

Class 11 English Trifles Act Summary

About the author: Susan Glaspell (1876-1948)

- American playwright and novelist
- Her works were dismissed during her lifetime, but she was rediscovered in the 70s
- Explore the difficulties faced by women in their self-exploration
- Novels – Fidelity (1913), Norma Ashe (1942), Bernice (1918)
- Plays – Trifles (1916), The Verge (1921)

Setting

- The house of Mr. and Mrs. Wrights.
- Mr. Wright has been murdered and Mrs. Wright has been accused and arrested before the play begins.
- All characters -both men and women – try to figure out a reason or a motive behind the murder

Characters

- George Henderson – County Attorney
- Henry Peters – Sheriff
- Mrs. Peters
- Lewis Hale – a neighboring farmer
- Mrs. Hale
- John Wright and Mrs. Wright

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The play "Trifles" by Susan Glaspell revolves around the murder of Mr. Wright and the subsequent investigation carried out by the County Attorney, George Henderson, and the Sheriff, Henry Peters. Mrs. Wright has been accused and arrested for her husband's murder before the play begins. As the men search the house for evidence, the women, Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale join them.

The men dismiss the unkempt and scattered state of the house as evidence of Mrs. Wright's incompetence as a housekeeper. However, the women notice the signs of

uncompleted work and a poorly stitched quilt, which they attribute to Mrs. Wright's nervousness. As they search for evidence, the women uncover a broken birdcage and a dead canary in a box, leading them to suspect that Mr. Wright may have killed the bird and caused his own death in the same manner.

Despite the evidence, the men continue to ridicule the women's attention to detail and their interest in what they consider "trifles," such as the quilt and the dead bird. However, the women's conversations reveal their shared experiences and their understanding of the challenges faced by women in unhappy marriages and patriarchal societies.

In the end, the women conceal the box with the dead bird from the men, showing their solidarity in opposing male dominance. The play's title highlights the male prejudice that women's lives are superficial and unimportant, while the women's analysis of the "trifles" reveals their ability to understand and solve complex problems. The play highlights the difficulties faced by women in their self-exploration and their struggles to pursue their dreams in patriarchal societies.

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