

Compare the red  
room by hg wells and  
the monkeys paw  
written by ww jacobs



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I have chosen to compare The Red Room by H.

G. Wells and The Monkeys Paw written by W. W. Jacobs. In The Red Room there isn't a ghost but it's about a man who is overwhelmed with fear when he spends a night in a haunted room. There isn't a ghost in The Monkeys Paw either but there is a talisman that grants wishes, each wish has a terrible consequence though.

The first paragraph of The Red Room lands you right in the middle of an argument between the man and the people who live in the house, ' ' Ah,' she broke in: ' and eight and twenty years you have lived and never seen the likes of this house, I reckon. ' This line enhances the spookiness straight away by helping you picture the house, it also helps you think how terrifying The Red Room must be if that is what is haunted and not the whole house. The writer makes it interesting by starting the story during a conversation because you don't have to read pages and pages that lead up to that precise moment. Wells creates a ghostly feel to the story by describing the characters, for example ' The old woman sat staring hard into the fire, her pale eyes wide open. ' and ' .

.. he man with the withered arm,' picturing these characters just increases the haunting feeling of the place. The imagery of these people just fit together with the house in my mind because I can imagine a senile old woman pressuring her own fears on the man. Also pre 20th Century readers would have been frightened of a man with a deformity because they didn't understand what was wrong with people who had deformities. The story makes you want to read on because you want to find out what would frighten

this very assured man who seems to have no fear, ' that it will take a very tangible ghost to frighten me.

The first line of The Monkey's Paw gives a ghostly atmosphere, ' Without, the night was cold and wet,' because after this line you know something is going to change someone's life because nothing spooky or scary ever happens on a bright, sunny day. Jacobs captures the reader's attention by mentioning that someone is coming, you look forward to finding out who they are waiting for as they are so eager to see him so he must be important to the rest of the story. ' I should hardly think he'd come tonight,' The story seems paranormal right from the beginning because they live in such a dark, gloomy, isolated place ' of all the beastly, slushy, out of the way places to live in, this is the worst. ' Mr White seems to be a very bitter character in the first paragraph and it seems as though he would do anything to make his own life better and easier. You also get the feeling that the man Mr White and his family are waiting for is a very dear friend to the Whites and for him not to arrive deeply disappoints Mr White.

Wells maintains the atmosphere throughout the duration of the story by building up the man's fear so far that his mind plays tricks on him, ' and my candle flared and made the shadows cower and quiver. The echoes rang up and down the spiral staircase, and a shadow came sweeping up after me,' Wells uses a lot of personification and similes to describe the man's fear as it seeps through his brave exterior, '... the shadows seemed to take another step towards me. ' Wells increases the atmosphere by describing the long trip to the Red Room in which he makes the man's fear more obvious.

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When the man reaches the room he is so scared that he has to search every aspect of the room, ' I began to walk about the room, peering round each article of furniture,' The story increases its suspense when the man starts to lose his mind with fear as all the lights start going out and he loses all coordination until he collapsed. The writer keeps the atmosphere with his use of darkness; almost the entire story is surrounded by darkness, which maintains the ghostly feeling of the house. Jacobs maintains the atmosphere of the story with the event of Mr Whites sons death, but before this moment in the story it is about the time leading up to the first wish and Mr Whites increasing greed for the paw. The Whites take no notice of the sergeant majors warning, ' 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.

' During this conversation the evil that the paw possesses is intensified, as the sergeant major tells the Whites that the first man wished for death because of what it did to his life. The consequence of the first wish is a shock because Herbert wanted to be rich and famous, but because he egged his father on he died. ' Wish to be an Emperor, father, to begin with; then you can't be henpecked. ' The suspense builds up tremendously as Jacobs describes the knocking on the door in the middle of the night from the father's second wish.

By this time the father had realized that nothing would be given to them without a price, but his wife was determined to get her son back whatever the cost. It is not just the knocking on the door that builds up the suspense; it is also Mrs White's struggle to unbolt the door and Mr White's search in the darkness for the paw. ' It's my boy; it's Herbert! She cried, struggling  
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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. ' This keeps building up until the father finds the paw and wishes away their son just as his wife opens the door. In the Red Room the main character is surrounded by Ghostly happenings that take place while he is staying in the room. While he is in the room he lights many candles so that there are no dark corners, after a while these candles keep going out and he is fighting a losing battle to keep them alight.

It is as if the room does not want any light there and is extinguishing the candles itself. ' Steady on! I said. These candles are wanted, speaking with a half hysterical facetiousness,' Pre 20th century readers would not have been surprised by something like this, because people believed more in the supernatural, but people today would just laugh at the thought of a haunted room. We now have more understanding about unusual things that happen and can usually have a logical explanation for them.

Pre 20th century readers would have felt that the happenings were weird as there is talk of an apoplexy, which they didn't understand. ' I thought, had apoplexy better served the ends of superstition. ' People today probably would be a little spooked by a Ganymede and Eagle because it's an old statue which they probably would not be used to, but people in pre 20th century would have been used to seeing this type of statue and so it would not have bothered them. The story of the Monkey Paw would not hold much superstitious value today; if someone said they had a magic Monkey Paw no

one would take them seriously. Pre 20th century times were rife with superstition especially when it came to items said to hold magic in them and they would be intrigued by a magic monkey paw. However the idea that someone could return from the dead after being mangled in machinery would disturb them, as they didn't understand people with disabilities and viewed them as not normal.

The location of their house would make us feel uncomfortable because it is so isolated, we would feel cut of and vulnerable. Whereas people would have been living in this type of location 100 years ago. ' The street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road. ' Both these stories involve superstitions but neither have an actual ghost, The Red Room is a tale told by the characters in the story, which the main character sets out to uncover the truth.' Eight and twenty years, said I, I have lived, and never a ghost have I seen as yet.

Similarly in the Monkey's Paw the characters aren't sure that what the sergeant major told them about the paw was true. ' The idea of our listening to such nonsense! How could wishes be granted in these days? ' The main characters in the two stories are very different, the man in the Red Room is very sceptical, and tries to be open minded but he doesn't take ghosts very seriously. ' I half suspected the old people were trying to enhance the spiritual terrors of the house by their droning insistence. ' and, ' Well, I said, if I see anything tonight, I shall be much the wiser. For I come for business with an open mind.

' Whereas Mr White believes in the paw from the start, he believes in it so much that he wouldn't even trust the rest of his family with it, ' We shan't get much out of it. ' However they both change throughout the stories, in the red room the man learns true fear and he becomes more open minded, Mr White learns not to cheat fate and to listen to warnings as he starts to hate the paw. The man in the Red Room is described as a brave and assured man who is confident that there aren't spiritual beings. That it will take a very tangible ghost to frighten me. ' During the first paragraph Mr White seems like a bitter old man who would do anything to get away from where he lives, ' Paths a bog, and roads a torrent.

' In the Red Room the journey to the room and the happenings in the room are described, Wells describes how the mans fear built up as he travelled to the room because of all the darkness. ' But it's shadow fell with marvellous distinctness upon the white panelling and gave me the impression of someone crouching to waylay me. ' While he is in the room his surroundings are described which enhances the tension, ' with it's shadowy window bays, its recesses and alcoves,' ultimately leading to his struggle to keep the torches alight and his search for the door to escape from what ever it was in the room. ' But I had forgotten the exact position of the door, and struck myself heavily against the corner of the bed.

' The Monkeys Paw is described in detail during the conversation between the Whites and the Sergeant Major, Jacobs doesn't tell the reader what the Sergeant Major wished for but you get a feeling of regret from him. I have, he said quietly, and his blotchy face whitened. ' The Whites have their own journey to the final event in the story with the death of their son, it all leads <https://assignbuster.com/compare-the-red-room-by-hg-wells-and-the-monkeys-paw-written-by-ww-jacobs/>

up to the final wish and the terror Mr White suffers as the trip to the red room leads to the torment in the room. There is no ghost in either of the stories, in the Red Room it is the fear that the room itself holds, it wants no light and will only accept darkness because of the countess who was trapped there.

' I knew that was it. A power of darkness. To put such a curse upon a woman. And in the Monkeys Paw it is the fear of the unknown, with the second wish the husband is afraid of what will be outside the door, he knows it will be his son but what will he be like. The description of the Red Room is very detailed; the author describes the darkness and how the man tries to light all the alcoves and then once the torches start to be extinguished he describes how the darkness starts to take over. ' The steady process of extinction went on, and the shadows I feared and fought against returned and crept in upon me.

Even when the man realises that he is fighting a losing battle, he continues to try, ' The fire! Of course I could still thrust my candle between the glowing coals,' once he is in total darkness fear starts to win and he loses his bearings. The most frightening scene in the monkeys paw is when they make the second wish, Jacobs describes Mrs Whites excitement when she remembers the other two wishes and her husbands horror at the thought of using it again, he reminds her that their son has been dead for ten days and that he could only recognise him by his clothes, ' If he was too terrible for you to see then how now? The tension builds and the climax is reached with the knock at the door and Mr Whites desperate search for the Monkey paw to make his final wish and rid them of whatever is outside the door. He has <https://assignbuster.com/compare-the-red-room-by-hg-wells-and-the-monkeys-paw-written-by-ww-jacobs/>



described the scene well because the characters are in synchronisation. As the knocking gets louder Mrs White gets more excited and her husbands search for the Paw becomes more frantic. In each story I thought the fear and the ghostly atmosphere was built up well throughout both stories but the endings where disappointing. They where both lacking a final climax, in The Red Room the atmosphere built up and built up but then nothing happened because he knocked himself out.

Similarly in the Monkeys Paw the knocking grew louder but the son was wished away just as the door was opened. I didn't feel that the Superstitious Man's Story was as affective as the two I chose because it was too short but on the other hand I felt that The Body Snatcher and The Signal Man dragged on, because there was no real suspense towards the end.