

## **Women in Literature: Women of Justice**

Summer Reading, 2021—Dr. Marotta

**Text:** “A Jury of Her Peers” (1917), Susan Glaspell

The story can be accessed here <https://nmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/1345.pdf> (PDF, columns) or here <https://americanliterature.com/author/susan-glaspell/short-story/a-jury-of-her-peers> (scrolling webpage). Please bookmark or print the story, so it’s easily accessible for your reading, your writing, and our class work.

Glaspell explores themes and questions that we will revisit throughout this semester—justice, justification, criminality, gender, violence, judgement, and agency. Glaspell had originally written this piece as a one-act play and later transformed it into a short story. It is a story that asks “Who is guilty? Why? Who decides?” In summary, it is a story about finding evidence in the wake of a murder. As you’ll learn by reading the story, that summary is a vast oversimplification. [Content Warning: violence, death, domestic abuse, animal death]

**Assignment:** After reading the story—preferably more than once!—you will compose a brief essay (250 words).

**Due Date:** First Day of Class!

### **Summer Reading Expectations:**

All students who enroll on or before August 20, 2021 must read the book(s) assigned for their course and complete this summer reading assignment.

All students who enroll on or after August 21, 2021 should begin reading the summer reading book(s) upon enrollment and email the teacher for details about assignment expectations.

All new and returning students should bring a copy of the assigned novel(s) with them on the first day of class.

### **Essay Instructions:**

1. Choose a theme: justice, gender, violence, judgement, etc.
2. Choose a quote from the text that you believe best exemplifies this theme.
3. Defend your position in 250 words. This is your chance to show me your close reading skills. In short stories, especially, words are at a premium. Tell me why this quote is significant in the context of the story in terms of plot, theme, and character development. What is Glaspell’s “point” in this story, according to your theme/quote? Why might this story be meaningful to a larger audience? These questions are to help prompt your thinking, not limit it. As long as you address your quote, your theme, and their importance to the story, that’s what I want to read!
4. This essay should be in MLA formatting, Times New Roman font, size 12, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. You should cite the short story according to MLA conventions on a Works Cited page at the end of your essay. Please include your theme and chosen quote at the top of the page. The quote is not included in your overall word count.