

THE MONKEY'S PAW

Written by  
Alison Irving

Based on, The Monkey's Paw by W.W. Jacobs

FADE IN:

INT. PARLOUR OF LABURNUM VILLA - NIGHT

Camera pans through the dimly lit living room of a cozy villa. A fire is loudly crackling.

Mrs. White (65), a plump woman with graying hair in a plain dress, is cooking dinner in the kitchen. A pot has just begun to boil.

Mr. White (67), a portly man, is relaxing by the fireplace with a glass of whiskey in one hand and a pipe in the other.



MR. WHITE  
Is dinner ready yet? Sergeant  
Morris will be here any moment.

MRS. WHITE  
(sarcastically)  
Oh, don't worry one bit about  
dinner. Just keep drinking and  
smoking. God forbid you help out  
with anything around here.

MR. WHITE  
I think paying the bills is help  
enough.

MRS. WHITE

Really?

(motioning to the stack of  
overdue bills)

You're just like your father!

MR. WHITE

(balling his fist)

Would you just be quiet--

There's a knock on the door. Mrs. White drops what she's doing and quickly brushes the flour off of her apron.

MRS. WHITE

Get off of your butt for once and  
come greet our visitor.

Mr. White groans, and drags himself over to his wife as they both welcome their guest.

Sergeant Morris (43), a towering figure in a weathered soldier's uniform, enters the residence. They exchange greetings and gather for dinner.

FADE TO:

INT. PARLOUR OF LABURNUM VILLA - LATER THAT NIGHT

Sergeant Morris, Mr. and Mrs. White are seated around the fire in a small circle. Three rounds of drinks later, and the stories flow without regard.

MR. WHITE

(slurring)

Morris, what was that monkey thing  
you were talking about the other  
day?

SERGEANT MORRIS

Nothing. It's nothing.

MR. WHITE

No, no, it was something about a  
monkey...and wishes?

He's muttering to himself, trying to recall the story.

MRS. WHITE

(sternly)

Honey, he doesn't want to talk  
about it. Just drop it.

Mr. White is visibly annoyed at his own forgetfulness.

MR. WHITE

OH, I remember now! A monkey's paw,  
Morris! Please, tell us.

Sergeant Morris hesitates before reaching into his pocket. He pulls out a dried, mangled paw with gnarled fingers.

Mrs. White recoils, disgusted at the sight of the paw. Mr. White, leans toward Morris, intrigued.

MORRIS

I warn you...this is dangerous.

Mr. White guffaws at Morris' warning.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

Legend has it that the paw grants  
you three wishes, *but* it twists  
your desires--

MRS. WHITE

(cutting him off)

Ha! So I could wish for a new  
husband!

Mr. White casts her a wicked glare.

MR. WHITE

Morris, could I have it?

MORRIS

Take it if you must. But, frankly,  
it's better off in the fire.

Ignoring Morris' final caution, Mr. White admires the paw in his hand. Staring contemplatively at the magic it holds.



Morris, having had enough drinks to last him a year, wobbles to the door. Mrs. White helps him up, and leads him out.

MRS. WHITE  
Bye now, Sergeant. Please, be safe.

MORRIS  
Goodnight! Thank you again for  
dinner, it was lovely.

Mrs. White shuts the front door and starts walking up the stairs to bed. On her way, she shouts one last thing.

MRS. WHITE  
(to Mr. White)  
You have no manners. I swear if  
tomorrow morning you still have  
that gross paw I'm putting you on  
the street.

She scurries up the stairs and into bed. Mr. White remains by the fire, intensely staring at the paw.

MR. WHITE  
(to the paw)  
I wish that old hag would die.

CLOSE UP: Backlit by the roaring fireplace, one of the long fingers creepily closes into the palm. Two wishes remain.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. PARLOUR OF LABURNUM VILLA - MORNING

Sunlight is streaming through the main window, lighting up the mess left by last night's festivities. Mr. White is asleep in the same armchair.

Mr. White jolts awake to the sound of Mrs. White clopping down the stairs.

MRS. WHITE  
(as she's walking)  
You lazy oaf! You haven't moved one inch since yester--

There's a loud, prolonged crash as Mrs. White tumbles down the steps, and into the stone dining room table. She dies instantly.

Mr. White leaps up- the fastest he's ever moved. He's standing frozen for minutes.

He looks from Mrs. White to the paw in his hand and back to Mrs. White. An expression of realization dawns on his now pale face. The wish came true.

Gathering himself, he fumbles for the telephone and dials the morgue attendant for body removal.

FADE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DUSK (SEVERAL DAYS LATER)

Mr. White is casting a long shadow across the cemetery as the sun sets. He robotically places a bouquet of half-dead roses on Mrs. White's tombstone. His face is devoid of emotion.

He cranes his neck to see the cemetery is completely empty. He coyly unveils the monkey's paw from his overcoat. Still two wishes left.

He clumsily lowers himself to be eye level with Mrs. White's tombstone, and he evilly smiles. In a coolly, confident tone he wishes for fame.

A finger wriggles down. One wish left.

FADE TO:

EXT. TOWN ROAD - LATER THAT NIGHT

The sky is pitch black as Mr. White is strolling back to his villa from the cemetery. He happily whistles as he walks home.

All of the sudden, a shadowy figure emerges from behind a tree. Mr. White is startled.

SHADOWY FIGURE

Mr. White! Mr. White! I'm Henry  
from the Town Chronicle Newspaper.  
Is it true that you killed your  
wife?

Mr. White looks confused as Henry (32), a scrawny figure with oversized glasses, is eagerly holding a pencil and pad.

MR. WHITE

What? No, it's not true!

Mr. White shoves past Henry, and races home looking over his shoulder to see Henry scribbling something on his notepad.

FADE TO:

EXT. OUTISDE OF LABURNUM VILLA - LATER THAT NIGHT

Mr. White is cautiously approaching his home, checking behind bushes and trees for any staked out journalists.

As he gets closer to his front yard, he can see the silhouettes of several people standing in front of his door. They hear him approaching.

CROWD

Mr. White! Mr. White!

RANDOM JOURNALIST #1

Did you kill your wife?

The media mob is shuffling towards Mr. White, all scribbling furiously. He makes a beeline for his front door.

RANDOM JOURNALIST #2

Did you push her down the stairs?

RANDOM JOURNALIST #3  
Why did you do it?

Mr. White pushes past several people and jolts the door open. Quickly locking it behind him.

With his back against the closed door he catches his breath. Inside, the shouting journalists become an uncomprehensible chorus of sounds.

Mr. White takes the cursed paw out of his overcoat, and throws it on the faintly blood-stained dining table. He checks the lock of the front door again before turning in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LABURNUM VILLA - DAY (ONE WEEK LATER)

Time has stood still in the villa. Mr. White's eyes have deep-set dark circles, kept awake from the media attention.

A loud banging fills the house--uncharacteristic of the typical humming of the journalists.

Mr. White sits up in bed, and hesitantly puts on his slippers. He slowly ties his robe before making his way downstairs.

UNKNOWN VOICE  
(booming)  
Open up! We know you're in there!

Mr. White's pace increases as he hurries to the door, stowing the monkey's paw left on the dining table in his pocket.



He opens the door. A stern police officer with a wide brimmed hat and mean eyes is mounted in front of the villa.



OFFICER

Mr. White, you are under arrest for  
the murder of your wife!

He moves toward Mr. White to begin handcuffing him.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

You have the right to remain  
silent. Anything you say *can* and  
*will* be used against you.

Mr. White resigned to the situation is wheeled away to the  
local jail, leaving behind the crowd of media surrounding his  
once quaint villa.

SLOWLY FADE TO:

INT. JAIL CELL INSIDE OF LOCAL JAIL - NIGHT (YEARS LATER)

CLOSE-UP: A dinner tray slides onto the stone cold floor of  
the tiny cell. The yellowy-brown color of the food contrasts  
the overwhelmingly gray, dark tones of the walls.

Pan to Mr. White emotionlessly reaching for the provided spoon to begin shoveling in the mush to his mouth. Mr. White's pallid face frame his lifeless eyes.

After eating he sets the tray aside, and takes off his shoe. He shakes out the monkey's paw. It looks the same, as if no time has passed. One finger still up. One wish.

Taking the paw in his hand, he examines it.

CLOSE UP: His eyes turn from lifeless to fearful. He breathes heavy, and sweat beads form on his forehead.



Muffled, he says something to the paw.

Suddenly, he falls, sprawled out on the ground. Dead. On his way down, the paw tumbles out of his hand.

CLOSE-UP: The paw rolls out on the jail cell floor. As it comes to a stop, the monkey's paw balls into a fist.

No more wishes.

FADE OUT.