

The Monkey's Paw

W. W. Jacobs

How does the story make a voluntary choice feel like a trap?

TOTAL TIME	TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION
30 minutes	Part I - warning and first wish

TEACHER SETUP

Open the work in the Enhanced Reader and cue the span using the START and END anchors below.

START	"Better let it burn," said the soldier, solemnly.
END	He shook his head. "Never mind, though; there's no harm done, but it gave me a shock all the same."
PASSAGE ID	sec-monkeypaw-01

THE MOVE

Trace how warning, choice, and tone build dramatic irony

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Nothing forces Mr. White to use the paw. The scene repeatedly gives him opportunities to stop, but curiosity and joking reduce the warning's seriousness. Because readers see the warning before the wish, the apparently free choice already carries the shape of a trap.

MARK

Underline every warning Morris gives. Circle each moment Mr. White chooses to keep or use the paw. Box the family's jokes. Star the first physical sign that the wish may not be harmless.

NOTICE

- How many chances does Mr. White have to stop?
- What role does joking play in weakening the warning?
- Why does the paw's movement matter before any consequence is known?

THINK

Answer provisionally: How does the story make a voluntary choice feel like a trap? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response. Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.

STRONG ANSWER

The choice feels like a trap because the story makes Mr. White responsible while surrounding that choice with ignored warnings. Humor and curiosity make the danger feel dismissible, so the first wish is both voluntary and ominously prepared.

EVIDENCE

Use one explicit warning and one decision or joke that shows the family setting it aside.

WATCH FOR

Do not claim the paw forces Mr. White to wish. The tension depends on his freedom to choose despite the warning.

SOLO

Read independently.

SUPPORTED

Narration + highlighting.

LISTENING

Listen; same evidence task.

STUDENT PAGE · GRADE 8 · LESSON 275

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WORK	The Monkey's Paw
TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION	Part I - warning and first wish

PASSAGE ID	sec-monkeypaw-01
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Your teacher will open or cue the work in the Enhanced Reader. Use the location and verbatim anchors below to confirm the assigned span.

START

"Better let it burn," said the soldier, solemnly.

END

He shook his head. "Never mind, though; there's no harm done, but it gave me a shock all the same."

READ / LISTEN TO THE ASSIGNED PASSAGE SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration and highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the assigned passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK Underline every warning Morris gives. Circle each moment Mr. White chooses to keep or use the paw. Box the family's jokes. Star the first physical sign that the wish may not be harmless.
2. NOTICE How many chances does Mr. White have to stop? What role does joking play in weakening the warning? Why does the paw's movement matter before any consequence is known?
3. THINK Answer provisionally: How does the story make a voluntary choice feel like a trap?
4. WRITE Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.
5. CLOSE Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.