

SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an *excerpt* from a Samuel French title.

This sample is for perusal only and may not be used for performance purposes.

You may not download, print, or distribute this excerpt.

We highly recommend purchasing a copy of the title before considering for performance.

For more information about licensing or about purchasing a play or musical, please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.com

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

The Monkey's Paw

A Story in Three Scenes

by W. W. Jacobs

Dramatized by
Louis N. Parker

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

SAMUELFRENCH.COM
SAMUELFRENCH-LONDON.CO.UK

Produced at the Haymarket Theatre, London, on October 6, 1903, with the following cast:—

MR. WHITE	<i>Mr. Cyril Maude.</i>
MRS. WHITE	<i>Miss Lena Ashwell.</i>
HERBERT	<i>Mr. Wilfred Forster.</i>
SERGEANT-MAJOR MORRIS . .	<i>Mr. Sydney Valentine.</i>
MR. SAMPSON	<i>Mr. Rudge Harding.</i>

THE MONKEY'S PAW

SCENE.—*The living-room of an old-fashioned cottage on the outskirts of Fulham. Set corner-wise in the left angle at the back a deep window; further front, L., three or four steps lead up to a door. Further forward a dresser, with plates, glasses, etc. R.C. at back an alcove with the street door fully visible. On the inside of the street door, a wire letter-box. On the right a cupboard, then a fireplace. In the centre a round table. Against the wall, L. back, an old-fashioned piano. A comfortable armchair each side of the fireplace. Other chairs. On the mantelpiece a clock, old china figures, etc. An air of comfort pervades the room.*

I

(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 the 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 (*drily*). 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*). Lovers' 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 County Council 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 to-morrow. *(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, inother?

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 pipe.)

HERBERT *(down c.)*. And it's not such a bad place, dad, after all. One of the few old-fashioned houses left near London. None o' your stucco villas. Home-like, I call it. And so do you, or you wouldn't ha' bought it. *(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.

MRS. WHITE. I wish you would, Herbert. A good, steady, lad——

(She brings the tray with a bottle of whisky, glasses, a lemon, spoons, buns, and a knife to the table.)

HERBERT. Lots o' time, mother. Sufficient for the day—as the sayin' goes. Just now my dynamos don't leave me any time for love-making. Jealous they are, I tell you!

MR. WHITE *(chuckling)*. I lay awake o' night 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! (*gets R. C.*)

HERBERT. Joke! And me with the sack! Pretty idea of a joke you've got, I don't think.

(Knock at outer door.)

MRS. WHITE. Hark!

(Knock repeated, louder.)

MR. WHITE (*going towards door*). That's him. That's the Sergeant-Major. (*He unlocks door, back.*)

HERBERT (*removes chess-board*). Wonder what yarn he's got for us to-night. (*Places chess-board on piano.*)

MRS. WHITE (*goes up right, busies himself 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 do to hold it against the wind.

SERGEANT. Awful! Awful! (*Busy taking off his cloak, etc.*) And a mile up the road—by the cemetery—it's worse. Enough to blow the hair off your head.

MR. WHITE. Give me your stick.

SERGEANT. If 'twasn't I knew 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 MRS. 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 pourin' down in buckets, and the natives takin' pot-shots at you.

MRS. WHITE. Didn't you have no umbrellas? (*Corner below fire, kneels before it, stirs it, etc.*)

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

HERBERT (*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.

MRS. WHITE. You don't look to've taken much harm—except— (*Indicates his empty sleeve. She takes kettle to table, then returns to 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. Whisky? And hot? And sugar? And a slice o' lemon? No. I said I'd never—but seein' the sort o' night. Well! (*Waving the glass at them.*) Here's another thousand a year!

MR. WHITE (*sits R. of 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 chair, c.*). Oh! 'tisin't for want of being sociable. But my work don't go with it. Not if 'twas 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. (*Sits in arm-chair below fire.*)

HERBERT (*laughing*). No fear, mother.

SERGEANT. Ah! you electricians!—Sort o' magicians, you are. Light! says you—and light it is. And, power! says you—and the trams 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 cove with no more clothes on than a babby, (*to MRS. WHITE*) if you know what I mean—take an empty basket—empty, mind!—as empty as—as this here glass—

MR. WHITE. Hand it over, Morris. (*Hands it to HERBERT, who goes quickly behind table and fills it.*)

SERGEANT. Which was not my intentions, 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 up 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 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?

MRS. WHITE. No, no! He's only taking you off.—You shouldn't, Herbert.

MR. WHITE. Herbert always was one for a bit o' fun!

(HERBERT puts bun back on table, comes round in front, and moving 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 chose, I could tell you things—— But there! you don't get no more yarns out o' me.

MR. WHITE. Nonsense, old friend. (*Puts down his glass.*) You're not going to get shirty about a bit o' fun. (*Moves his chair nearer MORRIS's.*) What was that you started telling me the other day about a monkey's paw, or something? (*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 begin thinkin' o' the paw, it makes me that absent-minded——

MR. WHITE (*rises and fills 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 (*handing him his glass refilled*). There. (*Sits again in 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 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.

MRS. 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!

SERGEANT. I said so.

(*Wind.*)

FINISH READING THIS SCRIPT

Visit our website to purchase the full script or to explore other titles.

www.samuelfrench.com

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

To stay up to date on all that we are doing, follow us on social media:



*Titles for licensing are subject to availability depending on your territory.