

Text: Excerpt from Arthur Miller, All My Sons (1947), Act Two

Miller's play is about a manufacturer of aircraft parts (Joe Keller), who allows a batch of faulty parts to be supplied to the Air Force knowing that they might lead to plane crashes. In the following court case, he denies any responsibility and blames everything on one of his employees, who is found guilty and goes to jail, whereas Keller keeps his business and becomes even more successful. Keller's son, Larry – a pilot – went missing in action. Keller's second son, Chris, who was also a soldier, has always been convinced of his father's innocence.

Chris (*a broken whisper*): Then ... you did it? [...]

Keller: What's the matter with you? What the hell is the matter with you?

Chris (*quietly, incredibly*): How could you do that? How?

Keller: What's the matter with you!

5 Chris: Dad ... Dad, you killed twenty-one men!

Keller: What, killed?

Chris: You killed them, you murdered them.

Keller (*as though throwing his whole nature open before Chris*): How could I kill anybody?

Chris: Dad! Dad!

10 Keller (*trying to hush him*): I didn't kill anybody!

Chris: Then explain it to me. What did you do? Explain it to me or I'll tear you to pieces!

Keller (*horrified at his overwhelming fury*): Don't Chris, Chris don't ...

Chris: I want to know what you did, now what did you do? You had a hundred and twenty cracked engine heads, now what did you do? [...]

15 Keller (*their movements now are those of subtle pursuit and escape. Keller keeps a step out of Chris's range as he talks*): You're a boy, what could I do! I'm in business, a man in business; and hundred and twenty cracked, you're out of business; you got a process, the process don't work you're out of business; you don't know how to operate, your stuff is no good; they close you up, they tear up the contracts, what the hell's it for them? You lay forty years into a business and they knock you out in
20 five minutes, what could I do, let them take forty years, let them take my life away? (*His voice cracking*) I never thought they'd install them. I swear to God. I thought they'd stop 'em before anybody took off.

Chris: Then why did you ship them?

Keller: By the time they could spot them I thought I'd have the process going again, and I could show
25 them they needed me and they'd let it go by. But weeks passed [...] so I was going to tell them.

Chris: Then why didn't you tell them?

Keller: It was too late. The paper, it was all over the front page, twenty-one went down, it was too late. They came with handcuffs into the shop, what could I do? [...] Chris ... Chris, I did it for you, it was a chance and I took it for you. I'm sixty-one years old, when would I have another chance to make

30 something for you? [...]

Chris: You even knew they wouldn't hold up in the air. [...]

Keller: I was afraid maybe ...

Chris: You were afraid maybe! God in heaven, what kind of man are you? Kids were hanging in the air by those heads. You knew that!

35 Keller: For you, a business for you!

Chris (*with burning fury*): For me! Where do you live, where have you come from? For me! – I was dying every day and you were killing my boys and you did it for me? What the hell do you think I was thinking of, the Goddam business? Is that as far as your mind can see, the business? What is that, the world – the business? What the hell do you mean, you did it for me? Don't you have a country?

40 Don't you live in the world? What the hell are you? You're not even an animal, no animal kills his own, what are you? What must I do to you, what must I do? (With his fist he pounds down upon his father's shoulder. He stumbles away, covering his face as he weeps). What must I do, Jesus God, what must I do?

Keller: Chris ... My Chris.

45 (*curtain*)

Quelle: Arthur Miller, *All My Sons* (1947; London: Penguin Modern Classics e-Book, 2011), pp. 66-68.

Annotations

I. 14 engine heads G.: Zylinderkopfdeckel

Hilfsmittel

Den Prüflingen stehen einsprachige sowie für den schulischen Gebrauch geeignete zweisprachige Wörterbücher der Allgemeinsprache (Deutsch-Englisch/Englisch-Deutsch) zur Verfügung.