

Audio Play

AUDIO PLAY

Scene: 3

(FINAL SCENE IS EERILY QUIET)

SOUND: CLOCK TICKING AMBIENCE THROUGHOUT

NARRATOR

The days passed, hardly exchanging a word for now they had nothing to talk about, their days were long to weariness. The old man, waking suddenly in the night, stretches out his hand and finds himself alone.

SOUND: MAN SITTING UP IN BED

MR WHITE

Come back, You will be cold.

SOUND: BREATHING

MRS WHITE

(SORROWFUL)

It is colder for my son.

SOUND: FARAWAY CRYING QUIETENS, CLOSE UP EVENTUAL MANLY SOFT SNORING,

SOUND: RUNNING ACROSS FLOORBOARD, DOOR CREAKS OPEN

MRS WHITE

The paw! The monkey's paw!

SOUND: STANDING ON FLOORBOARDS

MR WHITE

(ALARMED)

Where? Where is it? What's the matter?"

SOUND: WOMAN RUNNING ACROSS FLOORBOARDS

MRS WHITE

(FRANTIC)

I want it, You've not destroyed it?

MR WHITE

It's in the parlour, on the bracket. Why?

SOUND: KISS ON THE CHEEK

(CONTINUED)

MRS WHITE

(EXCITEDLY)

I only just thought of it. Why didn't I think of it before? Why didn't you think of it?

MR WHITE

(CONFUSED)

Think of what?

MRS WHITE

The other two wishes! We've only had one.

MR WHITE

(ANGERED)

Was not that enough?

SOUND: JUST AMBIENCE FOR 2 SECONDS

MRS WHITE

No. We will have one more. Go down and get it quickly, and wish our boy alive again.

SOUND: FLINGING BED SHEETS

MR WHITE

Good God, you are mad!

SOUND: STRICKING A MATCH AND LIGHTING A CANDLE

MR WHITE

Get back to bed. You don't know what you are saying.

MRS WHITE

We had the first wish granted. Why not the second?

MR WHITE

A coincidence

MRS WHITE

(EAGER)

Go and get it and wish!

MR WHITE

I could only recognize him by his clothing. If he was too terrible for you to see then, how now?

MRS WHITE

Bring him back!

SOUND: PUTTING UP A FIGHT. MR WHITE BEING DRAGGED TO THE OPENING DOOR

(CONTINUED)

MRS WHITE

Do you think I fear the child I have nursed?

SOUND: FEELING WAY AROUND FURNITURE. MOVING TABLES ETC

NARRATOR

He went down in the darkness, and felt his way to the parlour, and then to the mantelpiece. The talisman in its place, and a horrible fear that the unspoken wish might bring his mutilated son before him ere he could escape from the room seized upon him, he caught his breath as he found that he had lost the direction of the door. He felt his way round the table until he found himself in the small passage with the unwholesome thing in his hand.

MRS WHITE

(AS IF POSESSED)

Wish!

MR WHITE

It is foolish and wicked

MRS WHITE

(ANGRIER)

Wish!

MR WHITE

(SIGHING)

I wish my son to be alive again.

SOUND: THUD AS HE FALLS TO THE GROUND, BLINDS RUSTLE

NARRATOR

Neither spoke, but both lay silently listening to the ticking of the clock.

SOUND: A STAIR CREAKED, AND A SQUEAKY MOUSE SCURRIED NOISILY THROUGH THE WALL. AFTER SOME PAUSE TAKING A BOX OF MATCHES, AND STRIKING ONE, WE HEAR HIM CREAK DOWNSTAIRS.

SOUND: JUST AMBIENCE FOR 2 SECONDS

SOUND: SOUND: STRIKING ANOTHER MATCH AT THE SAME MOMENT OF A VERY QUIET KNOCK.

SOUND: THE MATCHES FALL FROM HIS HAND. UNTIL THE KNOCK WAS REPEATED. THEN HE TURNED AND FLED SWIFTLY BACK TO HIS ROOM, AND CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM. A THIRD KNOCK SOUNDED THROUGH THE HOUSE

(CONTINUED)

MRS WHITE

What's that?

MR WHITE

A rat. It passed me on the stairs.

SOUND: ANOTHER LOUD KNOCK

MRS WHITE

It's Herbert! It's Herbert!

SOUND: RUNNING ACROSS FLOORBOARD

MRS WHITE

(STRUGGLING)

It's my boy; it's Herbert! What are you holding me for?
Let go. I must open the door.

MR WHITE

For God's sake, don't let it in

MRS WHITE

You're afraid of your own son, Let me go. I'm coming,
Herbert; I'm coming.

SOUND: CONTINUOUS KNOCKING, BREAKING FREE FROM A STRUGGLE
RUNNING ACROSS FLOORING. BEING FOLLOWED BY HEAVIER FOOTED
HUSBAND TO THE LANDING. THE CHAIN RATTLES

MRS WHITE

The bolt. Come down I can't reach it.

SOUND: ON KNEES SEARCHING FOR PAW MANICLY, LOUD REVERBERATED
KNOCK THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE, SCRAPING CHAIR PLACED AGAINST A
DOOR, BOLT OPENING, HEAVY BREATHING AND RELIEF. SILENCE

SOUND: OF THE BELOW PASSAGE

SOUND:

The knocking ceased suddenly, although the echoes of it were still in the house. He heard the chair drawn back and the door opened. A cold wind rushed up the staircase, and a long loud wail of disappointment and misery from his wife gave him courage to run down to her side, and then to the gate beyond.

NARRATOR

The street lamp flickering opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.