“The Monkey’s Paw” by W.W. Jacobs

Organizing Your Thoughts
Before You Read

1. Give the title and author of the story. ____________________________

2. What image comes to mind when you read the title of the story? ________

3. Name several objects that are generally considered to bring good luck. ______

4. Name several objects that are generally considered to bring bad luck. _____

5. Do you believe that wishes can be granted? Why or why not? ______________

6. What do you think is the most common wish people make? ________________

7. If you could make three wishes, what would they be? Describe the wishes, and what you think would happen if they were granted. ________________

________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
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Organizing Your Thoughts

As You Read

1. What is the first clue that the monkey’s paw is not a good thing? __________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

2. What is the second clue that something is not right about the paw? ________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

3. What is ironic about the wish? (Something is ironic when the thing that
   happens is the exact opposite from what you had expected.) __________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

4. Why does the mother think the second wish will make everything alright?
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

5. Why is the father afraid to make the second wish? __________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

6. What do you think the third wish was? Why do you think this? _____________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

7. The story begins with the anonymous quote, “Be careful what you wish for...”.
   How does this story illustrate the need for caution in wishing? _____________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

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Chain Reaction

The Monkey’s Paw is the story of a problem the characters face after making a fateful decision. Instead of solving the problem, the solutions they find only make it worse. Use complete sentences to fill out the diagram below, and create a map of the story.

Fateful decision

↓

Problem Caused

↓

Solution

↓

Problem(s) Caused by Solution

↓

Final Result
---

**Comprehension**

Use complete sentences to answer the following questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge:</th>
<th>1. How would you describe the monkey’s paw?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehension:</th>
<th>1. Which facts or incidents indicate that the monkey’s paw was a “bad” thing or should have been thrown away?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. What were the warning signs that something bad was going to happen?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application:</th>
<th>1. What techniques does the author use to create suspense? Describe each incident.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis:</th>
<th>1. Why do you think that the colonel, knowing what he does, still offers or shows the paw to the family?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synthesis:</th>
<th>1. What would have happened if the father had not made a wish?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation:</th>
<th>1. What would you recommend the Whites do with the paw?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

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In *The Monkey’s Paw*, the characters found their wishes coming true in unexpected and unpleasant ways. Look over the following list of common wishes. Complete the chart, showing the possible positive and negative outcomes of each wish. Then, in the final column, see if you can phrase your wish so that all the negative effects are ruled out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wish</th>
<th>Positive Effects</th>
<th>Negative Effects</th>
<th>“Ideal” Wish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Peace</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Live Forever</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Pollution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletic Abilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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Creative Interpretation

Choose one of the activities below. Work with a partner to complete the task. If you like, you may continue your work on a larger piece of paper.

1. Create a “WANTED” poster for the monkey’s paw. Include an illustration of the suspect, and a description of its crimes. List any warnings, and advice on what to do for people who come across it.

2. Design an object that can be used to grant wishes. Include a detailed illustration of the wish-granting object, labeling any important elements. State the rules of the wishing process, and any rules for the wishes themselves. Include warning labels.
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Reading Between the Lines

I. Complete the chart by organizing the elements from the story into the appropriate categories.

A. The Monkey’s Paw being a story about a man who wished on the paw
B. The content of Mr. White’s third wish
C. The content of Sergeant Morris’s warning
D. Movement of the paw when wished upon
E. The content of Mr. White’s first wish
F. The content of Mr. White’s second wish
G. The reasons that Mr. White didn’t want his son to appear from the grave
H. The idea that nothing bad would have happened if the Whites had not made a wish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stated</th>
<th>Inferred</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

II. Decide whether each sentence is an example of foreshadowing in the story or whether it is irrelevant to the situation at hand. Write “F” or “I” on the line next to the statement.

______ 1. The Whites liked to play chess during the evening.
______ 2. The monkey paw’s previous owner wished for death as his third wish.
______ 3. The son Herbert worked at a machine factory.
______ 4. Wished could be made on a monkey’s paw.
______ 5. The paw moved when Mr. White made his wish.
______ 6. The story took place during the 1800s.
______ 7. Herbert was an only child.
______ 8. Herbert jokes that he didn’t see the money and probably never would.
______ 9. The sergeant panics when the father tells the mother to wish for four pairs of hands.
______ 10. The sergeant tells the family to throw it into the fire and let it burn.
______ 11. Mr. White doesn’t realize his mistake in chess until it is too late.
______ 12. The sergeant and Mr. White have not seen each other in a while.
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Suspense in Literature

The author, W.W. Jacobs, uses many different suspense techniques in *The Monkey’s Paw*. Match the element of the story with the literary technique used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unusual Characters</th>
<th>Foreshadowing</th>
<th>Dilemma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unusual Setting</td>
<td>Unusual Situation</td>
<td>Ironic Devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withholding Information (keeps you wondering)</td>
<td>Dramatic Actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cliffhanger (leaves you guessing at the end)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The story begins with the line, “Without, the night was cold and wet.”
2. Herbert says that he doesn’t see the money and he bets he never will.
3. The story does not show who is knocking at the door or give the reason the father does not want his son to come back.
4. The son comes back from the dead.
5. The story deals with a monkey’s paw that can be used to make wishes.
6. The father is forced to decide between pleasing his wife or sending his son back to his grave.
7. The wish comes true but in a very tragic way.
8. When the mother hears the knocking, she rushes to the door. The father tries to find the paw, the mother can’t get the door open, the wish is made, and then there is silence.
9. The story ends with nothing at the door and an eerie quietness all around.