

## The Monkey's Paw

Short Story by W. W. Jacobs

# Are you SUPERSTITIOUS?

### COMMON CORE

**RL 4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. **RL 6** Analyze how differences in points of view create effects.

Many people say they aren't superstitious. But those same people might own a lucky charm or get nervous on Friday the 13th. Usually these superstitions are harmless, but sometimes they can interfere with a person's life. In the selection you are about to read, curiosity about the power of an unusual object brings unexpected consequences.

**DISCUSS** What kinds of superstitious behaviors do you or people you know believe in? In a small group, brainstorm a list of common superstitions. Then discuss which you think are harmless, and which might cause problems or interfere with someone's life. Share your findings with the class.



## Meet the Author

### W. W. Jacobs

1863–1943

#### Bored at the Bank

William Wymark Jacobs grew up on the docks of London, where his father worked as a wharf manager. As a young man, Jacobs was employed at a bank, a job he hated, calling it his “days of captivity.” To pass the time, he began writing humorous short stories of ships and sailors. Eventually, he began publishing his stories in magazines and soon became one of the most popular and respected writers of his time.

#### A Frightening Classic

Though most of Jacobs’s stories were humorous, he is most famous for his horror classic “The Monkey’s Paw,” which has been adapted numerous times for the stage, film, and television. The story’s “steady, relentlessly building tension” makes it one of the most widely read horror stories in history.

#### BACKGROUND TO THE STORY

##### The British in India

Like most of Jacobs’s stories, “The Monkey’s Paw” is set in Britain. One of the characters is an officer in the British Army and served in India during the British occupation of the country. The British first arrived in India in the 1600s, when the British East India Company established trading. Their role changed dramatically after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857–1858, in which Indian soldiers of the British Army revolted. From then on, the British government controlled India through a system of governors and military outposts. As a result, young men went to India to serve in the army. British rule of India ended in 1947, and today, India is an independent nation.

### ● TEXT ANALYSIS: MOOD

**Mood** is the feeling or atmosphere the writer creates for the reader. There are as many moods as there are emotions—cheerful, gloomy, anxious. Writers create mood through

- the choice of **setting**, including time and place
- **imagery**—descriptions that appeal to the reader’s senses
- conversations between characters

As you read “The Monkey’s Paw,” notice how the story makes you feel and which words or passages make you feel that way.

### ● READING SKILL: IDENTIFY TYPE OF NARRATOR

You have learned that a **narrator** is the voice that tells a story. A third-person narrator is not a character in the story, but, rather, an outside voice. Now you will learn that a third-person narrator may be objective or subjective. An **objective narrator** reports events in a factual way, without sharing any characters’ hidden thoughts or feelings. A **subjective narrator** recounts events with a character’s thoughts, feelings, and observations.

As you read “The Monkey’s Paw,” try to determine whether it is told by an objective narrator or a subjective one. Use a chart to record the narrator’s observations.

Event	Narrator’s Description

Review: **Predict**

### ▲ VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Choose the word that best completes each sentence.

<b>WORD LIST</b>	compensation	fate	peril
	credulity	grimace	resignation

1. The old woman’s \_\_\_\_ allowed the stranger to trick her.
2. My creepy neighbor wanted \_\_\_\_ for his broken window.
3. The sailors faced great \_\_\_\_ as the storm approached.
4. His \_\_\_\_ scared the children.
5. Tom sighed with \_\_\_\_ upon realizing he was lost.
6. Had she not been saved, she could have met a terrible \_\_\_\_.



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

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KEYWORD: HML8-373



# THE MONKEY'S PAW

W. W. Jacobs

## Analyze Visuals ▶

What can you **infer** about the object in the photograph? Note the clues you use to make your inference.

**peril** (pĕr'əl) *n.* danger

## A MOOD

Reread lines 1–18. Note words and phrases that describe the **setting**. What feelings do these suggest?

**I**  
**W**ithout, the night was cold and wet, but in the small parlor 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 changes, 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<sup>1</sup> desirous of preventing his son from seeing it.

“I’m listening,” said the latter, grimly surveying the board as he stretched  
10 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,<sup>2</sup> and the road’s a torrent.<sup>3</sup> I don’t know what people are thinking about. I suppose because only two houses in the road are let,<sup>4</sup> they think it doesn’t matter.” **A**

“Never mind, dear,” said his wife soothingly; “perhaps you’ll win the  
20 next one.”

1. **amiably** (ă'mĕ-ə-blĕ): in a friendly way.

2. **bog**: a swamp.

3. **torrent** (tôr'ənt): a swift-flowing stream.

4. **let**: rented.



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 loudly and heavy footsteps came toward the door.

The old man rose with hospitable haste, and opening the door, was heard condoling<sup>5</sup> with the new arrival. The new arrival also condoled 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>6</sup>

30 “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 brought out drinks and stood a small copper kettle on the fire.

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 wild scenes and doughty<sup>7</sup> deeds; of wars and plagues and strange peoples.

“Twenty-one years of it,” said Mr. White, nodding at his wife and son.

40 “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.”

50 “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. **B**

60 “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.

## VISUAL VOCABULARY



**fakir** (fə-kīr') *n.* a Muslim or Hindu holy man

## **B** IDENTIFY TYPE OF NARRATOR

Have you learned anything about the characters that a keen observer could not have learned? If so, jot down what you have learned. If not, make a mental note of that fact.

**grimace** (grīm'īs) *n.* a facial expression of pain or disgust

5. **condoling** (kən-dōl'ing): expressing sympathy.

6. **rubicund** (rōō'bī-kənd) **of visage** (vīz'ij): with a ruddy complexion.

7. **doughty** (dou'tē): brave.

“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.”

**fate** (fāt) *n.* a power that is thought to determine the course of events

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?” persisted 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 forefinger 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.

90 “If you don’t want it, Morris,” said the other, “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.” **C**

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*,”<sup>8</sup> 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?”

100 Her husband drew the talisman<sup>9</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.” **D**

**C MOOD**

What feeling do you get from the **dialogue** between the Whites and Sergeant-Major Morris?

**D PREDICT**

What, if anything, do you think Mr. White will wish for?

8. *Arabian Nights*: a famous collection of Asian stories.

9. **talisman** (tāl'is-mən): an object thought to have magical powers.

Mr. White dropped it back in 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's paw is not more truthful than those he has been telling us," said Herbert, as the door closed behind their guest, just in  
110 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 henpecked."

He darted round the table, pursued by the maligned Mrs. White armed with an antimacassar.<sup>10</sup>

120 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.

130 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 hand like a snake." **E**

"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."

140 They sat down by the fire again. 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. **F**

"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<sup>11</sup> watching you as you pocket your ill-gotten gains."

**credulity** (krĭ-dōō'ĭtē) *n.*  
a disposition to believe too readily

**E PREDICT**

What do you think will happen as a result of Mr. White's first wish? Why?

**F MOOD**

Reread lines 130–142. Note the **imagery** in these lines. To what senses does it appeal? Explain how it contributes to the mood.

10. **antimacassar** (än'tĭ-mə-käs'ər): a cloth placed over an arm or back of a chair.

11. **wardrobe**: a piece of furniture that serves as a closet.



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>12</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,  
150 and with a little shiver he wiped his hand on his coat and went up to bed. **G**

## II

**I**n the brightness of the wintry sun next morning as it streamed over the breakfast table he laughed at his fears. There was an air of prosaic<sup>13</sup> wholesomeness about the room which it had lacked on the previous night, and the dirty, shriveled little paw was pitched on the sideboard<sup>14</sup> with a carelessness which betokened no great belief in its virtues.<sup>15</sup>

12. **simian** (sĭm'ē-ən): monkey- or ape-like.

13. **prosaic** (prō-zā'yk): ordinary.

14. **sideboard**: a piece of furniture used to store linens and dishes.

15. **virtues**: powers.

### ▲ Analyze Visuals

What do you see in the fire? How does this **compare** to what Herbert sees?

### **G** IDENTIFY TYPE OF NARRATOR

What have you just learned about Mr. White? Would this have come from an **objective** or **subjective narrator**?

“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<sup>16</sup> Herbert.

160 “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<sup>17</sup> 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, when she found that the post brought a tailor’s bill.

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

“I dare say,” said Mr. White, “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  
180 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 at her furtively, 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 his  
190 business, but he was at first strangely silent. **H**

“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.

### Language Coach

**Prefixes** A prefix is a word part added to the beginning of a word to form a new word. For example, in line 164 you will find the word *disown*, which contains the prefix *dis-*, meaning “to undo, do the opposite, or free from.” Based on the meaning of this prefix, what do you think *disown* means?

### **H** PREDICT

Reread lines 177–190. Why do you think the man comes to see the Whites?

16. **frivolous** (frīv’ə-ləs): inappropriately silly.

17. **avaricious** (āv’ə-rīsh’əs): greedy.

“I’m sorry—” began the visitor.

“Is he hurt?” demanded the mother wildly.

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

“Oh!” said the old woman, clasping her hands. “Thank goodness 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. **I**

“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.”

210 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 round. “I beg that you will understand I am only their servant and merely obeying orders.”

220 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. **J**

### III

230 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.

#### **I MOOD**

Think about the news the stranger reveals during his conversation with the Whites. What emotions do you feel as a result of this news?

#### **◆ GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT**

In line 222, W. W. Jacobs correctly makes the verb *disclaim* plural in number to agree with its compound subject, “Maw and Meggins.”

#### **compensation**

(kŏm’pən-sā’shən) *n.*  
something, such as money, received as payment

#### **J PREDICT**

Did your prediction about what would result from Mr. White’s first wish come true?

#### **resignation**

(rĕz’ĭg-nā’shən) *n.*  
acceptance of something that is inescapable

It was about a week after that the old man, waking suddenly in the night,  
240 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 wild cry  
from his wife awoke him with a start.

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

He started up in alarm. “Where? Where is it? What’s the matter?”

250 She came stumbling across the room toward him. “I want it,” she said  
quietly. “You’ve not destroyed it?” **K**

“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.

260 “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.

270 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. **L**

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.

280 “*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.” **M**

### **K** PREDICT

What do you think  
Mrs. White plans to  
do with the paw?

### **L** MOOD

Reread lines 270–276.  
What **imagery** does the  
author use to establish  
the mood in this  
paragraph?

### **M** PREDICT

Do you think the Whites’  
wish will be granted?  
Note the clues that  
influence your answer.

The talisman fell to the floor, and he regarded it fearfully. 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  
290 on the ceiling and walls, until, with a flicker larger than the rest, it expired.



### ◀ Analyze Visuals

Describe the **mood** of this photograph. What details contribute to this mood?

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 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 gathering 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  
300 scarcely audible, sounded on the front door. **N**

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.

310 “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.”

“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  
320 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>18</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  
330 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.  

## **N** MOOD

Reread lines 294–300.

What sounds help create the mood in these paragraphs?

## **COMMON CORE** RL 6

### **IDENTIFY THE NARRATOR**

As you may recall, an **objective narrator** reports what he or she could have gathered from observation. A **subjective narrator** shares details that could only be known if he or she were inside the character’s head.

Reread lines 298–332 to determine whether the narrator is objective or subjective. Explain your answer.

18. **fusillade** (fyoo’sə-lād’): discharge from many guns; a rapid outburst.

## Comprehension

1. **Recall** How does Mr. White get the monkey's paw?
2. **Recall** What power is the monkey's paw supposed to have?
3. **Clarify** Why does Sergeant-Major Morris throw the paw onto the fire?

## Text Analysis

4. **Make Inferences** At the end of the story, why did the knocking stop so suddenly? Explain.
5. **Examine Predictions** Review the chart you created as you read. Did most of your predictions come true? Looking back at the places where your predictions were wrong, notice how W. W. Jacobs tried to surprise readers by giving false clues about what would happen.
6. **Analyze Mood** How would you describe this story's mood? Include your answer at the top of a chart like the one shown. Then provide examples of setting descriptions, conversations, and imagery that are relevant to the creation of this mood.

<i>Mood:</i>		
<i>Setting Descriptions:</i>	<i>Conversations:</i>	<i>Imagery:</i>

7. **Analyze Type of Narrator** Think back over the thoughts and emotions that were described by the narrator. For the most part, which type of narrator appears to be telling this story, an objective narrator or a subjective one? Which type of narrator actually recounts the story? Explain.

## Extension and Challenge

8. **Reader's Circle** Consider what would have happened if Mrs. White had opened the door before her husband made the final wish. Would you have liked to find out what was on the other side of the door? Or is it better for you as a reader not to know? In a small group, discuss your thoughts about the ending of "The Monkey's Paw."

### Are you SUPERSTITIOUS?

Reread lines 160–161 of the story. Are you more inclined to believe in superstitions or coincidence? Why?

### COMMON CORE

**RL 4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings. **RL 6** Analyze how differences in points of view create effects.

## Vocabulary in Context

### ▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Choose the word in each group that is most nearly opposite in meaning to the boldfaced word.

1. **peril**: (a) safety, (b) risk, (c) hazard
2. **credulity**: (a) simplicity, (b) doubt, (c) openness
3. **resignation**: (a) respect, (b) resistance, (c) acceptance
4. **compensation**: (a) consideration, (b) reward, (c) loss
5. **fate**: (a) choice, (b) destiny, (c) luck
6. **grimace**: (a) frown, (b) scowl, (c) grin

### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING

• circumstance • emerge • predominant • rely • technology

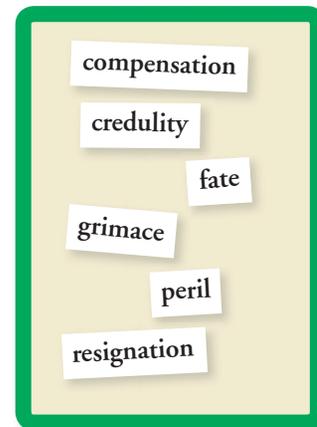
Why do you suppose writers so often **rely** on stormy weather and night time to create a fearful or suspenseful mood? Use at least one Academic Vocabulary word to write a one-paragraph answer.

### VOCABULARY STRATEGY: THE LATIN ROOT *cred*

The vocabulary word *credulity* contains the Latin root *cred*, meaning “to believe” or “to trust.” A number of commonly used English words are formed using *cred*. To figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words containing *cred*, use your knowledge of the root as well as any context clues provided.

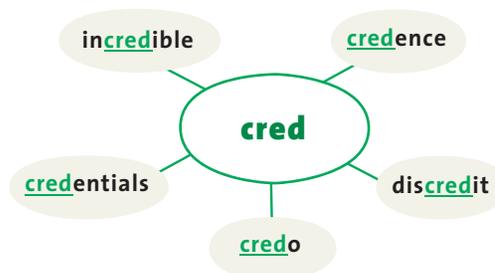
**PRACTICE** Choose a word from the web to complete each of the following sentences. Use context clues or, if necessary, consult a dictionary.

1. A person must get the proper \_\_\_\_\_ before he or she is able to teach.
2. Sharon didn't approve of the club's \_\_\_\_\_, so she didn't join.
3. I gave no \_\_\_\_\_ to his story, which changed each time he told it.
4. The violinist received several rounds of applause after her \_\_\_\_\_ performance.
5. They hoped to \_\_\_\_\_ the candidate by focusing on his lack of experience.



### COMMON CORE

L4b Use common, grade-appropriate Latin roots as clues to the meaning of a word.



Interactive Vocabulary **THINK** central

Go to [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com).  
KEYWORD: HML8-386

## Language

### ◆ GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT: Maintain Subject-Verb Agreement

A **compound subject** is made up of two or more subjects joined by a conjunction, such as *and*, *or*, or *nor*. The conjunction determines whether you should use a singular or plural verb. If a compound subject is joined by *and*, then it usually takes a plural verb. If a compound subject is joined by *or* or *nor*, then the verb should agree in number with the part closest to it.

*Original:* Neither **Mr. White nor** the two **men** before him **finds** happiness.

*Revised:* Neither **Mr. White nor** the two **men** before him **find** happiness. (*The plural verb find is correct because the plural noun men is closer to it.*)

**PRACTICE** Choose the verb form that agrees with each compound subject.

1. Mr. and Mrs. White (has, have) different feelings about the paw.
2. Neither the paw nor the wishes (has, have) any effect on fate.
3. Herbert and his father (like, likes) to play chess.
4. Either fate or several coincidences (lead, leads) to Herbert's death and the company's compensation.

For more help with subject-verb agreement with compound subjects, see page R65 in the **Grammar Handbook**.

### READING-WRITING CONNECTION



Broaden your understanding of “The Monkey’s Paw” by responding to this prompt. Then use the **revising tip** to improve your writing.

#### WRITING PROMPT

##### Short Constructed Response: Analysis

If someone offered you a monkey’s paw and claimed that it had the power to grant three wishes, would you use it? Write **one paragraph** explaining how you would respond to such an offer. Use details from the story to support your response.

#### REVISING TIP

Review your paragraph to make sure the verbs agree in number with the subjects. Pay special attention to verbs with compound subjects. If you find any subject-agreement errors, correct them.

#### COMMON CORE

L1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing.

Interactive Revision **THINK** central  
Go to [thinkcentral.com](http://thinkcentral.com).  
KEYWORD: HML8-387