

Trifles by susan glaspell essay

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



The play *Trifles* by Susan Glaspell talks about a murder. John Wright is killed in his sleep through struggling. Sherriff Peters, county lawman, Mr. Hale a farm man and George Henderson, the county attorney go to his house to investigate the crime. They look around for evidence of a crime, as the main suspect is the victim's wife Mrs. Minnie Wright.

Two women also join the men in Mrs. Wright's kitchen- Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters. The characters look at the murder differently and this discussion will focus on the development in terms of roundness and flatness of the characters and the degree to which the characters are stereotypes.

Mrs. Wright the protagonist that we do not meet on stage but learn about from other characters because she is in custody for suspicion of her husband's murder is a round character. Prior to her marrying her late husband, she was a cheerful young woman. She even wore colorful clothes because she enjoyed life and was a bubbly young woman. In addition, she enjoyed singing and once sang in a choir, this kept her cheerful.

However, after marriage she changed and become another person. Mrs. Hale noticed her personality change because she remembered her as a sweet woman and very beautiful. This contrasts with the bitter woman she came to be that murdered her husband in cold blood. She was also a timid woman according to Mrs. Hale yet the woman we see when Mr. Henderson stopped by to speak to Mr. Wright was not timid because she stood there unmoved and in a composed manner told him, he could not speak to Mr. Wright because he was dead.

Mrs. Hale appears to be timid when we meet her at first. However as the play progresses we see a woman who is empathetic and even agrees to commit a crime by concealing the evidence they find in Mrs. Wright's kitchen from the men investigating the crime. She is a remorseful person because she regrets not having come more often to visit Mrs. Wright because she knew of her loneliness.

She manages to talk Mrs. Peters into the conspiracy of silence regarding the motive and evidence of Mr. Wright's murder. Her understanding of the suffering of her fellow woman makes her frustrated with the men's attitude towards women and thus chooses to protect one of her own.

Mrs. Peters is a round character. When we meet her at first she is of the opinion that the perpetrator of the crime should be apprehended for the crime. She knows murder is a crime and a punishment is order. However, after a conversation with Mrs. Hale after they discover the strangled bird she changes her mind about Mrs. Wright.

They think she might have committed the crime out of frustration and anger of her environment, which they say was lonely and depressing. Mrs. Wright was a lonely woman with no child and her only company was her bird that most probably was killed by her husband. Thus, she killed him in retaliation and Mrs. Peters identifies with her situation as she says how lonely she felt when her two-year-old child died and protects hides the evidence in her coat pocket.

The two women describe Mr. Wright as a good man. This means that he had a dual character because to the outsiders he appeared as a quiet good husband. Yet Mrs. Hale says that he was a hard man and not pleasant to live with and that is why Mrs. Wright must have bought a bird to keep her company. Even though Mr. Wright did not take alcohol and always kept his word, he was not kind to his wife and did not try to make her life cheerful as he was always out working and mean when at home.

His character led Mrs. Wright to loneliness and eventual murder. This character remains flat because his character does not change for the better as Mrs. Wright became lonely and her troubles started soon after she married him. He remained detached from his wife, did not understand her feelings, and killed the one thing that gave her company and at least made her cheerful. He also made her withdraw from the society and become lonely.

The other three men, the Sheriff, the County and Mr. Hale do not change their character. These men have a low opinion about women and their thoughts about women only being concerned with trifles remain constant throughout the play. They belittle Mrs. Wright and the women at large with their condescending attitude.

For example we see them criticizing Mrs. Wright's housekeeping skills. At the close of the play, the men miss an important piece of evidence that might have helped to convict Mrs. Wright due to their lack of keenness in the trifles unlike the two women who see and come up with a motive for the murder, which they conceal.

The characters in the play have some degree of stereotype. The men represent the stereotype that the society has towards women that women cannot handle big things and only good for housekeeping and dealing with little things. Their trifles are not considered harmful and this explains why the men overlook the little things that would have led them to the motive of the crime and hence the perpetrator. On the other hand, the women represent the stereotype that women that they are only good for housekeeping.

For instance, Mrs. Wrights abandons her own life such as singing in the choir or joining other women because she has married. She represents women who stop living their lives once they get married, become lost in their new married life, and eventually become frustrated. To sum up the way men and women view each in the society ought to change, both are equally capable. The men ought to treat women as equals because they too are also capable of understanding 'big' things as the two women show by unraveling the murder motive.