

Ann's role

Ann was Larry's fiancé and is at the Kellers' house at Chris's invitation. Whilst discussing and answering the questions below you need to remember that we view her character very differently when we have seen (or read) the play at least once than when we view it the first time. We know, for example, that she is part of the key to the mystery: she is the one who confirms the other characters' suspicions about Larry; she reveals that Joe did, in some senses, kill Larry. If you can, read and discuss the following questions, both after reading or seeing the play the first time and again once you have studied it in more depth.

1. Once you have seen, or read, the play once it is possible to notice Miller's clues to the audience that Ann knows Larry is dead. Just after she comes on stage for the first time she says on page 25, 'Gosh, those dear dead days beyond recall.' Why do you think Miller does this? Is it just to add suspense to the play or does it suggest something about Ann's character? Can you find any other examples?
2. In these first few pages of Ann's dialogue there are a number of examples of Ann seeming to be surprised by Kate's remarks about Larry. Find at least two of these and discuss if you think they are important and what you think Ann's bewilderment shows us.
3. Ann explains to the other characters that she does not visit her father as she has effectively disowned him (p.31). Do you think her apparent morality here fits with her personality in other scenes in the play? Think in particular about her comments about money. Discuss your ideas.
4. When Chris and Ann kiss on page 35 Ann tells him that he kissed her, 'like Larry's brother.' What do you think she means?
5. Ann seems to believe that only her father is guilty of shipping the faulty parts. On page 36 she tells Chris, 'And the money, there's nothing wrong in your money. Your father put hundreds of planes in the air, you should be proud.' What is ironic about this statement? Do you think Ann is naïve to believe the deaths were all her father's fault or do you think her apparent ignorance, coupled with a discussion of money, shows she is not as moral as she would like others to believe?
6. What do you think Ann's comment to Sue that, 'I think it's mostly that whenever I need somebody to tell me the truth I've always thought of Chris,' (p.43) says about Ann? What does it suggest about the environment she grew up in?
7. When Ann speaks alone with Sue on pages 44-45 she has a lot of short lines which are questions or exclamations, such as, 'How does Chris?' and 'That's not true!' What does this imply about Ann? Do you think she is in charge of the situation here, equal to Sue, or has less power?
8. Ann appears willing to believe in her father's guilt because the court found him guilty (p.55). Miller possibly wants the audience to question their belief in law or justice just because they have been told something is true or right. Consider Miller's play *The Crucible* to gain an understanding of how Miller felt about the danger of accepting 'justice' and 'right', particularly where other people's 'evidence' is what decides a conviction.

9. When George and Ann leave the stage near the end of Act Two, Ann can be interpreted as a helpless and needy character: she is after all calling after George, 'Don't take it that way, Georgie!' even though she has just told him to leave. However in Act Three she seems in control of the situation when she tells Kate, 'I'll do nothing about Joe, but you're going to do something for me.' (p.78). Do you think she has really changed and, if so, what has brought about this alteration? If you feel that she has been like this throughout the play, explain your reasons.
10. When Ann tells Kate, on page 79, before showing her the letter, 'I didn't bring this to hurt you,' do you believe her? Explore your ideas and see if you can come up with opinions for both sides of the argument.
11. On page 80 Ann tells Chris, 'I don't ask you to do anything about Joe ... I swear I never will.' Do you believe her? What evidence do you have to support your ideas? What is Miller's intention here in writing a character who condemns her own father for apparently telling a lie but then seems prepared to live a lie herself?
12. What do you think of Ann when she thrusts Larry's letter at Chris on page 82? Do you feel she does the right thing or do you think she should have kept the letter to herself? Does this suggest she loves Chris or not?
13. At the end of the play, after the shot is heard, Ann's exit is described by Miller in the stage direction as, 'ANN *runs up driveway.*' (p.84) Why do you think the playwright has her leave like this? What does it suggest? Do you read anything symbolic in the gesture?
14. Overall, what do you think of Ann as a character? Do you think she has been cruel to the Kellers or is Joe's death inevitable from the outset of the play?