

The consequences of
greedy wishes in the
monkey's paw, a
short story by w.w.
jaco...



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Monkey's Paw is a short story written by W. W. Jacobs in which an older couple (Mr. and Mrs. White) and their adult son (Herbert) acquire a supposedly magic rabbit's paw from a soldier called Major-Major Morris. The major tells the family that he gained the item in India, after Mr. White brought up that location into the conversation. The major explained that the magic paw could grant three wishes to three separate men who possessed the thing. He said that the paw had already killed the first man, and that he himself was the second man. The major then tries to burn the paw.

Out of interest and mystery, Mr. White snatchers the charm from the fire it was thrown in. He holds thing as the major told him to and wished for money per his son's request. The major leaves and the money seems to not be coming. The family decides that the paw was a story and a joke.

Herbert goes to work at a factory and doesn't come home, instead a lawyer for the place arrives at the house and tells the couple that the son had died in a machinery accident and that the compensation for his death would be the exact amount that the father wished to have.

The decides the two events (wish and compensation) were coincidences, while the wife believes there was a correlation and that they should use one of their two remaining wishes to bring their son back to life. The man insists that whatever live could be wished into their child would turn him into something else, that Herbert was gone. The wife insists that the wish be made anyway and the husband does as told.

There's knocking at the door.

The wife hurries to let in their potentially mutilated and monstrous child while the husband scrambles for the paw with the intention of using the final wish to reverse the second (he should have just reversed it all, and gone back in time to allow the major to burn the thing.) Regardless of what other efforts the husband could/should have chosen, he chooses to kill his son for the second time in the nine-page story.

The story does not present a good perspective on the idea of wishing away problems. In the beginning of the story the man was complaining about where they lived and how much simpler their lives would be in a different location, however, when he gains the paw, he is stumped for a moment on what he should wish for. He even says that holding wishes in his fingers made him realize that he had all that he needed already. It was Herbert that prompted his father to ask for the money that spiraled their lives into sorrow.

The theme of the story can be interpreted as being that people are lost in the pursuit of selfish wealth.