Short Story Unit:
“The Monkey’s Paw” (1902) (W.W. Jacobs)

Reading Response Questions

- Fakir—a Muslim or Hindu religious ascetic or mendicant monk commonly considered a wonder-worker.
- Antimacassar—small covering, usually ornamental, placed on the backs and arms of upholstered furniture to prevent wear or soiling; a tidy.
- Talisman—any amulet or charm; anything whose presence exercises a remarkable or powerful influence on human feelings or actions.
- Simian—of or pertaining to an ape or monkey.

I. Inciting Incident. Briefly explain the following part of the story:

It had a spell put on it by an old fakir," said the sergeant-major, "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. He put a spell on it so that three separate men could each have three wishes from it.

II. Rising Action. Briefly explain the significance of the following quotation:

"Two hundred pounds," was the answer.

Unconscious of his wife's shriek, the old man smiled faintly, put out his hands like a sightless man, and dropped, a senseless heap, to the floor.

III. Climax. Briefly explain the significance of the following quotation:
He heard the creaking of the bolt as it came slowly back, and at the same moment he found the monkey's paw, and frantically breathed his third and last wish.

The knocking ceased suddenly, although the echoes of it were still in the house.

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**Passage of Interest—OR Comment on Good Storytelling**

Discuss a meaningful moment in the story—OR write about your experience as a listener listening to this famous story. What is the secret to this story’s longevity; that is, why has it been so popular for so long?