



**A READING ACTIVITY WITH VOCABULARY AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

Compiled by Kaye Mallory of English-Zone.Com <http://english-zone.com>

**Vocabulary for the story (in order of appearance)**

-----**(Section A)**-----

WITHOUT = outside, not in the house  
PARLOUR = living room, or sitting room  
LABURNAM VILLA = the name of the house  
BLINDS = curtains, drapes  
DRAW THE BLINDS = close the blinds  
THE FORMER = the first person talked about (the father)  
PERILS = dangers  
PLACIDLY = peacefully, quietly, happily  
HARK AT = listen to, take notice of  
THE LATTER = the last person talked about (the son)  
SURVEYING = looking at  
CHECK = the king is in danger (in chess)  
POISED = held above, positioned  
MATE = the king is captured, and the game is over (in chess)  
BAWLED = spoke loudly  
BEASTLY = disagreeable, unpleasant  
SLUSHY = muddy, very wet  
PATHWAY = the path, or the road to their house  
BOG = swamp  
TORRENT = a large amount of moving water, a flood  
LET = rented, lived in  
SOOTHINGLY = comfortingly  
SHARPLY = quickly and suddenly  
INTERCEPT = to receive a communication directed elsewhere, usually secretly  
A KNOWING GLANCE = the mother and son shared a look with a message in it  
BANGED TO = closed

-----**(Section B)**-----

HOSPITABLE = ready to receive guests  
HASTE = quickness, speed  
CONDOLING = expressing sympathy  
TUT TUT = to express disapproval or disbelief by making a clicking sound with the tongue  
BURLY = strongly and heavily built  
BEADY EYES = eyes that are small, round, and shiny with interest or greed  
RUBICUND = red, ruddy  
VISAGE = the face

PROFFER = to offer  
CONTENTEDLY = feeling satisfaction  
TUMBLERS = drinking glasses  
REGARDING = paying attention  
BROAD = wide across  
DOUGHTY = brave, fearless, bold, manly  
DEED = something that is done, an act or action  
PLAGUE = a terrible outbreak of disease, where many people die  
SLIP = a young and slender person  
YOUTH = a young person  
FAKIR = a beggar - sometimes thought to have magic powers  
JUGGLER = (1) a person who performs tricks or acts of magic  
(2) a person skilled at keeping several things in the air at the same time by throwing and catching them  
PAW = the hand or foot of an animal  
LEASTWAYS = at least  
BIT = small piece  
OFF-HANDEDLY = casually  
ABSENT-MINDEDLY = not paying attention to his action  
FUMBLE = to make awkward attempts to do or find something  
GRIMACE = a facial expression of disgust  
FATE = the course your life will take  
INTERFERE = try to change the course of something  
SORROW = sadness, bad results  
A SPELL = magic words  
CONSCIOUS = aware  
JARRED = sounded unpleasant  
REGARDED HIM = looked at him  
WONT TO REGARD = accustomed to looking at  
PRESUMPTUOUS = overstepping courtesy  
GRANTED = given  
GRAVE = very serious  
A HUSH = a silence  
FANCY = a strange liking  
MISCHIEF = trouble  
EYEING HIM KEENLY = looking at him intensely  
DANGLE = hang  
STOOP = bend  
SNATCH = suddenly take something  
SOLEMN = serious  
DOGGEDLY = persistently

PITCH = throw  
CONSEQUENCES = results  
TALISMAN = a magic object  
GRUFFLY = roughly, not friendly  
ENTHRALLED = very interested  
-----**(Section C)**-----  
SHANT = shall not  
A TRIFLE = a small amount of money  
SLIGHTLY = a little bit; a small amount  
HENPECKED = subjected to nagging and complaining by his wife  
DARTED = moved with sudden quickness  
PURSUED = chased, followed  
MALIGNED = insulted  
ANTIMACASSAR = a cloth to protect the arm of a chair or sofa  
DUBIOUSLY = with doubt, with disbelief  
CLEARED THE HOUSE = paid for the house completely  
POUNDS = a money unit in many countries  
SHAMEFACEDLY = looking ashamed or embarrassed  
CREDULITY = belief  
FANCY = imagination  
A SHOCK = a scare, a surprise  
STARTED = jumped suddenly  
RETIRE = go to bed  
BADE = said, wished  
SQUATTING = sitting on one's heels  
SIMIAN = like a monkey; monkeylike  
VIVID = real-looking  
UNEASY = nervous; uncomfortable

-----**(Section D)**-----

PROSAIC = ordinary, normal, usual  
SHRIVELED = dry and wrinkled like a mummy  
SIDEBOARD = a piece of dining-room furniture with compartments and shelves for holding articles of table service  
BETOKENED = showed  
VIRTUES = magic qualities  
FRIVOLOUS = silly, funny  
ATTRIBUTE = ascribe, classify, designate  
COINCIDENCE = events that happen at the same time by accident but seem to have some connection  
AVARICIOUS = greedy  
DISOWN = break the connection with a family member

SCURRY = to hurry  
 BIBULOUS = fond of alcoholic drinks  
 POST = mail  
 I DARESAY = I suppose so; Probably  
 MYSTERIOUS = strange, unknown  
 PEERING = looking  
 GLOSSY = shiny  
 PAUSED = stopped for a moment  
 RESOLUTION = a decision  
 APPAREL = clothing, clothes

------(Section E)-----

ILL AT EASE = uncomfortable  
 FURTIVELY = secretly  
 PREOCCUPIED = lost in thought  
 BROACH = discuss  
 CALL = come; visit  
 TROUSERS = long pants worn with a suit  
 MAW AND MEGGINS = the name of the company where Herbert works  
 INTERPOSED = interrupted  
 CONCLUSIONS = quick judgments  
 ASSENT = agreement  
 SINISTER = terrible, unlucky, very bad  
 AVERT = to look away  
 BLANKLY = no expression on his face  
 BEEN WONT TO = used to, did in the past  
 COURTING = dating, romancing someone  
 FIRM = company  
 MERELY = simply  
 OBEYING = following  
 INAUDIBLE = silent  
 LIABILITY = responsibility  
 SUM = amount of money  
 COMPENSATION = payment  
 SHRIEK = a short high-pitched scream

------(Section F)-----

TWO MILES DISTANT = two miles away  
 STEEPED = completely saturated, completely filled  
 HARDLY EXCHANGED A WORD = almost spoke no words  
 SUBDUED = quiet  
 WEEP = to cry (weep-weep-weep)  
 SOBS = loud crying noises

HYSTERICALLY = emotionally over-excited  
 FIERCELY = strongly  
 QUAKING = shaking  
 LIMBS = arms and legs  
 MAD = crazy, insane  
 AGHAST = in shock, with terror, very scared  
 PANT = to breathe heavily  
 FEVERISHLY = emotionally over-excited  
 STAMMER = to speak with stops and starts; to stutter  
 DRAGGED = pulled  
 MANTELPIECE = a shelf above a fireplace  
 MUTILATED = injured; destroyed  
 ERE = before  
 SEIZED = grabbed  
 BROW = forehead; area above the eyes  
 GROPE = to feel one's way blindly  
 PASSAGE = the hallway  
 UNWHOLESOME = unhealthy, bad, evil, horrible  
 WICKED = evil, horrible, sinful  
 SHUDDERINGLY = in a shaking manner  
 TREMBLING = shaking  
 PEERING = looking  
 PULSATING = moving  
 IT EXPIRED = the candle went out; the candle died  
 APATHETICALLY = showing no emotion or feeling; numb  
 SCREWING = gathering

------(Section G)-----

STEALTHY = secret  
 SUSPEND = to hold  
 FLEE = to run (flee-fled-fled)  
 RESOUND = to make a loud sound  
 WRENCH = a twisting movement  
 LANDING = the top or bottom of stairs  
 BOLT = a lock on a door  
 GROPE = to feel one's way blindly  
 FUSILLADE = a rapid series of sounds  
 REVERBERATE = to echo; to sound loudly  
 FRANTIC = fast and nervous  
 CEASE = to stop  
 WAIL = a long, loud screaming cry

## The Monkey's Paw by W.W. Jacobs

### ~~Part One~~

(§ A) WITHOUT, the night was cold and wet, but in the small parlour of Laburnum 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 chances, putting his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils that it even provoked comment from the white-haired old lady knitting placidly 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 in 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 grey beard.

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

Before continuing, answer the questions below:

1. Write four adjectives to describe the weather.
2. What are the father and son doing?
3. Is their house easily accessible to visitors?
4. What is the mother doing?
5. What is Mr. White complaining about?
6. But why is Mr. White really upset?
7. The white-haired old lady was knitting placidly by the fire. PLACIDLY = In a [angry | peaceful | sharp] manner.

8. "Never mind, dear," said his wife soothingly.  
SOOTHINGLY = In a [nervous | peaceful | comforting] manner.

(§ B) The old man rose with hospitable haste, and opening the door, was heard condoling 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.

"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 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 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 round 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 and jugglers," said the old man.

"What was that you started telling me the other day about a monkey's paw or something, Morris?"

"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, off-handedly.

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 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 afterwards."

"If you could have another three wishes," said the old man, eying 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 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 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 afterwards the three sat listening in an enthralled fashion to a second installment of the soldier's adventures in India.

Before continuing, answer the questions below:

9. Choose the correct description of Sergeant-Major Morris:

- a) He's a tall, thin man with an ugly face and little eyes.
- b) He's a big, tall man with a red face and small eyes.
- c) He's a serious, tall man who drinks too much whiskey.

10. How long was Sergeant-Major Morris in India?

- a) Twenty one years.
- b) Three years.
- c) Thirty years.

11. What item did Mr. Morris bring?

- a) He brought dinner.
- b) He brought a magic monkey paw.
- c) He brought a bottle of whiskey.

12. How many wishes did the monkey paw hold?

- a) Three wishes for three different people.
- b) One wish for three people.
- c) One wish for one person.

13. Why did the fakir put the wishes on the monkey's paw?

- a) To show that people are silly to believe in magic.
- b) To make people die.
- c) To show that people who tried to change their fate would be sorry.

14. Who threw the monkey's paw into the fire?  
 a) Herbert White  
 b) Sergeant-Major Morris  
 c) Mr. White  
 d) Mrs. White
15. Who took the monkey's paw from the fire?  
 a) Herbert White  
 b) Mr. White  
 c) Mrs. White  
 d) Sergeant-Major Morris

16. How does the monkey's paw work?  
 a) Hold the paw and write the wish on paper. Then burn the paper in the fire.  
 b) Put the paw in a pocket and make a wish.  
 c) Hold the paw in the right hand and make a wish.

- 17) What did Mrs. White jokingly wish for?  
 18) Did Sergeant-Major Morris think her wish was a good wish? Why or why not?

(§ C) "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, colouring 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 henpecked."

He darted round the table, pursued by the maligned 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 towards 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. 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 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.

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 Before continuing, answer the questions below:  
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19. Did Mr. White pay any money for the monkey's paw?  
 20. Do the Whites believe that the monkey's paw will work?  
 21. What is the first wish on the monkey's paw?  
 22. What happened when he wished?

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 ~-Part Two~-  
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(§ D) 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 the sideboard with a carelessness which betokened 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 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.

"I daresay," said Mr. White, pouring himself 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.

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Before continuing, answer the questions below:  
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23. How is the day today?  
a) It's cold and raining and everything feels strange today.  
b) It's bright, sunny and everything feels normal today.  
c) It's a mysterious, dark and strange day.

24. Where did Herbert go?

- a) He went to work.  
b) He's working in the garden.  
c) He went to his room.

25. Where is the monkey paw today?

- a) It's on the piano.  
b) It's on the sideboard.  
c) It's in the fireplace.

26. When the postman brought no money, how did Mrs. White feel?

- a) She was a little angry at Sergeant-Major Morris.  
b) She was very happy.  
c) She was very worried.

27. Choose the correct description of the stranger:

- a) The stranger's clothes are shiny, and he is old. He's very angry.  
b) The stranger's clothes are silk, and his hat is tall. He's very courageous.  
c) The stranger's clothes are nice, and his hat is new. He's very nervous.

(§ E) 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 as patiently as her sex would permit for him to broach 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 come 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?"

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.

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 slower-witted 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. "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.

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Before continuing, answer the questions below:  
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28. The stranger is...
- a) very happy and pleasant.
  - b) very angry and rude.
  - c) very nervous and upset.

29. What is the stranger's news?
- a) Herbert is hurt.
  - b) Herbert is a machine worker.
  - c) Herbert is dead.

30. What did the stranger bring to Mr. and Mrs. White?

- a) a hat
- b) money
- c) machinery

31. Did the wish for 200 pounds come true?

- a) Yes, it did.
- b) No, it didn't.

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(\$ F) 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 expectation gave place to resignation--the hopeless resignation of the old, sometimes miscalled 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 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.

"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 cry from his wife awoke him with a start.

"The monkey's paw!" she cried wildly. "The monkey's paw!"

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 parlour, 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. "Good God, 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 the old woman, and dragged him toward the door.

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 around 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, the husband took the box of matches, and striking one, went downstairs for a candle.

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Before continuing, answer the questions below:  
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32. Now that Herbert is dead, how do Mr. and Mrs. White feel?

- a) They are a little bit sad, but they talk to each other and they're feeling a little better now.
- b) They are very sad, depressed and quiet. They don't speak to each other.
- c) They want to die so they can be with Herbert.

33. How far away is the cemetery?

- a) It's two miles away.
- b) It's near their garden.
- c) It's next to the factory where Herbert worked.

34. Mrs. White got an idea. What's her idea?

- a) She wants to use the monkey's paw to wish Herbert alive.
- b) She wants to open the window.
- c) She wants Mr. White to go get a candle.

35. How did Mr. White feel after he wished?

- a) He was sad and depressed.
- b) He was happy and excited.
- c) He was secretly relieved that it didn't seem to work.

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~~Part Three~~  
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(§ G) 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. 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 go. I must open the door."

"For God's sake 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 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 streetlamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.

## THE END

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Answer the questions below:  
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36. Mr. White went downstairs again to get something. What?

- a) He went to get the monkey's paw.
- b) He went to get a candle.
- c) He went to get a key.

37. He hears a knock on the door. Who/what is it?

- a) It's the wind.
- b) It's a rat.
- c) It's Herbert.

38. Mr. White finds the monkey's paw and makes another wish. What did he wish for?

- a) He wished Herbert away.
- b) He wished the door would open.
- c) He wished for his wife to open the door.

39. What happened when Mrs. White opened the door?

- a) Herbert was gone and the street was empty.
- b) Herbert said, "Hi, mom!"
- c) Mrs. White died.

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Questions for discussion:  
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40. What do you think Mr. And Mrs. White's lives were like after that night?

41. Many stories try to teach a lesson to the readers. What do you think the lesson of this story is?

42. If you had three wishes, what would you wish for?

43. If you knew that your wishes had consequences, would you still make the wishes?

44. Do you personally believe in magic, spells, and wishes?

45. Retell the story in your own words to a classmate or friend.

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