

ELA 9

Review Guide Questions and Answers

The Monkey's Paw by W.W. Jacobs

Playwright: Mara Rockliff

Directions: Use this in your review for your test along with your notes and study guide. These are answers to questions that were covered in our study of the play.

1. What is the first clue that the monkey's paw is not a good thing?

Sergeant Major Morris warns the Whites that the paw is not as good of a thing as it would seem to be and then throws it into the fire.

2. What is the second clue that something is not right about the paw?

Another clue that the paw is not a good thing is that it is described

3. What is ironic about the wish? (Something is ironic when the thing that happens is the exact opposite from what you had expected.)

The wish is ironic because something bad always occurs with the good that comes with the wish.

4. Why does the mother think the second wish will make everything right?

The mother thinks that the second wish will make everything right because she believes it will bring her son back with no consequences.

5. Why is the father afraid to make the second wish?

The father is afraid to make the second wish because he understands what happens when a wish is made.

6. What do you think the third wish was? Why do you think this?

The third wish was to make the son go away because he would come back as a mutilated, walking corpse.

7. Why does the story start with the father and son playing chess? Does the father's strategy at the chess game tell you anything about his personality? If so, what?

The story starts with the father and son playing chess to show that the father takes unnecessary risks. The father's actions during the chess game foreshadows his continuing to make wishes.

8. Sergeant Major Morris describes the monkey's paw in this way:

"It had a spell put on it by an old fakir,...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."

What does Morris' statement mean when you first read it? What does it mean after you have read the entire story? Is his comment significant? If so, why?

Morris's statement means that disrupting fate will end with tragedy. After reading the

entire story, the statement means that you should be careful what you wish. His comment is significant because in life many people wish for things that they may not deserve.

9. Why does Major Morris throw the monkey's paw onto the fire and why do the Whites react so strongly?

Major Morris throws the monkey's paw onto the fire because he knows the paw is cursed. The Whites react so strongly, though, because they do not think of the consequences of using the paw; they only think of the good the paw can bring to them.

10. What happens to Herbert White?

Herbert White gets mauled by a machine at his work.

11. What do you think happened at the end of the story? Why does Mr. White beg his wife not to let "it" into the house? What does he mean? What is he afraid of? Who or what was outside of the house?

At the end of the story, Herbert White approaches the Whites' house and knocks on the door. Before Mrs. White can open the door, though, Mr. White has already wished Herbert away. Mr. White begs his wife not to let "it" into the house because he knows that it is not really their son that's standing outside the house; instead, it was his mutilated corpse.

12. What makes Jacobs' style of writing unique? Read the following passage and think about how he puts his words together to create a mood. Underline words or passages that seem important to you.

"...and a horrible fear that his wish would bring his mangled son before him ere he could escape from the room seized upon him, and he caught his breath as he found he had lost the direction of the door. His brow cold with sweat, he felt his way around the table, and groped along the wall until he found himself in the small passage with the unwholesome thing in his hand."

13. How does Jacobs set the mood and/or tone of the story? How does he build suspense? Think about the way he uses silence as a way to create a mood. What does he describe at the end as the husband and wife lie in bed waiting for their wish to come true?

Jacobs sets the mood of the story as chilling. He uses silence to build suspense. For example, silence is used when the Whites are talking to Major Morris and after Mr. White makes the wishes. As the husband and wife lie in bed waiting for their wish to come true, Jacobs describes a knock on the door breaking the silence.