that Larry never flew p - 40s ; when Keller says this fact nobody dares say the opposite. Ann knows this fact also but when she asks Keller about the possibility of Larry's being among the dead pilots, she is attacking the Kellers indirectly that they should not think of their son in isolation from his company. Kate angrily dismisses this idea on the ground that Larry is not dead so there is no argument while Ann is staying with them :

Ann : He [Steve] knowingly shipped out parts that would crash
an airplane. And how do you know Larry wasn't one of
them ?

Mother : As long as you're here, Annie, I want to ask you never
to say that again, ...

What your father did had nothing to do with Larry ?

Nothing.

... He's [Larry] not dead,
so there's no argument.

In concordance with Kate, Keller immediately remarks :

Those cylinder heads
went into p - 40s only
What's the matter with you ?
You know Larry never flew a
p - 40 s (Act 1 , 117).

Ann wants to leave the Kellers. It is Kate, for her own reason, who asks her to leave. Actually, Kate likes Ann personally, nothing is given to say the opposite. The only thing Kate does not like to think of is Chris and Ann's marriage for this will no doubt affirm Larry's death. Also, this opposition does not mean that Kate does not love Chris as much as she loves Larry. On the contrary, this woman loves both sons greatly and equally. At one point, we even get the impression that Chris has been spoiled by his mother's excessive love. One could, thus, safely see in Kate's opposition to Chris's marriage to Ann an indication of her possessive nature as a mother. To use the terms of Tony Wolf, which go hand in hand with the notion of the Electra complex, there is strong attachment between the mother and her son since the mother gives him birth and is responsible from the start for providing him with different physical and spiritual needs.⁸ As the son grows up, the mother is supposed to surrender him to a female companion. But, when the mother finds difficulty in accepting the role of a companion in her son's life, the mother's love becomes negative. Kate has nothing personal against Ann yet Chris's closeness to Ann does not appeal to her. Taking into consideration Kate's possessive nature and excessive love for Chris, Thakur sees the conflict between the two women as that between the mother and her son's companion.⁹ Chris, on the other hand, has not been able as a result of his mother's excessive love to establish himself. This is shown clearly in Kate's words to Chris : " Honest to God, it breaks my heart to see what happened to all the children. How we worked and planned for you, and you end up no better than us " (Act 2 , 145). It seems that Chris was brought up in a good manner, received a better education than his father and stayed home at the comfort his parents supplied till he left for the war :

I [Keller] spoiled both of you [Chris, Kate]
I should've put him [Chris] out when he was
ten like I was put out, and made him earn his
keep. Then he'd know how a buck is made
in this world (Act 3 , 163)

Being spoiled by his parents, especially his mother's excessive love, Chris has not experienced much in life. That is why his war experience has greatly, and probably to an exaggerated degree, influenced him. What Chris found out in the battlefield is a sort of relatedness ; man to man. In other

words, people whom he saw in the battlefield were deeply related to one another by human compassion and concern other than that of blood ties. It is not surprising then to realize the fact that :

They didn't die ; they killed themselves for each other
I mean that exactly ; a little more selfish and they've
been here today ...Everything was being destroyed
see, but it seemed to me that one new thing was made.
A kind of responsibility. Man to man (Act 1 , 121).

Thus, Chris feels the aches of conscience for returning alive from the war when so many young men under his command died in battlefield. Still, it is of such advantage to Chris that he comes for the first time to realize the need to develop his character in an independent way from his parents.¹⁰ The new realization Chris comes to as a result of his war experience brings him into a direct confrontation with his parents, especially his mother, over his desire to marry Ann.

A growing suspense is soon felt on the part of the Kellers, namely Keller and Kate, on knowing that George, Steve's son, after visiting his father in jail is coming to visit them. Keller finds much to suspect George and Ann equally that while George goes to see his father in jail suddenly, Ann comes to visit them. Keller thus wants to know " If she [Ann] was sent here to find out something " (Act 1 , 124). Obviously, he is worried that they would open up the case again. Kate herself has nothing against Ann or George. She only suspects them for having to come with some evil intention against Keller. Kate then finds much sense to wonder that all these years George has not even sent his father a postcard since he returned from the war. All of a sudden, George takes an airplane from New York to visit his father. Feeling apprehensive, therefore, Kate asks Keller to be "smart" (Act 1 , 126). Once again, it is Kate's desire to protect her husband against any possible harm which makes her seek Chris's help: "Dad and I are stupid people. We don't know anything. You've got to protect us" (Act 2 , 127). Growing even more suspicious of the Deever's motives to visit them Kate tells Chris : " You don't realize how people can hate, they can hate so much they'll tear the world to pieces " (Act 2 , 128). Despite Kate's superstitious nature and lack of wisdom in many of the remarks she made

about Larry, there is much truth to perceive in what she says about people's ability to hate which is part of their" human nature." ¹¹

The neighbours' concern for the Kellers' problem, particularly Kate, is clearly seen. As a character, Kate's power is apparent. She has undeniable influence on both family members and neighbours. Thus, they are often seen do their best to serve and please her. Dr. Jim, who drives George in, is obviously worried about her. He advises Chris not to let George in for Kate is not in a good mood and further warns him not to "explode this in front of her" (Act 2 , 137). George, who is now a lawyer, is the same age as Chris but looks even paler. He puts on his father's hat which sounds a jarring point for the Kellers as he comes with the intention of avenging his father upon Keller. He speaks quietly lest, he is afraid, he would find himself screaming. As he comes in, the first he asks about is Kate but is told that she is not well. It turns out that George, like Chris, is among those who fought in the war and have their lives changed since. He tells Chris :

When I was studying [law] in
the hospital, it seemed sensible,
but outside there doesn't seem
to be much of a law (Act 2 , 139).

George is obviously troubled as if blood were in his eyes when asked by Chris about his trouble, he makes it clear that : "The trouble ? The trouble is when you make suckers of people once, you shouldn't try to do it twice" (Act 2 , 140). The truth George learns from his father is that while the army was screaming for stuff, his father had nothing to ship. It was Keller who told Steve, on the phone, to weld, cover up the faulty cylinder heads in any way he could and ship them out. Keller promised to take the full responsibility of shipping the faulty heads but is smart enough to know that on the phone one can not take the responsibility. In a court, one can easily deny taking the responsibility of a phone call and that is exactly what Keller did. Steve wanted his partner, Keller, there, but the latter suddenly got the flu. So, Steve can not do anything while Keller managed to be freed. He, thus, wants to talk to Keller to know the answer. He also demands that Ann come with him and warns her not to marry Chris because Keller destroyed their family. George is obviously infuriated by

what he hears from his father but he soon gives up his threatening demand for truth the moment Kate comes in.

Along with the plot's development, Kate is shown not only as a loving mother and wife but also as an affectionate mother even for the grown ups in the neighbourhood including George.¹² It is true that Kate at first sight suspects George and Ann equally for having some evil intention to visit the Kellers, but she does not let suspicion overcome her good maternal nature. Soon, she sets her apprehensions at rest and allows herself to mother George as a son. Thus, when she meets him, Miller tells: " her pity, open and unabashed reaches into him " (Act 2 , 144). She prepares grape juice for George taking delight to recall how "He always liked grape"(Act2,127). She asks Ann to give him immediately a glass. when Ann says she had offered him one, Kate answers that she should better give than simply just ask :

Mother : None of us changed, George. We all love you (To Ann) why didn't you give him juice !

Ann (defensively) : I offered it to him !

Mother (scoffingly) : you offered it to him [Thrusting the glass into George's hand] Give to him ! (To George, who is laughing): And you're going to sit here and drink some juice...And look like something (Act 2, 145).

With growing motherly affection Kate calls him " Georgie , Georgie ! " (Act 2, 144) and George feels much interested to see that Kate, despite all these years, still remembers his grape juice. Kate shows further motherly concern for George's health since mothering is something instinctive. She is really anxious at George's growing thin and thus suggests to feed him better than his own mother does in case he makes up his mind to stay with them. Again, Kate's sense of motherhood does not fail her to remind George of the great chance he had once to marry the fine Lydia who is now married to Frank and has three babies. George himself admits that Kate's advice had been really wise but he lost the chance. Still, Kate keeps her word to find George a nice girl to marry if he ever likes. It is the mother in Kate that is responsible for her passionate concern for others and in turn makes them richly respond to her. Noteworthy enough is that Kate's sense of

motherhood, though exaggerated in many instances, is not only restricted to her own sons but also extended to include the grown ups around her.

Despite Kate's superstitious nature which causes her to be blamed by others, she has the ability to see deeply into the characters around her. Having such a keen eye, Kate comes to see that George thinks too much which is a problem for her. She takes the stance then to criticize Larry, Chris and George equally for thinking too much : " You had big principles. Eagle Scouts the three of you ... stop begin a philosopher and look after yourself " (Act 2 , 148). That is why, Kate thinks, George lost his girl, Lydia to Frank. He is thus told by Kate : " while you were getting mad about Fascism Frank was getting into her [Lydia's] bed " (Act 2 , 148).

Lydia is content to marry Frank " that big dope " as Kate once comments, " who never reads anything but Andy Gump " (Act 2 , 149). She is able to raise a family being married to a man, unlike George, who did not join the war and stayed home. Lydia, it turns out, was George's girlfriend but she preferred to marry the first man who asked for her hand, Frank, never minding how simple he is than to wait for George to return from the war. Lydia's desire to marry and raise a family is also echoed by Ann, who being scared of her lonely life wants to marry but is opposed by Kate for all the reasons she has got .¹³

However, Kate manages to calm down George's anger at what he already heard from his father and for one time even the situation seems to be promising of much release and comfort for the Kellers. George, who fails to pursue his demand for revenge, thus allows himself to be mothered by Kate. Keller, in turn, is no less convincing in the part he plays to defend his old partner, Steve, and between the lines, himself, against the State :

A little man makes a mistake and
they
hang him by the thumbs : the big ones
become ambassadors (Act 2 , 150)

When questioned further by Keller, George reveals that the problem is now with his father's soul. He would like to take everyone who made money in the war and put him against a wall. Keller then is sad to claim that as long as he knows Steve, the latter has never learnt to take the blame of his

wrong doing upon himself. Even though, Keller is ready to offer him a job and he wants him to know that. Once again, Keller is convincing in the way he talks about his old partner which leaves no way for others to argue or suspect him a bit. The Kellers manage to soothe George till he says that he never felt at home anywhere but with them. But, Kate, who has never betrayed her husband's secret to any living soul before, suddenly reveals that :

Mother : He [Keller] hasn't been laid up in fifteen years .

Keller : Except my flu during the war
my flu, when I was sick during ... the war

Mother : Well, sure ... [To George] I mean
except for the flu [George stands perfectly
still] well, it slipped my mind, don't
look at me that way. He wanted to go
to the shop but couldn't lift himself off
the bed.

George : She [Kate] said you've never been
Sick.

Mother : I said he was sick, George
Do you remember every time you were sick

George : I'd remember pneumonia
Especially if I got it just the day
my partner was going to patch up
cylinder heads (Act 2 , 153)

No further details are given by the playwright to justify this verbal slip, the only explanation left is that it is something accidental. It is Kate, though unintentionally, who "destroys the pretense of Keller's innocence"¹⁴ bringing about the turning point from which many effects quickly come to the light.

George demands that Ann immediately leave the Kellers, and Kate unquestionably agrees with George. Throughout the play till Ann shows Kate Larry's letter, Kate persists in opposing Chris and Ann's marriage. Once again, there is no evil intention on the part of Kate to refuse that marriage other than her irrational belief about Larry's being still alive and her persistent demand that they should wait for his return home one day. Also, this opposition does not contradict the maternal " solicitude and sympathy "¹⁵ this woman displays towards Chris. But, unfortunately, Kate lacks the " wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason "¹⁶ So, instead of wisdom and spiritual exaltation which would have enabled Kate to transcend the tragedy of Larry's death and seek much solace in Chris's

marriage, she slips into depression and turns to astrology in an attempt to support her illusion about Larry. This time, Frank hurries in to tell Kate what he finds out. He is obviously concerned to do as Kate pleases in working on Larry's horoscope. Even though Chris argues with Frank to choose a better time, he is insistent to tell Kate that he has just finished working on Larry's horoscope with the result that Larry is still alive somewhere. Larry, as mentioned earlier, supposed to die on November 25, but it turns out that this date was his favourable when he "should've married on " (Act 2 , 154) as Frank puts it.

Consequently there is a confrontation between mother and her son over the latter's decision to marry Ann :

Chris [turning to his Mother] : What do you mean, you
packed her bag ? How dare you pack her
bag ?

Mother : Chris ...

Chris : How dare you pack her bag ?

Mother : She doesn't belong here

Chris : Then, I don't belong here

Mother : She's Larry's girl

Chris : And I'm his brother and he's dead, and
I'm marrying his girl

Mother : Never, never in this world ! (Act 2 , 155)

At Chris's insistence to marry Ann, Kate says no though Chris has never known his mother before to refuse him a thing. Her refusal to accept Ann into the family further reflects her instinctive opposition as a possessive mother to accept the role of a companion to share in her son's life. So, Kate angrily dismisses the possibility of Chris's marriage on the ground that his brother, Larry is still alive and naturally he has no right to marry his brother's fiancée. Kate's insistence on Larry's being still alive and subsequent opposition to Chris's marriage could also be explained in terms of her excessive motherly love for both sons. Many instances suggestive of Kate's motherly mood are noted before which are no doubt strong enough to make her refuse the possibility of Larry's death and dismiss the whole intention of Chris's marriage. Whatever Kate's motives could be, the result is " a very important dramatic confrontation which precipitates the play's catastrophe. " ¹⁷

Keller then has plenty to say that three and a half years Kate has been talking like "maniac" (Act 2 , 155). But, Kate who is in a dominating position as ever, smashes him across the face insisting that Larry is still alive and everybody ought to wait. Kate's violent reaction is once again an expression of her desire to control and dominate people around her. Despite her strong love to Chris, her belief in Larry's being still alive is even stronger. For Kate, Chris's marriage to Ann will be no way an admission of Larry's death. Such admission, in Kate's mind, will bring the Kellers face to face with the consequences of what Keller has already committed. Keller is able to avoid thinking of the consequences of his guilt. It is his smartness and practical thinking which assure him that his son, Larry never flew a p-40. But, Kate for the first time makes in mind a symbolic link between Keller's guilt and Larry's death.

Though Kate has not perceived before any other values than that of blood ties, though she has not been able to see the moral implications of her husband's guilt, intuitively she does perceive a link between her husband's guilt and her son's death.¹⁸ Thus, she insists on her son's being still alive this time declaring, though not facing Chris, that " If he's dead, your father killed him. Do you understand now ? God does not let a son be killed by his father " (Act 2 , 156).

Even though the faulty cylinder heads Keller supplied the Air force with never really went to Larry's plane, Keller is to blame for his own son's death. Larry surprisingly enough, as revealed later on, committed suicide out of being ashamed of people and equally guilty at their death because of his father's crime¹⁹. So, it is Kate again, though with no evil intention, who bursts with her husband's guilt. Kate suppressed for so long this connection between Keller's guilt and Larry's death because to acknowledge this link would be to reject her husband. But, this time she does burst with this secret in an attempt to justify her persistent belief in Larry's being still alive. Once again, Kate is at the core of the plot development. Had she been able to hold her tongue, Keller's guilt would not have been exposed so overtly. Subsequently, there is a clash between the father and his son over the former's motives to ship the faulty cylinder heads.

Chris is so confused now as how he should manage the situation with his father. On his leaving home, however, Kate is obviously worried. Much to her anxiety, she comes to think that Chris may not come back home. Even though Jim knows that Chris will not be able to live with his father while turning a blind eye to his guilt, he reassures Kate of Chris's coming back since :

We all come back, Kate. These little private revolutions
always die. The compromise is always made ...
Frank is right – everyone 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 shines again (Act 3 , 160)

Despite Kate's anxiety over her son, she enjoys the feeling of being a mother to all people around her be they family members or neighbours. She, thus, listens wholeheartedly to Jim while he is revealing much dissatisfaction with his wife and profession. Chris's leaving home, however, reminds Jim of how he once left home to study a new disease in New Orleans and for two months living on milk and banana. It was beautiful, Jim recalls, then things turn upside down when Sue came in and cried for him to come back home : " And now I live in the usual darkness, I can't find myself : It's even hard sometimes to remember the kind of a man I wanted to be " (Act 3 , 160)

Kate's power as a character is felt once again through the way she influences Dr. Jim who in dismay at her increasing anxiety does all his best to bring her peace and calm her down. He thus promises Kate to look for Chris somewhere. Even more kindly, he asks Keller to put Kate to bed since " this is no good " (Act 2 , 161) for her to keep still. But, what makes the situation even worst is that Kate is not only worried about Chris, but also she is worried about Keller. Taking much care that it " is not over yet " (Act 3 , 161), Kate asks Keller to be smart again. Keller, in turn, is suspicious of Ann wondering why she never comes out of the room after the argument he had with Chris. His suspicions, as noted are already revealed by Kate who finds no reason for Ann to stay with them any longer.

Soon, Keller gives in his power to his wife as he becomes increasingly unable to control what is going on. Thus, he is recognized turning to Kate asking for advice and seeking relief :

Keller : May be I ought to talk to her [Ann] ?

Mother : Don't ask me, Joe

Keller [almost in an outburst] : Then , who do I ask ?

But I don't think she'll do anything about it.

Mother : You're asking me again.

Keller : I'm asking you. What am I, a stranger ?

I thought I had a family here.

What happened to my family ? (Act 3 , 161)

Kate's inability to give Keller an answer, however, does not contradict her being all concerned about him. But, Kate who is now no less bewildered than Keller himself simply has " no strength to think anymore " (Act 3 , 162). Despite Kate's apparent bewilderment, she does not give in. Soon, she regains control over things around her and is once more able to decide on what Keller should do to manage the situation with Chris. She thus suggests to Keller to act on Chris's compassion by confessing his guilt to Chris and seeking further his forgiveness. She finds it much better for Keller to " explain yourself ... you ought to make it clear that you know you did a terrible thing " (Act 3 , 162). For the special talent Kate has got to manage things, it is not surprising to see her suggest a pretence Keller is supposed to act on his son by bringing him to believe that " You [Keller] want to pay for what you did ... you're willing to go to prison " (Act 3 , 162). As far as Kate could see, if Chris gets the feeling that his father wants really to atone for his guilt, he might very possibly forgive him. But, Kate's words do not appeal to Keller. The latter is obviously struck at such threatening words like " prison " even though Kate does not really mean it nor ever think of it once. The problem with Keller is that he has not realized his guilt yet. To him, the only thing matters and the only world he knows prior to business is his family for whose sake, he thinks, all crimes must be pardoned. So, he gives himself an excuse to ship the faulty cylinder heads thinking only of how to make money for his wife and sons and keep them happy :

Keller : I don't know what you mean !

You wanted money, so I made you

Money. What must I be forgiven ?

You wanted money, didn't you ?
Mother : I didn't want it that way
Keller : I didn't want it that way, either
 what difference is it what you want ?
 ... but I got a family so I (Act 3 , 163)

It is true that Kate knows about Keller's guilt, but she is not to blame. Had she taken interest in Keller's business, she would have no doubt prevented him. The fact remains that Kate finds much interest in her family, particularly her sons, than bothers herself thinking of the business world of her husband ²⁰. Even though she wants money, she does not intend it the way Keller did. Keller, in turn, is firm in believing that he has got the excuse for his guilt on the grounds that he did it for the family. However, upon Kate's declaring that "it don't excuse it" (Act 3 , 163), she has just begun to realize what her sons equally come to as a result of their war experience. It is her trust in the power of the heart which leads Kate to a realization Keller comes to only so late in the play. She thus tells him : "There is something bigger than the family to him [Chris] " (Act 3 , 163).

In this concern, Kate speaks on the behalf of Chris and the playwright himself whose main theme in this play is that the individual is further bound to a world larger than his family where in people beyond blood ties are equally responsible to each other. This is exactly what Larry and Chris equally believe in as a result of the sacrifice their comrades made in the battlefield with the former's committing suicide and the latter's determination later on to surrender his father to justice.

But, the situation is completely different for Keller who could not find himself bound to any beyond blood ties. In other words, Keller is fully controlled by a strong sense of loyalty to his family. As he talks to Kate, much is revealed about what Keller sees as the sanctity in the father- son relationship. He thus gives excuses for whatever his son does, even homicide, and expects to be pardoned by his son on the same grounds :

There's nothing
 he could do that I wouldn't
 forgive. Because he's my
 son. Because I'm his father
 and he's my son (Act 3 , 163).

Keller further shows strong faith in what he says. If it is proved to be otherwise, he will immediately commit suicide, an act which is to take place late in the play :

Nothing is bigger than that [the family]
And you're going to tell me you understand ?
I'm his father and he's my son, and if there's
something bigger than that I'll put a bullet in
my head (Act 3 , 163) .

Kate's role as a faithful wife is focused on. She spares no effort to dismiss her husband's anxiety over what happened with Chris. She takes the stance then to remind Keller that Chris has been an obedient son, so he would not do his father any sort of harm. Actually, Kate never minds Chris's idealism, the only thing she really cares about is that he should forgive his father. Yet, as Keller is unwilling to confess his guilt to his son things become even worse. If he had only admitted his guilt to Chris, he would have been forgiven by him. But, Keller could not do that. Keller's problem , to use the words of Arthur Miller : " is not that he can not tell right from wrong but that his cast of mind can not admit that he personally, has any viable connection with his world, his universe, or his society." ²¹

Mistakenly Keller thinks that Larry is different from Chris. While Chris is idealistic, Keller thinks Larry to be realistic. He understands the world the way it is : " To him the world had a forty - foot front, it ended at the building line " (Act 3 , 163). If Larry was still alive , Keller wonders , he would not act like Chris. His reactions, in other words, would not be as violent as Chris's. At his increasing anxiety, however, Kate reassures him that "nothing is going to happen" (Act 3 , 164). At this point, Ann comes to reveal that she is going to do nothing against the Kellers, nothing to expose Keller on the condition that Kate frees Chris from " feeling guilty with me " (Act 3 , 164). Subsequently, there is a clash between Kate and Ann at the former's insistence on Larry's being still alive :

I'd like you to tell him [Chris] that
Larry is dead and you know it ...
I want you to set him free. And then I
promise you everything will end, and
we'll go away, and that's all (Act 3 , 164).

But, Kate for all the reasons she has got, is as firm as ever in her belief about Larry. Once again, her obsessions are not easy to challenge:

It wouldn't depend on my word to make
Chris know it ... The night he gets into
your bed, his heart will dry up. Because
he knows and you know. To his dying
day he'll wait for his brother (Act 3 , 164).

When Kate asks Ann to leave, the latter declares the truth, " Larry is dead " (Act 3 , 165). She goes on to reveal that Larry crashed off the coast of China on November 25. His engine did not really fail him but he died. Ann, then, is equally determined to dislodge the whole fiction of Larry's safety from Kate's mind :

I loved him [Larry]
You know I loved him
would I have looked at
anyone else if I won't sure ? (Act 3 , 165).

All the same, Kate refuses to believe Ann's words with the consequence of Ann's feeling obliged to reveal the letter Larry wrote the day he committed suicide. It is currently recognized that Kate's slip of the tongue brings about the turning point in the course of action. Similarly, it is Kate's persistence in believing about Larry's being still alive which drives Ann into revealing Larry's letter and thus giving way to the climax, forcing the conclusion and the end .²²

Ann for her own reason then asks Keller to go into the house while taking the letter from her pocket. Stricken with pity and fear at Kate's reaction while reading into Larry's letter, Ann reminds Kate that she does not intend to hurt her nor to harm Keller. But, it is Kate alone and her insistence over Larry's fiction which makes Ann reveal the letter. Ann's procrastinated revelation of the letter is justified then insofar as she comes to use it only when no way out for her to let Kate forget about Larry :

First you've [Kate] got to understand
when I came
I don't have any idea that Joe – I had
nothing against him or you. I came to get
married. So I didn't bring this [the letter]
to hurt you

I thought I'd show it to you only if there was
no other way to settle Larry in your mind (Act 3 , 165).

Though late in the course of action, the letter as a means of revelation is, to use the words of Dennis Welland, "credible, economical and dramatic."²³ It serves the purpose probably better than any theatrical device in bringing about the final destruction of the mother's whole fiction about Larry's coming back home one day. Also, it consequently demonstrates to Keller, through Larry's suicide, the obligation to bear the consequences of his own guilt.²⁴

Despite the shock Kate receives at this revelation, she does not really break down. It is true that she lost one son, still she finds much sense to "lavish all her intention upon Chris and upon her husband, Keller"²⁵. That is exactly what Kate will do and what the playwright himself focuses on though he does not concentrate on Kate's reaction to Larry's death as much as he later on does on her equally great love for Chris and loyalty to Keller. The fact remains that it is something in character which enables Kate to face such calamity, Larry's death, without breaking down finally. Kate's desire to live is even stronger to make her find solace in Chris and Keller than to lose herself in an utter despair. Even though the action mainly focuses on the father - son conflict, the mother no less focused on, takes the stance to defend her husband against her son's will to surrender him to justice .

This time, Chris returns home with the intention to leave for Cleveland and start a new life alone. He can not stand living on his father's fortune while turning a blind eye to his guilt. Now, he is uncertain of what to do. If he had only known this the night he returned from the war, he would have immediately taken his father to jail. Keller wants to talk to Chris but the latter has nothing to say. In fact, Keller wants to know if Chris seriously wants to take him to jail and whether or not he really belongs there. Chris, worth noting, does not seem to be really decisive in taking his father to jail. He is practical in realizing that Keller is not the only one to blame but others in the business world are equally guilty. Even if he takes him to jail, this will amend nothing, will not raise the dead. Chris, then, is determined to leave home forever which he thinks is for the good.

On hearing this, Ann refuses to let him leave alone and is insistent that " There's reason , there's reason " (Act 3 , 167) which makes Chris turn his father to justice and stay with her. But, Chris is even more practical to refuse thinking that his father acts as others exactly do in what he describes as " the land of the great big dogs " (Act 3 , 167).

It is of significance that Keller shipped the faulty cylinder heads with untroubled conscience believing that he has got the excuse since the whole process is meant for the welfare of his family. Beside, through his conduct as a business man, Keller reflects the values of the business world. He has been taught that he could take the full advantage of the situation while people turning a blind eye to his fault insofar as the production line is going on ²⁶. In other words, Keller is only " a man among men " (Act 1 ,90) when others could not have done better, therefore, he is not to be judged differently :

Who worked for nothing in the war ?
When they work for nothing, I'll work
for nothing. Did they ship a gun or a truck
outa Detroit before they got their price ?
Is that clean ? Its dollars and cents
nickels and dimes, what's clean ?
Half the god dam country is gotta go if
I go ! That's why you can't tell me (Act 3 , 168).

Here, Keller is figured out as a smart character. He knows that Chris can not take him to jail because he is not the only one who should go there. Chris exactly knows this fact but it troubles him great deal to see the ideal image of his father crumble to ruin. He, thus, turns away being unable to face his father :

I know you're [Keller] no worse than most
men but I thought you were better
I never saw you as a man
I saw you as my father [almost breaking]
I can't look at you this way. I can't look
at myself (Act 3 , 168).

Ann asks Kate to help Chris turn his father to justice. At Kate's refusal, Ann quickly takes the letter from Kate and starts for Chris even though Kate rushes to stop her : " He's [Chris] going to read it ... He [Larry] wrote

it to me the day he died " (Act 3 , 169). Kate cries to Chris trying to prevent him from reading the letter.

Kate's concern for her husband comes even stronger than before. She desperately pushes him towards the alley and pleads the more with Chris not to tell his father about the letter. When Chris starts reading into the letter it is revealed that Larry killed himself being unable to face people because of Keller's crime. Though Chris at first hesitates to take his father to jail, he feels determined to take him there after reading Larry's letter. Men like Larry, Chris, and to some extent George, though nothing revealed about him since he left the Kellers, were greatly influenced by the sacrifice their comrades made in the battlefield with the result that they come to develop " a strong sense of social responsibility " ²⁷ This leads Larry to commit suicide for not being able to cope with people around due to his father's crime. Also, Chris is led, as a result of the war experience to recognize some higher principles worthy to live by. As Keller grabs the letter from Chris and starts reading into, he feels it better to surrender himself to justice which is the climax of the play. The letter forces Keller for the first time to admit his guilt and realize his moral responsibility to others.

Kate rushes to stop Keller on the ground that if Larry had been still alive, he would not have liked him to go to jail. But, Keller who has just realized the moral implications of his son's suicide immediately replies :

Sure he [Larry] was my son
But, I think to him
they were all my sons. And I guess
they were, I guess they were (Act 3 , 170).

Against his mother's expectation, Chris is now all determined, by Larry's suicide, to surrender his father to justice and nothing can stop him. He tells his mother that " Larry didn't kill himself to make you and Dad sorry " (Act 3 , 170). His suicide has been an immediate response to his father's crime, thus it teaches Chris the course he should take in surrendering his father to justice never minding even how devastating the result is.

²⁸Kate wrongly gets the notion that Chris, who has been an obedient son, will not be as decisive as such. She equally believes that Keller could manage the situation if he simply apologized to Chris for the crime he has committed.

But, things turn out differently. Now, there is a real danger that Keller is to be taken to jail and he seems almost ready to go there. Even more worried than ever, Kate tries to act on her son's compassion not to take him there reminding him that Keller would not live long in jail.

Being overwhelmed by Larry's suicide, Chris cries to Kate announcing the message Miller intends to convey :

Once and for all you can
know there's a universe of people
outside and you're responsible to it,
and unless you know that,
you throw away your son because
that's why he died (Act 3 , 170).

While Chris is busy talking to mother, a gunshot is heard inside. Keller kills himself for Larry's suicide has shown him the path he should take to atone for his guilt. With Keller's suicide, Kate's role as a loving faithful wife is cut, so her part as an equally affectionate mother dominates the end. Her reaction is important to stop at.

It is true that Kate grieves from the depth of her heart over Keller's suicide but she does not let sorrow control her inspirations. Though she lost her husband, she still finds solace in Chris and is attached to him now stronger than before. Chris has already defied his mother, as he decides to marry Ann, and equally challenged her fiction about Larry's being still alive somewhere. Yet, it is to Kate, rather than Ann, that Chris turns "almost crying " (Act 3 , 171) seeking refuge and comfort against what Keller has done.

Kate's " overwhelming capacity for love " (Act 1 , 102) wins her the situation at last. It is her great motherly love for Chris which enables her to transcend grief over losing Larry and Keller. She is seen then as forgetting all illusory ideas about Larry's coming back and due grief over losing Keller in favour of Chris.

The non - disputed significance of the mother image, which Miller sheds much light on, stems from the fact that the final words of the play belong to Kate. Being moved by her great motherly love, She asks Chris earnestly not to take what happened to his father hard upon himself but to

"forget now, live" (Act 3 , 171). Once again, this reflects Kate's desire to "live" despite all unpleasant situations she has come through.

To conclude then one can safely assume that Kate Keller is an important character in the play. She strikes our attention not for the illogical and imaginary remarks she repeatedly makes about Larry, but for her "overwhelming capacity for love" (Act 1 ,102). She, as a character, could be best understood as a loving mother whose sense of motherhood extends even to include the grown ups in the neighbourhood. Besides, she is a loyal wife, though dominating in many instances. Except for Kate's slip of the tongue, she does her best to protect her husband even against her son's decision to surrender him to justice.

Despite the shock she receives over losing her son, Larry, and her husband, she does not let grief overwhelm her for long. She could at last transcend grief through her great capacity for love and find much solace in her other son, Chris. Finally, she, interestingly enough, wins our admiration at her strong desire to forget all unpleasant events and firmly "live" (Act 3 , 171).

Notes

¹ Arthur Miller, *A View from the Bridge & All My Sons* (New York: Penguin Books Ltd , 1961), 89. All subsequent references to this edition will appear in my text showing the act number followed by page number between parentheses.

² Tom Scanlan, *Family , Drama and American Dreams* (Westport , CT : Greenwood, 1978), 129.

³ Ramji Lall, *Arthur Miller : All My Sons* (New Delhi : Rama brothers India PVT, LTd , 2005), 142.

⁴ Susan C . W . Abbotson, *Critical Companion to Arthur Miller: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* (NewYork: Facts on File, Inc., 2007), 52.

⁵ Ronald Hayman, *Contemporary Playwrights : Arthur Miller* (London : Heinemann, 1977), 17.

⁶ Lall, 105.

⁷ Abbotson, 46.

⁸ Santosh Thakur, *Arthur Miller : The Playwright* (New Delhi : Vrinda publications (P) Ltd, 1999), 23.

⁹ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰ Masahiro Oikawa, " *All My Sons* as Precursor in Miller's Dramatic Works " in *The International Studies Association of Ritsumeikan University*, Vol.1 (Kyoto : Ritsumeikan University, 2002), 106.

¹¹ Lall, 144.

¹² Thakur, 23.

¹³ Abbotson, 53.

¹⁴ Edward Murray, *Arthur Miller : Dramatist* (New York : Frederick Unger Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), 3.

¹⁵ Thakur, 25.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Lall, 143.

¹⁸ Scanlan, 131.

¹⁹ Abbotson, 45.

²⁰ Thakur, 23.

²¹ Quoted in Leonard Moss, *Arthur Miller* (Boston : Twayne Publishers, 1980), 20.

²² Murray, 19.

²³ Quoted in Murray, 7.

²⁴ Dennis Welland, *Miller : The Playwright* (London: Methuen, 1983), 27.

²⁵ Lall, 143.

²⁶ Abbotson, 46.

²⁷ Ibid., 46.

²⁸ Ibid., 45.

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دور الام في مسرحية " كلهم أبنائي " لأرثر ميلر

م. مسرة ماجد ابراهيم

كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية / جامعة ديالى

قسم اللغة الانكليزية

الملخص

تعتبر مسرحية " كلهم أبنائي " من الاعمال الناجحة لأرثر ميلر في (برودوي) وتحكي قصة احد اصحاب المصانع الاثرياء جوكلر الذي باع بعض الرؤوس الاسطوانية المعابة الى الجيش خلال الحرب العالمية الثانية مما تسبب في مقتل واحد وعشرون طيارا أمريكيا .

أما ابنه الاكبر (لاري) فانه فقد اثناء الحرب وهذا ما كانت كيت زوجة كلر ترفض تصديقه حتى بعد مضيء ثلاث سنوات ونصف . وقد كتب ميلر نسخ مختلفة لهذه المسرحية ففي النسخ الاولى كان مهتماً بتسليط الضوء على (كيت) باعتبارها امرأة قوية تتمتع بسطوة في بيتها وكان ايمانها بالاساطير والتنجيم يثير اهتمام الكاتب (ارثر ميلر) وعلى الرغم من ان الضوء كان قد سلط على الصراع بين الاب والابن في النسخة الاخيرة للمسرحية إلا ان (كيت) ليست اقل إثارة كأم حنون وزوجة مخلصة . كيت كلر كشخصية مسرحية عبارة عن مزيج من الايمان بالأساطير ، وهي امرأة ذات رغبة في السطوة مع قدرة اكبر على الحب . وان قدرتها الكبيرة على الحب جعلتها امرأة مثيرة للأهتمام كأم حنون لمن حولها حتى من الكبار وكزوجة وفيية محبة . تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تسليط الضوء على اهمية الدور الذي لعبته كيت كلر بجدارة فيما يتعلق بحياة وعلاقات افراد عائلتها .