

# "a jury of her peers" case essay sample

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## **“ A Jury of Her Peers” Case Essay Sample**

Adapted from Susan Glaspell's popular one-act play, *Trifles* (1920), " A Jury of Her Peers" is about sisterhood. Women's roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers do not make them totally passive, unintelligent, or subordinate to men. Mrs. Peters, for example, being small, thin, and soft-spoken, did not strike Martha Hale as a sheriff's wife when they first met; however, Mrs. Peters reveals her inner strength in defying her husband by suppressing evidence that would surely convict Minnie Wright of murder. Because they understand how John's killing the canary must have been the last straw in killing his wife's love of life, Martha and Mrs. Peters " knot" the criminal investigation.

They shift their loyalty from their husbands, and the male-dominated legal system, to a woman who mirrors their own lives. As Martha wistfully says of her regret in abandoning her neighbor Minnie, " We live close together, and we live far apart. We all go through the same things-it's all just a different kind of same thing!" Because the legal defense of justifiable homicide by an abused wife might not have succeeded in the early twentieth century, the women take matters into their own hands. They also retaliate against the men's arrogant air of superiority. The men's supposedly logical, intelligent methods of investigation lead to naught, whereas the women's intuitive, emotional responses to their " sister" probably will save Minnie's..

Gender Roles Much of the tension in " A Jury of Her Peers" results from what the women understand and what the men are blind to. The kitchen, during the time the story takes place, was the sole domain of the wife. Wives

themselves, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters are able to determine Mrs. Wright's frame of mind from how she left her kitchen. The men are scornful of the messy kitchen, and ultimately dismissive of what it contains. The sheriff comments that there's " nothing here but kitchen things," and when Mrs. Peters laments that the jars of preserves have burst from the cold, Mr. Hale says that ' ' women are used to worrying over trifles."

Yet the women know that Mrs. Wright would not choose to have such a shabby or ill-kept kitchen. When the attorney notices the filthy dish towels and says, " Not much of a housekeeper, would you say, ladies?" Mrs. Hale replies that " Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be." Because both women have been farmer's wives themselves, they understand the loneliness of living in isolation on a farm, and they can understand how upset Mrs. Wright would be over the death of her canary. They also recognize that the erratic stitching on her quilting squares, which contradicts her earlier, neater stitching was the result of a distracted mind. Eventually, the men leave the women in the kitchen to search for clues in " more important" areas of the house, but not before telling Mrs....

Describe the character of Minnie Wright in " A Jury of Her Peers" as a young woman...

1. The young Minnie is a lively girl who loved singing in the church choir. Mrs. Hale spoke of how well she dressed and of how pretty her voice was when she sang. Her voice was easily picked out of the choir. Her happiness in youth is in great contrast to the lifestyle she had to mold into after marrying

John Wright. The descriptions from both the men and women in this story describe John as a cold, selfish and unsocial man who ended up dragging his wife into his own lifestyle. This smothering among other events is what eventually caused her to snap. But in doing so, perhaps Minnie will be able to revert back to her old yet fun ways.