**“The Monkey’s Paw”**

**By W.W. Jacobs**

**SOCRATIC SEMINAR**

**Questions for Study and Discussion**

How does he reveal which characters are trustworthy and reliable, and which ones may not be?

Is Morris an untrustworthy guy? Is he trying to make Mr. White want the cursed paw?

Why do you think Jacobs chose a monkey's paw as the talisman? Is there symbolism attached to a monkey that isn't associated with another animal?

Discuss whether the central theme of the story can be summed up: "Be careful what you wish for."

How does Jacobs use [foreshadowing](https://www.thoughtco.com/foreshadowing-in-narratives-1690869) in The Monkey's Paw? Is it effective, building a sense of dread, or did you find it melodramatic and predictable?

Are the characters consistent in their actions? Are they fully-developed characters?

How essential is the setting to the story? Could the story have taken place anywhere else?

*The Monkey's Paw* is usually considered a work of [supernatural fiction](https://www.thoughtco.com/gothic-literature-2207825)? Do you agree with this classification? Why or why not?

How would this story have been different if it were set in the present day?

What do you think Herbert would have looked like if Mrs. White had opened the door in time? Do you think it was really an undead Herbert who was knocking? Can you think of any other explanation for the sound?

If you were in Mr. and Mrs. White’s position, would you wish for Herbert to come back to life? Why or why not?

Does the story end the way you expected?

Do you think the reader is supposed to believe that everything that happened was just a series of coincidences, or that there really was magic afoot?