

# Comparison and analysis of 'the red room' and 'the monkeys paw' essay sample



In ghost stories, the scene is often set in a similar way. There may be an old, dilapidated house that is set in the middle of nowhere that the main character will describe or it has a terrible history. In the house, there may be a spiral staircase or a long daunting passage. There will almost certainly be a ghost involved with a certain room within the house. Furthermore, when the main character arrives it would usually be in the dark and set at night, sometimes it would even be described as cold and chilly.

All of these add tension and suspense to the story due to the fact that darkness and mist restricts the sight of the character and if it is chilly then it makes the reader feel scared because the thought of the cold sends a chill down their spine. The atmosphere in *The Red Room* follows the normal ghost story setting of there being an old dilapidated castle with creaking doors. There are three old people that the character describes, one of them having a "withered arm", a woman with "pale eyes" and a second man with a "monstrous shadow". This immediately sets the scene for the beginning of a ghost story.

The fact that the people are old shows that the fear of the room has gone on for generations. However, when the character starts talking to the people the tension gathers as the man with the withered arm repeatedly says to the character, "It is your own choosing". While he is saying that, the old woman repeatedly speaks of a warning, "This night of all nights". Both of these make the reader very tense and suspicious of what happened in this red room and what happened on this night. In *The Monkey's Paw* the very first line starts building the suspense, "the night was cold and wet".

This is a classic start to a ghost story because it creates tension. Like *The Red Room*, *The Monkey's Paw* follows the typical beginning of a ghost story, "of all the beastly, slushy, out of the way places to live in." You can tell by this line that the house will be the focus of the story because it says that it is out of the way, so you know that something is going to happen involving this house. As the story unfolds in *The Monkey's Paw*, the reader becomes more suspicious because the soldier acts as if he has something to hide, but whenever he is confronted, he speaks very hastily.

Mrs White soon becomes very curious, "' Monkey's paw?' " said Mrs White curiously. ' The soldier then begins to tell the story about how he got hold of the monkey's paw, so everybody in the room " leaned forward eagerly". This is trying to show that the story must be interesting and probably has some relevance to what the soldier didn't want to talk about, thus building and adding to the suspense. In *The Red Room* we are not told anything about the main character, unlike *The Monkey's Paw* where we are told a little bit about his family and himself.

Also, in *The Red Room* the main character does not talk a great deal to anyone, so the narrator has to tell the story to the audience, whereas in the other book it is the characters that tell most of the story, without the help of the narrator. *The Monkey's Paw* adds more tension to the story because the characters themselves tell the story so you can almost feel what they are feeling, it is easier to put you body in their shoes and experience what they are encountering. In *The Red Room*, the narrative voice builds the tension through its gathering speed.

As the character is walking down the dark and gloomy corridors alone, he starts talking to himself and reassuring himself that he is alone and that there aren't any ghosts. In *The Monkey's Paw*, the tension builds up slowly from as the man wishes that they had two hundred pounds. It continues to build until the couple see a man outside pondering whether to come in or not. This is when you find out that their son is dead and this is the consequence for making a wish with the monkey's paw. The author gives a hint to what might happen later in the story when the boy says, " Well, I don't see the money... nd I bet I never shall. This is inferring that something might happen to the boy in order for them to get the money.

In *The Red Room*, we learn new information about the room very near to the end; H G Wells leaves the reader in suspense right up until the character is about to enter the red room and that is when we find out what the room is actually about. We learn the history of the room, who died there and how they died. In *The Monkey's Paw*, the tension doesn't stop building because after the couple have lost their son the man is under orders of his wife to get their son back, so reluctantly he wishes for him to return.

At first, the man is so astonished that he cries, " Good God, you are mad! " In the days when this was, first published saying such things was a form of swearing and the public were not used to such language. It was frowned upon to swear. At the end of *The Monkey's Paw*, the tension reaches a climax because the father unwillingly wishes for his son back but tells his wife not to open the door. " For God's sake don't let it in" this is quite a severe statement since he is not only swearing for a second time, but he is also referring to his son as an " it".

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This tells you that he thinks that his son has turned into a monster, and no longer looks the same. There is a lot of contrast during this story because in the first paragraph it says that they are playing chess, and all seems peaceful and calm. However in the middle of the story everything is very frantic and there is lots of noise, while at the end there is tranquillity once again, " The street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road. " In The Red Room the tension builds to anti climax because before the character enters the room H G Wells lets your imagination run wild, in that he doesn't tell you what is in there.

However, after the character leaves the room you find out what is in there, " There is Fear in that room of hers - black Fear, and there will be - so long as this house of sin endures. " The Red Room ends in the same room that it started off in, except everything has been reversed; it has gone from night to day and the character has gone from being fearless to being terrified. In The Red Room, the author creates tension in his use of language. H G Wells uses similes, metaphors and personification to build suspense and tension throughout the story.

" Little tongue of light " produces tension because it is spoken when the character is in the room so it leads the reader to believe that there is something paranormal in the room like a ghost along with the character. " Like a ragged storm cloud sweeping out the stars " this simile is used to describe what is happening in the room while the character is in it. At this point, he is very scared because there is something in the room putting out the candles; this is why he uses this simile because it refers to darkness and

this adds suspense to the story due to the fact that he can see what is doing this but it is never identified.

Throughout *The Monkey's Paw* the reader is kept in suspense by the uses of similes and metaphors such as, "twisted like a snake" this refers to a serpent that is considered evil, so it makes the reader wonder where the paw came from and what it was used for. Another example of this happening is, "the words died away on his lips" this also refers to darkness and death, which is a common factor during the story. The fact that it is referring to death makes the reader wonder what is going to happen, it is adding to the suspense of the story.

I believe that *The Monkey's Paw* has become so successful because when it was originally published in the late nineteenth century, the public were not used to such language like, "For God's sake don't let it in." because it was almost immoral to say such things. The language therefore shocked people. I think that this is partly what has made this ghost story so famous and successful, together with the fact that it builds up tension and suspense in such a way that it engulfs the reader.

*The Red Room* has a similar effect to this in the way that it builds up a lot of tension and suspense throughout the story. However, in this book instead of building the tension up to a climax it has an anti climax. I feel that because of this it has made the book more successful because there aren't many books that have such a big anti climax, especially at the time of its publication. I believe that these books have sold so many copies because

they are written by famous authors and build up tension and suspense throughout the books.