

UTICA COLLEGE PERFORMING & FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT

TRIFLES

BY SUSAN GLASPELL

DIRECTION: DR. RACHEL WOLFE

NOVEMBER 4TH-6TH @ 7:30PM

NOVEMBER 7TH @ 2:00PM

STREBEL AUDITORIUM
AT UTICA COLLEGE



UTICA COLLEGE PERFORMING & FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT
PRESENTS

TRIFLES

BY SUSAN GLASPELL

DIRECTOR

Dr. Rachel M.E. Wolfe

STAGE MANAGER

Jessilyn Pereira

ASST. STAGE MANAGER

Sameen Shaikh

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Alec Pease

SET DESIGNER

Laura Salvaggio

COSTUME DESIGNER

Kristin Palazzoli

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Mike Diederich

SOUND DESIGNER

Mike Deiderich

DRAMATURGY

Anabella Rossi

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Hannah DeStefano

PROPS

Listed Below

SONGWRITER

Elizabeth Cotten

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The students of THE 441: Directing in the Theatre: Roquise Bryant, Hannah DeStefano, Gabriella Hudziak, and Anabella Rossi, for their input on the casting and rehearsal processes, and especially to Gabriella Hudziak for volunteering to make our quilt squares.

Kristin Palazzoli and Michael Diederich for lending their own items to the show.

All the professors who have featured "Trifles" in their classes—there would be no show without an audience, and we are happy to have audiences who allow our productions to further the educational mission of Utica College from both on the stage and in the house.

Our prop Finders; Jessilyn Pereira, Sameen Shaikh, Laura Salvaggio, Kristin Palazzoli, Gabriella Hudziak, Rachel Wolfe

Everyone who worked tirelessly on our set, including but not limited to Alec Pease, Laura Salvaggio, our theatre workstudies, the theatre production class, & all not listed here!



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

When I was in graduate school, a fellow grad student with a thick Georgian accent told me that most people assumed he was stupid, purely on account of his regional dialect. Obviously he wasn't; he was going for his Ph.D., and had gained admittance into a very prestigious program. In 1916, when "Trifles" was written, similar stereotypes applied to women: not that they were stupid, necessarily, but that their concerns, emotions, and thoughts were trivial. In an era where gender roles were strictly enforced and work was segregated by gender, "women's work," though hugely important for household survival, would have been largely ignored and misunderstood by people who had been assigned men's roles in society. "Trifles" dramatizes this tension, and shows the grave prejudice of oversight that can be committed when groups judge one another on the basis of such stereotypes. The law officials in this play seriously botch a murder investigation, because they take neither the women who are with them nor the woman who is their prime suspect seriously.



Despite its deep links to the time period in which it was written, "Trifles" rings true today because people still use stereotyping to assume they know a lot about another person when they only know a little, often to deadly effect. The Black Lives Matter movement is a direct reaction against such stereotyping, again in law enforcement, when both civilians and police officers assume that Blackness is associated with criminality and turn arrests into murders on the basis of this prejudice. The fact that there is any pushback against the call for justice in this arena is a strong testament to the ways in which people outside this targeted and stereotyped category have been trained to dismiss the concerns of those who are in it, ignoring Black experiences and emotions as resolutely as the men in "Trifles" do women's. In general, a reluctance to see things from others' points of view—and to assume that those things which do not affect our own groups do not exist—is a key driver in the perpetuation of social inequality. And, as "Trifles" proves, such willful ignorance hurts everyone, including the people practicing it.

As you leave the auditorium today, I urge you to ponder the questions raised by this short play, and to ask yourself whom you may have dismissed or ignored on the basis of category. It may surprise you.

- DR. RACHEL M.E. WOLFE

NOTES FROM THE DRAMTURG

Some relevant facts about women in 1916:

Quilting utilizes four different forms of fabric and decorative stitching to make a single blanket. Squares of fabric called “blocks” are sewn together to create patterns that are either stitched through with thread or tied together with knots of yarn, a choice which gives the quilter a bit of creative freedom. A quilt could easily take a hand-sewer up to a year to make, and some accounts record full-time mothers taking over two decades to make one quilt. Though the log cabin pattern Minnie Foster chose was not complicated, it would still have been a time-consuming process.



The modern process for making a few jars of fruit preserves takes the average person over fifteen hours, but in the early 20th century, the process would be much more involved. Electric refrigeration, electric stoves, and the food processor did not exist in 1916. Glass jars were also more fragile, prone to breaking from high or low temperatures if left untouched. The comments made about preserves are untoward, coming from the men who benefited from the preservation of fruits to avoid deficiencies and diseases, such as scurvy or heart disease.

Though women had access to commercially-produced yeast, baking powder, and bread tins, a farmer's wife would begin the process of bread-making with considerably less equipment, electronic and otherwise. Along with this, cold temperatures slow the rise of dough, high humidity can change the amount of flour needed in a recipe, and if the recipe calls for milk, that changes the temperature the bread is cooked at by a few degrees, something quite hard to control on a wood-fueled oven.

Wedding rings were only worn by women until the 1940's, when married men began to wear them as a token of remembrance while they were overseas during World War II. The custom became normalized for all married men in the 1950's, but prior to World War I and II wedding rings were only worn by women, to symbolize their attachment to a man.

- ANABELLA ROSSI

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Susan Glaspell was born on July 1, 1876, and grew up in a rural farmhouse until 1891, where her family moved to Davenport, Iowa. Her success in school and her talent for writing led to her becoming a salaried journalist in a local newspaper by the age of eighteen. Despite the societal expectations that women marry and have children at a young age, Glaspell instead attended Drake University at age twenty-one as a philosophy major, and consistently out-performed her male classmates. After graduation, she worked



full-time as a reporter, where she encountered the conviction case of a woman accused of murdering her abusive husband, the story that caused her to resign as a reporter and begin writing fiction stories. During her time as a fiction writer, Glaspell co-founded the Davenport Group for fiction writers, and after meeting and marrying George Cram Cook, moved to Provincetown to co-found the Provincetown Playhouse, the first modern American theatre company that threw Glaspell into the world of playwriting, despite her recent surgical removal of a tumor. Though her fiction writing was a large success, Glaspell was renowned for her plays, her first and most famous being the one-act play *Trifles* (1916), a story based on the murder trial she reported on during her time as a journalist. During her lifetime, Glaspell wrote fifty short stories, nine novels, fifteen plays, most of which focused on contemporary social issues such as gender, one of which earned her a Pulitzer Prize for Drama.



ABOUT THE SONG WRITER

Elizabeth Cotten was born in 1893 in North Carolina to a musically-inclined family. By age eight, she was playing songs on her brother's banjo, but a year later she was forced to quit school and become a domestic worker. Through this work, she saved up enough money to afford her first guitar, but being left-handed, she invented a new style of playing that was affectionately termed "Cotten-picking", where she played the instrument upside-down, using her fingers to play the bass lines and her thumb to play

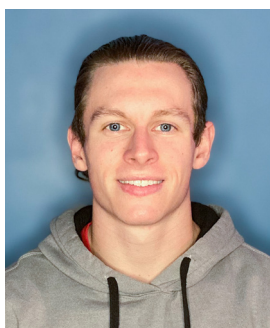
the melody. By her early teens, she was officially a song-writer, her song "Freight Train" having been written between the years 1906 and 1912. After marrying Frank Cotten at

seventeen and giving birth to a daughter, Lillie, Elizabeth Cotten retired as a guitarist for twenty-five years. She reintroduced herself to the instrument after being hired as a housekeeper for Charles and Ruth Crawford Seeger, and nanny for their daughter, Peggy Seeger. When Peggy Seeger went to England, she took the song “Freight Train” with her, where it became popular enough to be misappropriated as an original song by British songwriters Paul James and Fred Williams, who copyrighted it and watched it become a chart hit with their names attached. Years later, the influential Seeger name returned the copyright to Elizabeth Seeger, but it remains miscredited in multiple sources. With the help of Mike Seeger, she recorded the album *Folksongs and Instrumentals with Guitar* in 1958. Cotten died in June, 1987 at the age of 94 in Syracuse, New York.

THE CAST OF TRIFLES



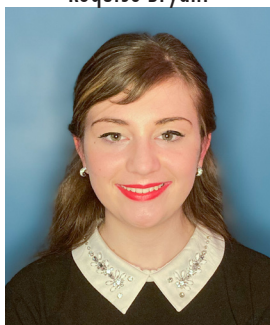
Roquise Bryant



Andrew Clark



Isabella Hudziak



Gabrielle Koenig



Logan Newman



Voertje Prather

THE CAST LIST

Mrs. Wright (née Minnie Foster), the prime suspect	Gabrielle Koenig
Mrs. Peters, the sheriff's wife	Voertje Prather
Mrs. Hale, the key witness's wife	Isabella Hudziak
Mr. Henderson, the county attorney	Roquise Bryant
Mr. Peters, the local sheriff	Logan Newman
Mr. Hale, the key witness	Andrew Clark

CAST/CREW BIOGRAPHIES

ROQUISE BRYANT

MR. HENDERSON

Roc is a communications and media major with the concentration in theatre. He has participated in *The Ghost Stories At Yotsuya*, a play that gave him a confidence boost to continue his journey as an actor. He's a senior at Utica college and really likes to act in plays here; as mentioned he played in the kabuki horror play. The cast and crew makes him feel comfortable to be himself while around them.

ANDREW CLARK

MR. HALE

During his first semester he took the class Elements of Acting, and enjoyed taking that class so much that he decided to add a minor in theatre. During his Introduction to Theatre class this semester he decided to audition for *Trifles*. This will be his first time performing in anything with the theatre community.

ISABELLA HUDZIAK

MRS. HALE

Isa Hudziak is a sophomore English Education major with a minor in Journalism. She voiced Carol Phillips in the radio play *War of the Worlds* during the Fall 2020 semester. This is her first on-stage show and she is very excited to play Mrs. Hale!

GABRIELLE KOENIG

MRS. WRIGHT (MINNIE FOSTER)

Gabrielle Koenig has not only been a stage actress since elementary school, but a film actress as well for the past five years. Gabrielle has recently worked on films such as *Bloodfly* as Ashley and *Z Dead End* as a Zombie. She has also starred in *Seussical The Musical* as Cindy Lou Who, *Miracle on 34th Street* as many characters, and in many other high school shows.

ALEC PEASE

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Alec Pease is a Junior at UC. They are pursuing a degree in Construction Management and a minor in Theater, and is pursuing Graduate School after graduation. Alec is acting as Set Designer and Technical Director in this show. This is their eighth show at Utica College. Their previous roles include a kit kat girl in *Cabaret*, Hamlet and the Director in *I Hate Shake-*

CAST/CREW BIOGRAPHIES

speare, Lady Croom in *Arcadia*, Tiny Tom in *Urinetown*, both Kohei and Yumi in *The Ghost Stories of Yotsuya*, Robin in *Something Rotten*. Alec would like to thank their family and friends for supporting them as they pursue their dreams and the theater at Utica College for accepting them as they are.

VOERTJE PRATHER

MRS. PETERS

Voertje has always been interested in theatre. Now, since she is not partaking in sports, she finally gets to explore acting. In high school, she played Lena Younger in *A Raisin in the Sun* & has been in a few shorts. Theatre allows her to use the imagination she has fostered since childhood.

ANABELLA ROSSI

DRAMATURG

Anabella is a senior at Utica College majoring in English, with a double minor in Creative Writing and Theatre. Her first experience with theatre occurred in high school, where she took her friend's advice and worked on the stage crew for the school musical. On a whim, she took her professor's advice and added a Theatre minor to her degree, and is continuing to thoroughly enjoy that decision.

SAM SHAIKH

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Sam is a sophomore studying cybersecurity at Utica. She owes her involvement in UC's theatre program to her mentor and close friend Laura Salvaggio, who has been indispensable to Sam during her time here at Utica.

DR. RACHEL M.E. WOLFE

DIRECTOR

Wolfe is an Assistant Professor of Theatre here at UC, where she teaches acting, directing, play analysis, and theatre history. Her professional work as a director and dramaturg has been seen on stages in New York, California, and Seattle, WA. At UC, she has directed *Arcadia*, *Ghost Stories at Yotsuya*, and *War of the Worlds*. *Trifles* is her first one-act for the college, and ought to be considered the opener for the season of staff- and student-directed one-acts to follow this semester.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR PERFORMING & FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT!

COMING SOON

Student Directed One Act Play Festival

A Matter of Husbands

By: Ferenc Molnar
Directed By: Hannah DeStefano

A fast-paced Frech farce full of cartoon mischief, adultery, and cheaters who get what's coming to them!

Tone Clusters

By Joyce Carol Oates
Directed By: Anabella Rossi

Two parents defend their son against a murder conviction on Live TV.

A Tender Offer

By: Wendy Wasserstein
Directed By: Roquise Bryant

Tender Offer is about a father and his daughter that don't have a good bond between each other.

The Illuminati in Drama Libre

By Alice Gerstenberg
Directed By: Gabriella Hudziak

A fast-paced action-packed dramedy where a night of flirtatious philosophical debate devolves into a violent argument.

Fri. 12/3/21
Sat. 12/4/21
**Strebel
Auditorium**

rmwolfe@utica.edu

ALSO COMING SOON;

Adjunct Professor of Theatre Jason Francey's contribution to the one act festival, *Far Away* by Carly Churchill, premiering the same week as the student-directed shows!