
1.

**Primary text:**

“Wright was close!” She exclaimed, holding up a shabby black skirt that bore the marks of much making over. “I think maybe that’s why she kept so much to herself. I s’pose 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 twenty years ago.”

This quote from the primary text represents the metamorphosis that transpired in Minnie. When she was a young girl she was described as a “lively town girl” who sang in the choir. After she got married to John Wright, her life became dark and lonely. Her persona completely changed for the worse. She no longer wore pretty clothes to match her cheerful personality. She was not only married to John Wright, but also to that one black skirt that she had to wear over and over. Neither did John Wright or the black skirt mirror Minnie and who she used to be as a young girl.

**Secondary sources:**

“Through marriage, the story suggests, young girls are separated from their communities and families of nurturance, and isolated within heterosexual relationships in which they are expected to altruistically sacrifice their own needs and subordinate their own wills, and which are often—typically?—far less nourishing than the communities from which they came.” (West)

“In “Jury of Her Peers,” wives in traditional, patriarchal marriages, who bear the weight of the institutionalized loneliness, abuse, and injustice that such marriages often entail.” (West)

“In teaching the story in *Women and the Law*, the plight of the canary serves mainly as a metaphor for the isolated (caged) abused wife, who sang in the choir as a girl.” (Forell)

“The husband has killed the bird, the wife’s only comfort, as he has killed the bird-like spirit of the woman” (Ben-Zvi)

“The mise-en-scène suggests the harshness of Minnie’s life. The house is isolated, “down in a hollow and you don’t see the road”—dark, foreboding, a rural, gothic scene.” (Ben-Zvi)
“He was apparently a cold and silent man, miserly and caring little for what his wife may have wanted. In the small details of Minnie’s life, Mrs. Hale recognizes John Wright’s cruelty to her, how her marriage to him changed and eventually imprisoned her, destroying her vitality and spirit.” (Bryan)

“Conversing, Minnie’s neighbor and the sheriff’s wife realize how difficult her work must have been at the bad stove, how shabby and humiliated she must have felt in her worn-out clothes, and how she must have longed for music. They appreciate how desperately she must have missed other women’s company and their social activity, friendship, warmth, conversation, and compassion” (Kamir)

These quotes from multiple secondary sources emphasize on how Minnie’s marriage to John Wright entailed psychological oppression. She was once this lively and cheerful girl whose world was filled with music. Now she is caged in this marriage and is unable to express her true self. She’s been isolated from her community and “institutionalized” in her dark and lonely home. Minnie in a way has been imprisoned by John Wright. She does not leave the house, she does not have social interactions with her community, and she wears the same black skirt that reminds me of a prisoner jumpsuit for most women in the 1900s.

2.

Primary text:

“I wonder how it would seem,” Mrs. Hale at last began, as if feeling her way over strange ground—“never to have had any children around?” Her eyes made a slow sweep of the kitchen, as if seeing what that kitchen had meant through all the years.

The kitchen is commonly referred to as the “heart of the home”. In the early 1900s that is where most women were expected to spend their time, cooking and cleaning. Minnie’s kitchen is described as a small, cold, oddly built, and with broken essential equipment. The kitchen shows the hardships of Minnie’s life. The stove was broken making it difficult to perform daily tasks and bring warmth to the kitchen. The frigid temperatures caused the glass where she kept her preserves in to break open. Her furniture was old and falling apart. Not only did Minnie feel lonely and hollow inside, but the place where she was expected to survive did not provide nourishment or comfort.

Secondary sources:

“The interior of the kitchen replicates this barrenness and the commensurate disjunctions in the family, as the women experience them. Things are broken, cold, imprisoning; they are also violent. “Preserves” explode from lack of heat, a punning reminder of the casual relationship between isolation and violence. The mutilated cage and bird signify Wright’s brutal nature and the physical abuse his wife has borne.” (Ben-Zvi)
“Evidence that appears disconnected and means nothing to the men reveals Minnie Wright’s hardship and despair to the women. The women focus on Minnie Wright’s shabby and much mended clothes, the sagging rocking chair, and the broken stove in need of repair. They sense the lonely and desolate feel of the house, down in a hollow out of sight, where Minnie Wright has spent her days alone, without children and friends.” (Bryan)

“As the men inspect the outdoors and the upper floor in search of clues, the two women bond with the absent Minnie and with each other as they explore her kitchen. Through dialogue, applying their own life experiences while closely reviewing the details of her oven, armchair, towel, preserves, the women piece together Minnie’s secluded, lonely, silenced life.” (Kamir)

Within the isolated home, Minnie spends most of her time in the kitchen. The story’s setting is in Minnie’s kitchen. The men in the story made remarks of how the women would not be able to notice a clue in the kitchen even if they encountered one. Then, they went off to the bedroom where the murder took place. The men were wrong. The kitchen held many secrets that occurred in the Wright household. The women were able to put together the horrible things that Minnie went through and the emotions that she felt. These secondary quotes perfectly describe Minnie’s situation and how important and telling the kitchen was. The kitchen was cold causing Minnie’s preserves to break. The stove was broken, making Minnie’s life even more difficult to preform daily tasks. The bird cage in the kitchen signifies the imprisoning feeling that Minnie was living and the broken door on the bird cage expressed violence that happened in the household. All of the details in the kitchen show that Minnie was in a marriage that experienced domestic abuse and psychological oppression.

3.

Primary text:

I’d spoke to Wright about it once before; but he put me off, saying folks talked too much anyway, and all he asked was peace and quiet—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, and said all the women-folks liked the telephones, and that in this lonesome stretch of the road it would be a good thing—well, I said to Harry that that was what I was going to say—thought I said at the same time that I didn’t know as what his wife wanted made such a difference to John”

Mrs. Hale described Minnie as a lively and cheerful person who sang in the choir. Minnie grew up in environment that provided her with social opportunities. John Wright was the complete opposite. He was a man who preferred silence and was unable to communicate efficiently. Whenever Mr. Hale made attempts to convince John Wright to get a telephone for the neighborhood, he refused, stating that “people talk too much”. He isolates Minnie in this cold and run down home and rips away any social opportunity that arises. She spends her whole days alone and he will not even consider providing her with the ability to communicate with others.

Secondary sources:
"The lonesomeness endured by Minnie Foster in this house (aggravated by her husband’s refusal to install a telephone), was further underscored by the ugliness and hardness of life in a home pressed for cash, and without light, liveliness, or delight.” (West)

"The injury occasioned by such marriage in Minnie Foster’s life was extreme. Minnie Foster, the women’s conversation in the kitchen makes clear, moved from girlhood to an early marriage to an incommunicative, cold man, and more generally, from a life of delight and pleasure to a life dominated by lonesomeness and ugliness.” (West)

When Minnie was a young girl, she lived in the town and was active in her community. She loved to sign in her church’s choir. Once she got married to John Wright all of the communication she had with her community, family, and friends were stripped away from her. John Wright barely liked to communicate himself. In the story, it states that he would come home from work and want quietness. It must have been a very shocking and mentally taxing transition for Minnie. It was as if she came from a world full of cheer and sound to a depressing and still world. John Wright refusing to get Minnie access to a phone shows just how controlling he was in their one-sided relationship. John Wright keeping Minnie out of connect with others is a prime example of psychological oppression.

4.

Primary text:

“I stayed away because it weren’t cheerful—and that’s why I ought to have come. I”—she looked around—I’ve never liked this place. Maybe because it’s down in a hollow and you don’t see the road. I don’t know 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—“ She did not put it into words”

Mrs. Hale has known Minnie since she was a young girl, but she has not visited her home in a long time. In the text, she repeatedly states that wishes she had come by Minnie’s house to bring her company. Mrs. Hale being in Minnie’s house makes her feel the lonesomeness and darkness Minnie experienced for years. The reason why she did not come by Minnie’s is because of how uninviting her home seemed. Minnie’s house is secluded “down in a hollow”. Mrs. Hale knew the loneliness from afar, but after going into Minnie’s house, she found out how lonely her household really was.

Secondary source:

“In the absence of the wife, the women, like quilters, patch the scenario of her life and her guilt. As they imagine her, Minnie Foster is a lonely, childless woman, married to a taciturn husband, isolated from neighbors because of the rigors of farm life.” (Ben-Zvi)

The house that Minnie resides in is often described as a dark and lonely place. It is isolated from other homes. The inside of the house is run down and cold. Mrs. Hale never visited Minnie due to the uninviting factors from the outside of the house. The inside of that home was even more lonely
than the outside appeared to be. It was quiet, cold, and lonely. This was another way John Wright was able to control Minnie’s lonely life.

5.

Primary text:

“No, Wright wouldn’t like the bird,” she said after that—“a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that too.”

John Wright killing the bird represents so much in this story. To me that bird represented Minnie’s past life and her happiness. The bird also brought her comfort and light while living a lonely and dark life. The bird was something that gave her hope and brought her happiness. When he killed the bird, I feel as if it triggered Minnie and caused her to remember how he also killed “Minnie Foster”. John Wright killing the bird shows how abusive and cruel he really was. He took the only thing Minnie loved dearly and killed it.

Secondary sources:

“The discovery of the strangled canary presents ambiguities about what went on in the household that caused Minnie to take such an extreme course of action.” (Forell)

“Abusers use animals to get at their human victims and why battered women might be especially affected by threats of violence or actual violence against their companion animals.” (Forell)

“In A Jury of Her Peers, we can infer that the violence against Minnie’s pet canary was used to terrorize, emotionally abuse, punish, and degrade Minnie, and that it precipitated the killing of her tormentor.” (Forell)

“The women reason that the strangled bird had been both treasured by the desperately lonely farm wife for its companionship and killed at the hands of her husband, and must have been the proverbial last straw, prompting the wife to kill her abusive husband.” (West)

“Mrs. Peters is at first reluctant to identify with the accused woman, but then, remembering the death of her first child on a lonely homestead, she begins to imagine Minnie’s loneliness and despair. Mrs. Peters remembers seeing a boy murder her pet kitten with a hatchet, and she senses in herself the capacity for violence that Minnie displayed. As Mrs. Peters faces her own powerless and inferiority in a world controlled and defined by male figures of authority, she more fully comprehends Minnie’s subjugation and isolation in a world controlled by John Wright.” (Bryan)

“While Glaspell’s female protagonists speak in a different voice, the story they tell is one of patriarchal dominance and oppression. The Minnie they reconstruct is an abused woman, confined and tormented by a tyrannical spouse.” (Kamir)
"They pay careful attention to the smallest details, mocked and ignored by the investigating men, relying on intuition and expressing compassion. They see the tragic circumstances of Minnie’s life, respect them, and deem them relevant. They recognize John Wright’s brutality and violence as horrible crimes committed against Minnie." (Kamir)

John Wright killing Minnie’s pet canary shows his true colors. John Wright was an abusive, controlling, and violent husband. He killed the canary to abuse Minnie in every emotional way possible. These secondary quotes provide insight of how abusers use animals to harass and hurt their victims. John Wright killing the canary was the last straw for Minnie. He hurt her so bad that she reacted.

6.

Primary text:

“Not having children makes less work,” mused Mrs. Hale, after a silence, “but it makes a quiet house—and Wright out to work all day—and no company when he did come in.”

The Wright’s marriage was a lonely one. I feel as though it was even more lonely since she was married to someone who really was not there, psychically, mentally, and emotionally. This marriage did not have what marriage is supposed to offer; love, company, and family. It seems all that Mr. Wright did was bring home the money and nothing else. I am not sure why they did not have children, but from reading about Mr. Wright’s personality, I am guessing he did not want any. He was incapable of loving Minnie, why would he be capable of loving children? This just made Minnie even more depressed and hopeless. Most other women had families, and she didn’t.

Secondary sources:

“However, as Mrs. Peters slowly ferrets out the facts of Minnie’s life- the childlessness, the isolation- and conflates the experience with her own early married days, she begins to identify with Minnie.” (Ben-Zvi)

“Mrs. Hale, who has known Minnie Wright since they were both young and who is protective of her from the beginning, takes the lead, thinking of what it would have meant in her own life to have worked with a broken stove, to have had only shabby clothes to wear, and to have lived and worked without children or other companionship.” (Bryan)

Minnie did not have the typical family structure of a woman in the 1900s. She did not have any kids. This made Minnie’s life even that much lonelier. For years that she was married to John Wright her life lacked human and social interaction. This is domestic abuse within itself. Keeping Minnie away from others and then refusing to communicate with her, lead her to live an empty life.
Works Cited


