

Northwood High School  
2019-2020 Rising Ninth Graders  
Summer Choice Assignments

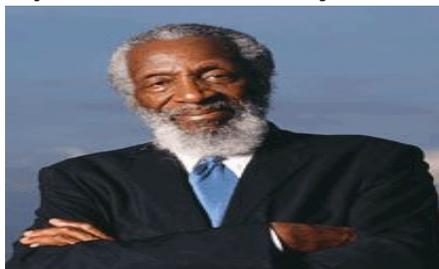


# Memoirs & Magic

**Instructions:**

1. Choose THREE excerpts to read from this packet.
2. For each excerpt, monitor your understanding by responding to the questions on the right hand side of the text.
3. For each excerpt, write multi-paragraph response to the excerpt prompt (Note: each excerpt has a DIFFERENT prompt. Make sure you respond to the correct one!) You will have to write THREE extended responses in total!

### **Option A: Shame by Dick Gregory (Excerpt on Page 7)**



Richard "Dick" Gregory was an American writer, comedian and civil rights activist known for his biting humor and social commentaries. In this autobiographical account, he writes about his experience as a poor young boy and the impact of a classroom incident that helped to define him for decades to come.

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- As you read, monitor your understanding by responding to the questions on the right hand side of the text.

Complete an extended response to the following prompt:

- *How does Gregory's memoir show the relationship between social class, poverty and dignity?*
- *In your response, be sure to consider the meaning of the key terms-**social class, poverty and dignity**. Use evidence from the text to determine how all three topics are connected.*



**Option B: *Hello My Name Is...* by Jason Kim**  
**(Excerpt on Page 12)**

Jason Kim is an Asian American screenwriter and playwright. In this personal account, Kim discusses his experiences emigrating from Korea at a young age and his struggle to fit into American culture while maintaining his identity.

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- As you read, monitor your understanding by responding to the questions on the right hand side of the text.
  - Write a multi-paragraph to the following prompt: Analyze the factors which led to Kim's rejection and eventual embrace of his identity as an Asian American.

**Option C: Zero by Paul Logan (Excerpt on Page 16)**

Bright and capable, the author of this essay followed the popular crowd—right into a career as a shopping-cart attendant at a giant warehouse store. There he ran into a glimpse of his past and had an unsettling vision of his future.

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- As you read, monitor your understanding by responding to the questions on the right hand side of the text.
  - The narrator addresses several issues high school students often experience. These topics include bullying, peer pressure, choices, failure and achievement.
  - *Write a multi-paragraph response analyzing how the narrator develops THREE of these issues throughout the text.*



**Option D: How I Found True Love in an Arranged Marriage by Surabhi Surendra: (Excerpt on Page 23)**

Arranged marriages have been traditional in many cultures, including South Asian societies, for centuries. While "love marriages" are becoming more popular in India, arranged marriages continue to thrive there as well. The tradition of arranged marriages has evolved over time, and today many potential spouses can spend more time getting to know each other before agreeing to marriage. In Surabhi Surendra's story of her own arranged marriage, she finds love in a match set up by her father.

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- As you read, monitor your understanding by responding to the questions on the right hand side of the text.
  - The author discusses the role of tradition, culture and personal choice in the text.
  - Write a multi-paragraph response analyzing the role of tradition, culture and personal choice in the outcome of events.

**Option E: *The Monkey's Paw* by W.W. Jacobs (Excerpt on Page 28):**

W.W. Jacobs (1863-1943) was an English writer of novels and short stories, most famous for his horror story, "The Monkey's Paw." In this text, Jacobs tells the story of an older couple, their adult son, and a visitor who brings them fantastic stories and a mysterious souvenir from his travels in India.

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- As you read, monitor your understanding by responding to the questions on the right hand side of the text.
  - In the story, the writer uses characterization and developments in the plot to highlight the role of fate and free will in the outcome of events.

Write a multi-paragraph response analyzing the role of fate **and** free will in the outcome of events in the story

*Shame* by Dick Gregory

I never learned hate at home, or shame. I had to go to school for that. I was about seven years old when I got my first big lesson. I was in love with a little girl named Helene Tucker, a light-complexioned little girl with pigtails and nice manners. She was always clean and she was smart in school. I think I went to school then mostly to look at her. I brushed my hair and even got me a little old handkerchief. It was a lady's handkerchief, but I didn't want Helene to see me wipe my nose on my hand.

The pipes were frozen again, there was no water in the house, but I washed my socks and shirt every night. I'd get a pot, and go over to Mister Ben's grocery store, and stick my pot down into his soda machine and scoop out some chopped ice. By evening the ice melted to water for washing. I got sick a lot that winter because the fire would go out at night before the clothes were dry. In the morning I'd put them on, wet or dry, because they were the only clothes I had.

Everybody's got a Helene Tucker, a symbol of everything you want. I loved her for her goodness, her cleanness, her popularity. She'd walk down my street and my brothers and sisters would yell, "Here comes Helene," and I'd rub my tennis sneakers on the back of my pants and wish my hair wasn't so nappy and the white folks' shirt fit me better. I'd run out on the street. If I knew my place and didn't come too close, she'd wink at me and say hello. That was a good feeling. Sometimes I'd follow her all the way home, and shovel the snow off her walk and try to make friends with her momma and her aunts. I'd drop money on her stoop late at night on my way back from shining shoes in the taverns. And she had a daddy, and he had a good job. He was a paperhanger.

I guess I would have gotten over Helene by summertime, but something happened in that classroom that made her face hang in front of me for the next twenty-two years. When I played the drums in high school, it was for Helene, and when I broke track records in college, it was for Helene, and when I started standing behind microphones and heard applause, I wished Helene could hear it too. It wasn't until I was twenty-nine years old and married and making money that I finally got her

How does the narrator introduce readers to the central idea of the story?

Highlight the significance of Helene Tucker to the narrator.

out of my system. Helene was sitting in that classroom when I learned to be ashamed of myself.

It was on a Thursday. I was sitting in the back of the room, in a seat with a chalk circle drawn around it. The idiot's seat, the troublemaker's seat.

The teacher thought I was stupid. Couldn't spell, couldn't read, couldn't do arithmetic. Just stupid. Teachers were never interested in finding out that you couldn't concentrate because you were so hungry, because you hadn't had any breakfast. All you could think about was noontime; would it ever come? Maybe you could sneak into the cloakroom and steal a bite of some kid's lunch out of a coat pocket. A bite of something. Paste. You can't really make a meal of paste, or put it on bread for a sandwich, but sometimes I'd scoop a few spoonfuls out of the big paste jar in the back of the room. Pregnant people get strange tastes. I was pregnant with poverty. Pregnant with dirt and pregnant with smells that made people turn away. Pregnant with cold and pregnant with shoes that were never bought for me. Pregnant with five other people in my bed and no daddy in the next room, and pregnant with hunger. Paste doesn't taste too bad when you're hungry.

The teacher thought I was a troublemaker. All she saw from the front of the room was a little black boy who squirmed in his idiot's seat and made noises and poked the kids around him. I guess she couldn't see a kid who made noises because he wanted someone to know he was there.

It was on a Thursday, the day before the Negro payday. The eagle always flew on Friday. The teacher was asking each student how much his father would give to the Community Chest. On Friday night, each kid would get the money from his father, and on Monday he would bring it to the school. I decided I was going to buy a daddy right then. I had money in my pocket from shining shoes and selling papers, and whatever Helene Tucker pledged for her daddy I was going to top it. And I'd hand the money right in. I wasn't going to wait until Monday to buy me a daddy.

I was shaking, scared to death. The teacher opened her book and started calling out names alphabetically: "Helene Tucker?" "My Daddy said he'd give two dollars

What important information does the reader learn from this paragraph?

Highlight the metaphor that the writer uses to portray poverty.

What can the reader infer about the narrator's ambitions from this paragraph?

and fifty cents." "That's very nice, Helene. Very, very nice indeed."

That made me feel pretty good. It wouldn't take too much to top that. I had almost three dollars in dimes and quarters in my pocket. I stuck my hand in my pocket and held on to the money, waiting for her to call my name. But the teacher closed her book after she called everybody else in the class.

I stood up and raised my hand. "What is it now?" "You forgot me?"

She turned toward the blackboard. "I don't have time to be playing with you, Richard."

"My daddy said he'd..." "Sit down, Richard, you're disturbing the class." "My daddy said he'd give...fifteen dollars."

She turned around and looked mad.

"We are collecting this money for you and your kind, Richard Gregory. If your daddy can give fifteen dollars you have no business being on relief."

"I got it right now, I got it right now, my Daddy gave it to me to turn in today, my daddy said\_"

"And furthermore," she said, looking right at me, her nostrils getting big and her lips getting thin and her eyes opening wide, "We know you don't have a daddy."

Helene Tucker turned around, her eyes full of tears. She felt sorry for me. Then I couldn't see her too well because I was crying, too.

"Sit down, Richard."

And I always thought the teacher kind of liked me. She always picked me to wash the blackboard on Friday, after school. That was a big thrill; it made me feel important. If I didn't wash it, come Monday the school might not function right.

"Where are you going, Richard! "

I walked out of school that day, and for a long time I didn't go back very often.

There was shame there. Now there was shame everywhere. It seemed like the whole world had been inside that classroom, everyone had heard what the teacher had said, everyone had turned around and felt sorry for me. There was shame in going to the Worthy Boys Annual Christmas Dinner for you and your kind, because everybody knew what a worthy boy was. Why

How does the setting contribute to the narrator's response?

couldn't they just call it the Boys Annual Dinner-why'd they have to give it a name? There was shame in wearing the brown and orange and white plaid mackinaw' the welfare gave to three thousand boys. Why'd it have to be the same for everybody so when you walked down the street the people could see you were on relief? It was a nice warm mackinaw and it had a hood, and my momma beat me and called me a little rat when she found out I stuffed it in the bottom of a pail full of garbage way over on Cottage Street. There was shame in running over to Mister Ben's at the end of the day and asking for his rotten peaches, there was shame in asking Mrs. Simmons for a spoonful of sugar, there was shame in running out to meet the relief truck. I hated that truck, full of food for you and your kind. I ran into the house and hid when it came. And then I started to sneak through alleys, to take the long way home so the people going into White's Eat Shop wouldn't see me. Yeah, the whole world heard the teacher that day-we all know you don't have a Daddy.

It lasted for a while, this kind of numbness. I spent a lot of time feeling sorry for myself. And then one day I met this wino in a restaurant. I'd been out hustling all day, shining shoes, selling newspapers, and I had googobs of money in my pocket. Bought me a bowl of chili for fifteen cents, and a cheese- burger for fifteen cents, and a Pepsi for five cents, and a piece of chocolate cake for ten cents. That was a good meal. I was eating when this old wino came in. I love winos because they never hurt anyone but themselves.

The old wino sat down at the counter and ordered twenty-six cents worth of food. He ate it like he really enjoyed it. When the owner, Mister Williams, asked him to pay the check, the old wino didn't lie or go through his pocket like he suddenly found a hole.

He just said: "Don't have no money." The owner yelled: "Why in hell did you come in here and eat my food if you don't have no money? That food cost me money."

Mister Williams jumped over the counter and knocked the wino off his stool and beat him over the head with a pop bottle. Then he stepped back and watched the wino bleed. Then he kicked him. And he kicked him again.

I looked at the wino with blood all over his face and I went over.

Highlight the lasting impact of this incident on the narrator's life.

"Leave him alone, Mister Williams. I'll pay the twenty-six cents."

The wino got up, slowly, pulling himself up to the stool, then up to the counter, holding on for a minute until his legs stopped shaking so bad. He looked at me with pure hate. "Keep your twenty-six cents. You don't have to pay, not now. I just finished paying for it."

He started to walk out, and as he passed me, he reached down and touched my shoulder. "Thanks, Sonny, but it's too late now. Why didn't you pay it before?" I was pretty sick about that. I waited too long to help another man.

Why does the narrator include this incident at the end of his own story?

## Hello, My Name is \_\_\_\_\_ by Jason Kim

I will never forget the day I picked a new name. I was standing in front of my class on my first day of school at Craig Elementary in St. Louis, Missouri. I had, only a day before, landed at Lambert airport after a 16-hour flight from Seoul, South Korea. I was 10 years old. I was nervous, terrified, and jet-lagged, and I was wearing a vest because I thought it was chic.

For my entire life, everyone, including me, had known me by my Korean name: Jun Hyuk. But here, in this new country, in a brand-new classroom full of foreign faces, I had to pick a new, easy-to-pronounce, American name.

Jason.

Jason Kim.

How did I settle on Jason? Because I didn't speak any English. Because my teacher didn't speak any Korean. And because it was either going to be Aladdin, from my favorite childhood Disney tale, or Jason, from the *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*.

I spent the next decade wanting nothing more than to look like a Larry Lorberbaum or a Garrett Kennedy. I still vividly remember my first time at recess, a confusing experience for several reasons, in large part because hanging off monkey bars and making each other cry during dodgeball were not educationally sanctioned activities in Asia. What was so fun about waiting in line, running up the steps, and going down a tiny slide over and over again? What was the value in sprinting after your classmate like a person with rabies, screaming, "TAG!"

Why didn't anyone look, sound, or act like me?

I spent most days at recess sitting alone on the sidelines, eating the special snack that my mother had packed. The snack, a rice cake or a piece of candy from Korea, was always accompanied by a note, usually a joke, and sometimes embellished with a drawing, which often looked

Why does the narrator decide to change his name?

In what way does the narrator's past experiences increase his internal conflict?

like an abstract painting when it was meant to be a sketch of our beloved deceased poodle.

A month had passed when a teacher finally tapped me on the shoulder.

"Are you OK, sweetie?"

Before I could answer, another teacher rang out, "Maybe he likes sitting alone. Maybe that's the Asian way."

But in truth, I wanted to participate. I wanted to run up to Timmy like a crazy person and yell, "YOU'RE IT!" I just didn't know how.

Outside on the playground, sitting alone at recess, I learned to hate being Asian. I wanted desperately, more than anything, to be white.

I immediately forced my parents to stop calling me Jun Hyuk at home. I named myself after some guy in a live-action children's television series, and by God, they were going to call me by that name. I got rid of my fitted vests for loose-fitting basketball jerseys. I bought tickets to an Incubus concert and threw away my K-pop CDs. I stopped reading Korean children's books in order to figure out what the hell was going on with James and his giant peaches.

At the dinner table, I committed the two worst sins that a Korean son could possibly commit: I stopped speaking Korean and I stopped eating Korean food. My parents would try to talk to me over a bowl of kimchi stew, and I would pout and ask, in English, if we could order the Meat Lover's pie from Pizza Hut. For my 11th birthday, my mom made me my favorite Korean dish, oh jing uh bokkeum (spicy stir-fried squid), and I looked at her with disdain as I declared, "This is disgusting." The next day for dinner, she made me a cheeseburger. I promptly told her it tasted inauthentic and made her drive me to McDonald's. Oh, and no more special snacks either. Unless they were artificially flavored and made by Kraft. (I was a heinous child. Sorry, Mom.)

I graduated from high school and moved to New York City for college, where my primary goal was to blend in. But more and more, my new friends wanted to know about all the things that made me uncomfortable in the

Why is it hard for the narrator to interact with other kids?

Highlight the ways the narrator rejected his identity?

Midwest. To them, being an immigrant made me interesting. At dinner parties, people would fawn over the Korean food and ask for my mom's recipes. They even wanted to know about my childhood in Seoul. And at karaoke, people were genuinely excited that I could sing both Girls Generation and Natalie Imbruglia's "Torn." All of a sudden, being different was an asset, not a risk. In New York, I didn't have to be ashamed about being an Asian immigrant. I could just be ashamed about everything else in my life.

A year after I finished graduate school in playwriting, almost two decades after I'd landed at Lambert airport, Lena and Jennicast me as an Asian American graduate student on the fourth season of *Girls*. Almost immediately after the episodes aired, I began receiving emails, tweets, and Facebook messages from young Asian American writers, actors, and performers, who were excited to see a fellow Asian face on TV.

I was shocked. How could this be? I appeared on the show for, like, a millisecond, and my Beyoncé sweatshirt was definitely doing more work than I did onscreen. It was genuinely baffling to think that anyone could look at my very Korean face and feel a sense of connection, much less react in a positive way to the very features I hated about myself for so long.

We are at the point in our culture where people are finally beginning to talk about Asian identities in the media. I have not been at the forefront of those issues. I have been crouching in the back, hiding in the corner, watching people like Margaret Cho, Daniel Dae Kim, Ali Wong, George Takei, Constance Wu, and Aziz Ansari courageously speak up about the various issues that Asian Americans face in Hollywood.

The issues exist both in front of the camera and behind the scenes. There are barely any roles written for Asian actors. And in general, the roles that can be played by a person of any race do not tend to go to Asian actors. Worst of all, the few roles that should go to Asian actors — some very high-profile — are being portrayed by white actors. Behind the camera, there are equally few Asian American writers, producers, studio executives, authors, and editors, and while there are certainly a significant

How are these experiences different from the narrator's feelings about himself?

Why was the narrator surprised by the reaction he received from young Asian Americans?

number of people struggling to make it, their efforts seem to go largely unrecognized.

I have always been terrified of speaking up on behalf of diversity, which to me means a state of inclusion — a choice to be aware of the vast and profound range of identities in this world, including your own. I have been terrified because I grew up in a country without many visible Asian Americans in the culture, and I learned to hate every part of myself that felt foreign and strange. Unfortunately, years later, this is a problem that many young Asian Americans continue to face. How do you understand yourself in a diverse country that actively chooses to ignore your particular kind of diversity?

At one point during my 20s, I took a long, dramatic look in the mirror and realized, You will be Korean for the rest of your life. As a teenager growing up in the Midwest, that thought made me cringe. Now, it makes me happy and deeply proud.

My dream now as a 30-year-old is for our country to become a place where a cameo like mine would go completely unnoticed. And to see every third-grade teacher tell his or her students, "Keep your name. You don't have to change a thing."

How does the narrator begin to address his own racial identity?

*Zero by Paul Logan*

*Three F's and two I's.*

My first semester grades hit me like a kick in the stomach. The *F's* were for classes where my work was poor. The *I's* were "incompletes"—for courses in which I never finished my assignments. They eventually became *F's* too.

I crumpled the report card and shoved it deep in a trashcan. I can't say I was surprised. A zero grade point average was what I deserved, no question about it. But seeing my name in print on the worst possible report card still hurt. It also lit a spark in me, one that changed my life.

I was nineteen when I bombed out my first year of college. I hadn't always been a poor student. During elementary and middle school, I was consistently at the top of my class. But when I transferred into a huge regional high school, everything changed. I started "underachieving." Guidance counselors, teachers, and members of my family noticed. "You have potential," they'd say when they heard of my mediocre performance. "You just don't apply yourself."

They didn't understand. The truth was I *did* apply myself—just not to academics. As a shy acne-prone teenager thrown into an enormous and unfamiliar high school, grades were not my priority; survival was. During my freshman year, I was constantly hassled and teased by a group of older guys at my school. They shoved and threatened me on the bus, teased me in the halls, and mocked me during lunchtime. *Nerd. Geek. Loser.* These insults were

How is the narrator's performance in middle and elementary school different from his performance in high school?

fired at me like bullets. Sometimes they came with fists. I got scared.

This fear transformed me. Constantly stressed and distracted, I stopped worrying about classes. Too embarrassed to admit to teachers or my family what was happening, I quietly dropped from an A student in 8<sup>th</sup> grade to a C student just a year later. My definition of success changed just as dramatically. To me, a good day at school was no longer about doing well in class. It was simply about getting home without being hassled. To achieve this goal, I learned to blend in to the crowd—to look, talk, and act like the popular kids. First, I changed my clothes and hairstyle. Then I started behaving differently, hanging out with new “friends” and teasing the few kids who fit in worse than me. By the end of my freshman year, I escaped being at the bottom of the social ladder, but I also gave up on being a good student.

Instead, my focus was on following the crowd and being a social success. In 10<sup>th</sup> grade, I got a job at a nearby mall, so I could buy what seemed important: name-brand clothes, expensive sneakers, the latest CD's, and movie tickets—things I thought I needed to be popular. So what if my grades tumbled because I neglected my studies? At least no one was laughing at me anymore. By 11<sup>th</sup> grade, a new girlfriend and my used car were what I cared most about. Classes were a meaningless activity I endured weekdays. Senior year was more of the same, though I took the SAT and applied to a few colleges—because classmates were doing it. Despite my mediocre grades, I managed to get accepted. The following September, thanks to my family's savings, I followed the crowd and floated straight to college.

That's when I started to sink. Years of putting social time and my job ahead of school left me

Highlight the factors which influence the change in the narrator's performance.

In your view is the narrator being practical or foolish?

without study habits to deal with college work. Years of coasting in class left me unready for assignments that required effort and time management skills. Years of following others left me unequipped to make smart choices about my education. In addition to lacking skills, I also lacked motivation. College felt as meaningless to me as high school. Though I'd gotten accepted at a four-year university, nothing pushed me to succeed there. I arrived on campus in September without skills, goals, and a plan. I figured I could continue doing what I had done for years: coasting. It was a recipe for disaster.

My first week on campus, I coasted through freshman orientation, skipping activities because I didn't take them seriously. My second week, I attended a few parties, got home late, and overslept, missing a bunch of classes. No big deal, I thought. I'd just float by and hand in my homework late. But I quickly discovered, unlike high school, catching up was difficult in college. Readings in my English and History classes were longer and more complicated than I was used to—too difficult for me to skim. Writing assignments were more numerous and required more time than I'd expected. Unaccustomed to the workload, I started cutting "easy" classes to complete overdue assignments from other courses. This strategy made me fall further behind, which, in turn, made it difficult to motivate myself to attend class.

*Why bother if you're already behind?* I thought.

Deadlines passed and work kept piling up, and I began to realize I was over my head. Halfway through the semester, I stopped going to classes regularly, hoping instead that I could score well on final exams to offset my missing assignments. But without attending class and taking notes, there was no way I could adequately prepare for tests. While coasting

According to the narrator, what skills do students need to succeed in college?

worked in high school, it didn't work in college. By the end of ten weeks, I knew I was done. No longer able to float, I'd sunk. My family was stunned and disappointed at my failure. I was too, though the lesson hadn't yet fully sunk in.

That happened a few months later when I was working at a large warehouse store called Sam's Club—the one place near home that would hire an unskilled college dropout in the middle of winter. My job was to retrieve shopping carts from the store's massive parking lot and stack them in rows for customers. Days and nights, I trudged across the dismal asphalt collecting carts and cleaning up piles of garbage and soiled diapers shoppers left behind. On this March afternoon, it was raw and stormy, and I was wearing a used yellow Sam's Club raincoat that made me stink of sweat and vinyl. My hair was dripping, and my shoes squished like soaked sponges with each step.

The store was crowded with shoppers, and I'd just shoved a heavy train of carts next to the front door when a cluster of young people walked out. I recognized them immediately: four popular classmates who'd gone to my high school. They were giggling about something—a sound that brought me back to the time, years earlier, when I feared being laughed at by my peers. My face began to burn.

"Oh my God, it's *Paul*," said one of them. They all looked at me. I felt trapped.

"What are *you* doing here?" said Ken, a guy who'd been in my English class in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. He glanced at my rain-soaked jacket.

"Working," I said. There was an awkward silence. I had spent years trying to fit in with people like

Highlight the vocabulary words the narrator uses to suggest that he dislikes his job.

Why are these friends surprised by the

them, and now I only wanted to get away. "What about you?" I asked, hoping to change the subject.

"We're home for spring break," Ken replied.

The burning on my face suddenly grew hotter. They were already finishing their first year of college, and I was pushing carts in the rain—pushing carts for them.

*"Paul we need more carts in here! Hurry up!!!"* My supervisor yelled from inside the store.

My former classmates looked uncomfortable and embarrassed. I could see the questions in their eyes. *What happened to you? Weren't you in college too?* I felt as if my first semester grade point average was written across my face and they were reading it.

*Zero point zero.*

I nodded a quick goodbye and turned away. My eyes stung as the truth of my mistakes poured down on me like the rain. I had allowed myself to become what my grade point average said: a failure—a dropout without a plan, a goal, or a real future. A zero. Coasting wasn't going to carry me any further. Neither would the CD's, the parties, or the brand name sneakers I'd so valued in high school. By pursuing them and nothing else, I'd closed doors in my life. If I kept following the same path, I could spend years struggling in that dreary parking lot or some other menial job while my peers moved forward. I wanted to do more with my life than push shopping carts.

The spark which ignited at the sight of my report card erupted into a burning flame in my chest. Watching my friends drive off that afternoon, one thing was suddenly clear to me: it was time to get

narrator's  
circumstances?

How does the encounter  
with his friends impact  
the narrator's choices?

serious and take control of my life. College could help me do that, I realized. It could be a lifeline; I just had to grab it—no more coasting.

The following fall, with money saved from working nine months in the parking lot, I paid for classes at a local community college. This time, I attended every orientation activity—and I took notes. Learning from past mistakes, I also bought a calendar and jotted down each assignment, so I could see deadlines well in advance and plan accordingly. Instead of skipping classes for social time, I arranged social events after class with peers who seemed serious about their work. No longer a follower, I became a study group leader! This actually helped me become a popular student—the thing I had chased for so long in high school.

I am not going to say it was easy. After long days on the job, I spent longer nights at home doing my coursework. It took months of practice for me to learn the skills I'd missed in high school: how to take good notes, how to take tests, how to write an effective essay, and how to get help when I needed it. But gradually I learned.

Throughout my “second” attempt at college, I sat beside many students who reminded me of myself during my first semester. I recognized them right away—students who seemed distracted or disinterested in class or who were frequently absent. They usually disappeared after a few weeks. Some were dealing with full lives that made it difficult to focus on their courses. Others, especially the ones straight out of high school, were coasting, unsure of why they were there or what they were doing. For these students, college is especially tough.

To thrive in college, you have to want to be there, and you have to be ready to focus on work. Some

How does the narrator's study habits change?

Why is the narrator quickly able to recognize students who are unlikely to succeed?

people aren't ready. They're likely to fail, just as I did. But even failure, as painful as it is, doesn't have to be an ending. It can be a learning experience—one that builds strength and gives direction. It can also serve as a wake up call that turns a floating student into a serious one. It can even light a spark that sets the stage for future success. Take it from me, a former zero, who graduated from community college with a perfect grade point average!

## How I Found True Love in an Arranged Marriage

By Surabhi Surendra

Last week we celebrated our sixth wedding anniversary. Ours was an arranged marriage, and I had not even seen his picture before saying yes to him. Sounds so backwards, eh? ! I didn't see his picture because I didn't care to see, as I was already besotted by him when I began to talk to him on the phone and chat with him over email.

It was the beginning of 2009. I was on holiday with my friend in Manipur without informing my parents. I called my sister at the hour of departure and told her I was leaving for a four-day holiday in Manipur with my friend. Before she could say anything, I switched off my phone and sat on the ATR2 that took off from Kolkata.

Within this short trip, I intended to leave behind the emotional bruises of a failed relationship and also to get some relief from the mounting pressure of arranged marriage that had been dangling over my head. For the past five years, my papa brought proposals to me for marriage, and I somehow couldn't seem to settle down with any of them.

I would talk to them, once or multiple times, depending on my interest, but none of them fit well in my vision of a "life partner." It was difficult to explain this concept of "my kind of life partner" to my increasingly restless parents, but I was determined to not give in to their irrational demands. I knew I would rather stay single and stay abroad than marry someone against my wishes. Coming to Manipur was an impulsive decision to gain some sanity.

I didn't know the devil of arranged marriage would follow me up there, where the phone caught signal once every 10 minutes. But you see, parents find a way to get

to you. I was trying to call my bestie from Manipur, and was haggling with the intermittent network, when I saw my phone beeping: "Papa calling."

It sent chills down my spine, but as a matter of family rules, I answered the call. What I heard from the other end was more than enough to spoil my vacation. Papa had given my number to a prospective match who might call me anytime. I was now on an alert, and since I couldn't hate Papa, I hated this prospect who could call me. Couldn't he give a set date and time?

Thankfully the phone call never came, but a month later an email arrived on Valentine's Day. The sender had politely asked me to be his friend, and while he told me about himself in a flat 10 sentences, he asked me if I wanted to change him.

As a thoughtful reply, I wrote to him in detail that I was a spontaneous and happy-go-lucky girl who was seeking love, chemistry, mutual understanding and a spark. This probably didn't answer his questions, so he called me the next day.

"I sent you an email but you didn't reply," he questioned.

"I did. I sent a long reply," I retorted.

"You sent an email but it was not the reply to my questions. They remained unanswered," he argued.

I didn't know what to say, except that I thought he was an extremely arrogant man full of attitude with a superiority complex about his job. I didn't want to carry on with the conversation, but I did because I knew I would have to answer Papa after the call. We talked, and he spoke about his life, his personality and he confessed this was the first call he ever made to a girl. At the end of that hour-long conversation, he admitted that he had never spoken to any woman for that long.

"What? Not even to your mum?" I asked.

"Sadly, no. I lost her when I was 14, which was five years after my father's death."

I was quiet, speechless and spellbound. This explains his maturity. He didn't carry a phone, which is why he couldn't give a set date and time to call. This explained

Why does the narrator describe her decision as "backwards"?

How does the narrator's view of relationships differ from her parents' view?

why he asked me if I wanted to bring about any change in him. He wanted to be accepted the way he is, and he brutally presents himself in his purest form to people.

"I do not have any bank balance or property but I have immense love to give. I have always held onto this love and I now want to love someone to the best of my capacity," he said in one of the following conversations.

Is he a part of me? How else could he know that I was seeking somebody who could love me to the best of his abilities? How could he learn that I didn't need money or wealth or property, but a sound character and true, pure love?

One phone call led to another and one email gave way to a chain of emails. We shared views, opinions and feelings. He talked about his struggling childhood, while I talked about my insecurities and inferiorities. We discussed the hypocrisies of society and we planned for a happier future. But I had not seen his picture while he had seen plenty of mine. My social networks were rife with images of my vacations, friends and family, and he was completely absent from Google.

One day Papa asked me, "How is it going with him? Did he say he is ready to marry you?"

"No. He hinted at it but he hasn't said it explicitly," I replied.

That night he specifically mentioned marrying me, and I asked him to talk to Papa. He called Papa and only said, "Thank you, uncle."

Papa was a little confused and asked, "Thank you for what?"

"Thank you for sending Surabhi in my life. I want to marry her."

Next day we were off to his training center in Mussoorie to carry out a small, formal family tradition of "roka." My heart thumped heavily on those curvy, snaky uphill roads. What if I don't like him physically? What if he had chubby cheeks? What if he was too fair? My mind was bombarding my heart with questions, and my heart replied to each question with a quick heartbeat.

How does the prospective match reveal an aspect of his character in the first phone call?

Highlight the factors which lead to the

I knew he had worked in Indian Air Force for 10 years, so I was assured he possessed a well rugged body, but body wasn't enough. I had to like his face. I wanted to see kindness in his eyes and an innocent, compassionate face. Finally the moment arrived. He was waiting outside his training center to receive us. From the rear window of the car, I glanced at him. Standing around 5'8" tall, he looked decent and handsome.

A sharp nose, petite eyes and a broad jaw primarily defined his facial features. Behind those glasses, I could see purity in his eyes. His well combed, oily hair was a bit of a turn off, and so was his old patterned shirt, but I chose to dive deeper into his disposition that was charming on the phone and now charismatic in person.

We met, shook hands and he gifted me a rose bud. "My eternal love is yours now," he said. Now that we are happily and crazily married (we fight 10 times in a week), I can see how an arranged marriage system came to my rescue when I was failing at taking charge of my life. After brief stints of attempting to find love, I gave up. I realized that maybe I was not destined to get married and that my kind of love does not exist in the world.

My kind of love is slightly possessive, but overtly giving. It comprises more of shared laughs and dreams and less of gifts and services. My love is about me and my happiness, and my lover should be okay with it. But this is where I faltered. How can a person love you without demanding a bit of happiness for himself?

In my kind of love, I don't give happiness to him. He must derive it from mine, and how and where would I find such a person? Who would love me the way I want to be loved? Who would take the risk and eventually have a core belief that once he loves me, I will ultimately give all of myself to him?

Had I met him on any random occasion, I am sure I wouldn't have continued talking to him after five minutes. It was the pressure (and the liberty) of an arranged marriage system that helped me in knowing him further beyond those superficial, materialistic aspects.

I am thankful for the fact that Papa insisted I talk to him. It is an added advantage that Papa had done all the

narrator's change in attitude?

background checks by himself, and that there were no chances of being cheated. The best part is that Papa admired him instantly when he met him for the first time. Papa was so sure of his choice that he knew this guy would sweep me off my feet; he was so right.

He courted me for three months before we got married, in a dowry-free marriage. I did not think twice about not utilizing my Bradford MBA, and I quit my business analyst job with a MNC to settle down with him in the pristine and remote islands of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

How are these concerns seemingly at odds with the decisions the narrator makes earlier in the narrative?

## The Monkey's Paw

By W.W. Jacobs

Without, the night was cold and wet, but in the small parlour of Laburnam Villa the blinds were drawn and the fire burned brightly. Father and son were at chess, the former, who possessed ideas about the game involving radical changes, putting his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils that it even provoked comment from the white-haired old lady knitting placidly by the fire.

"Hark at the wind," said Mr. White, who, having seen a fatal mistake after it was too late, was amiably desirous of preventing his son from seeing it.

"I'm listening," said the latter, grimly surveying the board as he stretched out his hand. "Check."

"I should hardly think that he'd come to-night," said his father, with his hand poised over the board.

"Mate," replied the son.

"That's the worst of living so far out," bawled Mr. White, with sudden and unlooked-for violence; "of all the beastly, slushy, out-of-the-way places to live in, this is the worst. Pathway's a bog, and the road's a torrent. I don't know what people are thinking about. I suppose because only two houses on the road are let, they think it doesn't matter."

"Never mind, dear," said his wife soothingly; "perhaps you'll win the next one."

Mr. White looked up sharply, just in time to intercept a knowing glance between mother and son. The words died away on his lips, and he hid a guilty grin in his thin grey beard.

"There he is," said Herbert White, as the gate banged to loudly and heavy footsteps came toward the door.

The old man rose with hospitable haste, and opening the door, was heard condoling with the new arrival. The new arrival also consoled with himself, so that Mrs. White said, "Tut, tut!" and coughed gently as her husband entered the room, followed by a tall burly man, beady of eye and rubicund<sup>11</sup> of visage.

How did pressure and personal choice help the narrator to make her decision?

"Sergeant-Major Morris," he said, introducing him.

The sergeant-major shook hands, and taking the proffered seat by the fire, watched contentedly while his host got out whisky and tumblers and stood a small copper kettle on the fire.

At the third glass his eyes got brighter, and he began to talk, the little family circle regarding with eager interest this visitor from distant parts, as he squared his broad shoulders in the chair and spoke of strange scenes and doughty deeds; of wars and plagues and strange peoples.

"Twenty-one years of it," said Mr. White, nodding at his wife and son. "When he went away he was a slip of a youth in the warehouse. Now look at him."

"He don't look to have taken much harm," said Mrs. White, politely.

"I'd like to go to India myself," said the old man, "just to look round a bit, you know."

"Better where you are," said the sergeant-major, shaking his head. He put down the empty glass, and sighing softly, shook it again.

"I should like to see those old temples and fakirs and jugglers," said the old man. "What was that you started telling me the other day about a monkey's paw or something, Morris?"

"Nothing," said the soldier hastily. "Leastways, nothing worth hearing."

"Monkey's paw?" said Mrs. White curiously.

"Well, it's just a bit of what you might call magic, perhaps," said the sergeant-major off-handedly.

His three listeners leaned forward eagerly. The visitor absentmindedly put his empty glass to his lips and then set it down again. His host filled it for him.

"To look at," said the sergeant-major, fumbling in his pocket, "it's just an ordinary little paw, dried to a mummy."

He took something out of his pocket and proffered it. Mrs. White drew back with a grimace, but her son, taking it, examined it curiously.

How does the setting help to establish the mood?

Describe the relationship between parents and son.

"And what is there special about it?" inquired Mr. White, as he took it from his son and, having examined it, placed it upon the table.

"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."

His manner was so impressive that his hearers were conscious that their light laughter jarred somewhat.

"Well, why don't you have three, sir?" said Herbert White cleverly.

The soldier regarded him in the way that middle age is wont to regard presumptuous youth. "I have," he said quietly, and his blotchy face whitened.

"And did you really have the three wishes granted?" asked Mrs. White.

"I did," said the sergeant-major, and his glass tapped against his strong teeth.

"And has anybody else wished?" inquired the old lady.

"The first man had his three wishes, yes," was the reply. "I don't know what the first two were, but the third was for death. That's how I got the paw."

His tones were so grave that a hush fell upon the group.

"If you've had your three wishes, it's no good to you now, then, Morris," said the old man at last. "What do you keep it for?"

The soldier shook his head. "Fancy, I suppose," he said slowly.

"If you could have another three wishes," said the old man, eyeing him keenly, "would you have them?"

"I don't know," said the other. "I don't know."

He took the paw, and dangling it between his front finger and thumb, suddenly threw it upon the fire. White, with a slight cry, stooped down and snatched it off.

Better let it burn," said the soldier solemnly.

"If you don't want it, Morris," said the old man, "give it to me."

What is the Major's attitude towards the paw?

"I won't," said his friend doggedly. "I threw it on the fire. If you keep it, don't blame me for what happens. Pitch it on the fire again, like a sensible man."

The other shook his head and examined his new possession closely. "How do you do it?" he inquired.

"Hold it up in your right hand and wish aloud," said the sergeant-major, "but I warn you of the consequences."

"Sounds like the Arabian Nights," said Mrs White, as she rose and began to set the supper. "Don't you think you might wish for four pairs of hands for me?"

Her husband drew the talisman from his pocket and then all three burst into laughter as the sergeant-major, with a look of alarm on his face, caught him by the arm.

"If you must wish," he said gruffly, "wish for something sensible."

Mr. White dropped it back into his pocket, and placing chairs, motioned his friend to the table. In the business of supper the talisman was partly forgotten, and afterward the three sat listening in an enthralled fashion to a second instalment of the soldier's adventures in India.

"If the tale about the monkey paw is not more truthful than those he has been telling us," said Herbert, as the door closed behind their guest, just in time for him to catch the last train, "we shan't make much out of it."

"Did you give him anything for it, father?" inquired Mrs. White, regarding her husband closely.

"A trifle," said he, colouring slightly. "He didn't want it, but I made him take it. And he pressed me again to throw it away."

"Likely," said Herbert, with pretended horror. "Why, we're going to be rich, and famous, and happy. Wish to be an emperor, father, to begin with; then you can't be henpecked."

He darted round the table, pursued by the maligned Mrs. White armed with an antimacassar.

Mr. White took the paw from his pocket and eyed it dubiously. "I don't know what to wish for, and that's a fact," he said slowly. "It seems to me I've got all I want."

"If you only cleared the house, you'd be quite happy, wouldn't you?" said Herbert, with his hand on his shoulder. "Well, wish for two hundred pounds, then; that'll just do it."

According to Major Morris, what makes the paw special?

What can readers infer about Morris' interaction with the paw based on his response?

His father, smiling shamefacedly at his own credulity, held up the talisman, as his son, with a solemn face somewhat marred by a wink at his mother, sat down at the piano and struck a few impressive chords.

"I wish for two hundred pounds," said the old man distinctly.

A fine crash from the piano greeted the words, interrupted by a shuddering cry from the old man. His wife and son ran toward him.

"It moved, he cried, with a glance of disgust at the object as it lay on the floor. "As I wished it twisted in my hands like a snake."

"Well, I don't see the money," said his son, as he picked it up and placed it on the table, "and I bet I never shall."

"It must have been your fancy, father," said his wife, regarding him anxiously.

He shook his head. "Never mind, though; there's no harm done, but it gave me a shock all the same."

They sat down by the fire again while the two men finished their pipes. Outside, the wind was higher than ever, and the old man started nervously at the sound of a door banging upstairs. A silence unusual and depressing settled upon all three, which lasted until the old couple rose to retire for the night.

"I expect you'll find the cash tied up in a big bag in the middle of your bed," said Herbert, as he bade them good-night, "and something horrible squatting up on top of the wardrobe watching you as you pocket your ill-gotten gains."

He sat alone in the darkness, gazing at the dying fire, and seeing faces in it. The last face was so horrible and so simian that he gazed at it in amazement. It got so vivid that, with a little uneasy laugh, he felt on the table for a glass containing a little water to throw over it. His hand grasped the monkey's paw, and with a little shiver he wiped his hand on his coat and went up to bed.

## II.

In the brightness of the wintry sun next morning as it streamed over the breakfast table Herbert laughed at his fears. There was an air of prosaic<sup>37</sup> wholesomeness about the room which it had lacked on the previous night, and the dirty, shriveled little paw was pitched on the sideboard with a carelessness which betokened<sup>38</sup> no great belief in its virtues.

Why would Major Morris dangle the paw between his front finger and thumb?

How do the Whites respond to the story of the paw?

Why would Major Morris accept money for the paw after advising them to toss in the fire?

"I suppose all old soldiers are the same," said Mrs White. "The idea of our listening to such nonsense! How could wishes be granted in these days? And if they could, how could two hundred pounds hurt you, father?"

"Might drop on his head from the sky," said the frivolous Herbert.

"Morris said the things happened so naturally," said his father, "that you might if you so wished attribute it to coincidence."

"Well, don't break into the money before I come back," said Herbert, as he rose from the table. "I'm afraid it'll turn you into a mean, avaricious man, and we shall have to disown you."

His mother laughed, and following him to the door, watched him down the road, and returning to the breakfast table, was very happy at the expense of her husband's credulity. All of which did not prevent her from scurrying to the door at the postman's knock, nor prevent her from referring somewhat shortly to retired sergeant-majors of bibulous habits when she found that the post brought a tailor's bill.

"Herbert will have some more of his funny remarks, I expect, when he comes home," she said, as they sat at dinner.

"I dare say," said Mr. White, pouring himself out some beer; "but for all that, the thing moved in my hand; that I'll swear to."

"You thought it did," said the old lady soothingly.

"I say it did," replied the other. "There was no thought about it; I had just — What's the matter?"

His wife made no reply. She was watching the mysterious movements of a man outside, who, peering in an undecided fashion at the house, appeared to be trying to make up his mind to enter. In mental connection with the two hundred pounds, she noticed that the stranger was well dressed and wore a silk hat of glossy newness. Three times he paused at the gate, and then walked on again. The fourth time he stood with his hand upon it, and then with sudden resolution flung it open and walked up the path. Mrs. White at the same moment placed her hands behind her, and hurriedly unfastening the strings of her apron, put that useful article of apparel beneath the cushion of her chair.

She brought the stranger, who seemed ill at ease, into the room. He gazed at her furtively, and listened in a preoccupied fashion as the old lady apologized for the appearance of the

Highlight the details which seem to indicate that the paw has begun to impact the mood the White's household?

room, and her husband's coat, a garment which he usually reserved for the garden. She then waited as patiently as her sex would permit, for him to broach his business, but he was at first strangely silent.

"I — was asked to call," he said at last, and stooped and picked a piece of cotton from his trousers. "I come from Maw and Meggins."

The old lady started. "Is anything the matter?" she asked breathlessly. "Has anything happened to Herbert? What is it? What is it?"

Her husband interposed. "There, there, mother," he said hastily. "Sit down, and don't jump to conclusions. You've not brought bad news, I'm sure, sir" and he eyed the other wistfully.

"I'm sorry — " began the visitor.

"Is he hurt?" demanded the mother.

The visitor bowed in assent. "Badly hurt," he said quietly, "but he is not in any pain."

"Oh, thank God!" said the old woman, clasping her hands. "Thank God for that! Thank — "

She broke off suddenly as the sinister meaning of the assurance dawned upon her and she saw the awful confirmation of her fears in the other's averted face. She caught her breath, and turning to her slower-witted husband, laid her trembling old hand upon his. There was a long silence.

"He was caught in the machinery," said the visitor at length, in a low voice.

"Caught in the machinery," repeated Mr. White, in a dazed fashion, "yes."

He sat staring blankly out at the window, and taking his wife's hand between his own, pressed it as he had been wont to do in their old courting days nearly forty years before.

"He was the only one left to us," he said, turning gently to the visitor. "It is hard."

The other coughed, and rising, walked slowly to the window. "The firm wished me to convey their sincere sympathy with you in your great loss," he said, without looking round. "I beg that you will understand I am only their servant and merely obeying orders."

What evidence suggests that the Whites are still inclined to believe in the magical properties of the paw?

There was no reply; the old woman's face was white, her eyes staring, and her breath inaudible; on the husband's face was a look such as his friend the sergeant might have carried into his first action.

"I was to say that Maw and Meggins disclaim all responsibility," continued the other. "They admit no liability at all, but in consideration of your son's services they wish to present you with a certain sum as compensation."

Mr. White dropped his wife's hand, and rising to his feet, gazed with a look of horror at his visitor. His dry lips shaped the words, "How much?"

"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.

In the huge new cemetery, some two miles distant, the old people buried their dead, and came back to a house steeped in shadow and silence. It was all over so quickly that at first they could hardly realize it, and remained in a state of expectation as though of something else to happen — something else which was to lighten this load, too heavy for old hearts to bear.

But the days passed, and expectation gave place to resignation — the hopeless resignation of the old, sometimes miscalled, apathy. Sometimes they hardly exchanged a word, for now they had nothing to talk about, and their days were long to weariness.

It was about a week after that that the old man, waking suddenly in the night, stretched out his hand and found himself alone. The room was in darkness, and the sound of subdued weeping came from the window. He raised himself in bed and listened.

"Come back," he said tenderly. "You will be cold."

"It is colder for my son," said the old woman, and wept afresh.

The sound of her sobs died away on his ears. The bed was warm, and his eyes heavy with sleep. He dozed fitfully, and then slept until a sudden wild cry from his wife awoke him with a start.

"The paw!" she cried wildly. "The monkey's paw!"

Highlight the evidence which suggests that the visitor does not bring good news.

He started up in alarm. "Where? Where is it? What's the matter?"

She came stumbling across the room toward him. "I want it," she said quietly. "You've not destroyed it?"

"It's in the parlor, on the bracket," he replied, marveling. "Why?"

She cried and laughed together, and bending over, kissed his cheek.

"I only just thought of it," she said hysterically. "Why didn't I think of it before? Why didn't you think of it?"

"Think of what?" he questioned.

"The other two wishes," she replied rapidly. "We've only had one."

"Was not that enough?" he demanded fiercely.

"No," she cried, triumphantly; "we'll have one more. Go down and get it quickly, and wish our boy alive again."

The man sat up in bed and flung the bedclothes from his quaking limbs. "Good God, you are mad!" he cried aghast.

"Get it," she panted; "get it quickly, and wish — Oh, my boy, my boy!"

Her husband struck a match and lit the candle. "Get back to bed," he said, unsteadily. "You don't know what you are saying."

"We had the first wish granted," said the old woman, feverishly; "why not the second?"

"A coincidence," stammered the old man.

"Go and get it and wish," cried the old woman, quivering with excitement.

The old man turned and regarded her, and his voice shook. "He has been dead ten days, and besides he — I would not tell you else, but — I could only recognize him by his clothing. If he was too terrible for you to see then, how now?"

"Bring him back," cried the old woman, and dragged him toward the door. "Do you think I fear the child I have nursed?"

He went down in the darkness, and felt his way to the parlor, and then to the mantelpiece. The talisman was in its place, and a horrible fear that the unspoken wish might bring his mutilated son before him ere he could escape from the room

Why does Mr. White faint?

seized upon him, and he caught his breath as he found that he had lost the direction of the door. His brow cold with sweat, he felt his way round the table, and groped along the wall until he found himself in the small passage with the unwholesome thing in his hand.

Even his wife's face seemed changed as he entered the room. It was white and expectant, and to his fears seemed to have an unnatural look upon it. He was afraid of her.

"Wish!" she cried, in a strong voice.

"It is foolish and wicked," he faltered.

"Wish!" repeated his wife.

He raised his hand. "I wish my son alive again."

The talisman fell to the floor, and he regarded it fearfully. Then he sank trembling into a chair as the old woman, with burning eyes, walked to the window and raised the blind.Q10

He sat until he was chilled with the cold, glancing occasionally at the figure of the old woman peering through the window. The candle end, which had burnt below the rim of the china candlestick, was throwing pulsating shadows on the ceiling and walls, until, with a flicker larger than the rest, it expired. The old man, with an unspeakable sense of relief at the failure of the talisman, crept back to his bed, and a minute or two afterward the old woman came silently and apathetically beside him.

Neither spoke, but both lay silently listening to the ticking of the clock. A stair creaked, and a squeaky mouse scurried noisily through the wall. The darkness was oppressive, and after lying for some time screwing up his courage, the husband took the box of matches, and striking one, went downstairs for a candle.

At the foot of the stairs the match went out, and he paused to strike another, and at the same moment a knock, so quiet and stealthy as to be scarcely audible, sounded on the front door.

The matches fell from his hand. He stood motionless, his breath suspended until the knock was repeated. Then he turned and fled swiftly back to his room, and closed the door behind him. A third knock sounded through the house.

"What's that?" cried the old woman, starting up.

How does Hebert's death impact his parents?

Why does Mr. White seem reluctant to wish a third time?

"A rat," said the old man, in shaking tones — "a rat. It passed me on the stairs."

His wife sat up in bed listening. A loud knock resounded through the house.

"It's Herbert!" she screamed. "It's Herbert!"

She ran to the door, but her husband was before her, and catching her by the arm, held her tightly.

"What are you going to do?" he whispered hoarsely.

"It's my boy; it's Herbert!" she cried, struggling mechanically. "I forgot it was two miles away. What are you holding me for? Let go. I must open the door."

"For God's sake, don't let it in," cried the old man trembling.

"You're afraid of your own son," she cried, struggling. "Let me go. I'm coming, Herbert; I'm coming."

There was another knock, and another. The old woman with a sudden wrench broke free and ran from the room. Her husband followed to the landing, and called after her appealingly as she hurried downstairs. He heard the chain rattle back and the bottom bolt drawn slowly and stiffly from the socket. Then the old woman's voice, strained and panting.

"The bolt," she cried loudly. "Come down. I can't reach it."

But her husband was on his hands and knees groping wildly on the floor in search of the paw. If he could only find it before the thing outside got in. A perfect fusillade of knocks reverberated through the house, and he heard the scraping of a chair as his wife put it down in the passage against the door. 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. He heard the chair drawn back and the door opened. A cold wind rushed up the staircase, and a long loud wail of disappointment and misery from his wife gave him courage to run down to her side, and then to the gate beyond. The street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.

What does Mr. White wish? How do you know?