

Lilacs

English for Enhancement

Semester - II

B.A. / B.Sc. / B.Com. / B.B.A.

Board of Editors

Postgraduate and Research Department of English
Government Arts College, (Autonomous)
Coimbatore - 18.

Syllabus

SEMESTER - II

UNIT - I ONE-ACT PLAYS

1. The Monkey's Paw - *W.W. Jacobs*
2. The Never - Never Nest - *Cedric Mount*
3. The Sheriff's Kitchen - *Ronald Gow*
4. The Gray Matter - *Jeanette D. Farr*

UNIT - II VOCABULARY

1. Climate Change and its Impact
2. Cinema and Freedom of Expression

UNIT - III COMMUNICATIVE GRAMMAR

1. Present Tense
2. Past Tense
3. Future Tense
4. Sequence & Tense

UNIT - IV COMPOSITION

1. Précis - Writing
2. Dialogue Writing
3. Report Writing
4. Essay Writing

TEXT BOOKS:

1. *Lilacs: English for Enhancement*. Department of English, Government Arts College, Coimbatore.
2. *Grammar for Communication*. V. Saraswathi et.al. Emerald publisher

CONTENTS

Unit - I - ONE-ACT PLAYS

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. The Monkey's Paw
- <i>W.W. Jacobs</i>
<i>dramatized by Louis N. Parker</i> | 65 |
| 2. The Never-Never Nest
- <i>Cedric Mount</i> | 97 |
| 3. The Sheriff's Kitchen
- <i>Ronald Gow</i> | 106 |
| 4. The Gray Matter
- <i>Jeanette D. Farr</i> | 129 |

Unit - II - VOCABULARY

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Climate Change and its Impact | 143 |
| 2. Cinema and Freedom of Expression | 150 |

Unit IV - COMPOSITION

- | | |
|---------------------|-----|
| 1. Précis-Writing | 156 |
| 2. Dialogue Writing | 166 |
| 3. Reporting | 171 |
| 4. Essay | 180 |

1. The Monkey's Paw

by W.W. JACOBS
dramatized by Louis N. Parker

Characters

MR. WHITE
 MRS. WHITE
 HERBERT
 SERGEANT - MAJOR MORRIS
 MR. SAMPSON

Scene : The living - room of an old - fashioned cottage on the outskirts of Fulham. Set: corner - wise in the left angle at the back is a deep window; further, L., three or four steps lead up to a door. Further forward a dresser, with plates, glasses, etc. R.C. at back is an alcove with the street door fully visible. On the inside of the street door is a round table. Against the wall, L. back, is an old- fashioned piano. A comfortable armchair is on each side of the fireplace. There are other chairs. On the mantelpiece are a clock, old china figures, etc. An air of comfort pervades the room.

At the rise of the curtain, Mrs. White, a pleasant - looking old woman, is seated in the armchair below the fire, attending to a kettle which is steaming on the fire, and keeping a laughing eye on Mr. White and Herbert. These two are seated at the right angle of the table nearest the fire with a chess-board between them, Mr. White is evidently losing. His hair is ruffled; his spectacles are high up on his forehead. Herbert, a fine young fellow, is looking with satisfaction at the move he has just made. Mr. White makes several attempts to move, but thinks better of them. There is a shaded lamp on the table. The door is tightly shut. The curtains of the window are drawn; but every now and then wind is heard whistling outside.

- Mr. White : *[Moving at last and triumphant]* There, Herbert, my boy! Got you, I think.
- Herbert : Oh, you're a deep un. Dad, aren't you?
- Mrs. White : Mean to say he's beaten you at last?
- Herbert : Lor, no! Why, he's overlooked.
- Mr. White : *[very excited]* I see it! Lemme have that back!
- Herbert : Not much. Rules of the game!
- Mr. White : *[disgusted]* I don't hold with them scientific rules. You turn what ought to be an innocent relaxation...
- Mrs. White : Don't talk so much, Father. You put him off.
- Herbert : *[laughing]*. Not he.
- Mr. White : *[trying to distract his attention]*. Hark at the wind.
- Herbert : *[dryly]* Ah! I'm listening. Check.
- Mr. White : *[Still trying to distract him]* I should hardly think Sergeant-major Morris'd come to - night.
- Herbert : Mate
[Rises, goes up L]
- Mr. White : *[With an outbreak of disgust and sweeping the chessmen off the board]* That's the worst of living so far out. Your friends can't come for a quiet chat, and you addle your brains over a confounded...
- Herbert : Now, Father! Morris'll turn up all right.
- Mr. White : *[Still in a temper]* Lover's Lane, Fulham! Ho! of all the beastly, slushy, out-o-the way places to live in ...! Pathway's a bog, and the road's a torrent. *[To Mrs. White who has risen, and is at his side]* What's the Country Coucil thinking of, that's what I want to know? Because this is

- the only house in the road it doesn't matter if nobody can get near it, I s'pose.
- Mrs. White : Never mind, dear. Perhaps you'll win tomorrow *(She moves to back of table)*
- Mr. White : Perhaps I'll perhaps I'll -- What d' you mean? *[Bursts out laughing.]* There! You always know what's going on inside o'me, don't you. Mother?
- Mrs. White : Ought to, after thirty years, John. *[She goes to dresser, and busies herself wiping tumblers on tray there. He rises, goes to fireplace and lights his pipe].*
- Herbert : *[down C.]* And it's not such a bad place, Da, after all. One of the few old-fashioned houses left near London. None o' your stucco villas. Homelike, I call it. And so you or you wouldn't ha' bought it. *[He rolls a cigarette]*
- Mr. White : *[R. growling]*. Nice job I made o' that, too! With two hundred pounds owin' on it.
- Herbert : *[on back of chair, C]* Why, I shall work that off in no time, Dad. Matter o' three years, with the rise promised me.
- Mr. White : If you don't get married.
- Herbert : Not me. Not that sort.
- Mr. White : I wish you would, Herbert. A good, steady lad, *[She brings the tray with a bottle of whiskey, glasses, a lemon, spoons, buns, and knife to the table].*
- Herbert : Lots o' time. Mother. Sufficient for day-- as the sayin' goes. Just now my dynamos don't leave me anything for love-making. Jealous they are, I tell you!

Mr. White : [chuckling]. I lay awake o' nights often, and think: if Herbert took a nap, and let his what-d' you-call-ums-dynamos, run down, all Fulham would be in darkness, Lord! What a joke!

[He goes R.C.]

Herbert : Joke! And me with the sack ! Pretty idea of a joke you've got, I don't think. [A knock is heard at the outer door]

Mr. White : Hark!

Mr. White : [going towards the door] That's him. That's the sergeant major. [He unlocks the door, back]

Herbert : [removes the chessboard] Wonder what yarn he's got for us tonight. [He places the chessboard on the piano]

Mrs. White : [goes up right, and busies herself putting the other armchair nearer fire, etc.] Don't let the door slam, John! [Mr. White opens the door a little, struggling with it. Wind. Sergeant-Major Morris, a veteran with a distinct military appearance-- left arm gone-- dressed as a commissionaire, is seen to enter. Mr. White helps him off with his coat, which he hangs up in the outer hall].

Mr. White : [at the door] Slip in quick! It's as much as I can to hold it against the wind.

Sergeant : Awful! Awful! [Busy taking off his cloak, etc]. And a mile up the road by cemetery it's worse. Enough to blow the hair off your head.

Mr. White : Give me your stick.

Sergeant : If't wasn't I know what a welcome I'd get--

Mr. White : [preceding him into the room] Sergeant - Major Morris!

Mrs White : Tut! tut! So cold you must be! come to the fire; do'ee, now.

Sergeant : How are you, marm? [To Herbert] How's yourself laddie? Not on duty yet, eh? Day - week, eh?

Herbert [C] : No, sir. Night- week. But there's half an hour yet.

Sergeant : [sitting in the armchair above the fire, which Mr. White is motioning him towards].

[Mr. White mixes grog for Morris].

Thank'ee kindly, marm, That's good! hah! That's a sight better than the trenches at Chitral. That's better than settin' in a puddle with the rain pouring' down in buckets, and the natives takin' pot- shots at you.

Mrs. White : Didn't you have no umbrellas?

[She is at the corner below the fire, and kneels before it, stirs it, etc.]

Sergeant : Umbrell --? Ho! Ho! That's good! Eh, White? White? That's good. Did ye hear what she said? Umbrellas! And goloshes! and hot water bottles! Ho, yes! No offences, marm, but it's easy to see you was never a soldier.

Mr. White : [rather hurt] Mother spoke out o' kindness, sir.

Sergeant : And well I know it; and no offence intended. No, marm, 'ardship, 'ardship is the soldier's lot. Starvation, fever, and get yourself shot. That's a bit o' my own.

Mr. White : You don't look to've taken much harm except- [She indicates his empty sleeve. She takes the kettle to the table, then returns to the fire].

Sergeant : [showing a medal hidden under his coat]. And that I got this for. No, marm. Tough. Thomas Morris is tough. [Mr. White is holding a glass of grog under the Sergeant's nose].

And sober : What's this now?

- Mr. White : Put your nose in it; you'll see.
- Sergeant : Whiskey? And hot? And sugar? And a slice o' lemon? No. I said I'd never but seein' that sort o' night-- well! [*Waving the glass at them*] Here's another thousand a year!
- Mr. White : [*Sits R. of the table, also with a glass*]. Same to you and many of'em.
- Sergeant : [*to Herbert, who has no glass*]. What? Not you.
- Herbert : [*laughing and sitting across his chair*]. Oh! 't isn't for want of being sociable. But my work don't go with it. Not if't was ever so little. I've got to keep a cool head, a steady eye, and a still hand. The fly-wheel might gobble me up.
- Mrs. White : Don't Herbert. [*She sits in the armchair below the fire*].
- Herbert : [*laughing*]. No fear, Mother.
- Sergeant : Ah! you electricians! -- Sort o' magicians, you are, Light! say you -- and light it is. And, Power! says you -- and the trains go whizzin. And knowledge! says you -- and words go ummin' to the ends o' the world. It fair beats me -- and I've seen a bit in my time too.
- Herbert : [*nudges his father*]. Your Indian magic? All a fake, governor. The fakir's fake.
- Sergeant : Fake, you call it? I tell you, I've seen it.
- Herbert : [*nudging his father with his foot*]. Oh!, come, now such as what! Come, now!
- Sergeant : I've seen a ^{chap} cove with no more clothes on than a babby. [*to Mrs. White*] if you know that I mean -- take an empty basket -- empty mind! -- as empty as -- as this here glass--.
- Mr. White : Hand it over, Morris.

- [*He hands it to Herbert who goes quickly behind the table and fills it*].
- Sergeant : Which was not my intention, but used for illustration.
- Herbert : [*While mixing*]. Oh, I've seen the basket trick; and I've read how it was done. Why, I could do it myself, with a bit o' practice. Ladle out something stronger. [*Herbert brings him the glass*].
- Sergeant : Stronger? -- What do you say to an old fakir chuckin' a rope in the air -- in the air-- in the air, mind you! -- and swarming up it, same as if it was' ooked on -- and vanishing clean out o' sight?. I've seen that.
[*Herbert goes to the table, plunges a knife into a bun and offers it to the sergeant with exaggerated politeness*].
- Sergeant : [*eyeing it with disgust*]. Bun--? What for?
- Herbert : That yarn takes it.
[*Mr and Mrs. White delighted*].
- Sergeant : Mean to say you doubt my word?
- Mr. White : No, no! He's only taking you off. -- you shouldn't, Herbert.
- Mrs. White : Herbert always was one for a bit o' fun!
[*Herbert puts the bun back on the chair out of the way, sits cross-legged on the floor at his father's side*].
- Sergeant : But it's true. Why, If I choose, I could tell you things -- but there! you don't get no more yarns out o'me.
- Mr. White : Nonsense, old friend! (*He puts down his glass*) You're not going to get shirty about a bit o' fun. [*He moves his chair nearer Morris's*]. What

- was that you started telling me the other day about a monkey's paw, or something?
[He nudges Herbert, and winks at Mrs. White].
- Sergeant : [gravely] Nothing. Leastways, nothing worth hearing.
- Mrs. White : [with astonished curiosity]. Monkey's paw--?
- Mr. White : Ah -- you -- was tellin' me--
- Sergeant : Nothing. Don't go on about it. [Puts his empty glass to his lips -- then stares at it]. What? Empty again. There! When I began thinkin' o' the paw, it makes me that absent minded--
- Mr. White : [rises and fills the glass]. You said you always carried it on you.
- Sergeant : So I do, for fear o' what might happen. [Sunk in thought] Ay! -- ay!
- Mr. White : [handling him his glass refilled]. There . [He sits again in the same chair].
- Mrs. White : What's it for?
- Sergeant : You wouldn't believe me, if I was to tell you.
- Herbert : I will, every word.
- Sergeant : Magic, then! -- Don't you laugh!
- Herbert : I'm not, Got it on you now?
- Sergeant : Of course.
- Herbert : Let's see it.
[Seeing the Sergeant embarrassed with his glass, Mrs. White rises, takes it from him, places it on the mantelpiece and remains standing].
- Sergeant : Oh, it's nothing to look at. [Hunting in his pocket]. Just an ordinary -- little paw -- dried to a mummy. [Produces it and holds it towards Mrs. White]. Here.

- Mr. White : [Who has leant forward eagerly to see it starts back with a little cry of disgust]. Oh!
- Herbert : Give us a look ...[Morris passes the paw to Mr. White, from whom Herbert takes it]. Why, it's all dried up !
- Sergant : I said so.
[wind]
- Mrs. White : [with a slight shudder]. Hark at the wind! [She sits again in her old place].
- Mr. White : [taking the paw from Herbert]. And what might there be special about it?
- Sergeant : [impressively]. That this paw has had a spell put upon it!
- Mr. White : No?
[In great alarm he thrusts the paw back into Morris's hand].
- Sergeant : [pensively, holding the paw in the palm of his hand]. Ah! By an old fakir. He was a very holy man. He'd sat all doubled up in one spot, goin' on for fifteen years; thinkin' o' things. And he wanted to show that fate ruled people. That there wasn't no getting away from it. And that, if you tried to, you caught it hot. [He pauses solemnly]. So he put a spell on this bit of a paw. It might ha'been anything else, but he took the first thing that came handy. Ah! He put a spell on it, and made it so that there people [looking at them and with deep meaning] could each have three wishes.
[All but Mrs. White laugh rather nervously].
- Mrs. White : Ssh! Don't
- Sergeant : [More gravely]. But --! But, mark you , though the wishes was granted, those three people would have cause to wish they hadn't been.

- Mr. White : But how could the wishes be granted?
- Sergeant : He didn't say. It would all happen so natural, you might think it a coincidence if so disposed.
- Herbert : Why haven't you tried it, sir?
- Sergeant : [*gravely, after a pause*]. I have.
- Herbert : [*eagerly*]. You've had your three wishes?
- Sergeant : [*gravely*] Yes.
- Mr. White : Were they granted?
- Sergeant : [*Staring at the fire*]. They were
[*A pause*].
- Mr. White : Has anybody else wished?
- Sergeant : Yes. The first owner had his three wishes -- [*Lost in recollection*]. Yes, oh yes, had his three wishes all right. I don't know what his first two were, [*Very impressively*] but the third was for death. [*All shudder*]. That's how I got the paw. [*A pause*].
- Herbert : [*cheerfully*]. Well! Seems to me you've only got to wish for things that can't have any bad luck about'em -- [*He rises*].
- Sergeant : [*Shaking his head*]. Ah!
- Mr. White : [*tentatively*]. Morris -- if you've had your three wishes -- it's no good to you, now -- What do you keep it for?
- Sergeant : [*still holding the paw; looking at it*]. Fancy I s'pose. I did have some idea of selling it, but I don't think I will. It's done mischief enough already. Besides, people won't buy. Some of 'em think it's a fairy - tale. And some want to try it first, and pay after.
[*There is a nervous laugh from the other*].
- Mrs. White : If you could have another three wishes, would you?

- Sergeant : [*Slowly weighing the paw in his hand, and looking at it*]. I don't know -- [*Suddenly with violence, flinging it in the fire*].
No! I'm damned if I would! [*Movement from all*]
- Mr. White : [*rises and quickly snatches it out of the fire*]. What are you doing?
[*He goes R.C.*]
- Sergeant : [*rising and following him and trying to prevent him*]. Let it burn! Let the infernal thing burn!
- Mrs. White : [*rises*]. Let it burn, Father!
- Mr. White : [*wiping it on his coat-sleeve*]. No if you don't want it, give it to me.
- Sergeant : [*violently*]. I won't! I won't! My hands are clear of it. I threw it on the fire. If you keep it, don't blame me, whatever happens. Here! Pitch it back again.
- Mr. White : [*stubbornly*], I'm going to keep it. What do you say, Herbert?
- Herbert : [*L.C. laughing*]. I say, keep it if you want to. Stuff and nonsense, anyhow.
- Mr. White : [*looking at the paw thoughtfully*]. Stuff and nonsense. Yes, I wonder -- [*casually*] I wish-- [*He was going to say some ordinary thing like 'I wish I were certain'*]
- Sergeant : [*misunderstanding him; Violently*]. Stop! Mind what you're doing. That's not the way.
- Mr. White : What is the way?
- Mrs. White : [*moving away, up R.C. to the back of the table, and beginning to put the tumblers straight, and the chairs in their places*]. Oh, don't have anything to do with it. John.

[She takes the glasses on the tray to the dresser, L., busies herself there, rinsing them in a bowl of water on the dresser, and wiping them with a cloth].

- Sergeant : That's what I say, marm. But if I warn't to tell him, he might go wishing something he didn't mean to. You hold it in your right hand, and wish aloud. But I warn you ! I warn you !
- Mrs. White : Sounds like The Arabian Nights. Don't you think you might wish to me four pairs o' hands?
- Mr. White : [laughing]. Right you are, Mother! -I wish -
- Sergeant : [pulling his own down]. Stop it! If you must wish, wish for something sensible. Look here! I can't stand this. Get on my nerves. Where's my coat?
[He goes into the aclave].
[Mr. White crosses to the fire place and carefully puts the paw on the mantelpiece. He is absorbed in it to the end of the tableau].
- Herbert : I'm coming your way to the works, in a minute. Won't you wait?
[He goes up C. and helps Morris with his coat].
- Sergeant : [Putting on his coat]. No. I'm all shook up. I want fresh air. I don't want to be here when you wish. And wish you will as soon's my back's turned. I know. I know. I know. But I've warned you, mind.
- Mr. White : [helping him into his coat]. All right. Morris. Don't you fret about us. [He gives him money]. Here.
- Sergeant : [refusing it]. No, I won't.
- Mr. White : [forcing it into his hand]. Yes you will.
[He opens the door].

- Sergeant : [turning to the room]. Well good night all.
[To White].
Put it in the fire.
All good night.
[exit sergeant. Mr. White closes the door, comes towards the fireplace, absorbed in the paw].
- Herbert : [down L] If there's no more in this than there is in his other stories, we shan't make much out of it.
- Mrs. White : [comes down R.C. To White] Did you give him anything for it, Father?
- Mr. White : A trifle. He didn't want it, but I made him take it.
- Mrs. White : There, now ! You shouldn't. Throwing your money about.
- Mr. White : [looking at the paw which he has picked up again]. I wonder.
- Herbert : What?
- Mr. White : I wonder, Whether we hadn't better chuck it on the fire?
- Herbert : [laughing], Likely! why, we're all going to be rich and famous and happy.
- Mrs. White : Throw it'n the fire, indeed, when you're given money for it! So like you, Father.
- Herbert : Wish to be an emperor, Father, to begin with. Then you can't be henpecked!
- Mrs. White : [going for him front of the table with duster]. You young --!
[She follows him to the back of the table].
- Herbert : [running away from her round behind the table]. Steady with the duster, Mother!

- Mr. White : Be quite, there! [*Herbert catches Mrs. White in his arms and kisses her*]. I wonder. [*He has the paw in his hand*]. I don't know what to wish for, and that's a fact, [*He looks about him with a happy smile*]. I seem to've got all I want.
- Herbert : [*with his hands on the old man's shoulders*]. Old Dad! If you'd only cleared the debt on the house, you'd be quite happy, wouldn't you [*Laughing*]. Well go ahead! Wish for the two hundred pounds. That'll just do it.
- Mrs. White : [*half laughing*]. Shall I? [*Crosses to R.C*]
- Herbert : Go on! Here! -- I'll play slow music.
[*He crosses to the piano*]
- Mrs. White : Don't 'ee. John. Don't have nothing to do with it?
- Herbert : Now, Dad!

[*He plays*].
- Mr. White : I will! [*He holds up the paw, as if half ashamed*]. I wish for two hundred pounds.
[*Crash on the piano. At the same instant Mr. White utters a cry and lets the paw drop*].
- Mrs. White
& Herbert : What's the matter?
- Mr. White : [*gazing with horror at the paw*]. It moved! As I wished, it twisted in my hand like a snake.
- Herbert : Nonsense, Dad, Why it's as stiff as a bone.
[*Lays it on the mantelpiece*].
- Mrs. White : Must have been your fancy, Father.
- Herbert : [*laughing*]. Well--? [*looking round the room*]. I don't see the money; and I bet I never shall.

- Mr. White : [*relieved*]. Thank God, there's no harm done! But it gave me a shock.
- Herbert : Half-past eleven. I must get along. I'm on at mid-night. [*He goes up C., fetches his coat, etc*]. We've had quite a merry evening.
- Mrs. White : I'm off to bed. Don't be late for breakfast, Herbert.
- Herbert : I shall walk home as usual. Does me good. I shall be with you about nine. Don't wait, though.
- Mrs. White : You know your father never waits.
- Herbert : Good night. Mother.
[*He kisses her. She lights the candle on the dresser., L., goes up the stairs and exit.*].
- Herbert : [*coming to his father, R., who is sunk in thought*]. Good night. Dad. You'll find the cash tied up in the middle of the bed.
- Mr. White : [*staring, seizes Herbert's hand*]. It moved, Herbert.
- Herbert : Ah! And a monkey hanging by his tail from the bed-post, watching you count the golden sovereigns.
- Mr. White : [*accompanying him to the door*]. I wish you wouldn't joke, my boy.
- Herbert : All right. Dad. [*He opens the door*] Lord! What weather! Good night [*He exits*].

[*The old man shakes his head, closes the door, locks it, puts the chain up and slips the lower bolt, but has some difficulty with the upper bolt*].
- Mr. White : This bolt's stiff again! I must get Herbert to look to it in the morning.
[*He comes into the room, puts out the lamp and crosses towards steps; but is irresistibly attracted*

towards the fireplace. He sits down and stares into the fire. His expression changes: he sees something horrible].

- Mr. White : [with an involuntary cry]. Mother! Mother!
- Mrs. White : [appearing at the door at the top of the steps with a candle]. What's the matter?
[She comes down R.C.]
- Mr. White : [mastering himself. He rises]. Nothing -- I -- haha! I saw faces in the fire.
- Mr. White : Come along.
[She takes his arm and draws him towards the steps. He looks back frightened towards fireplace as they reach the first step].

II

Scene: Bright sunshine. The table, which has been moved nearer the window, is laid for breakfast. Mrs. White is standing at the window looking off R. The inner door is open, showing the outer door.

- Mr. White : What a morning Herbert's got for walking home!
- Mrs. White : [L.C.] what's o' clock? [She looks at clock on the mantelpiece]. Quarter to nine, I declare. He's off at eight. [She crosses to the fire].
- Mr. White : Takes him half an hour to change and wash. He's just by the cemetery now.
- Mrs. White : He'll be here in ten minutes.
- Mr. White : [coming to the table]. What's for breakfast?
- Mrs. White : Sausages. [At the mantelpiece]. Why, if here isn't that dirty monkey's paw! [She picks it up, looks at it with disgust and puts it back. She takes some sausages in a dish from before the fire and places them on the table]. Silly thing! The idea of us listening to such nonsense!

- Mr. White : [goes up to the window again] Ay - the Sergeant-major and his yarns! I suppose all old soldiers are alike.
- Mrs. White : Come on. Father. Herbert hates us to wait. [They both sit and begin breakfast].
- Mrs. White : How could wishes be granted, nowadays?
- Mr. White : Ah! Been thinking about it all night, have you?
- Mrs. White : You kept me awake, with your tossing and tumbling.
- Mr. White : Ah! I had a bad night.
- Mrs. White : It was the storm. I expect. How it blew!
- Mr. White : I didn't hear it. I was asleep and not asleep, if you know what I mean.
- Mrs. White : And all that rubbish about its making you unhappy if your wish was granted! How could two hundred pounds hurt you, eh. Father?
- Mr. White : Might drop on my hand in a lump, Don't see any other way. And I'd try to bear that. Though, mind you, Morris said it would all happen so naturally that you might take it for a coincidence, if so disposed.
- Mrs. White : Well- it hadn't happened. That's all I know. And it isn't going to. [A letter is seen to drop in the letterbox]. And how you can sit there and talk about it. [There is a sharp postman's knock; She jumps to her feet].
What's that?
- Mr. White : Postman, o' course.
- Mrs. White : [Seeing the letter from a distance; in an awed whisper] He's brought a letter, John!
- Mr. White : [laughing]. What did you think he's bring? Ton o' coals?

- Mrs. White : John--! John--! Suppose--!
- Mr. White : Suppose what?
- Mrs. White : Suppose it was two hundred pounds!
- Mr. White : [Suppressing his excitement] Eh! -- Here! Don't talk nonsense. Why don't you fetch it?
- Mrs. White : [crosses and takes the letter out of the box] It's thick, John - [She feels it] -- and -- it's got something crisp inside it. [She takes letter to White, R.C.]
- Mr. White : Who -- who's it for?
- Mrs. White : You
- Mr. White : Hand it over, then. [Feeling and examining it with ill-concealed excitement]. The idea! What a superstitious old woman you are! Where are my specs?
- Mrs. White : Let me open it.
- Mr. White : Don't you touch it. Where are my specs?
[Goes to R].
- Mrs. White : Don't let sudden wealth sour your temper, John.
- Mr. White : Will you find my specs?
- Mrs. White : [taking them off the mantelpiece]. Here. John, here. [As he opens the letter]. Take care! Don't tear it!
- Mr. White : Tear what?
- Mrs. White : If it was banknotes, John!
- Mr. White : [taking a thick, formal document out of the envelope and a crisp looking slip]. You've gone dotty. You've made me nervous. [He reads]. "Sir Enclosed please find receipt for interest on the mortgages of 200 on your house, duly received".

- [They look at each other. Mr. White sits down to finish his breakfast silently. Mrs. White goes to the window].
- Mrs. White : That comes of listening to tipsy old soldiers.
- Mr. White : [Pettish] What does?
- Mrs. White : You thought there was banknotes in it.
- Mr. White : [injured]. I didn't! I said all along.
- Mrs. White : How Herbert will laugh, when I tell him!
- Mr. White : [with gruff good - humour] You're not going to tell him. You're going to keep your mouth shut. That's what you're going to do. I why, should never hear the last of it.
- Mrs. White : Serve you right. I shall tell him. You know you like his fun. See how he joked you last night when you said the paw moved.
[She is looking through the window towards R].
- Mr. White : So it did. It did move. That I'll swear to.
- Mrs. White : [abstractedly. She is watching something outside]. You thought it did.
- Mr. White : I say it did. There was no thinking about it. You saw how it upset me didn't you? [She doesn't answer].
Didn't you?-- Why don't you listen? [She turns round]. What is it?
- Mrs. White : Nothing.....
- Mr. White : [turns back to his breakfast]. Do you see Herbert coming?
- Mrs. White : No.
- Mr. White : He's about due. What is it?
- Mrs. White : Nothing. only a man. Looks like a gentleman. Least-ways, he's in black.

- Mr. White : What about him?
[He is not interested; goes on eating].
- Mrs. White : He stood at the garden-gate as if he wanted to come in. But he couldn't seem to make up his mind.
- Mr. White : Oh, go on! You're full o' fancies.
- Mrs. White : He's going - no; he's coming back.
- Mr. White : Don't let him see you peeping.
- Mrs. White : [with increasing excitement]. He's looking at the house. He's got his hand on the latch. No. He turns away again. [Eagerly] John! He looks like a sort of a lawyer.
- Mr. White : What of it?
- Mrs. White : Oh, you'll only laugh again. But suppose -- suppose he's coming about the two hundred.
- Mr. White : You're not to mention it again! - You're a foolish old woman. Come and eat your breakfast. [Eagerly] Where is he now?
- Mrs. White : Gone down the road. He has turned back. He seems to've made up his mind. here he comes!
- Oh, John, and me all untidy!
[She crosses to the fire R].
[A knock is heard].
- Mr. White : [to Mrs. White who is hastily smoothing her hair etc.] What's it matter? He's made a mistake. Come to the wrong house. [He crosses to the fireplace]. [Mrs. White opens the door. Mr. Sampson, dressed from head to foot in solemn black, stands in the door way].
- Sampson : [Outside]. Is this Mr. White's?
- Mrs. White : Come in. Sir. Please step in.
[She shows him into the room; goes R; he is awkward and nervous]. You must overlook out

- being so untidy; and the room all anyhow ; and John in his garden - coat.
[To Mr. White, reproachfully]. Oh. John.
- Sampson : [To Mr. White] Morning. My name is Sampson.
- Mrs. White : [offering a chair]. Won't you please be seated?
[Sampson Stands quite still up C].
- Sampson : Ah, thank you -- no. I think not -- I think not.
[A pause].
- Mrs. White : [awkwardly, trying to help him]. Fine weather for the time o' year.
- Sampson : Ah-- yes-- yes[A pause; he makes a renewed effort]. My name is Sampson. I've come.
- Mrs. White : Perhaps you was wishful to see Herbert; he'll be home in minute. [Pointing] Here's his breakfast waiting.
- Sampson : [interrupting her hastily]. No . No! [A pause]. I've come from the electrical works.
- Mrs. White : Why, you might have come with him.
[Mr. White sees something is wrong, tenderly puts his hand on her arm].
- Sampson : NO -- no-- I've come -- alone.
- Mrs. White : [With a little anxiety]. Is anything the matter?
- Sampson : I was asked to call--
- Mrs. White : [abruptly] .Herbert! Has anything happened ? Is he hurt? Is he hurt?
- Mr. White : [Soothing her] . There, there, Mother. Don't you jump to conclusions. Let the gentleman speak. You've not brought bad news. I'm sure, sir.
- Sampson : I'm -- sorry--
- Mrs. White : Is he hurt?
- Sampson : Yes

- Mrs. White : Badly?
- Sampson : Very Badly.
- Mrs. White : [*with a cry*]. John --!
[*She instinctively moves toward Mr.White*].
- Mr. White : Is he is in pain.
- Sampson : He is not in pain.
- Mr. White : Oh, thank God! Thank God for that! Thank-
[*She looks in a startled fashion at Mr. White -- realizes what Sampson means, catches his arm and tries to turn him towards her*]. Do you mean?
[*Sampson avoids her look; she gropes for her husband; he takes her two hands in his, and gently lets her sink into the armchair above the fire- place, then he stands on her right, between her and Sampson*].
- Mrs. White : [*hoarsely*] Go on, Sir.
- Sampson : He was telling his mates a story. Something that had happened here last night. He was laughing, and wasn't noticing and -- and -- [*hushed*] the machinery caught his--
[*A little cry from Mrs. White, her face shows her horror and agony*].
- Mr. White : [*Vague, holding Mrs. White's hands*] . The machinery caught him -- yes -- and him the only child-- it's hard, sir -- very hard.
- Sampson : [*subdued*]. The Company wished me to convey their sincere sympathy with you in your great loss--
- Mr. White : [*starting blankly*]. Our -- great--loss!
- Sampson : I was to say further -- [as if apologizing] I am only their servant -- I am only obeying orders-
- Mr. White : Our -- great-- loss--

- Sampson : [*laying an envelope on the table and edging towards the door*]. I was to say, the Company disclaim all responsibility, but, in consideration of your son's services, they wish to present you with a certain sum as compensation.
[*Gets to door*].
- Mr. White : Our -- great-- loss [*Suddenly, with horror*]. How -- how much?
- Sampson : [*in the doorway*]. Two hundred pounds. [*Exit, puts out his hands like a sightless man, and drops, a senseless heap, to the floor. Mrs White stares at him blankly and her hands go out helplessly towards him.*]

III

- Night. on the table a candle is flickering at its last gasp. The room looks neglected. Mr. White is dozing fitfully in the armchair. Mrs.White in the window peering through the blinds towards.
[*Mr.WHITE starts, wakes, looks around him*].
- Mr. White : [*fretfully*]. Jenny -- Jenny.
- Mrs. White : [*in the window*]. Yes.
- Mr. White : Where are you?
- Mrs. White : At the window.
- Mr. White : What are you doing?
- Mrs. White : Looking up the road.
- Mr. White : [*falling back*]. What's the use, Jenny? What's the use?
- Mrs. White : That where the cemetery is; that's where we've laid him.
- Mr. White : Ay--ay-- a week today -- what o' clock is it?
- Mrs.White : I don't know.

- Mr. White : We don't take much account of time now, Jenny, do we?
- Mrs. White : Why should we? He don't come home. He'll never come home again. There's nothing to think about--
- Mr. White : Or to talk about. [*A pause*]. Come away from the window; you'll get cold.
- Mrs. White : It's colder where he is.
- Mr. White : Ay -- gone for ever --
- Mrs. White : And taken all our hopes with him --
- Mr. White : Ay, and all our-- [*With a sudden cry*] John! [*She comes quickly to him; he rises*].
- Mr. White : Jenny! For God's sake! What's the matter?
- Mrs. White : [*with dreadful eagerness*]. The paw! The monkey's paw!
- Mr. White : [*bewildered*]. Where? Where is it? What's wrong with it?
- Mrs. White : I want it? You haven't done away with it?
- Mr. White : I haven't seen it -- since -- why?
- Mrs. White : [*groping on the mantelpiece*]. Here ! Here it is! What do you want of it?
[*he leaves it there*]
- Mrs. White : Why didn't I think of it? Why didn't you think of it?
- Mr. White : Think of what?
- Mrs. White : The other two wishes!
- Mr. White : [*with horror*]. What?
- Mrs. White : We've only had one.
- Mr. White : [*tragically*]. Wasn't that enough?

- Mrs. White : No! We'll have one more . [*WHITE crosses to R.C. Mrs WHITE takes the paw and follows him*]. Take it, take it quickly. And wish --
- Mr. White : [*avoiding the paw*]. Wish what?
- Mrs. White : Oh, John! John! Wish our boy alive again?
- Mr. White : Good God! Are you mad?
- Mrs. White : Take it. Take it and wish. [*With a paroxysm of grief*]. Oh, my boy ! My boy!
- Mr. White : Get to bed. Get to sleep. You don't know what you're saying.
- Mrs. White : We had the first wish granted -- why not the second?
- Mr. White : [*hushed*]. He's been dead ten days, and -- Jenny! Jenny I only knew him by his clothing -- if you wasn't allowed to see him then -- how could you bear to see him now?
- Mrs. White : I don't care. Bring him back.
- Mr. White : [*Shrinking from the paw*]. I daren't touch it!
- Mrs. White : [*thrusting it in his hand*]. Here! Here! Wish!
- Mr. White : [*trembling*]. Jenny!
- Mrs. White : [*fiercely*]. Wish.
[*She goes on frantically whispering "Wish"*].
- Mr. White : [*Shuddering, but overcome by her insistence*]. I -- I-- wish -- my -- son -- alive again.
[*He drops it with a cry. The candle goes out . There is unttter darkness. He sinks into a chair. Mrs WHITE hurries to the window and draws the blind back. She stands in the moonlight. A pause*].
- Mrs. White : [*drearily*]. Nothing/
- Mr. White : Thank God! Thank God!

- Mrs. White : Nothing at all. Along the whole length of the road not a living thing. [*She closes the blind*]. And nothing, nothing, nothing left in our lives, John.
- Mr. White : Except each other, Jenny... and memories
- Mrs. White : [*Coming back slowly to the fireplace*]. We're too old. We were only alive in him. We can't begin again. We can't feel anything now, John, but emptiness and darkness. [*She sinks into armchair*].
- Mr. White : Tisn't for long, Jenny. There's that to look forward to.
- Mrs. White : Every minute's long, now.
- Mr. White : [*rising*]. I can't bear the darkness!
- Mrs. White : It's dreary -- dreary.
- Mr. White : [*crosses to the dresser*]. Where's the candle? [*Finds it and brings it to the table*]. And the matches? Where are the matches? We mustn't sit in the dark. Tisn't wholesome. [*he lights a match; the other candlestick is close to him*]. There. [*Turning with the lighted match towards Mrs WHITE, who is rocking and moaning*] Don't take on so, Mother.
- Mrs. White : I'm a mother no longer.
- Mr. White : [*lights candle*]. There now; there now, Go on up to bed. Go on, now - I'm coming.
- Mrs. White : Whether -- I am here or in bed, or wherever I am. I am with my boy, I am with -- [*A low single knock at the street door*].
- Mrs. White : [*Starting*]. What's that!
- Mr. White : [*mastering his horror*]. A rat. The house is full of 'em. [*There is a louder single knock; She starts up. He catches her by the arm*].

- Stop! What are you going to do?
- Mrs. White : [*wildly*]. It's my boy! It's Herbert! I forgot it was a mile away! What are you holding me for? I must open the door. [*The knocking continues in single knocks at irregular intervals, constantly growing louder and more insistent*].
- Mr. White : [*still holding her*]. For God's sake!
- Mrs. White : Don't open the door! [*he drags her towards L. front*].
- Mrs. White : Let me go!
- Mr. White : Think what you might see!
- Mrs. White : [*struggles fiercely*]. Do you think I fear the child I bore! Let me go! [*She wrenches herself loose and rushes to the door which she tears open*]. I'm coming. Herbert! I'm coming!
- Mr. White : [*covering in the extreme corner, left front*]. Don't 'ee do it! Don't 'ee do it! [*Mrs WHITE is at work on the outer door, where the knocking still continues. She slips the chain, slips the lower bolt and unlocks the door*].
- Mr. White : [*suddenly*]. The paw! Where's the monkey's paw? [*He gets on his knees and feels along the floor for it*].
- Mrs. White : [*tugging at the top bolt*]. John! The top bolt's stuck. I can't move it. Come and help. Quick!
- Mr. White : [*wildly groping*]. The paw! There's a wish left. [*The knocking is now loud, and in groups of increasing length between the speeches*].
- Mrs. White : D'ye hear him? John! Your child's knocking!
- Mr. White : Where is it? Where did it fall?

- Mrs. White : [*tugging desperately at the bolt*]. Help! Help!
Will you keep your child from his home?
- Mr. White : Where did it fall? I can't find it - I can't find--
[*the knocking is now tempestuous, and there are
blows upon the door as of a body beating against
it*].
- Mrs. White : Herbert! Herbert! My boy! Wait! Your mother's
opening to you! Ah! It's moving!
- Mr. White : God forbid! [He finds the paw]. Ah!
- Mrs. White : [*slipping the bolt*]. Herbert!
- Mr. White : [*has raised himself to his knees; he holds the paw
high*]. I wish him dead. [*The knocking stops
abruptly*]. I wish him dead and at peace!
- Mrs. White : [*flinging the door open simultancously*]. Herb --
[*There is a flood of moonlight, but only emptiness.
The old man sways in prayer on his knees. The
old woman lies half swooning, wailing against
the door- post*].

CURTAIN

William Wymark Jacobs (1863 - 1943) was a famous writer of tales of the sea, full of dramatic possibilities. Many of his stories have been dramatized with a high degree of success on the stage.

'The Monkey's Paw' has been dramatized by Louis N. Parker and it has been popular for many decades as a stage - play . It is full of suspense, oriental supernaturalism and horror, centering round the monkey's paw.

The routine common place life of the Whites is suddenly thrown out of gear, when their acquaintance, Sergeant - Major Morris gives Mr. White the monkey's paw, which has a power of granting three wishes to three different persons. Mr. White is the third owner of the paw and the story gradually builds up into a chilling climax with each successive wish made by Mr. White. The first wish is for two hundred pounds which come to them as compensation for the accidental death of their

son Herbert while working in his dynamo factory. The second wish made at the insistence of Mrs. White, brings back the dead son to their door; the third wish is used by Mr. White, to send his son back to the land of the dead to be at peace.

Notes:-

- outskirts : outer border of a town
- alcove : recess in a room
- mantelpiece : ornamental work above a fireplace
- ruffled : disordered
- lemme : let me
- addle : confuse
- bog : marsh
- stucco villa : a house with fine plastering
- yarn : a long story
- cemetery : a graveyard
- trenches : ditches
- commissionaire : uniformed door porter
- marm : madam
- grog : drink made of rum and water
- puddle : a small muddy pool
- pot - shot : shot made without taking careful aim
- goloshes : rubber overshoes worn in wet weather
- flywheel : a heavy wheel to regulate machinery
- 'ummin' : humming
- fakir : an ascetic who begs for food
- cove : chap
- ladle out : distribute
- swarming up : climbing up in a rush

8. Major Morrriis has served in _____.
- (i) Myanmar (ii) Nepal
(iii) India (iv) Sri Lanka
9. The Monkey's paw is a _____ play.
- (i) horror (ii) tragic
(iii) comic (iv) romantic
10. The play Monkey's Paw revolves around the theme of _____.
- (i) chance (ii) fate
(iii) luck (iv) opportunity

II. Answer the following Questions in about 100 words each.

- How does Sergeant - Major Morris come into possession of the Monkey's paw?
- How does Herbert react to the sergeant - Major's narrative?
- How does the first wish come true?
- What is the solution offered by Mrs. White?
- What do you think actually happened at the end of the play?

III. Answer the following Questions in about 200 words.

- Describe the atmosphere of suspense and horror in "The Monkey's Paw".

2. THE NEVER-NEVER NEST

- Cedric Mount

CHARACTERS

Jack,
Jill, his wife
Aunt Jane
Nurse

Scene: The **lounge** of JACK and JILL'S Villa at New Hampstead. The essential furniture consists of a table on which are writing materials, and two chairs. As the curtain rises the lounge is empty, but JACK and JILL come immediately, followed by AUNT JANE.

JILL : And this is the lounge.

AUNT JANE: Charming! Charming! Such a **cosy** little room! and such pretty furniture.

JACK (*modestly*): We like it, you know, handy place to sit in and listen to the radiogram.

AUNT JANE: Oh, have you got a radiogram as well as a car and a piano?

JACK : Why, of course, Aunt Jane. You simply must have a radio set nowadays.

JILL : And it's so nice for me when Jack's away at business. I even make him move it into the kitchen, so that I can listen to it while I cook.

JACK : Sit down, Aunt Jane, You must be tired — and we've shown you everything now.

JILL: What do you think of our little nest, Aunt Jane?

AUNT JANE: I think it's wonderful, my dears. The furniture—and the car—and the piano—and the refrigerator and the radio—what's it—it's wonderful, really wonderful!

JACK: And we owe it all to you.

AUNT JANE: Yes, Jack, that's what's worrying me.

JACK: Worrying you, Aunt Jane?

AUNT JANE: Yes. That cheque I gave you for your wedding present—it was only two hundred pounds, wasn't it? I—didn't put two thousand by mistake?

JILL: Why no, Aunt Jane. What on earth made you think that?

AUNT JANE (*relieved*): Well, that's all right. But I still don't altogether understand. This house—it's very lovely—but doesn't it cost a great deal for rent?

JACK: Rent? Oh, no, we don't pay rent.

AUNT JANE: But, Jack, if you don't pay rent, you'll get turned out—into the street. And that would never do. You've Jill and the baby to think of now, you know.

JACK: No, no, Aunt Jane. You misunderstood me. We don't pay rent because the house is ours.

AUNT JANE: Yours?

JILL: Why, yes; you just pay ten pounds and it's yours.

JACK: You see, Aunt Jane, we realized how uneconomic it is to go on paying rent year after year, when you can buy and enjoy a home of your own for ten pounds—and a few quarterly payments, of course. Why be Mr. Tenant when you can be Mr. Owner?

AUNT JANE: I see. Yes, there's something in that. Even so, it must be getting on very well to keep up a place like this.

JILL: Oh, he is, Aunt Jane. Why, only last year he had a five shilling rise—didn't you, Jack?

JACK (*modestly*): Of course that was nothing, really. I'm expecting ten this Christmas.

AUNT JANE (*suddenly*): Jack! I've just thought of something. That car—is it yours?

JILL: Of course it's ours.

AUNT JANE: All yours?

JACK: Well, no. Not exactly all.

AUNT JANE: How much of it?

JILL: Oh, I should say the steering wheel—and one of the tyres—and about two of the cylinders. But don't you see, that's the wonderful thing about it.

AUNT JANE: I don't see anything wonderful about it.

JILL: But there is, Aunt Jane. You see, although we could never buy a car outright, we can enjoy all the pleasures of motoring for a mere five pounds down.

AUNT JANE: And the rest by easy instalments, I suppose.

JILL: Exactly.

AUNT JANE: Exactly. And what about the radio—what's it?

JACK: Well, that's the—

AUNT JANE: And the piano?

JILL: Well, of course—

AUNT JANE: And the furniture?

JACK: [—I'm afraid so—

AUNT JANE: I suppose all you own is this leg. (She points to one.)

JILL: Well, no, as a matter of fact, it's that one. (She points to another.)

AUNT JANE: And the rest belongs to Mr. Sage. I suppose?

JILL: Er—Yes.

AUNT JANE : Well. I'm not going to sit on—Mr. Sage's part for any one. *(She stands up.)* Now, tell me, how much do all these instalments come to?

JACK : Well, actually—*(He takes out his pocket-book and consults it.)*—actually to seven pounds eight and eight pence a week.

AUNT JANE : Good heavens! And how much do you earn?

JACK : As a matter of fact—er—that is—six pounds.

AUNT JANE : But that's absurd! How can you pay seven pounds eight and eight pence out of six pounds?

JACK : Oh, that's easy. You see, all you have to do is to borrow the rest of the money for the payments from the Thrift and Providence Trust Corporation.

JILL : They're only too glad to loan you any amount you like, on note of hand alone.

AUNT JANE : And how do you propose to pay that back?

JACK : Oh, that's easy, too. You just pay it back in instalments.

AUNT JANE : Instalments! *(She claps her hand to her forehead and sinks back weakly into the chair. Then realizes that she is sitting on Mr. Sage's piece and leaps to her feet again with a little shriek.)*

JACK : Aunt Jane! Is anything the matter? Would you like to lie down?

AUNT JANE : Lie down? Do you suppose I'm going to trust myself in a bed that belongs to Mr Sage, or Marks and Spencer, or somebody? No, I am going home.

JILL : Oh, must you really go?

AUNT JANE : I think I'd better.

JACK : I'll drive you to the station.

AUNT JANE : What! Travel in a car that has only one tyre and two **thingummies**! No thank you—I'll take the bus.

JACK : Well, of course, if you feel like that about it....

AUNT JANE *(relenting a little)*: Now, I'm sorry if I sounded rude, but really I'm shocked to find the way you're living. I've never owed a penny in my life—cash down, that's my motto and I want you to do the same. *(She opens her handbag.)* Now look, here's a little cheque I was meaning to give you, anyway. *(She hands it to JILL.)* Suppose you take it and pay off just one of your bills—so that you can say one thing at least really belongs to you.

JILL *(awkwardly)*: Er—thank you. Aunt Jane. It's very nice of you.

AUNT JANE *(patting her arm)*: There! Now I must be going.

JACK : I'll see you to the bus. anyway.

JILL : Good-bye, Aunt Jane—and thanks so much for the present.

AUNT JANE *(kissing her)*: Good-bye, my dear. *(She and JACK go out. JILL looks at the cheque and exclaims 'Ten pounds!' Then she hurries to the table, addresses an envelope, endorses the cheque and slips it inside with a bill which she takes from the bag and seals the envelope. Then she rings the bell. In a moment the nurse comes in with the baby in her arms.)*

JILL : Oh, nurse. I want you to run and post this for me. I'll look after baby while you're gone.

NURSE : Certainly, madam. *(She hands the baby to JILL, takes the letter, and goes.) (A second later JACK comes in again.)*

JACK : Well, she's gone! What a tartar! Still, she did leave us a bit on account—how much was it?

JILL : Ten pounds.

JACK *(with a whistle)*: Phew! That's great! We can pay off the next two months on the car with that.

JILL : I—I'm afraid we can't—

JACK : Why ever not?

JILL : You see, I—I've already sent it off for something else. Nurse has just gone to post it.

JACK : Well that's all right. Who have you sent it to?

JILL : Dr. Martin.

JACK : Dr Martin! What on earth possessed you to do that?

JILL (*nearly in tears*): There! Now you're going to be angry with me.

JACK : I'm not angry! But why waste good money on the doctor? Doctors don't expect to get paid anyway.

JILL (*sobbing a little*): Bu—but 'you don't understand —

JACK : Understand what?

JILL : Why; just one more instalment and **BABY'S REALLY OURS!** (*She is holding out the infant, a little pathetically, as we blackout.*)

About the author

Cedric Mount is a modern playwright known for his great sense of humour. Many of his plays received immediate popularity and success. His most notable one - act play is 'Twentieth - Century Lullaby'

About the Play

The play by Cedric Mount depicts the materialistic mind of the modern man. Jack and Jill, the representatives of the younger generation stand in contrast to Aunt Jane who belongs to the previous generation. Gone are the days when buying anything on credit was considered demeaning. Aunt Jane visits the house of Jack and Jill for the first time since they got married a year back. She admires the house that appears sophisticated. She is amazed on seeing the radiogram and the furniture. They proudly display their sofa, piano, refrigerator and car that they have managed to buy through instalment. Aunt Jane is very curious to know the truth behind the affluence. She is shocked when they say that it is all because of her. Their words create a doubt in her mind about the wedding gift she had given. She plainly ask them whether she gave two hundred pounds or by mistake she had written a cheque for two thousand pounds.

After making sure, that she gave only two hundred, she expresses her wish to know about how they manage to pay the rent for their luxurious house. She is unable to digest the truth that they are owners of the house and not just the tenants. According to Jack and Jill, it is uneconomic to pay the rent, instead through easy instalment they can soon become the owners of the house. Soon Aunt Jane learns that they are not owners of even a single item. They inform her that they have been borrowing money for the payment of the instalments from the Thrift and Providence Trust corporation. Their attitude towards buying everything through instalment is against her policy. She has never borrowed money and has purchased everything by paying cash. Never to borrow is her motto. She is disgusted with their attitude and refuses to sit on the sofa or travel in their car as they are only owners of a part of the sofa or car and they don't own anything wholly.

She wants them to follow her policy. In order to assist them to become the owner of at least one item, she once again gives them a cheque for ten pounds. On receiving the cheque, Jill immediately calls for the nurse and sends her to post the envelope that holds the cheque. She has sent it to the doctor. The irony of the whole thing is highlighted in the end where the readers come to know the truth that they don't even own their child because they haven't settled the bill for the doctor.

Glossary

lounge	- a public room to sit and relax
cosy	- giving a feeling of comfort, warmth, and relaxation
shriek	- scream
thingummies	- a person or thing whose name one has forgotten
endorses	- sign (a cheque) on the back to make it payable to someone other than the stated payee or to accept responsibility for paying it

COMPREHENSION**I. Choose the correct answer**

- The play opens in the _____ of Jack and Jill's house.
 (i) lounge (ii) kitchen
 (iii) verandah (iv) bed room
- _____ visits the house of Jack.
 (i) Aunt Jane (ii) Mary
 (iii) Mrs. Malaprop (iv) Jill
- Jack and Jill are _____.
 (i) brother and sister (ii) father and daughter
 (iii) husband and wife (iv) son and mother
- Jack earns _____ pounds and pays _____ pounds.
 (i) 8, 6 (ii) 6, 7,
 (iii) 10, 5 (iv) 7, 6
- Aunt Jane gave _____ pounds as wedding gift.
 (i) 2000 (ii) 20
 (iii) 200 (iv) 20,000
- The cheque of ten pounds was paid to _____.
 (i) the owner (ii) the electrician
 (iii) the nurse (iv) Dr. Martin
- Jack wished to spend that ten pounds for
 (i) radiogram (ii) piano
 (iii) refrigerator (iv) car
- Jack felt that Aunt was a _____.
 (i) tartar (ii) burglar

- (iii) terrorist (iv) smuggler
- The word _____ means a person or thing whose name one has forgotten
 (i) Mummies (ii) Zombies
 (iii) thingummies (iv) Tsunamis
- The term EMI Stands for _____
 (i) Easy Monthly Instalment
 (ii) Equal Monthly Instalment *Equated MI*
 (iii) Every Month Instalment
 (iv) Each Month Instalment

II. Answer the following Questions in about 100 words.

- Why is Aunt Jane worried after seeing the house of Jack?
- What is Aunt Jane's reaction to the instalment purchases?
- What does Jill do with the cheque given by Aunt Jane?
- Comment on the end of the drama?
- What is your opinion about instalment schemes?

III. Answer the following Question in about 200 words.

- Write an essay on the appropriateness of the title "The Never - Never Nest"