The Monkey’s Paw: The Demise Of Mr. White

'The Monkey's Paw' by W. W. Jacobs' explores the concept of fate and consequences of making the wrong choices. Jacob used mood, characterization, and setting throughout the story to show the dangers of the unknown. The downfall of the whites’ family is portrayed similarly. The Monkey Paw was used as a literal meaning to paraphrase the quote 'be careful what you wish for.' Fate cannot be changed, and those who interfere with it will face the consequences. Mr. White's once peaceful and happy family has come to ruins merely due to his curiosity and interfering with his fate. Had Mr. White not tried to change his life, the outcome would have been different. His ignorance, greed, and naive characteristics led him to make foolish choices that eventually led to his demise.

Mr. White is the main protagonist in the story and continues to keep the plot going. Although he proclaims that his son and wife have more authority over him, he was the ultimate driving force in altering and changing his life. He was portrayed as a simple ethical man, but chose to keep the monkey paw and make his wishes come true. He believes that with the monkey paw he has been given more dominance over his family. His ignorance causes him to think that he knows it all and that nothing worse can happen by just making a wish. He wrongly assumed that if he made the wishes and there was a positive change, his family would attribute him to their success, therefor giving him more authority. However, when his first wish leaves him childless, he couldn’t accept the fact that his son’s death was because of him. 'The old man, with an unspeakable sense of relief at the failure of the talisman, crept back to his bed'(Jacob) As he begins to repent and fear for his decisions, one can understand that Mr. White is scared of living and accepting the life he has created for himself. He would rather choose to believe that an object has changed his life but fails to see he was the reason for his downfall.

Even though Mr. White claimed to be satisfied with life, yet he still looks for improvement. He wasn't in any financial debt or having any difficulties, but out of greed, he makes the wish. His desire for change risked and destroyed everything he worked so hard to obtain. He had a peaceful family, with a loving son and wife, and even though he used the monkey paw to make life better for them, he failed to realize that the consequences of greed are always adverse. He was given a choice to not do anything, to live the simple normal life he had, yet he gambled it for his selfishness desires. Although Mr. and Mrs. White's intentions with the money were good, they risked their son's life in the process. When Mr. White makes his second wish to have his son return and realizes the implication and yells 'For God's sake don't let it in,' (Jacob) The monkey paw's taught Mr. White that with every wish comes a heavy burden. After realizing that ultimately the wishes come with such severe results then does he truly come to his senses.

By the end of the story, readers can visualize the helpless man learning the consequences by trying to alter his fate. Having his complete world shattered around him, he still lingers onto hope and repents for his sins of ever trying to change his life. His gullible nature of trying to please others made it worse. He began his first wish to please his son and then the next to satisfy his wife. He was trying to prove to himself that the monkey paw is fake but still believed in its supernatural ability the whole time. Although he tries to portray himself to be somewhat of a logical and ethical person, he chose to turn away from his friends' advice on not making any wishes. Mr. White was easily manipulated and heavily influenced by what others had to say. He

lacked the foresight to properly think and reflect on the events that transpired. Any other person would have stopped in using the monkey’s paw knowing the consequences, yet he continued due to the pressure from his wife.

Throughout as we see Mr. White’s demise, he repents and tries to change his fate believing that his downfall was because of an object. In the end, we finally see him accept his life and allow for what it has become. His third wish is ultimately the defining moment on how he decides to turn his life around. The Monkey’s Paw was cleverly used to portray the dangers of the unknown through characterization and plot. Jacob displayed one's intention with greed and desires which lead to negative outcomes in the end.

Work Cited:

1. Jacob, W. W. (2004). The Monkey's Paw: The Lady of the Barge and Others (Part 2). Retrieved from http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12122/12122-h/12122-h.htm