

the monkeys paw commonlit answer key

The Monkeys Paw CommonLit Answer Key

The short story "The Monkey's Paw," written by W.W. Jacobs, is a classic tale of horror and morality that explores the consequences of tampering with fate. This eerie narrative has been widely studied in educational settings, often accompanied by comprehension questions and activities designed to engage students with its themes and lessons. CommonLit, a free online resource for teachers and students, provides a platform where students can analyze the text and reflect on its deeper meanings. In this article, we will discuss the key themes, character analysis, and the significance of "The Monkey's Paw," while also highlighting the CommonLit answer key to enhance understanding.

Summary of "The Monkey's Paw"

"The Monkey's Paw" follows the story of the White family: Mr. White, Mrs. White, and their son Herbert. They live a comfortable life until they encounter a mysterious visitor, Sergeant-Major Morris, who introduces them to a magical object—a monkey's paw that grants three wishes to its owner. However, the paw comes with a dire warning: each wish may have unintended and tragic consequences.

Plot Overview

1. Introduction of the Monkey's Paw: The story begins with the Whites' peaceful evening, which is interrupted by Morris's visit. He tells them about the paw's powers but also warns them of its potential dangers.
2. The First Wish: Ignoring the warnings, Mr. White makes the first wish for two hundred pounds, which he believes will improve their financial situation. The next day, they receive the money, but it comes at the cost of Herbert's life in a workplace accident.
3. The Second Wish: Grieving, Mrs. White urges her husband to make a second wish to bring Herbert back to life. Mr. White hesitates but eventually complies.
4. The Third Wish: As they await Herbert's return, they are horrified by the implications of his resurrection. Mr. White, fearing what he might become, makes a final wish, which ultimately resolves the story.

Themes in "The Monkey's Paw"

"The Monkey's Paw" is rich with themes that provoke thought and discussion. Here are some of the most significant:

Fate and Free Will

- The story raises the question of whether people can or should control their destinies. The Whites' choices lead to tragic outcomes, suggesting that some forces in life are beyond human control.
- The idea of free will is complicated by the consequences that arise from the Whites' wishes, indicating that the pursuit of desire can lead to unforeseen consequences.

The Dangers of Greed

- The initial wish for money illustrates how greed can cloud judgment. The Whites' desire for wealth ultimately leads to their downfall.
- The story serves as a cautionary tale about the risks associated with wanting too much and the moral implications of selfish desires.

The Supernatural

- The monkey's paw itself symbolizes supernatural intervention in human affairs. Its magical properties challenge the characters' understanding of reality and the natural order.
- The presence of the supernatural raises questions about belief and skepticism, as the characters grapple with the consequences of their wishes.

Character Analysis

Understanding the characters in "The Monkey's Paw" is crucial for grasping the story's themes.

Mr. White

- An embodiment of curiosity and stubbornness, Mr. White is initially skeptical but ultimately succumbs to temptation.
- His character arc illustrates the tragic consequences of his decisions, moving from a loving father to a guilt-ridden man.

Mrs. White

- Driven by grief, Mrs. White represents desperation and the lengths to which one will go for love. Her insistence on using the paw for a second wish highlights her vulnerability.
- She embodies the emotional fallout of the family's choices, showcasing a powerful transformation from hope to despair.

Herbert White

- The most tragic figure in the story, Herbert's death serves as the catalyst for the unfolding horror.
- His character represents the innocence lost due to the family's reckless decisions and serves as a reminder of the fragility of life.

Significance of CommonLit Answer Key

CommonLit provides a comprehensive answer key that can enhance students' understanding of "The Monkey's Paw." The answer key typically includes:

Comprehension Questions

- Understanding Key Details: Questions that assess students' grasp of the plot, such as what the initial wish was and its consequences.
- Theme Analysis: Prompts that encourage students to reflect on the story's broader themes, including fate and morality.
- Character Insights: Questions that delve into character motivations and transformations throughout the narrative.

Discussion Prompts

CommonLit often includes discussion prompts that foster critical thinking and collaborative learning. These may include:

1. What would you do?: Students can discuss what they would wish for and the potential consequences of their choices.
2. Moral implications: Engaging students in conversations about the morality of their wishes and the lessons learned from the story.
3. Alternative endings: Encouraging creativity by asking students to write an alternative ending that changes the fate of the characters.

Conclusion

"The Monkey's Paw" remains a powerful story that resonates with readers due to its exploration of fate, free will, and the consequences of desire. Through its rich themes and complex characters, the narrative serves not only as a cautionary tale but also as a profound source of discussion in educational settings. The CommonLit answer key enhances the learning experience by providing structured questions and prompts that encourage deeper analysis and reflection. As students engage with this classic text, they will not only appreciate the intricacies of the story but also gain valuable insights into the human condition and the moral dilemmas that accompany our choices.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'The Monkey's Paw'?

The main theme of 'The Monkey's Paw' is the idea of fate and the consequences of interfering with it, highlighting the dangers of tampering with destiny.

How does the monkey's paw influence the characters' lives?

The monkey's paw grants wishes that lead to tragic consequences, illustrating how desires can lead to unforeseen and often disastrous outcomes.

What lesson does the story convey about greed?

The story conveys that greed can lead to one's downfall, as the characters' desires for wealth and happiness ultimately result in their suffering.

Who are the main characters in 'The Monkey's Paw'?

The main characters are Mr. White, Mrs. White, and their son Herbert, who are all affected by the wishes made on the monkey's paw.

What is the significance of the number three in the story?

The number three is significant as it represents the three wishes granted by the paw, and each wish leads to escalating consequences.

How does the story illustrate the concept of irony?

The story illustrates irony through the outcomes of the wishes, which

contradict the characters' intentions, highlighting that not all wishes lead to happiness.

What emotions do the characters experience after making their wishes?

The characters experience a range of emotions including regret, fear, and despair as they deal with the unintended consequences of their wishes.

How does the author create suspense in 'The Monkey's Paw'?

The author creates suspense through foreshadowing, ominous descriptions, and the gradual revelation of the consequences of the wishes, keeping readers on edge.

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