

Name _____



Dangerous Curiosity

On a cold, rainy night, the White family sat by the fire, listening to their guest, Sergeant-Major Morris. He told them about his travels to distant lands, but it was the strange object he carried that caught their attention—the monkey's paw.

"This is no ordinary talisman," Morris warned. "It grants three wishes, but each one comes with a terrible price." He sighed and tossed the dried-up paw into the fire. "Better to let it burn."

Curiosity flickered in Mr. White's eyes. Instead of letting it be destroyed, he quickly snatched the paw from the flames. "What kind of price?" he asked, intrigued.

Morris shook his head. "The first owner's last wish was for death." His voice was serious, but Mr. White only laughed nervously.

Despite the clear warning, the family's curiosity won. They didn't believe the paw could really be dangerous. To test it, Mr. White made a simple wish—for two hundred pounds. The wish seemed harmless, yet the fire crackled strangely, and the wind howled outside.

The next day, a stranger arrived with heartbreaking news. Their son, Herbert, had died in a factory accident. The company was giving the family two hundred pounds as compensation. Mr. White's hand trembled as he realized the truth—Morris had been right.

Grief-stricken, Mrs. White became desperate. She begged her husband to use the second wish to bring Herbert back. Though afraid, Mr. White lifted the paw and whispered the wish.

A slow, heavy knock sounded at the door. The house filled with tension. Mrs. White rushed to open it, but Mr. White's heart pounded in fear. Had they gone too far? With shaking hands, he grabbed the paw and made the final wish.

The knocking stopped. When Mrs. White pulled open the door, the street was empty.

Sergeant-Major Morris' warning had been clear, but human curiosity is powerful. Even when told of the dangers, Mr. White couldn't resist. The story teaches that curiosity can lead people to ignore warnings, sometimes with terrible consequences.

