The Monkey’s Paw
Short Story by W.W. Jacobs

Introducing the Short Story
Literary Analysis: Mood
Reading Skill: Identify Type of Narrator
Vocabulary in Context
Are you SUPERSTITIOUS?

Many people say they aren’t superstitious. But those same people might own a lucky charm or get nervous on Friday the 13th.
Are you SUPERSTITIOUS?

Usually these superstitions are harmless, but sometimes they can interfere with a person’s life.

In the selection you are about to read, curiosity about the power of an unusual object brings unexpected consequences.
INTRODUCING THE SHORT STORY

Are you SUPERSTITIOUS?

**DISCUSS**

What kind of superstitious behavior do you or people you know believe in?▼

In a small group, brainstorm a list of common superstitions.▼

Then discuss which you think are harmless, and which might cause problems or interfere with someone’s life. Share your findings with the class.
Mood is the feeling or atmosphere the writer creates for the reader.

There are as many moods as there are emotions—cheerful, gloomy, anxious.
Writers create mood through:

- the choice of **setting**, including time and place
- **imagery**—descriptions that appeal to the reader’s senses
- conversations between **characters**

As you read “The Monkey’s Paw,” notice how the story makes you feel and which words or passages make you feel that way.
Reading Skill

Identify Type of Narrator

You have learned that a narrator is the voice that tells a story.

A third-person narrator is not a character in the story, but, rather, an outside voice.

Now you will learn that a third-person narrator may be objective or subjective.
An **objective narrator** reports events in a factual way, without sharing any characters’ hidden thoughts or feelings.

A **subjective narrator** recounts events with a character’s thoughts, feelings, and observations.
As you read “The Monkey’s Paw,” try to determine whether it is told by an objective narrator or a subjective one. Use a chart like the one shown below to record the narrator’s observations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Narrator’s Description</th>
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Choose the vocabulary word from the box at right that best completes each sentence below.

1. The old woman’s **credulity** allowed the stranger to trick her.

2. My creepy neighbor wanted **compensation** for his broken window.

3. The sailors faced great **peril** as the storm approached.

4. His **grimace** scared the children.

5. Tom sighed with **resignation** upon realizing he was lost.

6. Had she not been saved, she could have met a terrible **fate**.
compensation *n.* something, such as money, received as payment

credulity *n.* a disposition to believe too readily

fate *n.* a power that is thought to determine the course of events

grimace *n.* a facial expression of pain or disgust

peril *n.* danger

resignation *n.* acceptance of something that is inescapable