“Trifles”
(p. 1033)
By Susan Glaspell
(1882-1948)

http://wiredforbooks.org/trifles/

First performed in 1916
Type of Play

• One-act, American 19th century drama
Plot: Identify Types of Conflict

- Person vs. Person
- Person vs. Self
- Person vs. Environment
  - (social or natural)
- Person vs. God
Setting

• Natural or Artificial?
• Hostile or Friendly?
  – Early 1900’s
  – American Midwest
  – Farmhouse kitchen
Characterization

- Protagonist = Mrs. Wright
- Antagonist = Men? Society? Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters? The Law?
- The social climate is the central antagonist
Characterization

• John Wright
  – Good man
  – Hard man
  – Closemouthed
  – Stingy
Mrs. Wright

- Pretty and lively when young
  “Minnie Foster”
- Sang in choir
- Homemaker when married
- Lonely
- Childless
- Married to Mr. “Right”
Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale

- The women are unsure of each other
- Mrs. Peters: Married to the law
- Mrs. Hale: Mini’s neighbor
- Uneasily discover, discuss clues
- Mrs. Wright is tried by a jury of her peers
Mr. Peters and Mr. Hale

- In charge
- Mocking of women
- Supportive of each other
- Concerned with law and the big picture
Symbol

- The bird
- The bird cage
- The Quilt
  - “Quilt it or Knot it”
- The cold
- “Married to the law”
- “That was a crime”
- Names: Mr. and Mrs. Wright/“Right”
Theme

• Trends of society and the law can be cruel and unfeeling and inhumane
• Laws at that time were made and enforced by men, with harsh consequences