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Merely a Preference by Design

Closing Arguments in the Trial of Minnie Wright

George Henderson – County Attorney

Gentlemen of the jury: During the early hours of the morning, John Wright, was brutally murdered while unknowingly sleeping next to his murderer: his wife- Mrs. Wright. Mrs. Wright was a bitter woman; cold, lacking in her capability to nurture, uncleanly, she certainly did not have the attributes that a woman should. Let us not forget that John Wright was a hardworking man, who provided a home, security, food and clothing for Mrs. Wright. He paid his debts, didn't drink and kept his word. All he ever asked was for a little peace and quiet. Gentlemen, during the trial you have listened to profound testimony from Lewis Hale, and Sheriff Peterson that accurately and vividly describes Mrs. Wright's behavior after the murder and the crime scene. Gentleman: Upon arriving at the crime scene, which was preserved by the Sheriff's department, the day following the murder, I personally surveyed the crime scene: I examined John Wright's bed- full of sticky red blood, the empty chair where Mrs. Wright sat rocking while righteously pleating her apron, laughing, as if she was delighted with joy. I examined John Wright's neck, which was bound, tied with a dirty piece of rope and restricted until the very last breath was wrung dry from his lungs. I examined the barn, the yard, and the windows of John Wright's home- there was no evidence showing that an intruder may have entered the home to murder John Wright. Mrs. Wright claims to have slept so soundly in the bed next to him that she never heard a thing? Mrs. Wright's story is almost as unbelievable as her ability to keep house: Her kitchen-unkempt-littered, not the kitchen of a woman who is an obedient, caring and good wife. Gentlemen of the jury, in a few moments you will hear Mrs. Wright try to appeal to your senses and good will towards women, do not be fooled by her words, for they will be of very little value, frivolous really. Of more importance to Mrs. Wright that dreadful morning was her preserved fruit, the kind women use to make trifles with. The facts that can be drawn from this trial are that Mrs. Wright violently murdered John Wright while he slept soundly in his quilted bed, and that Mr. Wright is guilty-gentlemen, guilty as charged and should be found as so.

Closing Argument of the accused in the Trial of Minnie Wright

Minnie Foster Wright – Defendant

I, Minnie Foster Wright, a woman of trivial importance-having no great or lasting merit remind you that people see things in the way that they want them to be, frivolous really. Mr. Henderson's case against me is based on his biased devotion towards men; he ignored every obvious clue in the most familiar and predictable way and for that I owe him a debt of gratitude. When Mr. Hale came to my house that morning, I was sittin in the chair rock'ng and pleat'ng my apron, laugh'ng cause I knew I was gonna be ac'used of killin him. Yes, Mrs. Wright was scar'd-nervous, I ain't nev'r felt pain from a death like th't bef're. I couldn't help but r'mber the days when I was the young Minnie Foster; amusing, versatile, full of love and a nurturing voice, pretty, timid, fluttery-you know, like a bird, graceful-like a sweet treat. I dint know I was givin' mys'lf aw'y to be Mrs. John Wright. Timid I was, scar'd ev'ryday of Mr. Wright, mean and burly Mr. Wright. You know how men folks are when it comes to wom'n, mock'n em-knock'n em. I wasn't pr'tty no more, I was scar'd. Minnie Foster, full of love, I could sew the prettiest quilts, and sing a lovely tune. No sirs, not now, not any more I can't. I gots nuttin in my life that is hap'y anymore. You ev'r feel blue, m'ybe a little gray? You know a kind of pewter bluish gray, like Mr. Wright? That's how I feel ev'ryday, sad and scar'd. That morning round 8 O'Clock just before Mr. Hale came in I was so scar'd, it was like there was an angry soul sing'ng and man'festing in me and it had enough, I was scar'd. But I aint noth'ng but a mere woman, frivolous really, noth'ng I could do bout my situat'n. So I was rockin, in the chair, laugh'ng cause I was scar'd, pleat'ng my apron, folding it in parallel folds, keep'ng them the same distance apart at all times. It was bett'r if they was alw'ys the same distance ap'rt, safer. Oh yes, Minnie Foster was very good at making pleats, I remember making the most exquisite designs when sewing quilts. Tht morn'ng th't Mr. Hale came in, he asked me, "What did he die of?" And I told him, point'd to the stairs and I said, "He died of a rope around his neck." I tho'ght that must've been painful cause you know how knots work, their all tied up-the more you struggle with them knots the tight'r and hard'r they become, their like that pain'f'l feel'ng in your gut when things aint r'ght. The Sheriff's office come and took me aw'y, charged me with murd'r, but re'lly I'm just a mere woman, frivolous really. But I sure was glad when the lad'es brought me some busy work and let me know that my cherry fruit didn't spo'l. I'm just a simple innocent woman, frivolous really. Somet'mes when it gits real cold in the house and the stove f're goes out, the fruit goes bad, sort of like a bad love affa'r, it spoils and gits messy when things git brok'n. Oh, but how Minnie loved to make fruit preserves- the

sweet smell of the berries simmering on the fire brings visions of memories from long ago. I was alw'ys try'ng to pr'serve peaces, if I didn't-decay wuld set in and the sweetn'ss would waste. I was scar'd, and I tried, dirty tow'ls-red sticky shelf-my kitch'n stove-red hot with warmth. I made bread for Mr. Wright, but he ain't liked it none, said it wasn't good enuf, but it gave me subsidence and purp'se, but it wasn't good enuf for him. Some things are real impo'tent to men, keep'ng a good kitch'n is important to women. The kitch'n is like a women's heart, hardwork'ng, warm, lov'ng, like your ma ma's kitch'ns. I tried real hard to keep it up, keep it clean. Mr. Wright kept wip'in his shoes on my tow'ls, and always after be'ng out in the barn clean'ng up the manure. I was scar'd, so I didn't say an'thing, that's why the roll'r tow'l was d'rty that morn'ng that Mr. Hend'ers'on was out in my kitch'n. I got too much pride, frivolous really. Shame really, I miss my kitch'n: Minnie's homemade bread, and jam preserves, the smell of my stove spreading warmth throughout the quaint little farmhouse. The windows wide open in the spring, the tulips dancing in the sunlight, the swallows swapping stories of how to knot their nests together, and my beloved yellow canary, joyful, full of emotion-the sweetest singer I have ever heard. Oh, I miss him so. I prob'ly won't nev'r git ov'r los'ng him like I did, one day, he was just gone- Mr. Wright is gone. I feel so foolish, like a wom'n, frivolous really. Its hard los'ng someth'ng that you love, seeing him lay there with a broken neck, wondering why it had to happ'n. I was scar'd, very scar'd, knew I had to do som'thin, so I got out my quilt'ng , I'm just a wom'n you know- frivolous really. I didn't know what to do. I had just lost my belov'd. So I did, what I had to do. Start'd sew'ng, scar'd an all, I was mak'ng a quilt, with one of them log cab'n patt'ns, like Lincoln ya know one of those patt'ns that repeat itself ov'r and ov'r aga'n, it looks like the walls of a log cab'n, with a red cloth, not st'cky red like cherr'es, just warm like the fire in the stove, and it's got three lay'rs, top, bind'ng and the back, sometimes I knot them togeth'r and somet'mes I quilt them tog'ther, but not that morn'ng, I was scar'd, I could bar'ly sew a stra'ght line. Oh listen to me, foolish Minnie, talking about how I make quilts, I am sure you men don't really care about whether I quilted it or knotted it— after all it is merely a preference in design, frivolous really.

County Attorney George Henderson's Rebuttal

(Mockingly) Well, Gentlemen, at least we found out that she was not going to quilt it. She was going to—what is it you call it?

Moral of the Story

Never mess with a woman's kitchen!