

“The Monkey's Paw”

Characters:

- **Mr. White** - a conservative, satisfied man who enjoys his quiet domestic life.
- **Mrs. White** - enjoys a good relationship with both her husband and her son, Herbert. She jokes with them, and humors them
- **Herbert White** lives with his elderly parents and gets along with them quite well. He works at a local company called Maw and Meggins. Like his father, he is good-natured and reliable.
- **The Stranger** - He is the messenger of bad news— he is the company representative sent to tell Herbert's parents about the death of their son in a horrible accident at work.
- **Sergeant-Major Morris** is the basis for the story: he brings the monkey's paw to the Whites' home. He is "a tall, burly man, beady of eye and rubicund of visage." His eyes get brighter after several glasses of whiskey at the Whites' home. Morris has seen the world and has brought back tales of "wild scenes and doughty deeds; of wars and plagues and strange peoples." Morris also carries with him the monkey's paw, which changes all the Whites' lives forever.

Setting: a house in England during the late 1800s

Mood: Sinister, dark

Exposition Sgt. Morris tells the Whites about the monkey's paw

Conflict:

- The main conflict is that the Whites are miserable and wish to undo their initial action.
- The Whites have internal conflict as they struggle with their grief. The external conflict is seen as they isolate themselves from each other.
- The more obvious external conflict is Mrs. White's desire for a second wish.

Rising Action

- Mr. White wishes for two hundred pounds
- The Whites receive the money but at a dear price – the death of their son
- Mrs. White forces Mr. White to wish a second time.
- There is considerable interval of time before the second wish is granted.
- The suspense heightens as Mrs. White waits with excited anticipation, and Mr. White waits with dread.

- Mr. White ignores a very faint knocking.
- The knocking becomes louder.

Climax

- Mr. and Mrs. White struggle over whether or not to answer the door.
- Mr. White makes a third wish and have no way to change the past.

Falling Action

The knocking ends and the street is deserted.

Resolution

Mr. and Mrs. White are left with the loss of their son. Herbert is gone for good and the wishes are all used. The internal conflict of their grief is not completely resolved.

The quick ending reinforces the idea that life can change in an instant from simple but happy to miserable and despondent.