

In “The Monkey’s Paw”, W.W. Jacobs uses characterization as well as plot to support the theme that the consequences of greed are often negative. During the story, Mr. White accepts a Monkey Paw that grants him three wishes. After each wish, Mr. White and his family begin to suffer in order for their wish to be granted. Jacobs characterizes Mr. White and his family as optimistic and somewhat greedy in terms of their wishes. While contemplating his first wish, Mr. White cries “Why, we’re going to be rich, and famous, and happy” and his son responds, “Wish to be a king, father, to begin with; then mother can’t complain all the time” (Jacobs). Jacobs uses both indirect and direct characterization to show that the family prioritizes greed. Ultimately, this leads to their demise because their first wish ends in Mr. White’s son’s death. Similarly, Jacobs uses plot elements to illustrate the theme that the consequences of greed are negative. As previously stated, the White family makes wishes related to material wealth. As the story goes on, they need to make more wishes to un-do the consequences of their original wish and have their son back again. Jacobs uses the plot structure in order to support this theme. After finding out that their son has died, Mrs. White immediately exclaims “THE PAW!...THE MONKEY’S PAW” (Jacobs). Without the exposition introducing the Monkey’s Paw as well as the rising action of the family making their first wish, the reader would not be led to the climax of the son dying as well as the falling actions and resolutions of the family trying to make up for their original greedy wish. Overall, Jacobs successfully uses both characterization and plot to support the theme that greed comes with negative consequences.

Yellow = thesis & concluding statement

Pink = Characterization

Green = Plot

Blue font = ICE quote