

TRIFLES

A Dramatic Reading

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The scene is the kitchen in the now abandoned farmhouse of John Wright; a gloomy kitchen, and left without having been put in order. The outer door opens and Henry Peters, the Sheriff, comes in, followed by George Henderson, the young County Attorney, and Lewis Hale. They are followed by the two women--the Sheriff's wife and Mrs. Hale. The Sheriff speaks: "Now, Mr. Hale, explain to Attorney Henderson just what you saw when you came here yesterday morning."

HALE: Well, Harry and I were driving by here, and I said, "I'm going to see if I can't get Wright to go in with me on a party telephone." So I knocked and went in and there in that rocker--sat Mrs. Wright.

ATTORNEY: What--was she doing?

HALE: Rockin' back and forth--and kind of--pleating her apron.

ATT.: And how did she--look?

HALE: Well, she looked--queer--kind of done up. I said, "It's cold, ain't it?" And she said, "Is it?"--not even looking at me, so I said, "I want to see John." And then she--laughed, I guess you would call it a laugh. I said a little sharp: "Can't I see John?" "No," she says, kind o' dull like. "Ain't he home?" says I. "Yes," says she, "he's home." "Then why can't I see him?" I asked her. "'Cause he's dead," says she. "Dead?" says I. She just nodded her head, and sat rockin' back and forth. "Why--where is he?" says I, not knowing what to say. She just pointed upstairs--like that. (Points) Then I says, "Why, what did he die of?" "He died of a rope round his neck," says she, and just went on pleatin' at her apron. Well, I went out and called Harry and we went upstairs and there he was lyin'--

ATT.: So you went upstairs. Go on with the rest of the story.

HALE: Well--so we came back downstairs. She was still sitting that same way. "Has anybody been notified?" I asked. "No," says she, unconcerned. "Who did this, Mrs. Wright?" said Harry. He said it businesslike--and she stopped pleatin' her apron. "I don't know," she says. "You don't know?" says Harry. "Somebody slipped a rope round his neck and strangled him and you didn't wake up?" says Harry. "I didn't wake up," she said after him. "I sleep sound." Then I said maybe we ought to let her tell her story first to the Sheriff--so I guess that's all I know that you don't.

ATT.: (Looks around) You're convinced that there is nothing here, Sheriff, that would point to a motive. He then opens the cupboard door and reaches in.

ATT.: (Pulls his hand away, sticky) Here's a nice mess.

Mrs. Peters speaks up: "Oh, her fruit; it did freeze. She worried about that."

SHERIFF: Well, can you beat the women!--Held for murder and worryin' about her preserves!

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