
Modern Drama – All My Sons by Arthur Miller

Considering the Issues of the play



Directions – For this activity you will be working in a group and discussing the following issues. You will write on a piece of paper your opinions about the issue. The more aspects that you can write, the better. Every five minutes we will be switching the issues so that every group will write on every issue. When we encounter these situations in the play, we will then consult with your ideas as listed on these sheets.

Scenarios

1. You have a successful business which has taken you years to build. It provides the money which supports your family. You are suddenly faced with a business decision which may have a negative impact on other people's lives. There may even be a risk of physical harm to others, but to choose another option may mean the ruining of your business. How far do you go to protect the interest of your family? What will you do? What are the moral/ethical consideration of either decision?
2. You have two sons, and the older one went missing in action during a war. It has been three years since you last heard from him, but you refuse to give up hope that he'll be found alive someday. How do you keep up hope when others are telling you to get on with your life? To what extent should you keep his memory alive in your day to day life? What will be some of the potential conflicts you will face?
3. You are in a partnership in a machine shop making mechanical parts for a large organization. The contract you are working on is massive and means healthy profits for your business at a time of economic hardships. One day, a small but serious irregularity appears in the products you are producing, and your business partner isn't there. Shutting down the operation may mean that you'll lose the contract, and perhaps even the whole business. What do you do? What problems do you foresee?
4. Your older brother went off to war and never returned. He was listed as missing in action, and presumed dead, but no body was ever recovered. It has been three years since he was reported missing, and you are finding yourself more attracted than ever to his former girlfriend. You suspect that she also likes you, but you are afraid to proceed. What will you do? What problems do you foresee?
5. Your boyfriend was reported missing in action in a war three years ago. You now want to get on with your life, and are finding yourself attracted to his younger brother. You strongly suspect that his parents might not both approve of any such relationship between you. How do you proceed? What conflicts do you anticipate?
6. Your father was charged with a crime, and had to spend some time in jail. He was later released following a successful appeal. You now have a chance to speak to the person whose testimony initially put him in jail. What will you say? What other conflicts do you anticipate in your life as a result of this past experience?