

# the monkeys paw plot diagram

## The Monkeys Paw Plot Diagram: An In-Depth Analysis

**The Monkeys Paw** is a renowned short story written by W.W. Jacobs, first published in 1902. This tale is a staple in the horror genre and delves into themes of fate, consequence, and the supernatural. The plot revolves around a mystical artifact known as the monkey's paw, which grants its owner three wishes. However, each wish comes with dire consequences, ultimately leading to devastating results. In this article, we will explore the plot diagram of "The Monkeys Paw," breaking down its key components and analyzing the elements that contribute to the story's lasting impact.

### Plot Diagram Overview

A plot diagram is a visual representation of the narrative structure of a story. It typically includes the following elements:

1. Exposition: Introduction of characters, setting, and background information.
2. Rising Action: Series of events that build tension and develop the conflict.
3. Climax: The turning point or most intense moment of the story.
4. Falling Action: Events that occur after the climax leading to the resolution.
5. Resolution: The conclusion where the conflict is resolved.

Let's examine how these components apply to "The Monkeys Paw."

### Exposition

The story begins by introducing the White family, consisting of Mr. White, Mrs. White, and their son Herbert. They live in a remote cottage in England. The setting is significant; it evokes a sense of isolation and simplicity, which contrasts sharply with the supernatural events that unfold. The exposition establishes the mundane life of the Whites, setting the stage for the arrival of the monkey's paw.

The story's background is introduced through the character of Sergeant-Major Morris, a family friend who has returned from India. He brings with him the monkey's paw, a talisman that he warns them about. He explains that it has the power to grant three wishes but that it comes with a heavy cost. This

warning foreshadows the tragic events to come, creating an atmosphere of impending doom.

## **Rising Action**

The rising action begins when Mr. White makes the fateful decision to wish upon the monkey's paw. He is skeptical but ultimately succumbs to curiosity. His first wish is for a sum of two hundred pounds. Shortly thereafter, they receive news that Herbert has died in a workplace accident, and the compensation from the company amounts to exactly two hundred pounds. This event serves as the catalyst for the unfolding tragedy and illustrates the story's central theme: the dangers of tampering with fate.

As the narrative progresses, the tension escalates. Mrs. White, devastated by her son's death, urges Mr. White to use the paw to wish Herbert back to life. Mr. White is hesitant, fearing the consequences, but ultimately agrees to make the wish. This decision heightens the emotional stakes and leads to further complications in the plot.

## **Climax**

The climax of "The Monkey's Paw" occurs when Mrs. White, filled with desperation and hope, demands that Mr. White wish for their son's resurrection. Mr. White reluctantly complies and makes the wish. The atmosphere is charged with tension as they await the outcome. The narrative reaches its peak when they hear a knocking at the door, suggesting that Herbert has returned.

However, the reader, along with Mr. White, is filled with dread. The story plays with the horror of uncertainty, as the nature of Herbert's return is shrouded in ambiguity. This moment encapsulates the story's moral message: sometimes, it is better to leave the past undisturbed.

## **Falling Action**

In the falling action, the consequences of the wish become apparent. Mr. White, realizing the horrific implications of their actions, becomes frantic and terrified. He fears that their son has returned in a grotesque or unnatural form. Meanwhile, Mrs. White, consumed by grief and hope, rushes to the door to greet her son.

Mr. White, in a moment of desperation, frantically wishes for the knocking to stop, fearing what lies beyond the door. This act signifies a turning point where Mr. White attempts to regain control over the situation, realizing the futility of their desires.

## Resolution

The resolution of "The Monkey's Paw" is bleak and serves as a cautionary tale. The knocking ceases, and when Mrs. White opens the door, there is nothing there. Herbert is never truly returned to them, leaving the Whites to grapple with their choices and the painful reality of loss. The story ends with a chilling reminder of the consequences of their actions, emphasizing the moral lesson that the pursuit of desires without consideration of the repercussions can lead to tragic outcomes.

## Thematic Analysis

The plot diagram of "The Monkey's Paw" effectively highlights several key themes that resonate throughout the story:

- **The Dangers of Greed:** The White family's desire for more leads to their downfall. Their initial wish for money sets off a chain reaction of tragic events.
- **The Unforeseen Consequences:** Each wish granted by the paw comes with unintended repercussions, illustrating the idea that one should be careful what they wish for.
- **The Nature of Fate:** The story suggests that tampering with fate can result in dire consequences, raising questions about free will and predestination.
- **The Fragility of Life:** The narrative explores the themes of life and death, emphasizing how quickly circumstances can change and the pain of loss.

## Conclusion

"The Monkey's Paw" remains a powerful exploration of human desires and the consequences that follow. The plot diagram serves as an effective tool for understanding the structure of the story and how its elements contribute to its overarching themes. W.W. Jacobs crafts a haunting narrative that warns against the dangers of greed and the unpredictable nature of fate. As readers reflect on the story, they are left with a lingering sense of dread and a reminder of the profound impact that our choices can have on our lives. The tale endures as a classic in literature, continuing to resonate with audiences and provoke thought long after its publication.

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

## **What are the main elements of the plot diagram for 'The Monkey's Paw'?**

The plot diagram includes exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. The exposition introduces the White family and the mysterious monkey's paw. The rising action involves the family's wishes and the consequences that follow. The climax occurs when the third wish is made. The falling action deals with the aftermath of the wishes, and the resolution shows the final consequences of their actions.

## **How does the exposition in 'The Monkey's Paw' set the stage for the story?**

The exposition introduces the White family, their home, and their interactions with Sergeant-Major Morris, who brings the monkey's paw. It establishes the themes of fate and the supernatural, foreshadowing the tragic events that will unfold as a result of their curiosity about the paw.

## **What is the significance of the climax in 'The Monkey's Paw'?**

The climax occurs when Mr. White makes the third wish for his son Herbert to return after his tragic death. This moment is crucial as it represents the peak of tension and the ultimate consequence of tampering with fate, leading to horrifying outcomes that underscore the story's moral.

## **What themes are explored in the falling action of 'The Monkey's Paw'?**

The falling action explores themes of grief, loss, and the dangers of desire. After the wish for Herbert's return, the family's reaction to his unexpected and disturbing resurrection highlights how their wishes can lead to unintended and tragic consequences, emphasizing the idea that some things are better left untouched.

## **How does the resolution of 'The Monkey's Paw' reflect the story's moral?**

In the resolution, after Mrs. White's desperate attempts to open the door to Herbert, Mr. White makes the final wish to undo the previous wishes. This action reflects the moral that desires can lead to ruin and that one should be cautious about what they wish for, as the consequences can be dire.

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