ABSTRACT

This is an Arabic translation of “Trifles”, a famous play by prominent American playwright Susan Glaspell (1876-1948). Glaspell was one of the founders of the Playwright’s Theatre, formerly recognized as the Provincetown Players in the United States of America. She wrote ten novels, twenty plays, and more than forty short stories. “Trifles” is a one-act play written in 1916. It is considered to be one of Susan Glaspell’s major works. “Trifles” is a play that is frequently anthologized in American literature textbooks. The play was based on the murder case of the sixty-year-old farmer, John Hossack, which was covered widely by Susan Glaspell while she was working as a journalist with the Des Moines Daily News immediately after her graduation from Drake University. Accordingly, “Trifles” presents the murder of an oppressive husband by his emotionally abused wife. It is an attempt to re-address the John Hossack case from the point of view of women who might not have a similar viewpoint of the nature of marital disagreement and domestic unhappiness. The murder happened in a period where women had insufficient protection from domestic abuse, and had not yet obtained the right to vote. The main characters of the play are: 1- The Sheriff, Mr. Henry Peters; 2- Mrs. Peters (wife of the Sheriff); 3- Mr. Lewis Hale (a neighbour of Mr. and Mrs. Wright); 4- Mrs. Hale (wife of Mr. Hale); and 5- The County Attorney, Mr. George Henderson. The off-stage characters are: 1- Mr. John Write (the victim); 2- Mrs. Minnie Write (the victim’s wife); 3- Frank (Deputy Sheriff); 4- Harry (a helper of Mr. Lewis Hale); 5- Dr. Lloyd (the coroner). The play addressed the life of Mrs. Wright who became enraged and took the life of her abusive and violent husband after he killed her bird. The motive for murder was the killing of the canary because it represented freedom for her. Mrs. Wright, the protagonist, lived through a series of emotions, such as rage, shock, lack of feeling, rejection, and deep sadness, mainly because the loss of her bird was sudden, surprising and unforeseen. She considered the death of her bird as a great calamity, as she lost something extremely crucial in her life. Susan Glaspell chose the title of the play from a line stated by one of the characters in the play, Mr. Lewis Hale, when he says: “Well, women are used to worrying about trifles.” The title demonstrates irony when Mrs. Minnie Wright seemed to be more concerned about trifles than she is about being under arrest for murder. This English play, “Trifles,” was chosen to be translated into Arabic because of its significance and association to the Arab culture. For the sake of wide readability, it was translated into Modern Standard Arabic (formal Arabic), as it is quite the same in all Arab countries.
**THE ORIGINAL TEXT**

"Trifles" (1916)
by Susan Glaspell (1876-1948)
Translated into Arabic by Abbas Brashi

Characters:
- The Sheriff, Mr. Henry Peters
- Mrs. Peters (wife of the Sheriff)
- Mr. Lewis Hale (a farmer and neighbour of Mr. and Mrs. Wright)
- Mrs. Hale (wife of Mr. Hale)
- The County Attorney, Mr. George Henderson

Off-Stage Characters:
- Mr. John Wright (the victim)
- Mrs. Minnie Write (wife of Mr. Write)
- Frank (Deputy Sheriff)
- Harry (a helper of Mr. Lewis Hale)
- Dr. Lloyd (the coroner)

Scene: The kitchen in the now abandoned farmhouse of John Wright, a gloomy kitchen, and left without having been put in order—unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside the breadbox, a dish towel on the table—other signs of uncompleted work. At the rear the outer door opens, and the Sheriff comes in, followed by the county Attorney and Hale. The Sheriff and Hale are men in middle life, the county Attorney is a young man; all are much bundled up and go at once to the stove. They are followed by the two women—the Sheriff’s Wife first; she is a slight wiry woman, a thin nervous face. Mrs. Hale is larger and would ordinarily be called more comfortable looking, but she is disturbed now and looks fearfully about as she enters. The women have come in slowly and stand close together near the door.

**THE TRANSLATION**

مسرحية "مسافف الأعمال" (1916م).

بُعِثت سوزان جلسر (1876م-1948م).

ترجمة الدكتور عباس براشي.

شخصيات المسرحية:
- أمامور الشرطة: السيد "هنري بيترز".
- السيدة "بيترز" (زوجة الأمام).
- السيد "الوصي هيل" (والسيدة "رايت") (أصحاب السيد "الوصي هيل").
- السيد "هيلى" (زوجة السيد "الوصي هيل").
- المدعي العام: السيد "جورج هندرسون".

 الشخصيات التي تظهر على خلفية المسرح:
- السيد "داتون رايت" (الضحية).
- السيد "ميني رايت" (زوجة السيد "داتون رايت").
- "فرانك" (نائب أمامور الشرطة).
- "هاري" (مساعد السيد "الوصي هيل").
- الدكتور "لويد" (المحقق)

المشهد: في مطبخ مزروعة "داتون رايت" الذي أصبح مهجورًا الآن، وهو مطبخ مظلم ومظلم. وقد تركه أصحابه دون ترتيب، فأدوات الطبخ تركت متسخة تحت المطبخ، ورغب خيّر ترك خارج صفوف الخبز، ومنظقة الأطباق تُركت على الطاولة. بالإضافة إلى مؤشرات أخرى تدل على أعمال غير مكتملة في المطبخ. وفتحت樱桃 الخفيف للمطبخ ودخل الأمام، وتبعته والمدعي العام والمщик "هيلى". والمأموم والمسي "هيلى" مما راحر يتنسب عاليا، أما المدعي العام في المفكرة، فهو شاب. دخلوا نقطة واحدة إلى المطبخ وتوهجوا جميعاً على الفناء إلى المفكرة. وتبعت الرجال الثلاثة سيدتان، وهي إمرأة تحلل نسباً ذات وجه نحيف بيد عليه الثور، وأما الثانية فهي السيدية "هيلى"، وهي أكبر حجماً من المرأة الأولى، وتعتبر نقلها مريحاً بشكل أكبر. وبناءً على ملامح النسائي الأولى، تبدو خفاختها وهي تدخل المطبخ. وفد تعلمت السيدتان ببطء ووقفتو بجانب بعضهما بالقرب من الباب.
Hale: Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes. We came along the road from my place; and as I got here, I said, "I'm going to see if I can't get John Wright to go in with me on a party telephone." I spoke to Wright about it once before, and he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself; but I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, though I said to Harry that I didn't know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John—

County Attorney. Let's talk about that later, Mr. Hale. I do want to talk about that, but tell now just what happened when you got to the house.

County Attorney: Somebody should have been left here yesterday.

Sheriff: Oh--yesterday. When I had to send Frank to Morris Center for that man who went crazy--I want you to know I had my hands full yesterday. I knew you could get back from Omaha by today, and as long as I went over everything here myself-

County Attorney: Well, Mr. Hale, tell just what happened when you came here yesterday morning.

Hale: Harry and I had started to town with a load of potatoes. We came along the road from my place; and as I got here, I said, "I'm going to see if I can't get John Wright to go in with me on a party telephone." I spoke to Wright about it once before, and he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—I guess you know about how much he talked himself; but I thought maybe if I went to the house and talked about it before his wife, though I said to Harry that I didn't know as what his wife wanted made much difference to John--

County Attorney. Let's talk about that later, Mr. Hale. I do want to talk about that, but tell now just what happened when you got to the house.
Hale: I didn't hear or see anything; I knocked at the door, and still it was all quiet inside. I knew they must be up, it was past eight o'clock. So I knocked again, and I thought I heard somebody say, "Come in." I wasn't sure, I'm not sure yet, but I opened the door--this door [indicating the door by which the two women are still standing], and there in that rocker-- [pointing to it] sat Mrs. Wright. [They all look at the rocker]

County Attorney. What--was she doing?

Hale: She was rockin' back and forth. She had her apron in her hand and was kind of--pleating it.

County Attorney. And how did she--look?

Hale: Well, she looked queer.

County Attorney. How do you mean--queer?

Hale: Well, as if she didn't know what she was going to do next. And kind of done up.

County Attorney: [Takes out notebook and pencil and sits left of center table] How did she seem to feel about your coming?

Hale: Why, I don't think she minded--one way or other. She didn't pay much attention. I said, "How do, Mrs. Wright, it's cold, ain't it?" And she said, "Is it?"-- and went on kind of pleating at her apron. Well, I was surprised; she didn't ask me to come up to the stove, or to set down, but just sat there, not even looking at me, so I said, "I want to see John." And then she--laughed. I guess you would call it a laugh. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed. I thought of Harry and the team outside, so I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" And then she--laughed.

County Attorney: I think I'd rather have you go into that upstairs, where you can point in all out. Just go on now with the rest of the story.
Hale: Well, my first thought was to get that rope off. I looked... [Stops, his face twitches...] but Harry, he went up to him, and he said, "No, he's dead all right, and we'd better not touch anything." So we went back downstairs. She was still sitting that same way. "Has anybody been notified?" I asked. "No," says she, unconcerned. "Who did this, Mrs. Wright?" said Harry. He said it business-like--and she stopped pleatin' of her apron. "I don't know," says she. "You don't know?"

County Attorney: And what did Mrs. Wright do when she knew that you had gone for the coroner.

Hale: she moved from the rocker to that chair over there... [Pointing to a small chair in the down right corner]...and just sat there with her hand held together and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if any conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone, and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at me--scared.

[The County Attorney, who has had his notebook out, rising and looking around] I guess we'll go upstairs first--and then out to the barn and around there. [To the Sheriff] You're convinced that there was nothing important here--nothing that would point to any motive?

Sheriff: Nothing here but kitchen things.

[The County Attorney, after again looking around the kitchen, opens the door of a cupboard closet. He gets up on a chair and looks on a shelf. Pulls his hand away, sticky]...and looking down. I got a feeling that I ought to make some conversation, so I said I had come in to see if John wanted to put in a telephone, and at that she started to laugh, and then she stopped and looked at me--scared.

County Attorney: [rising and looking around] I guess we'll go upstairs first--and then out to the barn and around there. [To the Sheriff] You're convinced that there was nothing important here--nothing that would point to any motive?

Sheriff: Nothing here but kitchen things.

[The women draw nearer up center]

Mrs. Peters: [to the other woman] Oh, her fruit; it did freeze. [To the Lawyer] She worried about that when it turned so cold. She said the fire'd go out and her jars would break.

Sheriff: [rises] Well, can you beat the women! Held for murder and worryin' about her preserves.
County Attorney: [getting down from chair] I guess before we're through she may have something more serious than preserves to worry about. [Crosses down right center]

Hale: Well, women are used to worrying over trifles. [The two women move a little closer together]

County Attorney: [with the gallantry of a young politician] And yet, for all their worries, what would we do without the ladies? [The women do not unbend. He goes to the sink, takes dipperful of water form the pail and, pouring it into a basin, washes his hands. Starts to wipe them on the roller towel, turns it for a pail and, pouring it into a basin, washes his hands. He goes to the sink, takes dipperful of water form the]

Mrs. Hale: [stiffly] There's a great deal of work to be done on a farm.

County Attorney: To be sure. And yet... [With a little bow to her] ... I know there are some Dickson county farmhouses which do not have such roller towels. [He gives it a pull to expose its full length again]

Mrs. Hale: Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be.

County Attorney: Ah, loyal to your sex, I see. But you and Mrs. Wright were neighbors. I suppose you were friends, too.

Mrs. Hale: [shaking her head] I've not seen much of her of late years. I've not been in this house--it's more than a year.

County Attorney: [Crossing to women up center] And why was that? You didn't like her?

Mrs. Hale: I liked her all well enough. Farmers' wives have their hands full, Mr. Henderson. And then--

County Attorney: Yes--?

Mrs. Hale: [looking about] It never seemed a very cheerful place.

County Attorney: No--it's not cheerful. I shouldn't say she had the homemaking instinct.

Mrs. Hale: Well, I don't know as Wright had, either.

County Attorney: You mean that they didn't get on very well?

Mrs. Hale: No, I don't mean anything. But I don't think a place'd be any cheerfuller for John Wright's being in it.

Hale: The two women move a little closer together

[sidew "Hil"": the ladies' two exchange on matters of the hearth.

County Attorney: [tense about what to say] With all this to worry about, would she have done this?

Hale: Not much of a housekeeper, Mr. Henderson. Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be.

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Hale: Not much of a housekeeper, Mr. Henderson. Those towels get dirty awful quick. Men's hands aren't always as clean as they might be.
County Attorney: I'd like to talk more of that a little later. I want to get the lay of things upstairs now. [He goes to the left, where three steps lead to a stair door]

Sheriff: I suppose anything Mrs. Peters does's all right. She was to take in some clothes for her, you know, and a few little things. We left in such a hurry yesterday.

County Attorney: Yes, but I would like to see what you take, Mrs. Peters, and keep an eye out for anything that might be of use to us.

Mrs. Peters: Yes, Mr. Henderson. [The men leave by up right door to stairs. The women listen to the men's steps on the stairs, then look about the kitchen]

Mrs. Hale: I'd hate to have men coming into my kitchen, snooping around and criticizing. [She arranges the pans under sink which the Lawyer had shoved out of place]

Mrs. Peters: Of course it's no more than their duty.

Mrs. Hale: Duty's all right, but I guess that deputy sheriff that came out to make the fire might have got a little of this on. [Gives the roller towel a pull] Wish I'd [Crosses right to Mrs. Peters at cupboard] this in there. [Kneels again] I declare that's the only one. [Gets down, bottle in her hand. Goes to the sink and wipes it off on the outside] She'll feel awful bad after all her hard work in the hot weather. I remember the afternoon I put up my cherries last summer. [She puts the bottle on the big kitchen table, center of the room, front shelf. With a sigh, is about to sit down in the rocking chair. Before she is seated realizes what chair it is; with a slow look at it, steps back. The chair, which she has touched, rocks back and forth]

The room, front table. With a sigh, is about to sit down to the baby [He watches the cherries in the room, front table. He looks at the baby, then turns to the window]

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My, it's cold in there. [She puts the clothes on the big table, and hurries to the stove]

Mrs. Peters: [shaking off the mood which the empty rocking chair has evoked. Now in a businesslike manner she speaks] Well, I must get those things from the front room closet. [She goes to the door at the right, but after looking into the other room, steps back] You coming with me, Mrs. Hale? You could help me carry them. [They go into the other room; appear, Mrs. Peters carrying a dress and skirt, Mrs. Hale following with a pair of shoes]

Mrs. Hale: [right of center table examining the skirt] Wright was close. I think maybe that's why she kept so much to herself. She didn't even belong to the Ladies' Aid. I suppose she felt she couldn't do her part, and then you don't enjoy things when you feel shabby. She used to wear pretty clothes and be lively, when she was Minnie Foster, one of the town girls singing in the choir. But that--oh, that was thirty years ago. This all you was to take?

Mrs. Peters: She said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want, for there isn't much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. [CROSSES TO CUPBOARD] She said they was in the top drawer in this cupboard. Yes, here. And then her little shawl that always hung behind the door. [OPEN STAIR DOOR AND LOOKS] Yes, here it is. [quickly shuts door leading upstairs.]

Mrs. Hale: [abruptly moving toward her] Mrs. Peters?

Mrs. Peters: Do you think she did it?

Mrs. Hale: [in a frightened voice] Oh, I don't know.

Mrs. Peters: [starts to speak, glances up, where footsteps are heard in the room above. In a low voice] Mr. Peters says it looks bad for her. Mrs. Hale? She said they

Mrs. Hale: Well, I don't think she did. Asking for an apron and her little shawl. Worrying about her fruit.

Mrs. Peters: [CROSSES TO TABLE AND PLACING Shawl and apron on table with other clothing] No, it's strange. It must have been done awful crafty and still. They say it was such a funny way to kill a man, rigging it all up like that.
Mrs. Peters: Mr. Henderson said coming out that what was needed for the case was a motive; something to show anger or—sudden feeling.

Mrs. Hale: [who is standing by the table] Well, I don't see any signs of anger around here. [She puts her hand on the dish towel which lies on the table, stands looking down at the table, one half of which is clean, the other half messy.] It's wiped here. [Makes a move as if to finish work, then turns and looks at loaf of bread outside the breadbox. Drops towel] In that voice of coming back to familiar things Wonder how they are finding things upstairs? I hope she had it a little more about.

The Sheriff enters, followed by Hale and the County Attorney. They wonder if she was going to quilt it or just knot it? The men laugh, the women look abashed

Hale has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It's all over the place! Mrs. Hale: [apologetically] I don't know as there's anything so strange, our takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. [She sits down at the big table, smoothing out a block with decision] I don't see as it's anything to laugh about.

Mrs. Peters: [examination another block] Mrs. Peters, look at this one. Here, this is the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It's all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about! [After she has said this, they look at each other, then start to glance back at the door. After an instant, Mrs. Hale has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing.

Mrs. Peters: But, Mrs. Hale, the law is the law.

Mrs. Hale: I s'pose 'tis. [Unbuttoning her coat] Better loosen up your things, Mrs. Peters. You won't feel them when you go out. [Mrs. Peters takes off her fur tippet, goes to hang it on chair back left of table, stands looking at the work basket on floor near down left window]

Mrs. Peters: She was piecing a quilt. [She brings the large sewing basket, and they look at the bright pieces]

Mrs. Hale: It's log cabin pattern. Pretty, isn't it? I wonder if she was goin' to quilt or just knot it? [Footsteps have been heard coming down the stairs. The Sheriff enters, followed by Hale and the County Attorney]

Sheriff: They wonder if she was going to quilt it or just knot it. [The men laugh, the women look abashed]

County Attorney: [rubbing his hands over the stove] Frank's fire didn't do much up there, did it? Well, let's go out to the barn and get that cleared up. [The men go outside]

Mrs. Hale: [resentfully] I don't know as there's anything so strange, our takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. [She sits down at the big table, smoothing out a block with decision] I don't see as it's anything to laugh about.

Mrs. Peters: [apologetically] Of course they've got awful important things on their minds. [Pulls up a chair and joins Mrs. Hale at the left of the table]

Mrs. Hale: [examining another block] Mrs. Peters, look at this one. Here, this is the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It's all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about! [After she has said this, they look at each other, then start to glance back at the door. After an instant, Mrs. Hale has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing.

Mrs. Peters: But, Mrs. Hale, the law is the law.

Mrs. Hale: They wonder if she was going to quilt it or just knot it? [The men laugh, the women look abashed]
Mrs. Peters: Oh, what are you doing, Mrs. Hale?

Mrs. Hale: [mildly] Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed very good. [Threading a needle] Bad sewing always made me fidgety.

Mrs. Peters: [with a glance at door, nervously] I don't think we ought to touch things.

Mrs. Hale: I'll just finish up this end. [Suddenly stopping and leaning forward] Mrs. Peters?

Mrs. Hale: Why, look at this cage! [Holds it up] Why, look at this! [With a glance at door, nervously] Mrs. Peters, then goes on sewing putting apron and other things together] I wonder where I can find a piece of paper, and string. [rises]

Mrs. Hale: In that cupboard, maybe.

Mrs. Peters: [crosses right looking in cupboard] Why, here's a birdcage. [Holds it up] Did she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?

Mrs. Hale: Why, I don't know whether she did or not--I've not been here for so long. There was a man around last year selling canaries cheap, but I don't know as she took one; maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty.

Mrs. Peters: My sister Bessie was like that. Queer, ain't it?

Mrs. Hale: [looking, too] Looks as if someone must have been rough with it.

Mrs. Peters: Why, yes. [She brings the cage forward and puts it on the table]
Mrs. Hale: [glancing toward up left door] I wish if they're going to find any evidence they'd be about it. I don't like this place.

Mrs. Peters: But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale. It would be lonesome of me sitting here alone.

Mrs. Hale: It wouldn't do it? [Dropping her sewing] But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes she was here. I--[Looking around the room]--wish I had.

Mrs. Peters: But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale.---your house and your children.

Mrs. Hale: [Rises and crosses left] I could've come. I stayed away because it weren't cheerful--and that's why I ought to have come. I--I've never liked this place.

Mrs. Peters: Maybe it's down in a hollow, and you don't see the road. I dunno what it is, but it's a lonesome place and always was. I wish I had come over to see Minnie Foster sometimes. I can see now--[Shakes her head]

Mrs. Peters: [left of table and above it] Well, you mustn't reproach yourself, Mrs. Hale. Somehow we just don't see how it is with other folks until--something comes up.

Mrs. Hale: Not having children makes less work--but it makes a quiet house, and Wright out to work all day, and no company when he did come in. [Turning from window] Did you know John Wright, Mrs. Peters?

Mrs. Peters: Not to know him; I've seen him in town. They say he was a good man.

Mrs. Hale: Yes--good; he didn't drink, and kept his word as well as most, I guess, and paid his debts. But he was a hard man, Mrs. Peters. Just to pass the time of day with him. [Shivers] Like a raw wind that gets to the bone. [Pauses, her eye falling on the cage] I should think she would 'a wanted a bird. But what do you suppose went with it?

Mrs. Peters: I don't know, unless it got sick and died. [She reaches over and swings the broken door, swings it again; both women watch it]

Mrs. Hale: She--come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself--real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and--fluttery. How--she--did--change.

Mrs. Peters: Why, I think that's a real nice idea, Mrs. Hale. There couldn't possibly be any objection to it, could there? Now, just what would I take? I wonder if her patches are in here--and her things. [They look in the sewing basket]
Mrs. Hale: [Crosses to right of table] Here's some red. I expect this has got sewing things in it [Brings out a fancy box] What a pretty box. Looks like something somebody would give you. Maybe her scissors are in here. [Opens box. Suddenly puts her hand to her nose] Why-- [Mrs. Peters bends nearer, then turns her face away] There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk.

Mrs. Hale: Why, this isn't her scissors.

Mrs. Hale: [lifting the silk] Oh, Mrs. Peters--it's-- [Mrs. Peters bends closer]

Mrs. Peters: It's the bird.

Mrs. Hale: [jumping up] But, Mrs. Peters--look at it. Its neck! Look at its neck! It's all--other side to.

Mrs. Peters: [opening a box] Here's some red. There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk. [Sinks into her chair. Enter Sheriff and County Attorney. Mrs. Peters rises under quilt pieces, and sinks into her chair. Enter Sheriff Peters, continuing an interrupted conversation] Well, not now. They're superstitious, you know. [They leave]

County Attorney: [to Sheriff Peters, continuing an interrupted conversation] No sign at all of anyone having come from the outside. Their own rope. Now let's go up again and go over it piece by piece. [They start upstairs] It would have to have been someone who knew just the-- [Mrs. Peters sits down left of the table. The two women sit there not looking at another, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they talk now, it is the manner of feeling their way over strange ground, as if afraid of what they are saying, but as if they cannot help saying it.]
Mrs. Hale: She liked the bird. She was going to bury it in that pretty box.

Mrs. Peters: [in a whisper] When I was a girl--my kitten--there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes--and before I could get there--[Covers her face an instant] If they hadn't held me back, I would have--[Catches herself, looks upstairs, where steps are heard, falters weakly] --hurt him.

Mrs. Hale: I knew John Wright.

Mrs. Peters: [moving uneasily] We don't know who killed the bird.

Mrs. Hale: I saw a kitten--there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes--and before I could get there--[Covers her face an instant] If they hadn't held me back, I would have--[Catches herself, looks upstairs, where steps are heard, falters weakly] --hurt him.

Mrs. Hale: [with a slow look around her] I wonder how it would seem never to have had any children around. [Pause] No, Wright wouldn't like the bird--a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too.

Mrs. Peters: [moving uneasily] We don't know who killed the bird.

Mrs. Hale: I knew John Wright.

Mrs. Peters: It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs. Hale. Killing a man while he slept, slipping a rope around his neck that choked the life out of him.

Mrs. Hale: His neck. Choked the life out of him. [Her hand goes out and rests on the birdcage]

Mrs. Peters: [with rising voice] We don't know who killed him. We don't know.

Mrs. Hale: [her own feeling not interrupted] If there'd been years and years of nothing, then a bird to sing to...

Mrs. Peters: [something within her speaking] I know what stillness is. When we homesteaded in Dakota, and my first baby died--after he was two years old, and me...

Mrs. Hale: [moving] How soon do you suppose they'll be through, looking for evidence?

Mrs. Peters: I know what stillness is. [Pulling herself back] The law has got to punish crime, Mrs. Hale.

Mrs. Hale: [not as if answering that] I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons and stood up there in the choir and sang. [A look around the room] Oh, I wish I'd come over here once in a while! That was a crime! That was a crime! Who's going to punish that?

Mrs. Peters: [looking upstairs] We mustn't--take on.
Mrs. Hale: I might have known she needed help! I know how things can be—-for women. I tell you, it's queer, Mrs. Peters. We live close together and we live far apart. We all go through the same things--it's all just a different kind of the same thing. [Brushes her eyes, noticing the bottle of fruit, reaches out for it] If I was you, I wouldn't tell her her fruit was gone. Tell her it ain't. Tell her it's all right. Take this in to prove it to her. She—she may never know whether it was broke or not.

Mrs. Peters: [Takes the jar, looks about for something to wrap it in; takes Petticoat from the clothes brought from the other room, very nervously begins winding this around the bottle. In a false voice] My, it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us. Wouldn't they just laugh! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a-- a dead canary. As if that could have anything to do with--with--wouldn't they laugh! [The men are heard coming downstairs]

Mrs. Hale: [Under her breath] Maybe they would-- maybe they wouldn't.

County Attorney: No, Peters, it's all perfectly clear except a reason for doing it. But you know juries when it comes to women. If there was some definite thing.

[Takes the jar, looks about for something to wrap it in; takes Petticoat from the clothes brought from the other room, very nervously begins winding this around the bottle. In a false voice] My, it's a good thing the men couldn't hear us. Wouldn't they just laugh! Getting all stirred up over a little thing like a-- a dead canary. As if that could have anything to do with--with--wouldn't they laugh! [The men are heard coming downstairs]

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Mrs. Hale: [Under her breath] Maybe they would-- maybe they wouldn't.
County Attorney: [scoffingly] Oh, windows!

Sheriff: We'll be right out, Mr. Hale. [Hale goes outside. The Sheriff follows the County Attorney into the other room. Then Mrs. Hale rises, hands tight together, looking intensely at Mrs. Peters, whose eyes take a slow turn, finally meeting Mrs. Hale's. A moment Mrs. Hale holds her, then her own eyes point the way to where the box is concealed. Suddenly Mrs. Peters throws back quilt pieces and tries to put the box in the bag she is carrying. It is too big. She opens box, starts to take the bird out, cannot touch it, goes to pieces, stands there helpless. Sound of a knob turning in the other room. Mrs. Hale snatches the box and puts it in the pocket of her big coat. Enter County Attorney and Sheriff, who remains down right.]

County Attorney: [Crosses to up left door facetiously] Well, Henry, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to--what is it you call it, ladies!

Mrs. Hale: [Standing center below table facing front, her hand against her pocket] We call it--knot it, Mr. Henderson.

[Curtain]