

A jury of her peers essay sample

Life



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In a court case, is the intention of the crime indication for or against the convicted? While on the other hand it is used to prove the person guilty, also, it can be used to persuade in defending an act. Oppression is a cause enough to confirm civil disobedience. Our country was founded upon law breaking and rebellion against the British. Therefore began over two centuries of compromising the law, in big or in small ways, “civil rights movement” has addressed slavery, racism, and the latest feministic plans. In Susan Glaspell’s short story, the author dares the reader to rethink what it means to be a victim.

First we are introduced to a woman, Mrs. Hale, who at the beginning comes off as a main character. The details and patterns of her thoughts and her life misleads us, for an example, in paragraph 1, here we are shown the concept of Mrs. Hale’s instinct for tidiness, “her bread all ready for mixing, half the flour sifted and half un-sifted.” This plays as a minor detail, but it later becomes a key point as the plot changes, Mrs. Hale is shown to be a person of neatness and detail; meaning no work is to be left undone, and devotion to keeping a proper household. She comes off as a strong woman, a woman of principle.

In direct comparison to Mrs. Hale, we meet her associate accomplice, Mrs. Peters, the wife of the sheriff. It is interesting to note that while the author makes it clear that Mrs. Hale is well suited for her role in life, as the wife of a farmer. Mrs. Peters seems to be at ease being the wife of a lawman. She seems to lack character that is required of someone of authority, yet we come to understand as the plot is developed that she is instead a woman of equality, and as a character who can and will rise to the occasion.

Finally we are introduced to the character, in which the story is centered, the accused murderer, Mrs. Wright. She is characterized to be a person of great life and liveliness in her younger years. Although, life as Mrs. Wright is pictured as one of grey repetitiveness, maintaining a dull daily grind, empty of life, as we look at it in a normal social sense. However it is clear to the reader that Mrs. Wright is in fact the felon, she is portrayed sympathetically because of the lack of normality in her daily routine. She was once a girl of joyfulness and laughter, it's clear that over the years she has been forced into an isolated shell by a marriage to a man who has been cruel. It is clear that she finally was brought to her personal breaking point, dealing with her situation in a manner that was final and questionable, depending on the outcome of the legal investigation. It is noted that regardless of the outcome, Mrs. Wright had finally realized a state of peace within herself, a state that had been deprived of her for the period of her marriage with the deceased husband.

The men in the story are redundant for the most part. Their major contribution to the story is their disapproval of women in general, and a woman's ability for judgment. Ignorance on their part is a deadly flaw. As humans we all are self-centered by nature, and it is only through conscious effort will humans become able to fully see and appreciate those subtle distinctions that form the human ego. We also note that the men's approach to the investigation is based on their experience with other men for the most part. The delicacy of the female mind escapes their attention completely; in fact it is a theme of disrespect. This is a direct opposition to the investigation led by the women. Although they themselves are only vaguely familiar with

the accused, they are also very familiar with, and sympathetic of, the trouble of her daily routine.

The scene set by the author; the broken stove, the threadbare clothes, the dirty pots; all contribute to creating a feeling of empathy on the part of the reader for Mrs. Wright. We know the facts of the case as presented in the story. Mr. Wright, the grim one, with no appreciation for the beauty of life, overbearing on his wife one too many times. He did so by taking from her the only thing in life that she truly cared for, he destroyed all that was left inside her that was good. His vicious killing of her bird, he committed the awful sin; he crossed the line formed by her inner feelings by taking from her the last part that she held near and dear to her heart. It's clear to the reader that the act of murder was one that was not a matter of impulse so much, it was an intended act based on years of mental and marital abuse. However the actual killing was not planned, the thought pattern leading up to the actual act had been long in formation. Mrs. Wright had been abused to the point of misery and was finally understood by the two women who were the "peers" in forming Mrs. Wright's "jury."

The details center on the unfinished task of putting the sugar away, and in the untidy sewing of a small piece of the unfinished quilt. We can easily visualize what occurred, Mr. Wright, after taking from his wife the only thing that she truly cherished, caused her to become distraught to the point of complete disturbance and fury. This is evidence by the fact that even though the majority of the stitching was very precise but all. It's not an accident that this very piece of stitchery covered the final resting place of the bird. Also, the dead bird rested in a box that was one of the last things Mrs. Wright

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valued in her life. The association between the bird and the box is very strong; they both signified the loss of all that she held close to her heart. The loss of them virtually was the last straw for Mrs. Wright.

We can only imagine the state of mind as she sat in shock after witnessing the destruction of all that she had left to love in her life. The fact that she put the bird in the box, was the last scrap of happier times. The image portrayed by the author to the reader draws a picture, the singing of the bird and that of the young Mrs. Wright strongly suggest the resemblance between her and the singing of the bird. It wasn't the bird so much that kept her sane, as much as it what it represented to her of her lost youth and former life.

When the bird was killed, it was as in doing so Mr. Wright symbolically murdered the last remnant of his wife's life innocence and youth, which was the only thing still sustaining her grey existence. In taking from her all that she loved, it was as if her husband physically shattered the core part of his own wife, and she could no longer tolerate this. The other women understood all too clearly what had compelled her to commit the act. Mr. Wright was murdered in a manner that was fully consistent with his wife's logic of justice. The fact that he also was choked until dead imitates ideally the justice required for his wringing of the birds neck. There was a gun in the house but it was not used, only by taking his life in the way that he lived.

This is a wonderful story that stands on its own. It is even a greater story when considered in light of the symbolic and figurative parts contained within.