Trifles

- *Trifles* is a murder mystery that explores gender relationships, power relationship between the sexes, and the nature of truth.

- In the play, Mr. and Mrs Wright never appear; instead, the story focuses on the prosecutor, **George Henderson**, who has been called in to investigate the murder; **Henry Peters**, the local sheriff; **Lewis Hale**, a neighboring farmer who discovered Wright's body; and **Mrs. Peters** and **Mrs. Hale**, wives to the two local men.
Summary

- The sheriff Henry Peters and the county attorney George Henderson arrive with the witness Lewis Hale, Mrs. Peters, and Mrs. Hale at John Wright's farmhouse.

- The police are investigating Wright's murder.

- Lewis Hale mentions how he discovered Mrs. Wright acting strangely, as she told him that her husband was murdered while she was sleeping.

- Although a gun had been in the house, Wright was gruesomely strangled with a rope.
• Men accuse women for worrying about trifles instead of about the case.
• But Henderson allows the women to collect some items for Mrs. Wright.
• He agrees that the objects are irrelevant to the case though.
• Women mention how happy Mrs. Wright had been before her marriage.
• They suspect the unhappiness she had suffered as John Wright's wife.
• After looking around the room, the women discover a quilt and decide to bring it with them.

• **Men tease them for pondering about the quilt as they briefly enter the room before going to inspect the barn.**

• Meanwhile, the women discover an empty birdcage.

• **They also find the dead bird in a box in Mrs. Wright's sewing basket while they are searching for materials for the quilt.**
• The bird has been strangled in the same manner as John Wright.

• Although Mrs. Peters is hesitant to tell the men, who are only following the law, she and Mrs. Hale decide to hide the evidence.

• The men are unable to find any evidence that will prevent her from being acquitted by a future jury.

• The play is sympathetic to women.
The play

• In simple terms, *Trifles* suggests that men tend to be aggressive, brash, rough, analytical and self-centered;

• In contrast, women are more cautious, thoughtful, intuitive, and sensitive to the needs of others.

• It is these differences that allows Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale to find the clues needed to solve the crime, while their husbands miss the same clues.
Conflict

- *Trifles* represents the struggles of women with constructed views of them in the society.

  Person vs. Person
  Person vs. Environment

there is another ethical conflict

  Person vs. ethics
plot

- Plot of the unseen characters is solved (murder)
- Plot of the seen characters is unsolved but complicated. (ethical plot)
- Men vs women
- Crime vs punishment
- Law and justice