

Symbolism in trifles

Literature



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Symbolism in Trifles Trifles, a dramatic play by Susan Glaspell expresses the repression of American women in the late 1800's by a male dominated society. Minnie Wright the main character has no way of defending herself but rather depends on the exposure of her circumstances to come to her defence (Glaspell 1921).

Symbolism is evident throughout the play with different objects and situations reflecting on the feelings and characteristics of women and their freedom in this play. Minnie Wright lived a lonely life of isolation and depression. The setting around her and the objects the ladies find are symbolic throughout the play.

The first part of the play showcases the sheriff and his wife and the neighbours who come to Minnie's house after the husband dies. The first step they take is towards the fire since it's cold and dreary outside. This weather outside is a representative of the coldness in Minnie's life. The coldness she received from the husband, her lonely and isolated life and the coldness she receives from those around her.

Minnie's farm house in which the play takes part represents her life in isolation from the rest of the world. The isolated farm house also represents how plain her life was from the routine of repetitive work every day.

The jar of unfreezing jar of fruit that did not break which was found by Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters represent freedom. Minnie did not break even with all the coldness around her. Just like the cherries, she made it out to free herself.

The singing bird in the cage is symbolic of Minnie's life as she was not a free woman. She was caged all her life. The singing was a reminiscing of Minnie's old life from when she was young and sung in the choir. The killing of the

bird was also symbolic of the death of Minnie's joy. Wright had killed her only source of love. Wright snapped the bird's neck and just like he did, Minnie tied a rope on his neck too. The stitches seen in her quilt represent her nervousness about something.

The title of the play, 'Trifles' is also symbolic of the trivial things in Minnie's life that later grew bigger culminating to the death of her husband. The title is symbolic of how undervalued women's work was at the time.

Work cited:

Glaspell, Susan. *Trifles: A Play*. , 1921. Print.