COUNTY ATTORNEY [Rubbing his hands over the stove.] Frank's fire didn't do much up there, did it? Well, let's go out to the barn and get that cleared up.

[The men go outside.]  

MRS. HALE [Resentfully.] I don't know as there's anything so strange, our takin' up our time with little things while we're waiting for them to get the evidence. [She sits down at the big table smoothing out a block with decision.] I don't see as it's anything to laugh about.

MRS. PETERS [Apologetically.] Of course they've got awful important things on their minds.

[Pulls up a chair and joins Mrs. Hale at the table.]

MRS. HALE [Examining another block.] Mrs. Peters, look at this one. Here, this is the one she was working on, and look at the sewing! All the rest of it has been so nice and even. And look at this! It's all over the place! Why, it looks as if she didn't know what she was about!

[After she had said this they look at each other, then start to glance back at the door. After an instant Mrs. Hale has pulled at a knot and ripped the sewing.]

MRS. PETERS Oh, what are you doing, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE [Mildly.] Just pulling out a stitch or two that's not sewed very good. [Threading a needle.] Bad sewing always made me fidgety.

MRS. PETERS [Nervously.] I don't think we ought to touch things.

MRS. HALE I'll just finish up this end. [Suddenly stopping and leaning forward.] Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS Yes, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE What do you suppose she was so nervous about?

MRS. PETERS Oh--I don't know. I don't know as she was nervous. I sometimes sew awful queer when I'm just tired. [Mrs. Hale starts to say something, looks at Mrs. Peters, then goes on sewing.] Well I must get these things wrapped up. They may be through sooner than we think. [Putting apron and other things together.] I wonder where I can find a piece of paper, and string.
1. Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters have different reactions to Mrs. Wright’s sewing. In the chart below, explain how each character feels about what they found. Provide the line from the play that helps you make that inference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>How does the character feel?</th>
<th>Evidence (quote)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Hale</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs. Peters</td>
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MRS. HALE In that cupboard, maybe.

MRS. PETERS [Looking in cupboard.] Why, here’s a bird-cage. [Holds it up.] Did she have a bird, Mrs. Hale?

MRS. HALE Why, I don't know whether she did or not--I've not been here for so long. There was a man around last year selling canaries cheap, but I don't know as she took one; maybe she did. She used to sing real pretty herself.

MRS. PETERS [Glancing around.] Seems funny to think of a bird here. But she must have had one, or why would she have a cage? I wonder what happened to it.

MRS. HALE I s'pose maybe the cat got it.

MRS. PETERS No, she didn't have a cat. She's got that feeling some people have about cats--being afraid of them. My cat got in her room and she was real upset and asked me to take it out.

MRS. HALE My sister Bessie was like that. Queer, ain't it?

MRS. PETERS [Examining the cage.] Why, look at this door. It's broke. One hinge is pulled apart.

MRS. HALE [Looking too.] Looks as if someone must have been rough with it.

MRS. PETERS Why, yes.

[She brings the cage forward and puts it on the table.]
MRS. HALE I wish if they're going to find any evidence they'd be about it. I don't like this place.

MRS. PETERS But I'm awful glad you came with me, Mrs. Hale. It would be lonesome for me sitting here alone.

MRS. HALE It would, wouldn't it? [Dropping her sewing.] But I tell you what I do wish, Mrs. Peters. I wish I had come over sometimes when she was here. I-- [Looking around the room]--wish I had.

MRS. PETERS But of course you were awful busy, Mrs. Hale--your house and your children.
MRS. HALE I could've come. I stayed away because it weren't cheerful--and that's why I ought to have come. I--I've never liked this place. Maybe because it's down in a hollow and you don't see the road. I dunno 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--

[Shakes her head.]

MRS. PETERS Well, you mustn't reproach yourself, Mrs. Hale. Somehow we just don't see how it is with other folks until--something comes up.

MRS. HALE Not having children makes less work--but it makes a quiet house, and Wright out to work all day, and no company when he did come in. Did you know John Wright, Mrs. Peters?

MRS. PETERS No; I've seen him in town. They say he was a good man.

MRS. HALE Yes--good; 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--[Shivers.] Like a raw wind that gets to the bone. [Pauses, her eye falling on the cage.] I should think she would 'a wanted a bird. But what do you suppose went with it?

2. How does Mrs. Hale feel about Mr. Wright?

MRS. PETERS I don't know, unless it got sick and died.

[She reaches over and swings the broken door, swings it again, both women watch it.

MRS. HALE You weren't raised round here, were you? [Mrs. Peters shakes her head.] You didn't know--her?

MRS. PETERS Not till they brought her yesterday.

MRS. HALE She--come to think of it, she was kind of like a bird herself--real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and--fluttery. How--she--did--change. [Silence; then as if struck by a happy thought and relieved to get back to every day things.] Tell you what, Mrs. Peters, why don't you take the quilt in with you? It might take up her mind.

MRS. PETERS Why, I think that's a real nice idea, Mrs. Hale. There couldn't possibly be any objection to it, could there? Now, just what would I take? I wonder if her patches are in here--and her things.
[They look in the sewing basket.]

MRS. HALE Here's some red. I expect this has got sewing things in it. [Brings out a fancy box.] What a pretty box. Looks like something somebody would give you. Maybe her scissors are in here. [Opens box. Suddenly puts her hand to her nose.] Why-- [Mrs. Peters bends nearer, then turns her face away.] There's something wrapped up in this piece of silk.

MRS. PETERS Why, this isn't her scissors.

MRS. HALE [Lifting the silk.] Oh, Mrs. Peters-- its--

[Mrs. Peters bends closer.

MRS. PETERS It's the bird.

MRS. HALE [Jumping up.] But, Mrs. Peters-- look at it! Its neck! Look at its neck! It's all-- to the other side.

MRS. PETERS Somebody-- wrung-- its-- neck.

[Their eyes meet. A look of growing comprehension, of horror. Steps are heard outside. Mrs. Hale slips box under quilt pieces, and sinks into her chair. Enter Sheriff and County Attorney. Mrs. Peters rises.]

COUNTY ATTORNEY [As one turning from serious things to little pleasantries.] Well, ladies, have you decided whether she was going to quilt it or knot it?

MRS. PETERS We think she was going to-- knot it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY Well, that's interesting, I'm sure. [Seeing the birdcage.] Has the bird flown?

MRS. HALE [Putting more quilt pieces over the box.] We think the-- cat got it.

COUNTY ATTORNEY [Preoccupied.] Is there a cat?

[Mrs. Hale glances in a quick covert way at Mrs. Peters.]

MRS. PETERS Well, not now. They're superstitious, you know. They leave.

3. Why do Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Peters lie to the county attorney?

COUNTY ATTORNEY [To Sheriff Peters, continuing an interrupted conversation.] No sign at all of anyone having come from the outside. Their own rope. Now let's go up again and go over it piece by piece. [They start upstairs.] It would have to have been someone who knew just the--

[Mrs. Peters sits down. The two women sit there not looking at one another, but as if peering into something and at the same time holding back. When they talk now it is in the manner of feeling their way over strange ground, as if afraid of what they are saying, but as if they cannot help saying it.]
MRS. HALE She liked the bird. She was going to bury it in that pretty box.

MRS. PETERS [In a whisper] When I was a girl--my kitten--there was a boy took a hatchet, and before my eyes--and before I could get there--[Covers her face an instant.] If they hadn't held me back I would have--[Catches herself, looks upstairs where steps are heard, falters weakly]--hurt him.

MRS. HALE [With a slow look around her.] I wonder how it would seem never to have had any children around. [Pause.] No, Wright wouldn't like the bird--a thing that sang. She used to sing. He killed that, too.

MRS. PETERS [Moving uneasily.] We don't know who killed the bird.

MRS. HALE I knew John Wright.

MRS. PETERS It was an awful thing was done in this house that night, Mrs. Hale. Killing a man while he slept, slipping a rope around his neck that choked the life out of him.

MRS. HALE His neck. Choked the life out of him.

[Her hand goes out and rests on the bird-cage.]

4. The way the bird died is very similar to the way John Wright died. What does Mrs. Hale think happened the night John Wright died? How do you know?

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