Conclusion Homework Exercise

Create a conclusion by selecting and putting in order 6 sentences and a quote.

**Quotes:**

*"No, Wright wouldn't like the bird - a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too"*

*"Here's a bird-cage," she said. "Did she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?"*

*Who is this about: "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--." ... "Like a raw wind that gets to the bone."*

*“Mr. Hale rubbed his after the fashion of a showman getting ready for pleasantry. ’But would the women know a clue if they did come up on it?’ he said, and having delivered himself of this, he followed the others through the stair door.”*

*“’I know what stillness is,’ says Mrs. Peters, and then adds, ‘The law has got to punish crime.”*

*“’Nothing here but kitchen things,’ the sheriff says with a little laugh for the insignificance of kitchen things.”*

*“The law is the law—and bad stove is a bad stove.”*

*“’We think,’ began the sheriff’s wife in a flurried voice, ‘that she was going – to knot it.’”*

**Sentences:**

Triviality is not a value, but it can be overcome by large numbers, by the community of women.

To comprehend the story one may follow the technique of the housewives, who in making their comprehensive patchwork quilt, sort and sift through trivia and discarded material, match small scraps together, and then sew piece after piece, into ever enlarging squares.

But the similarity in the lives and habits of the three women, made salient by the supercilious sneers of the men, leads to an empathy that transcends the pity.

The laws of the world cannot apply here, and yet it is from these individual considerations, these trifles, that the entire situation arises.

The two worlds are complete, the masculine world that would mock the apparent trivia of woman, and the secret trifle-language of women in which lie momentous truths of their existence, like the strangled bird in the childish box.

Critics tend to agree on the basic theme indicated by the sequence of events: loyalty to and sympathy for the murderess, Minnie Foster (Mrs. Wright), determine the women’s decision to conceal the truth from their husbands and the law.

The women are in the kitchen and the kitchen work is trivial, while the men study the “layout” of the house and the barn, gathering what they consider to be significant information

Minnie’s existence and her behavior are determined by her man who makes the rules she lives by.

The most productive approach to this story is one that acknowledges and imitates the pattern of these women’s lives, since it is specifically the connective, the accumulative details of experience, that provide the structural key for the comprehension of the story.

The fact that Mrs. Wright has been forced to maintain housewifely standards with equipment that could only be faulty due to the avarice of her husband indicates that the mutual responsibility of husband and wife has been violated.

She (Mrs. Peters) relates two events from her own life which enable her to comprehend the motivation and justification of the murder – her reaction to the murder of her kitten and her feeling of emptiness when her child died.

The fact that Minnie strangled her husband because he strangled the bird indicates to Mrs. Hale that Minnie understood her husband’s actions as a symbolic strangling of herself, his wife.

The greater crime, as Mrs. Hale has learned, is to cut oneself off from understanding and communicating with others, and in this context John Wright is the greater criminal and his wife the helpless executioner

The decision of the women is motivated, then, not by sexism, but by the realization that the gap between the sexes extends to a concept of the law which negates the possibility of a “fair trial” for Minnie Foster.

However it is the sudden comprehension of the significance of the unfinished work in the kitchen that brings Mrs. Hale to Minnie’s side.

**Source:**

Alkalay-Gut, Karen. "Jury Of Her Peers: The Importance Of Trifles." *Studies In Short Fiction,* v. 21, no. 1, Winter 1984, p. 1-8.