Jury of her Peers Annotated bibliography

"Evidence of isolation and accompanying abuse come from inanimate objects in the house: the dead canary, the unfinished quilt, the door violently torn off the cage, Minnie's shabby clothing."


"Jury of Her Peers" develops a case of spousal abuse and the psychological oppression that Minnie experiences at the hands of her husband John. The following quote Mrs. Hale is talking to Mrs. Peter about Minnie, how she used to be before marriage, while the men are upstairs looking for evidences.

"I wish you'd seen Minnie Foster," was the answer, "when she wore a white dress with blue ribbons, and stood up there in the choir and sang."

The picture of that girl, the fact that she had lived neighbor to that girl for twenty years, and had let her die for lack of life, was suddenly more than she could bear"

Minnie changed after her marriage from a happy youth in the city to a reclusive woman in the farm. This transformation is mentioned several times. This change shows how John impacted Minnie, whatever happened in their relationship, it was hurtful enough to change Minnie’s personality.

In the next quote Mrs. Hale is gathering some clothes to take to Minnie back at the prison and she describes the conditions of the clothes and compare them to the ones Minnie used to wear.
"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"

She was a happy young lady who always looked nice and loved to sing but transformed to this depressed women with old torn clothes, living in isolation in a horrible farm. Minnie's clothes also reveals the type of relationship she had with John, the poor quality of Minnies clothes and the old furnitures revels that John was poor and Minnie had to work continuously.

The following quote Mrs. Hale is talking with Mrs. Peter after they found the dead bird and she's wondering how odd it was for Minnie to have a bird at home since she knew how John was.

"Her eyes made a slow sweep of the kitchen, as if seeing what that kitchen had meant through all the years "No, Wright wouldn't like the bird," she said after that--"a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that too." Her voice tightened"

Minnie used to sing before getting married, because of Johns abuse she stopped singing and had to live a totally isolated life, where she wasn't even allowed to have a companion pet, in the case a bird, that John wouldn't like it, and would end up getting rid of it like he did with her bird.


This article the author talks about A jury of her peers' significance. It also explains the symbology behind the killing of the bird, the birdeage and the way Minnie lived in the farm. How the isolation and the objects inside the house show signs of abuse and violence towards Minnie.
"the purposeful isolation of Minnie, her old but carefully mended clothing, her broken stove. Physical abuse may be inferred from the killing of her canary... and from the torn cage door and the bursting preserve jars that indicate sudden explosive, destructive violence"

Abused women like Minnie, normally suffer both emotional and physical abuse. In the quote above the author states strong evidences of emotional and physical abuse towards minnies. One of the clues that lead to the evidence of abuse and isolation is the torn clothes.

"There are also constant references to isolation. John Wright isolated his wife from other people who might have offered support. He cut off communication, the telephone (20-21), and the money that would have let his wife escape. Minnie never appears in person during the story. She is in total isolation, in her cage at the jail."

The author talks about how John influenced the isolation for Minnie, she could’ve had the option to not be isolated if it wasn’t for John. Every possible way for her to escape from that horrible life and the daily routine of total seclusion was on John’s hands, he had the money, the power over Minnie’s voice and the voice to be able to install a phone.

"The canary was strangled. Just as John Wright strangled the canary and killed its voice, he silenced Minnie by slowly strangling her through abuse. The cage imprisoned the bird, which looked like someone had been "rough with it". Minnie was symbolically caged, confined in her isolated home and her abusive marriage. John Wright was rough with her."

The killing of the bird represents what John did to Minnie, first she was free living a happy and joyful life in the city like the bird free in the wild, then they get married and they move to this old house isolated from society, like the bird in the cage with nowhere to go, and the way he kills the bird so brutally represents what he did to Minnie’s soul, she transformed
because of his oppression, John brutally changed Minnies emotions and feeling like he brutally did twisting the bird's neck.

In the next quotes from the text Mrs. Hale while gathering Minnies stuff to take back to the prison is taking to Mrs. Peter and remembers that Minnie asked for a apron, and a little after that they notice the unfinished quilt and Mrs. Peter observes that a few squares of the quilt are poorly sewn.

"she said she wanted an apron. Funny thing to want... "for there's not much to get you dirty in jail, goodness knows. But I suppose just to make her feel more natural. If you're used to wearing an apron--."

The fact the Minnie requests a apron to wear in jail reveals that she spent most of her time in the kitchen, which supports the idea that John walls minnie up in the kitchen, and now she doesn't even see herself outside of the kitchen or doing differents things other than cooking or cleaning. Wearing a apron even in prison would make her feel more comfortable more at home.

"Why, she was piecing a quilt,".
"Why, look at this one."
She turned to take the block held out to her.

"The sewing," said Mrs. Peters, in a troubled way, "All the rest of them have been so nice and even--but--this one. Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about

The unfinished quilt gives the idea that Minnie was anxious or tired as she worked. Minnie at first was making sure the stitches were nicely done, the most recent squares exhibit angry, sloppy stitches that reveal her torment. The stitching pattern shows the state of mind
Minnie was into. It suggested that she was sewing in order to calm a restless mind. Her mind was occupied with endless misery and resent.

In the following quote Mrs. Hale noticed the bad stove in the kitchen after the men left to look for evidences for John's death.

"The law is the law--and a bad stove is a bad stove. How'd you like to cook on this?"--pointing with the poker to the broken lining, year after year, to have that stove to wrestle with."

"She was startled by hearing Mrs. Peters say: "A person gets discouraged--and loses heart."

The bad stove represents Minnie’s unhappy life, at the time women used to spent most of their time in the kitchen, it would make sense they would have a good stove, but the bad stove and the poor kitchen indicates that John didn't care about his wife well being and it wasn't a concern improve the situation. Everything on minnies surrounds made her life exhausting and miserable.

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The article talks about Susan Glaspell's feminist novel “A Jury of Her Peers”. It reviews the novel and the symbolic meanings in the story details such as the kitchen, broken stove and the quilt.

"Unable to sing in the church choir, deprived of her surrogate voice in the bird, denied access to other people, and with no visible beauty in her surroundings, Minnie, almost inevitably one can say, turned in her loneliness to that final resource available — quilting.

*Through quilting – through their stitches as well as through pattern and color –, women who were otherwise without expressive outlet were able to communicate their thoughts and feelings.”*
Through the quilt minnie was sewing she was without noticing transferring her thoughts and emotions to the piece of cloth as a form of scape of her lonely and tormented life. Since she had her mentally and physical freedom taken away.

"Minnie's "crazy" or crooked stitches are a clear signal to the two women that something, for her, was very seriously wrong."

The author goes on talking about minnies “crazy” stitches, which is a visible evidence of minnie's troubled mind triggered by the oppression she was experiencing.

"The center of her kitchen is not a hearth with an inviting open fire but that stove with its broken lining,... In Glaspell's story the cult of domesticity has become a trap, Minnie's home has become her prison" Women's confinement to the kitchen or to the private space of the home was a major source of their isolation.”

Because minnie spent most of her time confined in the poor kitchen cleaning and cooking with a broken stove, it turn out to be her prison inside her own house. she had no escape from it and had to deal with it day after day. A endless cycle of a lonely and mentally exhausting routine.

Minnie has asked Mrs. Peters to bring her an apron to wear in jail, a request the sheriff's wife at first finds "strange." But when Mrs. Peters decides that wearing the apron will perhaps make Minnie feel "more natural," we can only agree, since in moving from house to jail she has but exchanged one form of imprisonment for another.

Minnie’s emotional and spiritual loneliness is the result of her isolation, being in jail wasn't so much different for her, now she was confined to a cell like she was at her house to the kitchen, but still alone and isolated only missing her "uniform", the apron to make her feel more like home. He state of mind was so critical that being locked up in a cell was just another way of being secluded.