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The *Revision Roundtable* contains a manageable set of revision questions selected by your tutors based on 'A' Level trends. We took into consideration what has appeared and to some extent, are predicting the 2015 options. The *Revision Package* comprises a full set of questions if you wish to stretch yourself further; find it on our Party HQ post on *livreordie!*

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Find yourself a group of 3-5 members. Each individual should select a question and write an outline or a full essay in response. In an outline, label *what*, *how*, *why (concern)* and *why (link)*; a sample is attached for your reference.
2. Share your work with your friends. The group can consult in your tutor with all your work ready to seek feedback. We will sit in a circle, read each other's work and pass it along (hence 'roundtable'); your tutor will comment on and help to improve each response. The objective is to shore up content and to sharpen analysis, response, comparison skills.
3. Alternatively, you can work on selected questions alone and seek feedback from your tutor.

SECTION B

EDITH WHARTON: *The Age of Innocence*

1. 'The women in the novel are docile creatures moulded by convention.'
How far would you agree with this comment on *The Age of Innocence*?
2. Discuss the presentation and importance of art and literature in the novel.
3. 'Newland Archer is ultimately responsible for his own attainment of maturity.'
How far would you agree with this comment?
4. 'Wharton uses Countess Olenska's story as a means of social commentary.'
How far and in what ways do you agree with this comment?
5. 'Much of the novel is about people chasing what they cannot have.'
How far do you agree with this comment on *The Age of Innocence*? (2014 Promo)
*See sample outline provided on *livreordie*

Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the portrayal of the social code here and elsewhere in the novel.

Madame Olenska put her hand on his arm, and he noticed that the hand was ungloved, and remembered how he had kept his eyes fixed on it the evening that he had sat with her in the little Twenty-third Street drawing-room. All the beauty that had forsaken her face seemed to have taken refuge in the long pale fingers and faintly dimpled knuckles on his sleeve, and he said to himself: 'If it were only to see her hand again I should have to follow her—.'

It was only at an entertainment ostensibly offered to a 'foreign visitor' that Mrs. van der Luyden could suffer the diminution of being placed on her host's left. The fact of Madame Olenska's 'foreignness' could hardly have been more adroitly emphasised than by this farewell tribute; and Mrs. van der Luyden accepted her displacement with an affability which left no doubt as to her approval. There were certain things that had to be done, and if done at all, done handsomely and thoroughly; and one of these, in the old New York code, was the tribal rally around a kinswoman about to be eliminated from the tribe. There was nothing on earth that the Wellands and Mingotts would not have done to proclaim their unalterable affection for the Countess Olenska now that her passage for Europe was engaged; and Archer, at the head of his table, sat marvelling at the silent untiring activity with which her popularity had been retrieved, grievances against her silenced, her past countenanced, and her present irradiated by the family approval. Mrs. van der Luyden shone on her with the dim benevolence which was her nearest approach to cordiality, and Mr. van der Luyden, from his seat at May's right, cast down the table glances plainly intended to justify all the carnations he had sent from Skuytercliff.

Archer, who seemed to be assisting at the scene in a state of odd imponderability, as if he floated somewhere between chandelier and ceiling, wondered at nothing so much as his own share in the proceedings. As his glance travelled from one placid well-fed face to another he saw all the harmless-looking people engaged upon May's canvas-backs as a band of dumb conspirators, and himself and the pale woman on his right as the centre of their conspiracy. And then it came over him, in a vast flash made up of many broken gleams, that to all of them he and Madame Olenska were lovers, lovers in the extreme sense peculiar to 'foreign' vocabularies. He guessed himself to have been, for months, the centre of countless silently observing eyes and patiently listening ears; he understood that, by means as yet unknown to him, the separation between himself and the partner of his guilt had been achieved, and that now the whole tribe had rallied about his wife on the tacit assumption that nobody knew anything, or had ever imagined anything, and that the occasion of the entertainment was simply May Archer's natural desire to take an affectionate leave of her friend and cousin.

It was the old New York way of taking life 'without effusion of blood': the way of people who dreaded scandal more than disease, who placed decency above courage, and who considered that nothing was more ill-bred than 'scenes,' except the behaviour of those who gave rise to them.

As these thoughts succeeded each other in his mind Archer felt like a prisoner in the centre of an armed camp. He looked about the table, and guessed at the inexorableness of his captors from the tone in which, over the asparagus from Florida, they were dealing with Beaufort and his wife. 'It's to show me,' he thought, 'what would happen to me—' and a deathly sense of

the superiority of implication and analogy over direct action, and of silence over rash words, closed in on him like the doors of the family vault. 50

He laughed, and met Mrs. van der Luyden's startled eyes.

'You think it laughable?' she said with a pinched smile. 'Of course poor Regina's idea of remaining in New York has its ridiculous side, I suppose;' and Archer muttered: 'Of course.'

At this point, he became conscious that Madame Olenska's other neighbour had been engaged for some time with the lady on his right. At the same moment he saw that May, serenely enthroned between Mr. van der Luyden and Mr. Selfridge Merry, had cast a quick glance down the table. It was evident that the host and the lady on his right could not sit through the whole meal in silence. He turned to Madame Olenska, and her pale smile met him. 'Oh, do let's see it through,' it seemed to say. 60

'Did you find the journey tiring?' he asked in a voice that surprised him by its naturalness; and she answered that, on the contrary, she had seldom travelled with fewer discomforts.

'Except, you know, the dreadful heat in the train,' she added; and he remarked that she would not suffer from that particular hardship in the country she was going to. 65

Chapter 33

Write a critical commentary on the following passage, considering the portrayal of New York's social values here and elsewhere in the novel.

'Of course, Newland, I know you let dear May go to Mrs. Struthers's Sunday evenings—" she began; and May interposed gaily: "Oh, you know, everybody goes to Mrs. Struthers's now; and she was invited to Granny's last reception."

It was thus, Archer reflected, that New York managed its transitions: 5
conspiring to ignore them till they were well over, and then, in all good faith, imagining that they had taken place in a preceding age. There was *always* a traitor in the citadel; and after he (or generally she) had surrendered the keys, what was the use of pretending that it was impregnable? Once people had 10
tasted of Mrs. Struthers's easy Sunday hospitality they were not likely to sit at home remembering that her champagne was transmuted Shoe-Polish.

'I know, dear, I know,' Mrs. Archer sighed. 'Such things have to be, I suppose, as long as amusement is what people go out for; but I've never quite forgiven your cousin Madame Olenska for being the first person to countenance Mrs. Struthers.' 15

A sudden blush rose to young Mrs. Archer's face; it surprised her husband as much as the other guests about the table. 'Oh, Ellen—' she murmured, much in the same accusing and yet deprecating tone in which her parents might have said: 'Oh, the Blenkers—.'

It was the note which the family had taken to sounding on the mention of 20
the Countess Olenska's name, since she had surprised and inconvenienced them by remaining obdurate to her husband's advances; but on May's lips it gave food for thought, and Archer looked at her with the sense of strangeness that sometimes came over him when she was most in the tone of her 25
environment.

His mother, with less than her usual sensitiveness to atmosphere, still insisted: 'I've always thought that people like the Countess Olenska, who have lived in aristocratic societies, ought to help us to keep up our social distinctions, instead of ignoring them.'

May's blush remained permanently vivid: it seemed to have a significance 30
beyond that implied by the recognition of Madame Olenska's social bad faith.

'I've no doubt we all seem alike to foreigners,' said Miss Jackson tartly.

'I don't think Ellen cares for society; but nobody knows exactly what she does care for,' May continued, as if she had been groping for something noncommittal. 35

'Ah, well—' Mrs. Archer sighed again.

Everybody knew that the Countess Olenska was no longer in the good graces of her family. *Even* her devoted champion, old Mrs. Manson Mingott, had been unable to defend her refusal to return to her husband. The Mingotts had not proclaimed their disapproval aloud: their sense of solidarity was too 40
strong. They had simply, as Mrs. Welland said, 'let poor Ellen find her own level'—and that, mortifyingly and incomprehensibly, was in the dim depths where the Blenkers prevailed, and 'people who wrote' celebrated their untidy rites. It was incredible, but it was a fact, that Ellen, in spite of all her opportunities and her privileges, had become simply 'Bohemian.' The fact 45
enforced the contention that she had made a fatal mistake in not returning to Count Olenski. After all, a young woman's place was under her husband's roof, especially when she had left it in circumstances that ... well ... if one had cared to look into them ...

'Madame Olenska is a great favourite with the gentlemen,' said Miss 50
Sophy, with her air of wishing to put forth something conciliatory when she
knew that she was planting a dart.

'Ah, that's the danger that a young woman like Madame Olenska is always
exposed to,' Mrs. Archer mournfully agreed; and the ladies, on this conclusion,
gathered up their trains to seek the carcel globes of the drawing-room, while 55
Archer and Mr. Sillerton Jackson withdrew to the Gothic library.

Chapter 26

Write a critical commentary on the following passage, considering the presentation of Newland Archer here and elsewhere in the novel.

It was a crowded night at Wallack's theatre.

The play was 'The Shaughraun,' with Dion Boucicault in the title role and Harry Montague and Ada Dyas as the lovers. The popularity of the admirable English company was at its height, and the Shaughraun always packed the house. In the galleries the enthusiasm was unreserved; in the stalls and boxes, people smiled a little at the hackneyed sentiments and clap-trap situations, and enjoyed the play as much as the galleries did. 5

There was one episode, in particular, that held the house from floor to ceiling. It was that in which Harry Montague, after a sad, almost monosyllabic scene of parting with Miss Dyas, bade her good-bye, and turned to go. The actress, who was standing near the mantelpiece and looking down into the fire, wore a gray cashmere dress without fashionable loopings or trimmings, moulded to her tall figure and flowing in long lines about her feet. Around her neck was a narrow black velvet ribbon with the ends falling down her back. 10

When her wooer turned from her she rested her arms against the mantelshelf and bowed her face in her hands. On the threshold he paused to look at her; then he stole back, lifted one of the ends of velvet ribbon, kissed it, and left the room without her hearing him or changing her attitude. And on this silent parting the curtain fell. 15

It was always for the sake of that particular scene that Newland Archer went to see 'The Shaughraun.' He thought the adieux of Montague and Ada Dyas as fine as anything he had ever seen Croisette and Bressant do in Paris, or Madge Robertson and Kendal in London; in its reticence, its dumb sorrow, it moved him more than the most famous histrionic outpourings. 20

On the evening in question the little scene acquired an added poignancy by reminding him—he could not have said why—of his leave-taking from Madame Olenska after their confidential talk a week or ten days earlier. 25

It would have been as difficult to discover any resemblance between the two situations as between the appearance of the persons concerned. Newland Archer could not pretend to anything approaching the young English actor's romantic good looks, and Miss Dyas was a tall red-haired woman of monumental build whose pale and pleasantly ugly face was utterly unlike Ellen Olenska's vivid countenance. Nor were Archer and Madame Olenska two lovers parting in heart-broken silence; they were client and lawyer separating after a talk which had given the lawyer the worst possible impression of the client's case. Wherein, then, lay the resemblance that made the young man's heart beat with a kind of retrospective excitement? It seemed to be in Madame Olenska's mysterious faculty of suggesting tragic and moving possibilities outside the daily run of experience. She had hardly ever said a word to him to produce this impression, but it was a part of her, either a projection of her mysterious and outlandish background or of something inherently dramatic, passionate and unusual in herself. Archer had always been inclined to think that chance and circumstance played a small part in shaping people's lots compared with their innate tendency to have things happen to them. This tendency he had felt from the first in Madame Olenska. The quiet, almost passive young woman struck him as exactly the kind of person to whom things were bound to happen, no matter how much she shrank from them and went out of her way to avoid them. The exciting fact 30 35 40 45

was her having lived in an atmosphere so thick with drama that her own tendency to provoke it had apparently passed unperceived. It was precisely the odd absence of surprise in her that gave him the sense of her having been plucked out of a very maelstrom: the things she took for granted gave the measure of those she had rebelled against. 50

Archer had left her with the conviction that Count Olenski's accusation was not unfounded. The mysterious person who figured in his wife's past as 'the secretary' had probably not been unrewarded for his share in her escape. The conditions from which she had fled were intolerable, past speaking of, past believing: she was young, she was frightened, she was desperate — what more natural than that she should be grateful to her rescuer? The pity was that her gratitude put her, in the law's eyes and the world's, on a par with her abominable husband. Archer had made her understand this, as he was bound to do; he had also made her understand that simplehearted kindly New York, on whose larger charity she had apparently counted, was precisely the place where she could least hope for indulgence. 55 60

Chapter 13

Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the importance of the social conventions here and elsewhere in the novel (2015 HCI Prelim).

She said nothing, and he continued: 'Our ideas about marriage and divorce are particularly old-fashioned. Our legislation favours divorce—our social customs don't.'

'Never?'

'Well—not if the woman, however injured, however irreproachable, has appearances in the least degree against her, has exposed herself by any unconventional action to—to offensive insinuations—' 5

She drooped her head a little lower, and he waited again, intensely hoping for a flash of indignation, or at least a brief cry of denial. None came.

A little travelling clock ticked purringly at her elbow, and a log broke in two and sent up a shower of sparks. The whole hushed and brooding room seemed to be waiting silently with Archer. 10

'Yes,' she murmured at length, 'that's what my family tell me.'

He winced a little. 'It's not unnatural—'

'*Our* family,' she corrected herself; and Archer coloured. 'For you'll be my cousin soon,' she continued gently. 15

'I hope so.'

'And you take their view?'

He stood up at this, wandered across the room, stared with void eyes at one of the pictures against the old red damask, and came back irresolutely to her side. How could he say: 'Yes, if what your husband hints is true, or if you've no way of disproving it?' 20

'Sincerely—' she interjected, as he was about to speak.

He looked down into the fire. 'Sincerely, then—what should you gain that would compensate for the possibility—the certainty—of a lot of beastly talk?' 25

'But my freedom—is that nothing?'

It flashed across him at that instant that the charge in the letter was true, and that she hoped to marry the partner of her guilt. How was he to tell her that, if she really cherished such a plan, the laws of the State were inexorably opposed to it? The mere suspicion that the thought was in her mind made him feel harshly and impatiently toward her. "But aren't you as free as air as it is?" he returned. 'Who can touch you? Mr. Letterblair tells me the financial question has been settled—' 30

'Oh, yes,' she said indifferently.

'Well, then: is it worth while to risk what may be infinitely disagreeable and painful? Think of the newspapers—their vileness! It's all stupid and narrow and unjust—but one can't make over society.' 35

'No,' she acquiesced; and her tone was so faint and desolate that he felt a sudden remorse for his own hard thoughts.

'The individual, in such cases, is nearly always sacrificed to what is supposed to be the collective interest: people cling to any convention that keeps the family together—protects the children, if there are any,' he rambled on, pouring out all the stock phrases that rose to his lips in his intense desire to cover over the ugly reality which her silence seemed to have laid bare. Since she would not or could not say the one word that would have cleared the air, his wish was not to let her feel that he was trying to probe into her secret. Better keep on the surface, in the prudent old New York way, than risk uncovering a wound he could not heal. 40 45

'It's my business, you know,' he went on, 'to help you to see these things as the people who are fondest of you see them. The Mingotts, the Wellands, 50 the van der Luydens, all your friends and relations: if I didn't show you honestly how they judge such questions, it wouldn't be fair of me, would it?' He spoke insistently, almost pleading with her in his eagerness to cover up that yawning silence.

She said slowly: 'No; it wouldn't be fair.' 55

The fire had crumbled down to greyness, and one of the lamps made a gurgling appeal for attention. Madame Olenska rose, wound it up and returned to the fire, but without resuming her seat.

Her remaining on her feet seemed to signify that there was nothing more for either of them to say, and Archer stood up also. 60

'Very well; I will do what you wish,' she said abruptly. The blood rushed to his forehead; and, taken aback by the suddenness of her surrender, he caught her two hands awkwardly in his.

'I—I do want to help you,' he said.

'You do help me. Good night, my cousin.' 65

Chapter 12

'A' LEVEL TRENDS

Essay questions

The three essay questions on *Age* have thus far had a *concern*-trigger, centring on Old New York as: (i) a 'culture under attack' by external threats (social change, new money) and; (ii) a tribe trying to preserve its conventions through scrutiny (lack of privacy, social stability, old money). There would appear little room left for the discussion of social codes and conventions. Nonetheless, we can consider the narrow life in Old New York – its conformity and unimaginative ways – and specifically the presentation of women as possible areas of interest.

No *character*-trigger essay questions have thus far appeared. A question on Newland Archer and the bildungsroman narrative seems overdue. His path from (i) ignorance to understanding, (ii) childishness to maturity has been rinsed and repeated many times; we offer you a variation in Q3, to consider how much agency he has in his own 'education'. Ellen is the other much-awaited feature: accompanying your *bildungsroman*-focused Prelim question, Q4 pushes the discussion towards social tradition and intolerance. On that page, we hope the minor characters of Old New York do not get airtime, as the 'money' question already alludes to the Beauforts, van der Luydens and Mingotts. Lastly, we have included the 2014 Promo Exam (which you sat for) as a *broad* question that allows you to tackle visions, realities, duties and social order all at once.

Method-trigger questions are uncommon in Paper 1. 'Art and literature' can be read as a prime *method* that is also a *concern*. (i) It alludes to Old New York's lack of 'poetry and romance'. (ii) It is the bedrock of the Archer-Ellen relationship and Archer's romantic delusions. Whichever the case, an understanding of narrative structure will enrich any response: the intensification of Archer's visions, or his shift from conformist to passive 'rebel'.

Passage-based questions

Partially because of the obscure essay questions, most students in the 2013 and 2014 cohorts (80-90% of survey respondents) attempted the passage-based option. These three passages were thankfully familiar ones we covered during tutorials: we in fact looked at Ch 6 in 2013 Term 4 and various May passages in 2014 Term 4 (focusing however on the 'mute message' in Ch 26). The *triggers* so far however were less straightforward than our usual 'presentation of Newland Archer' and 'portrayal of social convention' questions. These triggers seem to follow to a discernible pattern, as a *method*, *concern* and *character* have all featured. Here are some simple observations: (i) the three passages selected thus far have *not* covered the Ch 22 - Ch 34 block; (ii) they all seem heavy on narration, either from the narrator or within Archer's thoughts; (iii) they tend not to overlap with the topic in the essay question.

It is practically impossible to escape mention of Archer in *any* passage we select. His romantic visions are ripe for analysis, which is why we would consider Ch 13 and Ch 15 as vital practice. His evaluation of Old New York's conventions later in the novel has been duly covered in the Prelim Examination (Ch 33) but is worth re-treading. While heavy on dialogue, the Ch 26 and Ch 12 passages in this package do illuminate New York's social code on divorce and extramarital affairs, as well as its ceaseless intent to obliterate such behaviour in the 'collective interest'. Consider how Archer's stand evolves, whilst the rest of society maintains its standards. —MKL

PAST YEAR ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. 'This is a novel in which nothing is private.' How far do you find this a helpful comment on social life in the novel? (Specimen, *Concern*-trigger)
2. How far do you agree that *The Age of Innocence* is more concerned with social change than with stability? (2013 'A' Level, *Concern*-trigger)
3. Consider the role and significance of money in the novel. (2014 'A' Level, *Concern*-trigger)

PAST YEAR PASSAGE-BASED QUESTIONS

1. The importance of setting - Ellen's home vis-a-vis the Archers' new home, Ch 9 (Specimen, *Method*-trigger)
 2. The effects of social convention - Archer's evaluation of his social 'patterns', Ch 6 (2013 'A' Level, *Concern*-trigger)
 3. Archer's understanding of his wife - flawed in view of May's 'strength' / authority, Ch 21 (2014 'A' Level, *Character*-trigger)
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SECTION C

ARTHUR MILLER: *All My Sons*

1. 'I never felt at home anywhere but here.' (Act Two)
Comment on the significance of the past in *All My Sons*.
2. How far do you agree that Miller presents George and Ann Deever as detestable because they are coldly selfish?
3. 'The play is mainly concerned about the need for compromise and balance.'
How far would you agree with this comment?
4. 'It takes a certain talent... for lying. You have it, and I do. But not him.' (Jim Bayliss, Act Three)
Discuss the implications of this comment on the play as a whole.
5. 'The play presents a world of divided loyalties.'
How far do you agree with this comment on *All My Sons*? (2014 Prelim)
**See sample outline provided on livreordie*

Write a critical commentary on the passage, relating it to the portrayal of the relationship between Chris and Keller here and elsewhere in the play.

- Chris:* She's not Larry's girl.
- Keller:* From Mother's point of view he is not dead and you have no right to take his girl. (*Slight pause.*) Now you can go on from there if you know where to go, but I'm tellin' you I don't know where to go. See? I don't know. Now what can I do for you? 5
- Chris:* I don't know why it is, but every time I reach out for something I want, I have to pull back because other people will suffer. My whole bloody life, time after time after time.
- Keller:* You're a considerate fella, there's nothing wrong in that.
- Chris:* To hell with that. 10
- Keller:* Did you ask Annie yet?
- Chris:* I wanted to get this settled first.
- Keller:* How do you know she'll marry you? Maybe she feels the same way Mother does?
- Chris:* Well, if she does, then that's the end of it. From her letters I think she's forgotten him. I'll find out. And then we'll thrash it out with Mother? Right? Dad, don't avoid me. 15
- Keller:* The trouble is, you don't see enough women. You never did.
- Chris:* So what? I'm not fast with women.
- Keller:* I don't see why it has to be Annie. 20
- Chris:* Because it is.
- Keller:* That's a good answer, but it don't answer anything. You haven't seen her since you went to war. It's five years.
- Chris:* I can't help it. I know her best. I was brought up next door to her. These years when I think of someone for my wife, I think of Annie. What do you want, a diagram? 25
- Keller:* I don't want a diagram... I – I'm – She thinks he's coming back Chris. You marry that girl and you're pronouncing him dead. Now what's going to happen to Mother? Do you know? I don't! (*Pause.*)
- Chris:* All right, then, Dad. 30
- Keller:* (*thinking Chris has retreated*) Give it some more thought.
- Chris:* I've given it three years of thought. I'd hoped that if I waited, Mother would forget Larry and then we'd have a regular wedding and everything happy. But if that can't happen here, then I'll have to get out. 35
- Keller:* What the hell is *this*?
- Chris:* I'll get out. I'll get married and live some place else. Maybe in New York.
- Keller:* Are you crazy?
- Chris:* I've been a good son too long, a good sucker. I'm through with it. 40
- Keller:* You've got a business here, what the hell is this?
- Chris:* The business! The business doesn't inspire me.
- Keller:* Must you be inspired?
- Chris:* Yes. I like it an hour a day. If I have to grub for money all day long at least at evening I want it beautiful. I want a family, I want some kids, I want to build something that I can give myself to. Annie is in the middle of that. Now... where do I find it? 45
- Keller:* You mean – (*goes to him*) Tell me something, you mean you'd leave the business?

Chris: Yes. On this I would. 50
Keller: *(after a pause)* Well... you don't want to think like that.
Chris: Then help me stay here.
Keller: All right, but – but don't think like that. Because what the hell did I
work for? That's only for you, Chris, the whole shootin' match is for
you! 55
Chris: I know that, Dad. Just you help me stay here.
Keller: *(putting a fist up to Chris's jaw)* But don't think that way, you hear
me?
Chris: I am thinking that way.
Keller: *(lowering his hand)* I don't understand you, do I? 60
Chris: No, you don't. I'm a pretty tough guy.
Keller: Yeah, I can see that.

Act One

Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the portrayal of Joe and Kate Keller's competing desires, here and elsewhere in the play.

- Keller:* I'm askin' you. What am I, a stranger? I thought I had a family here. What happened to my family?
- Mother:* You've got a family. I'm simply telling you that I have no strength to think any more.
- Keller:* You have no strength. The minute there's trouble you have no strength. 5
- Mother:* Joe, you're doing the same thing again. All your life whenever there's trouble you yell at me and you think that settles it.
- Keller:* Then what do I do? Tell me, talk to me, what do I do?
- Mother:* Joe... I've been thinking this way. If he comes back — 10
- Keller:* What do you mean 'if'? He's comin' back!
- Mother:* I think if you sit him down and you — explain yourself. I mean you ought to make it clear to him that you know you did a terrible thing. (Not looking into his eyes.) I mean if he saw that you really what you did. You see? 15
- Keller:* What ice does that cut?
- Mother:* (a little fearfully) I mean if you told him that you want to pay for what you did.
- Keller:* (sensing... quietly) How can I pay?
- Mother:* Tell him — You're willing to go to prison. (Pause.) 20
- Keller:* (struck, amazed) I'm willing to — ?
- Mother:* (quickly) You wouldn't go, he wouldn't ask you to go. But if you told him you wanted to, if he could feel that you wanted to pay, maybe he would forgive you.
- Keller:* He would forgive me! For what? 25
- Mother:* Joe, you know what I mean.
- Keller:* I don't know what you mean! You wanted money, so I made 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? I spoiled the both of you. I should've put him out when he was ten like I was put out, and make him earn his keep. Then he'd know how a buck is made in this world. Forgiven! I could live on a quarter a day myself, but I got a family so I — 30
- Mother:* Joe, Joe... It don't excuse it that you did it for the family. 35
- Keller:* It's got to excuse it!
- Mother:* There's something bigger than the family to him.
- Keller:* Nothin' is bigger!
- Mother:* There is to him.
- Keller:* 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. 40
- Mother:* Joe, I tell you —
- Keller:* Nothin's bigger than that. And you're going to tell him, 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! 45
- Mother:* You stop that!
- Keller:* You heard me. Now you know what to tell him. (Pause. He moves from her. Halts.) But he wouldn't put me away though... He wouldn't do that... Would he?

Mother: He loved you, Joe, you broke his heart. 50
Keller: But to put me away...
Mother: I don't know. I'm beginning to think we don't really know him. They say in the war he was such a killer. Here he was always afraid of mice. I don't know him. I don't know what he'll do.
Keller: Goddam, If Larry was alive he wouldn't act like this. He understood 55
the way the world is made. He listened to me. To him the world had a forty-foot front, it ended at the building line. This one, everything bothers him. You make a deal, overcharge two cents, and his hair falls out. He don't understand money. Too easy, it came too easy. Yes, sir. Larry. That was a boy we lost. Larry. Larry. (*He slumps on chair in front of her*) What am I gonna do, Kate? 60
Mother: Joe, Joe, please... You'll be alright, nothing is going to happen.
Keller: (*desperately, lost*) For you, Kate, for both of you, that's all I ever lived for...
Mother: I know, darling, I know. 65

Act Three

Write a critical commentary on the passage, relating it to the presentation of the father-son relationship here and elsewhere in the play (2015 RI Prelim).

- Keller enters from house. Chris sees him, goes down near arbour.*
- Keller:** What's the matter with you? I want to talk to you.
- Chris:** I've got nothing to say to you.
- Keller:** *(taking his arm):* I want to talk to you!
- Chris:** *(pulling violently away from him):* Don't do that, Dad. I'm going to hurt you if you do that. There's nothing to say, so say it quick. 5
- Keller:** Exactly what's the matter? What's the matter? You got too much money? Is that what bothers you?
- Chris:** *(with an edge of sarcasm):* It bothers me
- Keller:** If you can't get used to it, then throw it away. You hear me? Take every cent and give it to charity, throw it in the sewer. Does that settle it? In the sewer, that's all. You think I'm kidding? I'm tellin' you what to do, if it's dirty then burn it. It's your money, that's not my money. I'm a dead man, I'm an old dead man, nothing's mine. Well, talk to me! What do you want to do! 10 15
- Chris:** It's not what I want to do. It's what you want to do.
- Keller:** What should I want to do? *(CHRIS is silent.)* Jail? You want me to go to jail? If you want me to go, say so! Is that where I belong? Then tell me so! *(Slight pause.)* What's the matter, why can't you tell me? *(Furiously.)* You say everything else to me, say that! *(Slight pause.)* I'll tell you why you can't say it. Because you know I don't belong there. Because you know! *(With growing emphasis and passion, and a persistent tone of desperation.)* Who worked for nothin' in that war? When they work for nothin', I'll work for nothin'. Did they ship a gun or a truck outa Detroit before they got their price? Is that clean? It's dollars and cents, nickels and dimes; war and peace, it's nickels and dimes. What's clean? Half the Goddam country is gotta go if I go! That's why you can't tell me. 20 25
- Chris:** That's exactly why.
- Keller:** Then...why am I bad? 30
- Chris:** I know you're 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! *He turns away, unable to face Keller. Ann goes quickly to Mother, takes letter from her and starts for Chris. Mother instantly rushes to intercept her.* 35
- Mother:** Give me that!
- Ann:** He's going to read it! *(She thrusts letter into Chris's hand.)* Larry. He wrote it to me the day he died.
- Keller:** Larry! 40
- Mother:** Chris, It's not for you. *(He starts to read.)* Joe...go away...
- Keller:** *(mystified, frightened)* Why'd she say, Larry, What—?
- Mother:** *(desperately pushes him towards alley, glancing at Chris)* Go to the street, Joe, go to the street! *(She comes down beside Keller.)* Don't, Chris...*(Pleading from her whole soul.)* Don't tell him. 45
- Chris:** *(quietly)* Three and one half years ...talking, talking. Now you tell me what you must do....This is how he died, now tell me where you belong.
- Keller:** *(pleading)* Chris, a man can't be a Jesus in this world!

Chris: I know all about the world. I know the whole crap story. Now listen to this, and tell me what a man's got to be! (*Reads.*) 'My dear Ann: ...' You listening? He wrote this the day he died. Listen, don't cry... Listen! 'My dear Ann: It is impossible to put down the things I feel. But I've got to tell you something. Yesterday they flew in a load of papers from the States and I read about Dad and your father being convicted. I can't express myself. I can't tell you how I feel — I can't bear to live anymore. Last night I circled the base for twenty minutes before I could bring myself in. How could he have done that? Every day three or four men never come back and he sits there doing business... I don't know how to tell you what I feel... I can't face anybody... I'm going out on a mission in a few minutes. They'll probably report me missing. If they do, I want you to know that you mustn't wait for me. I tell you, Ann, if I had him there now I could kill him—'

(*Keller grabs letter from Chris's hand and reads it. After a long pause.*) Now blame the world. Do you understand that letter?

Keller: (*speaking almost inaudibly*) I think I do. Get the car. I'll put on my jacket.

Act Three

Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the role and significance of Jim Bayliss here and elsewhere in the play.

Jim: Any news?
Mother: No news.
Jim: (*gently*) You can't sit up all night, dear, why don't you go to bed?
Mother: I'm waiting for Chris. Don't worry about me, Jim, I'm perfectly all right. 5
Jim: But it's almost two o'clock.
Mother: I can't sleep. (*slight pause*) You had an emergency?
Jim: (*tiredly*) Somebody had a headache and thought he was dying. (*Slight pause*) Half of my patients are quite mad. Nobody realizes how many people are walking loose, and they're cracked as coconuts. Money. **Money-money-money-money. You say it long enough it doesn't mean anything.** (*She smiles, makes a silent laugh*) Oh, how I'd love to be around when that happens! 10
Mother: (*shaking her head*) **You're so childish, Jim! Sometimes you are.**
Jim: (*looks at her a moment*) Kate. (*Pause*) What happened? 15
Mother: I told you. He had an argument with Joe. Then he got in the car and drove away.
Jim: What kind of an argument?
Mother: An argument, Joe... He was crying like a child, before.
Jim: They argued about Ann? 20
Mother: (*after slight hesitation*) No, not Ann. Imagine? (*Indicates lighted window above*) She hasn't come out of that room since he left. All night in that room.
Jim: (*looks up at window, then at her*) What'd Joe do, tell him?
Mother: (*stops rocking*) Tell him what? 25
Jim: **Don't be afraid, Kate, I know. I've always known.**
Mother: How?
Jim: It occurred to me a long time ago.
Mother: I always had the feeling that in the back of his head, Chris... almost knew. I didn't think it would be such a shock. 30
Jim: (*gets up*) Chris would never know how to live with a thing like that. It takes a certain talent... for lying. You have it, and I do. But not him.
Mother: What do you mean... He's not coming back?
Jim: Oh, no, he'll come back. **We all come back, Kate. These private little revolutions always die. The compromise is always made.** 35
 In a peculiar way. Frank is right — every man 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 lights again. I don't think he went very far. He probably just wanted to be alone to watch his star go out.
Mother: Just as long as he comes back. 40
Jim: I wish he wouldn't, Kate. One year I simply took off, went to New Orleans; for two months I lived on bananas and milk, and studied a certain disease. And then she came, and she cried. **And I went back home with her. And now I live in the usual darkness; I can't find myself;** it's hard sometimes to remember the kind of man I wanted to be. **I'm a good husband; Chris is a good son — He'll come back.** 45

Act Three

'A' LEVEL TRENDS

Essay questions

The three questions are all *character-trigger* questions that amusingly cover all three members of the Keller family. The only remaining characters that can plausibly be examined would be (i) Ann and George, and; (ii) Jim and Sue. Questions on the role and significance of *minor character* (e.g. Emilia, Mitch, Pearl) are fairly commonplace. Q2 calls for you to examine the former pair in the light of self-interest and familial loyalty, and the effects on the audience. Playing the role of Greek chorus (exposing Chris and Joe Keller), Jim and Sue are worth considering; we can use Q3 to comment on how they both represent a 'successful' compromise between social responsibility and familial loyalty, idealism and pragmatism.

We would urge you to examine all the *concerns* in view of a *concern-trigger* question. Several JCs have set secrets (denial of guilt, denial of Larry's death, truth of Keller's culpability) as one such question. We must also consider the larger ideological conflicts in the play (Q5), between social responsibility and familial loyalty, moral idealism and pragmatism / materialism. Also scrutinise the portrayal of the American Dream, with its associations with wealth, business, a blissful family and an accompanying attitude of self-interest. In all cases, keep in mind the *context* of the play and what the play asks of its audience – a post-war America that has violated the social contract, abandoned its morality and pursued individual happiness at the expense of others. Gain a confident hold on each concern and how they differ (e.g. familial loyalty can be understood as protecting one's family despite incriminations and misdeeds, and providing for the family).

Passage-based questions

The three PBQs have been concentrated in Acts One and Two, varying between *concern* and *character relationship* triggers. As we have examined in CA2, the *conflict* question is in essence about *character relationships* – emerging or underlying tension, disagreement and aggression (verbal and physical). Mother has been, befitting the character, dominated proceedings in all three passages and the 2014 essay question as well.

We might argue that the *characters* of Chris and Keller deserve equal attention, if not more. Independently, Chris and Joe can be studied as tragic heroes who each come to face their own tragic flaws. For Chris, his moral values conflict with his own loyalty to his father and his desire to 'build something' with Ann, but eventually are fortified at the end of Act Three (Prelim PBQ and Q8). For Keller, his *hamartia* of familial devotion is fully fleshed out in Act Two (p52-54) and overturned at the end of the play. The development of the father-son relationship has been our constant focus through the years; now is the time to be very sensitive to how the love-with-traces-of-tension of Act One (Q6) shifts to Chris's effective repudiation of his father in Act Three (Q8). This does not mean we can ignore the roles of *minor characters* such as Jim (Act Three), Sue (Act Two, p47-49) and George (Act Two, p60-62).

Important *concerns* for the essay apply equally to the essay. Familial loyalty, social responsibility, moral idealism and pragmatism are appropriate *triggers* for the passages mentioned above. On the matter of truth, Keller's deceptive narratives in Act One (to Ann) and Act Two (to George) are interesting. – MKL

PAST YEAR ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. 'Chris has every reason to feel as guilty as his father.' How far do you agree with this comment?
(Specimen, *Character-trigger*)
2. 'Joe never recognises the consequences of his actions.' How far would you agree with this comment on the play?
(2013 'A' Level, *Character-trigger*)
3. 'For Kate, family is more important than morality.' Discuss the implications of this comment for the play as a whole.
(2014 'A' Level, *Character-trigger that links to opposing concerns*)

PAST YEAR PASSAGE-BASED QUESTIONS

1. Portrayal of self-deception - Mother's dream in Act One, p20-22 (Specimen, *Concern-trigger*)
 2. Cross-currents in thought and feeling between Mother and Ann in Act One, p26-29 (2013 'A' Level, *Relationship-trigger*)
 3. Presentation of conflict - between Chris, Mother and Keller in Act Two, p74-76 (2014 'A' Level, *Concern-trigger*)
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OUTLINE FORMAT

Adapted from the checklist in our *All My Sons* and *The Age of Innocence* packages.

INTRODUCTION
<p><i>Context (What)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- For the essay, briefly elaborate on your <i>interpretation of the trigger</i> (e.g. what does 'self-interest' entail?)- For the PBQ, briefly <i>describe what happens</i> in the passage and what has led up to this (i.e. link to earlier).- Provide an <i>outline</i> of key <u>ideas</u> and <u>effects</u> in the text or passage (e.g. shift from tension to tentative calmness). <p><i>Thesis (Why)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- For the essay, avoid restating the question. Consider the <i>purpose of the text</i> in the light of the question, examining a key <u>concern</u> (e.g. the play ultimately condemns the pursuit of self-interest and begs its audience to try to be 'better')- For the PBQ, consider the <i>purpose of the passage</i> in the whole text, focusing on a key <u>concern</u> and a relevant <u>link</u> to later (e.g. this passage serves to illustrate Chris's moral failure, while predicting the resurfacing of his deep sense of honour when he reads Larry's letter.)
BODY PARAGRAPH
<p><i>Topic sentence (What)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Identify main <u>idea</u> on a character, concern or method relevant to the trigger. <p><i>Analysis (How)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Identify broad or specific <u>methods</u>, depending on the question or passage.- Quote relevant patterns of <u>evidence</u> from the whole text (essay) or the passage (PBQ).- <u>Close analyse</u> these quotations, labelling methods used and elaborating on the <u>effects</u> of these methods. For the PBQ, detailed close analysis of evidence from the passage is mandatory. <p><i>Purpose (Why)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Based on your analysis, elaborate on a relevant <u>concern</u>.- For the essay, consider the <i>purpose of the text</i> as you reinforce your <u>thesis</u> (e.g. the play condemns...)- For the PBQ, consider the <i>purpose of the passage</i> with a <u>link to elsewhere</u> (e.g. this passage brings to an end...).
CONCLUSION
<p><i>Summary (What)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Briefly <u>restate</u> key ideas covered in your essay. If facing extreme time constraints, skip to personal response. <p><i>Personal response (Why)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Develop your <u>thesis</u> on the <i>purpose of the text</i> or <i>purpose of the passage</i>:<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) for the essay, consider the socio-historical context of the text and the writer's commentary on this world (e.g. post-war America, conservative Old New York).(ii) for the PBQ, consider how the passage <i>builds up previous ideas and events</i> (e.g. the passage marks the culmination of...) or <i>leads to subsequent ideas and events</i> in the text (e.g. the passage foreshadows).