

A conspiracy of women in susan glaspell's "trifles"

[Literature](#), [Play](#)



The differences among people somehow create a bond of affection or even simple empathy among those who share similarities. This is true for those who belong to the same racial and ethnic backgrounds, religion, nationality, and gender. Susan Glaspell's play, *Trifles*, explores the tie that binds women together; a conspiracy which comes into play in defense of a member who experiences a slight from a man. In the one-act play, Minnie Wright is being suspected of having killed her husband.

Minnie's character does not appear in the play but she is the focus the entire time as the other characters talk about her and what she did.

The play opens with Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters being brought along by the County Attorney and the Sheriff to the Wright residence to look for evidence regarding Mr. Wright's death. While the men do the supposedly all-important task of looking for clues, the women are to collect some things for Minnie who was then in prison awaiting trial.

They putter in the kitchen, worrying about Minnie's ruined preserves and her unfinished quilting. Mrs. Hale comments about how they are " takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them (the men) to get the evidence (Glaspell).

" However, it is actually the women who find all the strong evidence that could convict Minnie. As they are going through Mrs. Wright's sewing things, Mrs. Hale comes across a pretty box with a dead bird inside wrapped in silk. Its neck is wrung-out suggesting that somebody might have killed it and Minnie meant to bury it. As both women contemplate on the dead bird and what it must have meant to Minnie, facts about the murder seem to fit

together like pieces of a jigsaw to the two women as well as the readers' mind. Mrs.

Hale remembers how Minnie was a pretty girl who “ used to wear pretty clothes...one of the town girls singing in the choir (Glaspell). ” However, the once vibrant and cheerful character undergoes a transformation when she marries Mr. Wright. He was a possessive husband whom Mrs. Hale believes had a lot to do with the changes in Minnie after the marriage. According to her, Minnie kept to herself after the marriage, she seldom went out, and the couple did not even receive callers because Mr. Wright did not like having visitors around.

Furthermore, they did not ever have children, which left Minnie alone in the home the whole day while Mr. Wright went to work. Mrs. Hale aptly describes Mrs. Wright's life when she says: Mrs. Hale: Not having children makes less work—but it makes a quiet house, and Wright out to work all day, and no company when he did come in...He was a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him—(shivers). Like a raw wind that gets to the bone... (Glaspell) Getting a bird as a pet would have been Minnie's consolation in her depressing life. It was supposed to sing for her when her husband didn't allow her to sing anymore.

However, Mr. Wright had to withhold even this little joy from her. He kills the bird and her futile final effort to revive her spirit may have pushed Minnie to the edge, thus leading to the murderous act against her husband. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters both come to this same conclusion although they would leave it unsaid. Glaspell also leaves it to the reader to come to this inevitable conclusion. The two women then keep the truth they uncover from the men,
<https://assignbuster.com/a-conspiracy-of-women-in-susan-glaspells-trifles/>

including the clues they find among Minnie's things. This is because Minnie's fate strikes a common chord between them.

Minnie may have had it worse than they, but they understand what happened to her. Mrs. Peters, for instance, remembers how, in childhood, a boy killed her kitten with a hatchet right before her eye. They know the feeling of being defeated because they could not generate enough strength to fight against men. They live in acceptance of the social notion that they are of the weaker sex whose concerns in life are mere trifles like gossip and housework. They understand the life of being cooped inside a house with all household chores to finish while the men are at work, the more important job of the two.

Their conspiratorial silence is a sort of revenge for Minnie, themselves, and all women who have had to suffer a life that is more or less like Minnie's oppressing married life. The dialogues between the men and women throughout the play give the reader an idea as to how men treat women during the period when the play is set. When the County Attorney notices the dirty towels by the kitchen sink, he immediately judges Minnie Wright to be "not much of a housekeeper," which says a lot about her since women are supposed to be simply housekeepers and nothing else. When Mrs.

Peters worries about Minnie's preserves going bad, the Sheriff replies: "Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and wooryin' about her preserves (Glaspell)." The men constantly keep this undermining tone towards the women many times during the play. While it is easy to conclude that withholding the crucial information about Minnie's motive for killing her husband is wrong, it becomes harder to decide when one examines the <https://assignbuster.com/a-conspiracy-of-women-in-susan-glaspells-trifles/>

context behind the murder. The act may be against the law, but in the eyes of the two women, what Minnie did was an act in the defense of many women who experience oppression from their respective husbands.

It was an act of defiance, even heroism. They felt the need to cover-up Minnie's deed, she being another woman, another housewife, and one whose own promising life had been cut-off by a man. Viewing the crime as a woman, Minnie becomes the sympathetic character and victim instead of the criminal. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peter's final act of withholding relevant information about the murder proves that women could empower themselves, could even be more superior to men when they wanted, and the men does not even have to know they have already been had. Work Cited Glaspell, Susan. Trifles.