

## ALL MY SONS – SUMMARY

### **Act 1**

#### P.9-13

In the opening scene, we are introduced to Joe Keller, a sixty years old man, who reads the want ads. Next to him sits Jim, a 40 years old doctor, who is married to Sue, a nurse.

They don't speak to each other until Frank enters, a neighbor who does the horoscope for Larry (Keller's missing son) to find out whether November 25<sup>th</sup> (the day Larry was reported missing) was his favorable day – and if so – he might be alive somewhere. Jim says he doesn't believe in such things and asks about the whereabouts of his own son (a young boy who likes to pretend he's a doctor). Frank mentions that a doctor is a good profession and Jim doesn't agree. Frank also says that it is important to do research as a doctor but Jim says that the salary is not enough.

Jim asks about a girl who was supposed to visit and we are introduced to Annie - a visitor / a guest in Keller's house. Keller describes her as a beautiful woman and Jim is happy about it. Jim's wife, Sue, enters and

informs him he has a call from a patient. Jim doesn't like it but exits to take the call.

#### P.14-16

Frank's wife, Lydia, enters. She wants him to help her fix the toaster. He leaves and she stays to speak to Joe Keller. Joe says that Annie has arrived and that She's Beautiful. Lydia says that it is strange that a woman like Annie isn't married yet. Joe says that he believes Annie will get over it and adds that this is the result of a war – he had two sons and now he has one. Chris enters and starts reading the book section.

#### P.16-20

Bert enters, a kid from the neighborhood, who plays a game with Joe - via the game we discover that Keller mentions the word "jail", that he has a gun and that he asks Bert to "mum the word".

#### P.20-22

By creating a game between Bert and Joe the playwright tries to imply what will happen in the play. Chris mentions the fact that Mother saw the broken tree at 4 AM. He adds that they made a terrible mistake with

Mother, for being dishonest with her – they believe Larry's dead; Still, they've never said it to Mother, who believes Larry is alive.

Chris starts talking about his intentions to marry Annie. At first Keller says it's not his business, but then he adds that Mother may be upset about it. He also mentions that he doesn't understand why it has to be Annie ("You don't see enough Women"). Chris, who is frustrated says he will marry her and move to NY (and will leave the business).

#### P.23-27

Mother enters. She mentions the fact that the tree fell and other things happen at the same time (Larry's birthday, Annie comes, Mother found Larry's baseball glove). She also talks about the fact that Annie comes and has remained loyal to Larry (she isn't married). Mother tells Joe and Chris about her dream of Larry, the fact that she saw the tree breaks at 4 AM. She adds that it was too soon to plant the tree (for her it's a sign that Larry is alive). Chris tells Mother they should forget about Larry. He asks her to go out together. Then exits.

P.27-34

Mother wonders why Chris invited Ann. She guesses that he wants to marry her and adds that it's wrong since she's Larry's girl. She stresses that Joe above all has to believe that Larry is still alive. Bert enters and Mother is annoyed by the "jail game" and asks Bert to leave. Ann enters with Chris and Mother remarks an insulting remark to Ann ("You gained a little weigh"). Jim enters and seeing him coming out of her childhood's yard reminds Ann of her childhood. Before he leaves he says that Chris was known as "Mother McKeller" during the war. While talking, Ann is surprised to discover that she sleeps in Larry's room (since everything stayed the same). Kate asks about her mother – whether she's going to get a divorce. Ann is very indifferent to her father's situation. The conversation goes back to Larry and Ann says she's not waiting for him.

P.35-40

Kate finds it very difficult to believe ("deep in your heart you've always been waiting for him"). Mother says he can't be dead ("there's god") and that she would have known if something bad had happened like she knew when Chris was injured during the war. Frank enters – he asks Ann about her father, but stops when Chris makes him realize he shouldn't ask it. He mentions that he'll finish the horoscope tonight and leaves.

Ann asks Chris whether people still talk about her father. Joe says that nobody talks about it anymore and it was wrong of her and her family to leave to NY. Ann says that the last thing she remembers is that people yelled the word "murderers". Joe says that he wasn't ashamed when he got back from jail. He mentions the fact that everybody considered him as a "beast", who sold cracked cylinder heads to the army. He says that he wasn't guilty since he had a court paper to prove it. Joe asks Ann to move back to the neighborhood (for the sake of her father). Ann explains she couldn't support her father after she got the news about Larry. Joe tells Annie that what her father did wasn't connected to Larry because he never flew P-40's; Chris asks whether "Pigs flew P-40's".

#### P.40-45

Joe describes the day when a batch came out with a crack and describes Ann's father as a little man who prefers "to cover over the cracks" instead of not sending them at all and lose money. He says that if he were there, he would tell him not to send them: "that's a mistake, but it ain't murder". Ann asks Joe to forget about that day in the factory. Keller mentions the fact that Steve cried when he heard the news about Larry.

Then Keller changes the subject and says he'll order a table for tonight.

He exits.

P.42-45

Chris tells Ann that he wants to marry her and she says this was the reason she came. She mentions the fact that she almost got married 2 years ago and that she decided not to, since he started writing to her. They kiss and she asks him to kiss her like a real lover and not like his brother's girlfriend. Chris says he wants to take her somewhere else. She suspects that he has second thoughts because of his mother, but he says he feels bad about enjoying life when so many soldiers were killed in the war under his command. He adds that during the war a kind of responsibility was made and he felt that it was all gone after the war ended: "there was no meaning in it here" and he "felt wrong to be alive". He couldn't enjoy anything including Ann. Ann says that he mustn't feel that way and that he should be proud of his father. They kiss and Keller enters. He says that Ann's brother, George, is on the phone.

P.46-47

Chris tells Ann that they will tell his mother about them at night. She enters the house to speak to George, her brother. Joe, who is distracted, says that George is calling from Columbus and asks Chris whether he thinks he knows Annie enough (he suspects her motives; that maybe she was sent to find out something). Chris gets angry. In the background, they hear Ann who is speaking to George, they change the subject and Keller says that he wants a new sign over the plant – with Chris's name on it but Chris says he doesn't want it.

P.48-50

Keller says that sometimes he feels that Chris is ashamed of the money and adds "There is nothing wrong with that money". They suddenly hear Ann who is still talking to her brother, George. She tells him to come and the call ends. She gets out and asks Chris to go for a drive. Mother gets out and Keller asks her why George called. She says that he wants to see Ann right away. She also mentions the fact that George is a lawyer now. She finds it very strange because George hasn't contacted his father since the war. She asks Joe to "be smart" and repeats it. Keller gets angry and leaves.

## Act 2

### P.56-P.57

It's evening. While Chris is sawing the broken tree, his mother gets out with a tray of juice she has made for George (Ann's brother). She mentions the fact that Joe is still asleep since he's worried and asks Chris to protect them, since they are stupid people. She adds that Steve has always blamed Joe for making him cover the cracks. She thinks Steve's family (including Ann) hates the Keller's. Ann comes out while Mother leaves. He says he's relaxed about George's arrival.

### P.58-P.61

Chris leaves and Sue enters. After a brief small – talk with Ann about marriage and sacrifices connected to it (marrying an intern), Sue asks Ann to leave after marrying Chris, since he encourages Jim to do a medical research while Chris takes money from his father's plant. She adds that she's sick of the "holy family" and that everybody knows Joe is guilty and appreciates him for being smart. She accuses Chris of "phony idealism".



P.61-P.66

Chris enters. Sue becomes friendly again. After she leaves Chris compliments Sue and Ann gets upset. She asks him why he hasn't told her that everyone thinks Joe is guilty. She adds that she turned her back on her father and that it's important for her to know whether there's something wrong with Joe. Joe gets out and talks about the fact that everybody is so educated these days (by that he stresses the fact he isn't). Then he says he'd like to offer Steve and George a job. He adds that Chris is his "only accomplishment" and fears that when Steve gets out he'll be very angry. He doesn't want anything to be damaged between Ann and Chris. He says that he does it for his son. Chris says that he doesn't want Steve in the plant and that people may "misunderstand" Keller. Keller bursts out and shouts: "A father is a father".

P.67

Lydia comes. She mentions the fact that she has come to fix Kate's hair. Jim comes in. He says that he has asked George to wait in the car since

he's upset. He suggests taking him somewhere else and that he has come to take Ann home. While he talks George enters.

P.67-P.70

Chris and George talk. George asks about the broken tree and tells Ann about their father who became "smaller" and that he's a "little man", "a sucker". By that he implies that Steve was tricked in a way.

P.70

George tells Ann she's not going to marry Chris since his father has destroyed their family.

George adds that they did a terrible mistake with their father and says that Joe was the one who told Steve to send the broken parts (over the phone – a phone call couldn't be proven at that time). He mentions the fact that Joe likes to control things and that he believed Joe because Chris believed in him.

P.75-P.83

George implies that Chris doesn't want his name on the plant since he knows the truth. Mother gets out and the conversation becomes lighter.

She says that George looks older. George is upset to discover Lydia is married with 3 children. Mother tries to fix him a date. Joe gets out and offers Steve a job when he gets out. George says that Steve hates him.

Keller says it's because Steve never knew how to take the blame and gives examples for that.

#### P.84-P.91

George decides to stay and says that Joe looks great. Mother says that Joe hasn't been sick in 15 years. Joe tries to remind her about his flu, but it's too late, George refuses to believe it. Frank comes and informs Mother he discovered that November 25<sup>th</sup> was Larry's favorable day. Ann doesn't want to leave with George but she follows him outside. Chris is angry. Mother says that if Larry is dead then: "your father killed him". She gets in. Chris is left with Joe. They fight and Chris leaves.

### Act 3

The scene opens with Mother and Jim. They talk about the fact that Chris has gone. Jim is positive that Chris will return home since he will compromise. He adds that he wishes for Chris not to return as he wishes it for himself (in the past he tried to leave home to do research and returned as a compromise).

#### P.101 -P.103

Keller gets out. He asks what Jim knows and Mother tells him that he knows the truth. Keller doesn't know how to cope with the situation and asks Mother for an advice. He gets angry when she doesn't help him. Keller says he has made money for the family (he could live without it). He repeats the fact that family members should support each other ( " I am his father, he is my son").

#### P.104 P.106

Mother says she feels she doesn't know Chris anymore (in the army he was "a killer"). Keller adds that Larry was like him – he understood money. Ann gets out. She says she won't do anything about Joe if Kate tells Chris that Larry's dead. Then she shows Kate a letter Larry wrote her before he died.

P.106 - P.112

Chris returns home and says that he plans to leave. He can't send Joe to jail and can't marry Ann ("can't raise the dead. It's a zoo").

Keller tries to talk to Chris but Chris refuses. Keller says that everybody acted the same way as he did during the war. Ann gives Chris the letter while Mother tries to prevent it. He reads it out loud. Keller is shocked.

He understands that for Larry all the dead pilots were like family "they were all my sons". He gets into the house to take his jacket in order to go to jail. A shot is heard from the house. Keller kills himself. Mother tells Chris to "forget" to "live".