

Trifles: the little things that mean a lot

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



Susan Glaspell founded the Province Town Players with her husband and wrote plays for the group. She wrote her first play, *Trifles* in the empty theater one afternoon, she based it from a similar murder trial she had covered as a reporter (Kirsznner 876). *Trifles*, written in 1916, was a time before Women's Suffrage when women did not have a voice in society like the men did.

The characters in the play enter the home of the recently murdered Mr. Wright, and his wife Mrs. Wright who is being held in prison as the suspect for strangling him with a rope. The Sheriff, the County Attorney, Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Hale, who discovered the body, go to investigate the crime. Along with them came, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters, the sheriff's wife. The men went to investigate the home, leaving the women in the kitchen to collect things for Mrs. Wright (Glaspell). The men were unable to find the motivation through their investigation, but the two women are able to find clues in the kitchen and through Mrs. Wright's behavior prior to the murder that suggests why Mrs. Wright may have killed her husband.

The women first notice that various chores haven't been done and that she messed up a stitch in her otherwise nice and even sewing. Mrs. Hale recalls how Mrs. Wright was different before her marriage she used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, not the town girls singing in the choir (Glaspell 873). The women find a birdcage in the closet. Mrs. Hale compares how Mrs. Wright used to be similar to a bird. she was kind of like a bird herself real sweet a pretty, but kind of timid and fluttery.

How she did change (Glaspell 877). It was Mr. Wright who made her stop singing. The bird is symbolic of Minnie Foster's cheerful self. When the

women find the bird dead, with a rope around its neck they realize Mr. Wright must've killed the bird, symbolically killing Minnie Foster, indicating that Mr. Wright was abusive to Mrs. Wright. Throughout the play there are actions taken by the men that show their view on women causing the women to hide the bird at the end, protecting Mrs. Wright. Ironically, when the County Attorney asks Mr. Peters if he was sure that there was no evidence in the kitchen, the sheriff replies nothing here but kitchen things (Glaspell 871). When the county Attorney opens a cupboard and finds the fruit jars had broken Mrs. Peters explains that Mrs. Wright was worried about the jars and Mr. Hale respond Well, Women are used to worrying about trifles (Glaspell 871), suggesting how the men view women's work as small and insignificant compared to theirs.

The women through the play stay close together showing their support for each other and their sex. They choose to hide the evidence of the bird from the men to protect Mrs. Wright from prosecution. The women understand why Mrs. Wright killed her husband and sympathize with her. After women's suffrage in 1920 women were still treated as a housewife for many years and while women have gained a voice in society, they still face difficulties today. Works Cited Glaspell. Susan. Trifles. Portable Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing. Editing by Laurie G. Kirszner and Stephen R. Mandell, Cengage Learning, 2016, 867-880. Kirszner Lauri G., and Stephen R, Mandell, editors. Portable Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing. Cengage Learning, 2016