



# Before You Read

## The Monkey's Paw

### Reading Focus

What would you wish for if you could have three wishes granted? How might the granting of these wishes change your life and the lives of others around you? Would all the changes be positive?

**Freewrite** Make a list of wishes. Study the list and consider the possible consequences of each wish. Circle your top three wishes.

**Setting a Purpose** Read to learn how lives change when wishes are granted.

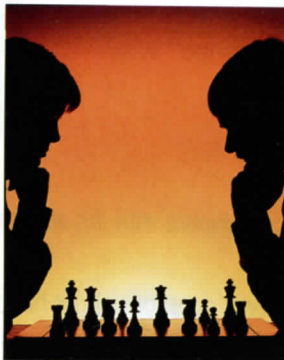
### Building Background

#### The Time and Place

"The Monkey's Paw" takes place in Laburnam Villa, the cozy home of an elderly English couple and their grown son. It is probably sometime in the late 1800s.

#### Did You Know?

As this story opens, Mr. White and his son, Herbert, are playing chess, a board game for two players. Each player has sixteen pieces—a king, a queen, two rooks, two bishops, two knights, and eight pawns—to move strategically around the board. The game is won when one player attacks and then captures the opponent's king. A player usually announces the attack by saying "Check" and the final victory with the word "Checkmate."



### Vocabulary Preview

**amiably** (ā' mē ə blē) *adv.* in a friendly, good-natured way; p. 173

**grimace** (grim' is) *n.* a twisting of the face; p. 175

**presumptuous** (pri zump' chō əs) *adj.* too forward; bold; p. 175

**doggedly** (dō' gid lē) *adv.* stubbornly; firmly; p. 175

**enthralled** (en thrōld') *adj.* fascinated; charmed; p. 176

**credulity** (kri dōō' li tē) *n.* a tendency to believe too readily; p. 176

**prosaic** (prō zā' ik) *adj.* ordinary; commonplace; p. 177

**avaricious** (av' ə rish' əs) *adj.* greedy; p. 177

**sinister** (sin' is tər) *adj.* threatening or suggesting evil; p. 178

**oppressive** (ə pres' iv) *adj.* hard to bear; distressing; p. 181



### Meet William Wymark Jacobs

William Wymark Jacobs, the son of an English wharf supervisor, was a bank employee and postal worker before he turned his writing hobby into a profession. Childhood memories of sailors and dock workers inspired the sea stories for which Jacobs became famous. He also wrote humorous stories and horror tales. "The Monkey's Paw"—the selection you are about to read—is the author's best-known story.

*William Wymark Jacobs was born in London in 1863; he died in 1943. This story appeared in the collection The Lady of the Barge, published in 1902.*

# The Monkey's Paw

W. W. Jacobs ~

## I

WITHOUT, THE NIGHT WAS COLD and wet, but in the small parlor of Laburnam Villa the blinds were drawn and the fire burned brightly. Father and son were at chess, the former, who possessed ideas about the game involving radical changes, putting his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils that it even provoked comment from the white-haired old lady knitting placidly<sup>1</sup> by the fire.

“Hark at the wind,” said Mr. White, who, having seen a fatal mistake after it was too late, was amiably desirous of preventing his son from seeing it.

“I’m listening,” said the latter, grimly surveying the board as he stretched out his hand. “Check.”

“I should hardly think that he’d come tonight,” said his father, with his hand poised over the board.

“Mate,” replied the son.

“That’s the worst of living so far out,” bawled Mr. White, with sudden and unlooked-for violence; “of all the beastly, slushy, out-of-the-way places to live in, this is the worst. Pathway’s a bog, and the road’s a torrent. I don’t know what people are thinking about. I suppose because only two houses on

1. *Placidly* (plas’ id lē) means calmly; peacefully.

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### Vocabulary

**amiably** (ā’ mē ə blē) *adv.* in a friendly, good-natured way

the road are let, they think it doesn't matter."

"Never mind, dear," said his wife soothingly; "perhaps you'll win the next one."

Mr. White looked up sharply, just in time to intercept a knowing glance between mother and son. The words died away on his lips, and he hid a guilty grin in his thin gray beard.

"There he is," said Herbert White, as the gate banged too loudly and heavy footsteps came toward the door.

The old man rose with hospitable haste, and, opening the door, was heard condoling<sup>2</sup> with the new arrival. The new arrival also consoled with himself, so that Mrs. White said, "Tut, tut!" and coughed gently as her husband entered the room, followed by a tall burly man, beady of eye and rubicund of visage.<sup>3</sup>

"Sergeant Major Morris," he said, introducing him.

The sergeant major shook hands, and, taking the proffered seat by the fire, watched contentedly while his host got out whiskey and tumblers and stood a small copper kettle on the fire.

At the third glass his eyes got brighter, and he began to talk, the little family circle regarding with eager interest this visitor from distant parts, as he squared his broad shoulders in the chair and spoke of strange scenes and doughty<sup>4</sup> deeds, of wars and plagues and strange peoples.

"Twenty-one years of it," said Mr. White, nodding at his wife and son. "When he went



*Frank John St. Jay*, 1900. Thomas Eakins. Oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 19 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, 3rd. 1979.77.

**Viewing the painting:** What does the posture of the man in the painting reveal about his character? How is this man similar to Sergeant Major Morris?

away he was a slip of a youth in the warehouse. Now look at him."

"He don't look to have taken much harm," said Mrs. White politely.

"I'd like to go to India myself," said the old man, "just to look around a bit, you know."

"Better where you are," said the sergeant major, shaking his head. He put down the empty glass and, sighing softly, shook it again.

"I should like to see those old temples and fakirs<sup>5</sup> and jugglers," said the old man. "What was that you started telling me the other day about the monkey's paw or something, Morris?"

2. To *condole* is to express sympathy.

3. *Rubicund of visage* means reddish or rosy in the face.

4. A *doughty* (dou' tē) deed is a brave or valiant one.

5. A *fakir* (fə kēr') is a member of a Muslim or Hindu sect who takes a vow of poverty and lives by begging. Fakirs sometimes do extraordinary and dangerous tricks.

“Nothing,” said the soldier hastily.  
“Leastways, nothing worth hearing.”

“Monkey’s paw?” said Mrs. White curiously.

“Well, it’s just a bit of what you might call magic, perhaps,” said the sergeant major offhandedly.

His three listeners leaned forward eagerly. The visitor absent-mindedly put his empty glass to his lips and then set it down again. His host filled it for him.

“To look at,” said the sergeant major, fumbling in his pocket, “it’s just an ordinary little paw, dried to a mummy.”

He took something out of his pocket and proffered it. Mrs. White drew back with a grimace, but her son, taking it, examined it curiously.

“And what is there special about it?” inquired Mr. White as he took it from his son and, having examined it, placed it upon the table.

“It had a spell put on it by an old fakir,” said the sergeant major, “a very holy man. He wanted to show that fate ruled people’s lives, and that those who interfered with it did so to their sorrow. He put a spell on it so that three separate men could each have three wishes from it.”

His manner was so impressive that his hearers were conscious that their light laughter jarred somewhat.

“Well, why don’t you have three, sir?” said Herbert White cleverly.

The soldier regarded him in the way that middle age is wont<sup>6</sup> to regard presumptuous

youth. “I have,” he said quietly, and his blotchy face whitened.

“And did you really have the three wishes granted?” asked Mrs. White.

“I did,” said the sergeant major, and his glass tapped against his strong teeth.

“And has anybody else wished?” inquired the old lady.

“The first man had his three wishes, yes,” was the reply. “I don’t know what the first two were, but the third was for death. That’s how I got the paw.”

His tones were so grave that a hush fell upon the group.

“If you’ve had your three wishes, it’s no good to you now, then, Morris,” said the old man at last. “What do you keep it for?”

The soldier shook his head. “Fancy, I suppose,” he said slowly. “I did have some idea of selling it, but I don’t think I will. It has caused enough mischief already. Besides, people won’t buy. They think it’s a fairy tale, some of them, and those who do think anything of it want to try it first and pay me afterward.”

“If you could have another three wishes,” said the old man, eyeing him keenly, “would you have them?”

“I don’t know,” said the other. “I don’t know.”

He took the paw, and dangling it between his front finger and thumb, suddenly threw it upon the fire. White, with a slight cry, stooped down and snatched it off.

“Better let it burn,” said the soldier solemnly.

“If you don’t want it, Morris,” said the old man, “give it to me.”

“I won’t,” said his friend doggedly. “I threw it on the fire. If you keep it, don’t

6. *Wont* means accustomed; used. Different people (and dictionaries) are wont to pronounce it with a long *o*, a short *o*, or a short *u*.

### Vocabulary

**grimace** (grim’ is) *n.* a twisting of the face

**presumptuous** (pri zump’ chōō əs) *adj.* too forward; excessively bold

**doggedly** (dō’ gjid lē) *adv.* stubbornly; firmly

## The Monkey's Paw

blame me for what happens. Pitch it on the fire again, like a sensible man.”

The other shook his head and examined his new possession closely. “How do you do it?” he inquired.

“Hold it up in your right hand and wish aloud,” said the sergeant major, “but I warn you of the consequences.”

“Sounds like the *Arabian Nights*,” said Mrs. White, as she rose and began to set the supper. “Don’t you think you might wish for four pairs of hands for me?”

Her husband drew the talisman<sup>7</sup> from his pocket and then all three burst into laughter as the sergeant major, with a look of alarm on his face, caught him by the arm. “If you must wish,” he said gruffly, “wish for something sensible.”

Mr. White dropped it back into his pocket, and placing chairs, motioned his friend to the table. In the business of supper the talisman was partly forgotten, and afterward the three sat listening in an enthralled fashion to a second installment of the soldier’s adventures in India.

“If the tale about the monkey paw is not more truthful than those he has been telling us,” said Herbert, as the door closed behind their guest, just in time for him to catch the last train, “we shan’t make much out of it.”

“Did you give him anything for it, Father?” inquired Mrs. White, regarding her husband closely.

“A trifle,” said he, coloring slightly. “He didn’t want it, but I made him take it. And he pressed me again to throw it away.”

“Likely,” said Herbert, with pretended horror. “Why, we’re going to be rich, and

famous, and happy. Wish to be an emperor, Father, to begin with: then you can’t be bossed around.”

He darted round the table, pursued by the maligned<sup>8</sup> Mrs. White armed with an antimacassar.

Mr. White took the paw from his pocket and eyed it dubiously. “I don’t know what to wish for, and that’s a fact,” he said slowly. “It seems to me I’ve got all I want.”

“If you only cleared the house, you’d be quite happy, wouldn’t you?” said Herbert, with his hand on his shoulder. “Well, wish for two hundred pounds, then; that’ll just do it.”

His father, smiling shamefacedly at his own credulity, held up the talisman, as his son, with a solemn face somewhat marred by a wink at his mother, sat down at the piano and struck a few impressive chords.

“I wish for two hundred pounds,” said the old man distinctly.

A fine crash from the piano greeted the words, interrupted by a shuddering cry from the old man. His wife and son ran toward him.

“It moved,” he cried, with a glance of disgust at the object as it lay on the floor. “As I wished it twisted in my hands like a snake.”

“Well, I don’t see the money,” said his son, as he picked it up and placed it on the table, “and I bet I never shall.”

“It must have been your fancy, Father,” said his wife, regarding him anxiously.



### Did You Know?

An *antimacassar* (an’ ti mə kas’ ər) is a small decorative covering put over the back and arms of a chair or sofa to prevent soiling.

7. A *talisman* is a charm believed to have magical powers.

8. If you are *maligned*, someone has spoken ill of you or told harmful untruths about you.

### Vocabulary

**enthralled** (en thrôld’) *adj.* fascinated; charmed

**credulity** (kri dōō’ li tē) *n.* a tendency to believe too readily

He shook his head. "Never mind, though; there's no harm done, but it gave me a shock all the same."

They sat down by the fire again while the two men finished their pipes. Outside, the wind was higher than ever, and the old man started nervously at the sound of a door banging upstairs. A silence unusual and depressing settled upon all three, which lasted until the old couple rose to retire for the night.

"I expect you'll find the cash tied up in a big bag in the middle of your bed," said Herbert, as he bade them good night, "and something horrible squatting up on top of the wardrobe watching you as you pocket your ill-gotten gains."

He sat alone in the darkness, gazing at the dying fire, and seeing faces in it. The last face was so horrible and so simian<sup>9</sup> that he gazed at it in amazement. It got so vivid that, with a little uneasy laugh, he felt on the table for a glass containing a little water to throw over it. His hand grasped the monkey's paw, and with a little shiver he wiped his hand on his coat and went up to bed.

## II

In the brightness of the wintry sun next morning as it streamed over the breakfast table Herbert laughed at his fears. There was an air of prosaic wholesomeness about the room which it had lacked on the previous night, and the dirty, shriveled little paw was pitched on

9. To be *simian* is to resemble a monkey.

### Vocabulary

**prosaic** (prō zā' ik) *adj.* ordinary; commonplace  
**avaricious** (av' ə rish' əs) *adj.* greedy

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 grasped the  
 monkey's paw,  
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the sideboard with a carelessness which betokened<sup>10</sup> no great belief in its virtues.

"I suppose all old soldiers are the same," said Mrs. White. "The idea of our listening to such nonsense! How could wishes be granted in these days? And if they could, how could two hundred pounds hurt you, Father?"

"Might drop on his head from the sky," said the frivolous Herbert.

"Morris said the things happened so naturally," said his father, "that you might if you so wished attribute it to coincidence."

"Well, don't break into the money before I come back," said Herbert, as he rose from the table. "I'm afraid it'll turn you into a mean, avaricious man, and we shall have to disown you."

His mother laughed, and following him to the door, watched him down the road, and, returning to the breakfast table, was very happy at the expense of her husband's credulity. All of which did not prevent her from scurrying to the door at the postman's knock, nor prevent her from referring somewhat shortly to retired sergeant majors of bibulous<sup>11</sup> habits when she found that the post brought a tailor's bill.

"Herbert will have some more of his funny remarks, I expect, when he comes home," she said, as they sat at dinner.

10. *Betokened* means "indicated."

11. A sergeant major or anyone else of *bibulous* (bib' yə ləs) habits is fond of alcoholic beverages and drinks them regularly.

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"I dare say," said Mr. White, pouring himself out some beer; "but for all that, the thing moved in my hand; that I'll swear to."

"You thought it did," said the old lady soothingly.

"I say it did," replied the other. "There was no thought about it. I had just—What's the matter?"

His wife made no reply. She was watching the mysterious movements of a man outside, who, peering in an undecided fashion at the house, appeared to be trying to make up his mind to enter. In mental connection with the two hundred pounds, she noticed that the stranger was well dressed and wore a silk hat of glossy newness. Three times he paused at the gate, and then walked on again. The fourth time he stood with his hand upon it, and then with sudden resolution flung it open and walked up the path. Mrs. White at the same moment placed her hands behind her, and hurriedly unfastening the strings of her apron, put that useful article of apparel beneath the cushion of her chair.

She brought the stranger, who seemed ill at ease, into the room. He gazed furtively at Mrs. White, and listened in a preoccupied fashion as the old lady apologized for the appearance of the room, and her husband's coat, a garment which he usually reserved for the garden. She then waited patiently for him to broach<sup>12</sup> his business, but he was at first strangely silent.

"I—was asked to call," he said at last, and stooped and picked a piece of cotton from his trousers. "I came from Maw and Meggins."

The old lady started. "Is anything the matter?" she asked breathlessly. "Has anything happened to Herbert? What is it? What is it?"

12. To *broach* a subject is to mention it for the first time.

Her husband interposed. "There, there, Mother," he said hastily. "Sit down and don't jump to conclusions. You've not brought bad news, I'm sure, sir," and he eyed the other wistfully.

"I'm sorry—" began the visitor.

"Is he hurt?" demanded the mother wildly.

The visitor bowed in assent. "Badly hurt," he said quietly, "but he is not in any pain."

"Oh, thank God!" said the old woman, clasping her hands. "Thank God for that! Thank—"

She broke off suddenly as the sinister meaning of the assurance dawned upon her and she saw the awful confirmation of her fears in the other's averted face. She caught her breath, and turning to her husband, laid her trembling old hand upon his. There was a long silence.

"He was caught in the machinery," said the visitor at length, in a low voice.

"Caught in the machinery," repeated Mr. White, in a dazed fashion, "yes."

He sat staring blankly out at the window, and taking his wife's hand between his own, pressed it as he had been wont to do in their old courting days nearly forty years before.

"He was the only one left to us," he said, turning gently to the visitor. "It is hard."

The other coughed, and, rising, walked slowly to the window. "The firm wished me to convey their sincere sympathy with you in your great loss," he said, without looking around. "I beg that you will understand I am only their servant and merely obeying orders."

There was no reply; the old woman's face was white, her eyes staring, and her breath inaudible; on the husband's face was a look such as his friend the sergeant might have carried into his first action.

"I was to say that Maw and Meggins disclaim all responsibility," continued the other.

### Vocabulary

**sinister** (sin' is tər) *adj.* threatening or suggesting evil

“They admit no liability at all, but in consideration of your son’s services they wish to present you with a certain sum as compensation.”

Mr. White dropped his wife’s hand, and rising to his feet, gazed with a look of horror at his visitor. His dry lips shaped the words, “How much?”

“Two hundred pounds,” was the answer.

Unconscious of his wife’s shriek, the old man smiled faintly, put out his hands like a sightless man, and dropped, a senseless heap, to the floor.

### III

In the huge new cemetery, some two miles distant, the old people buried their dead, and came back to a house steeped in shadow and silence. It was all over so quickly that at first they could hardly realize it, and remained in a state of expectation as though of something else to happen— something else which was to lighten this load, too heavy for old hearts to bear.

But the days passed, and expectations gave place to resignation—the hopeless resignation of the old, sometimes mis-called apathy. Sometimes they hardly exchanged a word, for now they had nothing to talk about, and their days were long to weariness.

It was about a week after that the old man, waking suddenly in the night, stretched out his hand and found himself alone. The room was in darkness, and the sound of subdued weeping came from the window. He raised himself in bed and listened.



*The Old Version*, 1881. Thomas Hovenden. Oil on canvas, 24 x 19 in. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, 3rd. 1993.35.17.

**Viewing the painting:** At what point in the story might Mr. and Mrs. White have resembled the couple in the painting? Explain.

“Come back,” he said tenderly. “You will be cold.”

“It is colder for my son,” said the old woman, and wept afresh.

The sound of her sobs died away on his ears. The bed was warm, and his eyes heavy with sleep. He dozed fitfully, and then slept until a sudden wild cry from his wife awoke him with a start.

“*The paw!*” she cried wildly. “The monkey’s paw!”

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He started up in alarm. "Where? Where is it? What's the matter?"

She came stumbling across the room toward him. "I want it," she said quietly. "You've not destroyed it?"

"It's in the parlor, on the bracket," he replied, marveling. "Why?"

She cried and laughed together, and bending over, kissed his cheek.

"I only just thought of it," she said hysterically. "Why didn't I think of it before? Why didn't you think of it?"

"Think of what?" he questioned.

"The other two wishes," she replied rapidly. "We've only had one."

"Was not that enough?" he demanded fiercely.

"No," she cried triumphantly; "we'll have one more. Go down and get it quickly, and wish our boy alive again."

The man sat up in bed and flung the bedclothes from his quaking limbs. "You are mad!" he cried, aghast.

"Get it," she panted; "get it quickly, and wish— Oh, my boy, my boy!"

Her husband struck a match and lit the candle. "Get back to bed," he said unsteadily. "You don't know what you are saying."

"We had the first wish granted," said the old woman feverishly; "why not the second?"

"A coincidence," stammered the old man.

"Go and get it and wish," cried his wife, quivering with excitement.

The old man turned and regarded her, and his voice shook. "He has been dead ten days, and besides he—I would not tell you else, but—I could only recognize him by his

*The man sat up  
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from his  
quaking limbs.*

*"You are  
mad!" he  
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clothing. If he was too terrible for you to see then, how now?"

"Bring him back," cried the old woman, and dragged him toward the door. "Do you think I fear the child I have nursed?"

He went down in the darkness, and felt his way to the parlor, and then to the mantelpiece. The talisman was in its place, and a horrible fear that the unspoken wish might bring his mutilated son before him ere he could escape from the room seized upon him, and he caught his breath as he found that he had lost the direction of the door. His brow cold with sweat, he felt his way round the table, and groped along the

wall until he found himself in the small passage with the unwholesome thing in his hand.

Even his wife's face seemed changed as he entered the room. It was white and expectant, and to his fears seemed to have an unnatural look upon it. He was afraid of her.

"Wish!" she cried, in a strong voice.

"It is foolish and wicked," he faltered.

"Wish!" repeated his wife.

He raised his hand. "I wish my son alive again."

The talisman fell to the floor, and he regarded it shudderingly. Then he sank trembling into a chair as the old woman, with burning eyes, walked to the window and raised the blind.

He sat until he was chilled with the cold, glancing occasionally at the figure of the old woman peering through the window. The candle end, which had burned below the rim of the china candlestick, was throwing pulsating shadows on the ceiling and walls, until, with a flicker larger than the rest, it expired. The old man, with an unspeakable sense of relief at the

failure of the talisman, crept back to his bed, and a minute or two afterward the old woman came silently and apathetically beside him.

Neither spoke, but both lay silently listening to the ticking of the clock. A stair creaked, and a squeaky mouse scurried noisily through the wall. The darkness was oppressive, and after lying for some time screwing up his courage, he took the box of matches, and striking one, went downstairs for a candle.

At the foot of the stairs the match went out, and he paused to strike another, and at the same moment a knock, so quiet and stealthy as to be scarcely audible, sounded on the front door.

The matches fell from his hand and spilled in the passage. He stood motionless, his breath suspended until the knock was repeated. Then he turned and fled swiftly back to his room, and closed the door behind him. A third knock sounded through the house.

“What’s that?” cried the old woman, starting up.

“A rat,” said the old man, in shaking tones—“a rat. It passed me on the stairs.”

His wife sat up in bed listening. A loud knock resounded through the house.

“It’s Herbert!” she screamed. “It’s Herbert!”

She ran to the door, but her husband was before her, and catching her by the arm, held her tightly.

“What are you going to do?” he whispered hoarsely.

“It’s my boy; it’s Herbert!” she cried, struggling mechanically. “I forgot it was two miles away. What are you holding me for? Let’s go. I must open the door.”

“Don’t let it in,” cried the old man, trembling.

“You’re afraid of your own son,” she cried, struggling. “Let me go. I’m coming, Herbert; I’m coming.”

There was another knock, and another. The old woman with a sudden wrench broke free and ran from the room. Her husband followed to the landing, and called after her appealingly as she hurried downstairs. He heard the chain rattle back and the bottom bolt drawn slowly and stiffly from the socket. Then the old woman’s voice, strained and panting.

“The bolt,” she cried loudly. “Come down. I can’t reach it.”

But her husband was on his hands and knees groping wildly on the floor in search of the paw. If he could only find it before the thing outside got in. A perfect fusillade<sup>13</sup> of knocks reverberated through the house, and he heard the scraping of a chair as his wife put it down in the passage against the door. He heard the creaking of the bolt as it came slowly back, and at the same moment he found the monkey’s paw, and frantically breathed his third and last wish.

The knocking ceased suddenly, although the echoes of it were still in the house. He heard the chair drawn back and the door opened. A cold wind rushed up the staircase, and a long loud wail of disappointment and misery from his wife gave him courage to run down to her side, and then to the gate beyond. The street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.

13. A *fusillade* (fyū’ sə lād’) is the firing of many guns in rapid succession or anything that resembles such a sound, as the knocks do here.



## Vocabulary

**oppressive** (ə pres’ iv) *adj.* hard to bear; distressing



# Responding to Literature

## Personal Response

Consider Mr. White's actions at the end of the story. In his place, what would you have done? Give a reason for your answer.

## Analyzing Literature

### Recall

1. At what time of day does the story begin? Compare the weather outside with the atmosphere inside the parlor.
2. What is special about the monkey's paw that Sergeant Major Morris shows to the Whites? How do the Whites react to it?
3. What does Morris do with the paw after telling about its background? What does Mr. White immediately do?
4. What is Mr. White's first wish? What happens after he makes it? What is his second wish?
5. Summarize what happens after Mr. White makes the second wish.

### Interpret

6. What is the **mood** at the beginning of the story? What details help to create this mood?
7. How does Morris feel about the paw? How do you know?
8. Do you think Morris regrets showing the monkey's paw to the Whites? Why or why not?
9. A situation is said to be **ironic** when what happens is the opposite of what is expected. What is ironic about Mr. White's first wish?
10. Why doesn't Mr. White want his wife to open the door? What do you think Mr. White's third wish is?

### Evaluate and Connect

11. **Theme Connections** Do you think Mr. White's first wish was a sensible choice? Why or why not? Evaluate your wish list from the Reading Focus on page 172. Are your wishes sensible? Explain.
12. Before making his first wish, Mr. White says, "It seems to me I've got all I want." In your opinion, what point is the author making?
13. How does the author use **foreshadowing** to prepare the reader for the events to come (see page R5)? Give three examples.
14. Have you ever gotten something you wished for and then regretted that your wish was granted? Describe your experience.
15. In your opinion, what is the most unsettling aspect of this story? Explain your answer.

## Literary ELEMENTS

### Suspense

**Suspense** is a feeling of uncertainty, a sense that something disastrous is about to happen. Authors can build suspense through the characters' actions and words. For example, an ominous feeling is created when Morris throws the monkey's paw on the fire and Mr. White snatches it up. Suspense builds when Morris tells Mr. White, "If you keep [the paw], don't blame me for what happens." A description of the setting also can create suspense.

1. Look for examples of how the author creates suspense by telling what characters do or say. Find two examples of each.
  2. In your opinion, what is the most suspenseful moment in the story? Explain your choice.
- See **Literary Terms Handbook**, p. R13.