‘The Monkey’s Paw” Discussion Questions

1. What does the word ‘fate’ mean to you? Do you believe in fate?
2. What type of mood is established in the beginning of the story? What helps determine that feeling?
3. What magical ability does the monkey’s paw have?
4. Why did the fakir place a spell on the paw?
5. Sergeant Major Morris’ face whitens when he reveals that he has had three wishes. What can you infer about the paw?
6. What is probably upsetting the sergeant-major about the White family’s lightheartedness toward the paw?
7. What was the first man’s third wish? How might this be an example of foreshadowing?
8. Why doesn’t Mr. White know what to wish for? What is Mr. White’s first wish?
9. What does the paw immediately do after the first wish? What can you infer from this?
10. What does Mr. White see in the fire the night of his first wish? How is this an example of foreshadowing?
11. What are the family’s feelings about the wish in the morning?
12. How do the Whites come to receive the 200 pounds?
13. Why does Mr. White want the monkey’s paw? What is the second wish?
14. What do you suppose was the final wish?
15. What do you think happened at the end of the story? What does he mean when Mr. White beds his wife not to let ‘it’ into the house? What is he afraid of? Who or what was outside of the house?
16. Foreshadowing: How does the quote, “Be careful what you wish for, you may receive it,” give the reader an idea about what may happen in the story?
17. How does the setting impact the story?
18. How does the setting change at the beginning of Part III? How does this impact the mood of the story?
19. Captain Morris tells his friend to make wishes sensible. Why? Are MR. White’s wishes sensible? Explain. What alternatives did MR. White have?