

Listen Close, Listen Well

NARRATOR

Ah! Look! You're finally here. Of course you were expected. This evening I'll be taking you through some of my favorite stories. So sit back, relax. I said, sit back. Relax. Make sure you listen close and listen well.

We begin by traveling to imperialist Britain in 1902; a short story by WW Jacobs adapted for your ears tonight. Are you ready to make your wish? You are. Behold, *The Monkey's Paw*.

"Be careful what you wish for, you may receive it."

Outside, the night was cold and wet, but in the small living room the curtains were closed and the fire burned brightly. The White family sat comfortably as the father and son played chess and the mother knit, examining their game.

MOTHER: Hah!

FATHER: Mmmm... listen to the wind, son!

SON: ...I'm listening... Check.

FATHER: Well. I should hardly think that he'll come tonight.

SON: Mate.

FATHER: Gah! Hmph... He should've been here ten minutes ago, shouldn't he have? The worst of living this far out...

MOTHER: Never mind, dear, perhaps you'll win the next one.

FATHER: There he is.

FATHER: Ah! Good evening. Oh I did hear, Morris, and my deepest condolences for your loss.

SERGEANT: Oh thank you. I have indeed seen brighter days.

MOTHER: Tut, tut!

FATHER: Sergeant-Major Morris, my wife, and my son Herbert.

SERGEANT: Ah, Mrs. White, how lovely a home you have prepared. And Herbert, Jr.! You are, my boy, as your father described.

MOTHER: Please sit.

NARRATOR

After the third glass of whiskey, the Sergeant's eyes got brighter and he began to talk. The little family listened to the soldier's stories of numerous adventures to the most exotic and distant parts.

SERGEANT: —and the bluest waters that one ever could see. That Indian Ocean! Nothing like the channel that we call our own.

FATHER: Twenty-one years of it. When he went away he was a thin young man. Now look at him.

MOTHER: He doesn't look to have taken much harm.

FATHER: I'd like to go to India myself. Just to look around a bit, you know.

SERGEANT: Better where you are.

FATHER: I should like to see those old mystical temples and the street entertainers. What was that that you started telling me the other day about a monkey's paw or something, Morris?

SERGEANT: Nothing. At least, nothing worth hearing.

MOTHER: Monkey's paw?

SERGEANT: Well, it's just a bit of what you might call magic, perhaps. To look at it, it's just an ordinary little paw, dried to a mummy.

MOTHER: Ugh!

SON: Hmm.

FATHER: And what is there special about it?

SERGEANT: It had a spell put on it by an old magical holy man. He wanted to show that fate ruled people's lives, and that those who tried to change it would be sorry. He put a spell on it so that three different men could each have three wishes from it.

SON: Well, have you made all three, sir?

SERGEANT: I have.

MOTHER: And did you really have the three wishes granted?

SERGEANT: I did.

MOTHER: And has anybody else wished?

SERGEANT: The first man had his three wishes. Yes. I don't know what the first two were, but the third was for death. That's how I got the paw.

FATHER: If you've had your three wishes it's no good to you now then Morris. What do you keep it for?

SERGEANT: Fancy I suppose. I did have some idea of selling it, but I don't think I will. It has caused me enough trouble already.

FATHER: If you could have another three wishes, would you have them?

SERGEANT: I don't know. I don't know.

SERGEANT: Better let it burn.

FATHER: If you don't want it Morris, give it to me.

SERGEANT: I won't. I threw it on the fire. If you keep it, don't hold me responsible for what happens. Throw it on the fire like a sensible man.

FATHER: How do you do it?

SERGEANT: Hold it up in your right hand, and state your wish out loud so that you can be heard. But I warn you of what might happen.

MOTHER: Sounds like the 'Arabian Nights'. Don't you think you might wish for four pairs of hands for me.

SERGEANT: If you must wish. Wish for something sensible.

FATHER: Oh of course, sensible. I do wonder—

NARRATOR

The family and their guest moved to the table and over the course of dinner the talisman was partially forgotten. At the end of the meal, the night closing in, the Sergeant bid them farewell to catch the last train of the night.

FATHER: Goodnight then old friend. Safe journey.

SON: If the tale about the monkey's paw is just as true as his other stories, there's no reason to take much stake in it.

MOTHER: Did you give anything for it, dear?

FATHER: A little. He didn't want it, but I made him take it. And he pressed me again to throw it away.

SON: Not likely! Why, we're going to be rich, and famous, and happy. Wish to be a king, father, to begin with; then mother can't complain all the time.

FATHER: I don't know what to wish for, and that's a fact. It seems to me I've got all I want.

SON: If you only paid off the house, you'd be quite happy, wouldn't you! Well, wish for two hundred pounds, then; that'll just do it.

FATHER: Hm! Gah! I wish for two hundred pounds. It moved! As I wished, it twisted in my hand like a snake.

SON: Well, I don't see the money, and I bet I never shall.

MOTHER: It must have been your imagination, dear.

FATHER: Never mind, though; there's no harm done, but it gave me a shock all the same.

MOTHER: We best be getting to bed now.

SON: I expect you'll find the cash tied up in a big bag in the middle of your bed and something horrible sitting on top of your wardrobe watching you as you pocket your ill-gotten money.

FATHER: Goodnight.

NARRATOR

Herbert, sitting alone in the darkness, stared into the dying fire and in it began to see animalistic and horrific faces. The eyes stared back at him fiercely until—

The next morning at the breakfast table, the family laughed at their fears and dispelled belief in the paw that sat, tossed on the cabinet.

MOTHER: I suppose all old soldiers are the same. The idea of our listening to such nonsense! How could wishes be granted these days? And if they could, how could two hundred pounds hurt you, darling?

SON: Might drop on his head from the sky.

FATHER: Morris said the things happened so naturally that you could miss the connection altogether.

SON: Well don't break into the money before I come back. I'm afraid it'll turn you into a mean, greedy old man, and we shall have to tell everyone that we don't know you.

FATHER: The thing moved in my hand; that I'll swear to.

MOTHER: You thought it did.

FATHER: I say it did. There was no thought about it; I had just—

NARRATOR

The rest of the couple's day proceeded as one could expect. By evening, they were sitting comfortably again by the fire when Mrs. White noticed a man pacing outside their gate.

FATHER: What's the matter?

MOTHER: There's a man in a very fine suit pacing outside our door. What is the matter indeed? Good evening sir. Won't you come in?

LAWYER: Mmm.

MOTHER: I do dearly apologize for the appearance of the room at this moment and that of my husband.

LAWYER: I—was asked to call. (cleaning something from his pants) I come from Maw and Meggins.

MOTHER: Is anything the matter? Has anything happened to Herbert? What is it? What is it?

FATHER: There, there darling. Sit down, and don't jump to a conclusion. You've not brought bad news, I'm sure sir.

LAWYER: I'm sorry—

MOTHER: Is he hurt?

LAWYER: Badly hurt, but he is not in any pain.

MOTHER: Oh thank God! Thank God for that! Thank...

LAWYER: He was caught in the machinery.

FATHER: Caught in the machinery, yes. He was the only one left to us. It is hard.

LAWYER: The firm wishes me to pass on their great sadness about your loss. I ask that you please understand that I am only their servant and simply doing what they told me to do. I was to say that Maw and Meggins accept no responsibility. But, although they don't believe that they have a legal requirement to make a payment to you for your loss, in view of your son's services they wish to present you with a certain sum.

FATHER: How much?

LAWYER: Two hundred pounds.

NARRATOR

The days passed, a funeral was held, and they realized that they had no choice but to accept the situation. It was about a week after that when Mr. White woke up in the night and found himself alone in his bed.

FATHER: Come back. You will be cold.

MOTHER: It is colder for my son. THE PAW! THE MONKEY'S PAW!

FATHER: Where? Where is it? What's the matter?

MOTHER: I want it. You've not destroyed it?

FATHER: It's in the living room, on the shelf above the fireplace. Why?

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

FATHER: Think of what?

MOTHER: The other two wishes. We've only had one.

FATHER: Was not that enough?

MOTHER: No! We'll have one more. Go down and get it quickly, and wish our boy alive again.

FATHER: Good God, you are mad!

MOTHER: Get it. get it quickly, and wish—Oh my boy, my boy!

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

MOTHER: We had the first wish granted, why not the second?

FATHER: A c-c-coincidence.

MOTHER: Go get it and wish.

FATHER: He has been dead ten days, and besides he—I would—I could only recognize him by his clothing. His face was—far too terrible—I would not wish that upon you.

MOTHER: Bring him back. Do you think I fear the child I have nursed?

MOTHER: WISH!

FATHER: It is foolish and wicked.

MOTHER: WISH!

FATHER: I wish my son alive again.

NARRATOR

She stood at the window waiting and watching. And when the candle finally went out without a resurrected son nearby, the old man went back to bed, and a minute afterward the old woman silently laid down beside him.

MOTHER: WHAT'S THAT?

FATHER: A rat, a rat. It passed me on the stairs.

MOTHER: It's Herbert! It's Herbert!

FATHER: What are you going to do?

MOTHER: It's my boy; it's Herbert! I forgot it was two miles away. What are you holding me for? Let go. I must open the door.

FATHER: For God's sake don't let it in.

MOTHER: You're afraid of your own son. Let me go. I'm coming, Herbert; I'm coming. The top lock. Come down. I can't reach it.

NARRATOR

But the streetlight opposite shone on a quiet and deserted road.

Mmmm. Beautiful story, isn't it? There is something so....succulent...to that tempting magic. Would you wish to wipe away your gravest errors?

Our night in the dark continues with a story to bring us a bit closer. Wouldn't you want to be closer? Think of me in your dreams? I bring to you, Ian Farrell's *Seities*.

TRUTH: Hello? Where, where am I?

TRUTH: How did I get here..? I was, I was in my apartment... Is there anybody there? Gray, please help me...

TRUTH: There's only a little light... If anyone can hear me, my name is Truth, I don't know where I am... it's hard to breathe.

TRUTH: The ceiling... it's leaking blood..

TRUTH: Is someone there? Show yourself.

TRUTH:

Who are you?

You have my... How..?

I just want help, please.

Stop! Why won't you help me?

Are you mocking me?

How do you sound like that...

You can't just be an echo. I can see your shadow. You must have answers?

Just, fucking stop, please.

This room, there's no windows or light or anything...

Are we underground? Do you know?

...

You are mocking me.

I bet you locked me in here.

You creep in the dark...

I will not respect a thief.

Are you the one who threw me in this disgusting bunker?!

Fucking answer me!

Please, come into the light. I need to know who you are.

MIMIC:

Who are you?

You have my... How..?

I just want help, please.

Stop! Why won't you help me?

Are you mocking me?

How do you sound like that...

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I will not respect a thief.

Are you the one who threw me in this disgusting bunker?!

Fucking answer me!

Please, come into the light. I need to know who you are.

TRUTH:

This, this is a trick! You're a trick.
You can't... You can't steal my face too.
Please, just let me leave.
I saw a door behind you...

TRUTH: Is that the way out? I'm sorry, I don't want this to be difficult. I have to get back. Please, let me get to the door. Let me go back to my life.

TRUTH:

Where did you come from? You, you must
have come from somewhere.
Am I right?
Maybe someone left you here too?
Maybe we're both victims?
I can hear the people above and below us.
Do you know who they are?
...
I can see their blood... soaking through
the ceiling... pooling on the floor...
I can feel it on my skin. It's still warm...
Someone's dying above...
What if we're next? We could escape
together?
What if...
...
What if I'm next?

MIMIC:

This, this is a trick! You're a trick.
You can't... You can't steal my face too.
Please, just let me leave.
I saw a door behind you...

MIMIC:

Where.

Am I?

I can hear?

I can see?

I can feel?

...

Of course you won't help me. Whoever
you are.

Who.

Are you trying to say something?

Are you?

I don't understand... I don't know what you
want.

Why won't you just speak to me...

...

Who could do this...

Who.

I'm, I'm all alone again...

Am I...

Am I?

I can't,

I can't be dead.

I'd never get to see Gray again...

I'd never get to see anyone.

I want to- no.

I want to.

I have to live.

Live.

This can't be real.

You can't be real.

...

Can you just tell me who the fuck you are?!

MIMIC: I don't know... who I am...

MIMIC: I have a... reflection? Of course.

MIMIC: I am Truth.

TRUTH: What? You, you can't-

MIMIC: My name is Truth.

TRUTH: No. You can't take that too.

MIMIC: Please.. Help me.

TRUTH: Stop it.

MIMIC: I don't... I don't know where I am. Please...

TRUTH: This is a trick.

MIMIC: Why won't you help me? I have to get back, please.

TRUTH: Get back where?

MIMIC: My partner... Please his name is Gray, I can't, I have to get back to them. Please help me...

TRUTH: DO NOT say that name. Do not try and take him as well. He's too important.

MIMIC: I'm not... I'm not trying to take anything. I don't even know how I got here, I just want to go home. He has to be waiting for me, you must understand-

TRUTH: This has gone far enough. Gray isn't, he isn't yours. You can't just take as you please. You're not me! You're not even real.

MIMIC: I am! I, I'm Truth! Who else would I be?! Please, you're scaring me...

TRUTH: Get the fuck away from me!

MIMIC: I don't understand, why do you hate me?

TRUTH: You're a freak! You, you're a monster. I have to get the fuck out.

MIMIC: But... we're exactly the same.

MIMIC: You... you did this, didn't you? You're the one who left me here?

TRUTH: No. Stop it.

MIMIC: That's why you wanna get rid of me! Where are we? Tell me where we are?! I know you fucking know!

TRUTH: Stop! I don't, I don't know!

MIMIC: I can hear other people around us, did they help you trap me here?

TRUTH: This isn't, this can't be real. You are not real.

MIMIC: You steal my face, and, and then you say I'm not real? I will not respect a thief.

TRUTH: This is all bullshit! You're the one taking everything!

MIMIC: No more deception. I need to get out of here. Either move, or... Or I'll force my way through.

TRUTH: Why?

MIMIC: Why? Please. Enough with the games. Just move so I can leave.

TRUTH: But the door is behind you... wait, where'd the, where'd the door go?

MIMIC: You're the one blocking it.

TRUTH: When did it get behind me... You were keeping me here! You were blocking the door!

MIMIC: You know that's not true. I won't fall for this trick.

TRUTH: How did it move... This can't, none of this...

MIMIC: Please. Move.

TRUTH: This isn't real.

MIMIC: I am real, you are not.

TRUTH: I'm, I'm real! I have a whole life of memories?!

MIMIC: Memories you stole from me.

TRUTH: I lived them! I'm 20 years old, I go to school and, I have a partner and a family and-

MIMIC: You're a thief!

TRUTH: I'm from outside Philly, my mother's name is Carla and, and my father's name is Darrel and, and...

MIMIC: These are basic, easily found facts.

TRUTH: I've got a home, and, and someone waiting for me in it. And no one can take it away from me and-

MIMIC: It was never your home.

TRUTH: And I'm fucking real!

TRUTH:

Was that my voice?

My voice... what is my voice...

The other people here... are they... me?

Do they all look like me?

Who else stole my voice?

How are they me...?

...

...

Am I real?

What, what're you doing?

There can only be one of us.

No please, don't!

TRUTH: Hello? Where, where am I?

NARRATOR

Hello? Where, where am I? (normal) Where are we indeed? Are you still there?

Boo! I love haunted houses. Scaring people...to death... Come with me into the chaos of *Funhouse* by Amir Gad.

JULES: If there was one sentence... one collection of words to sum up the night...

GERRY: This...

GERRY: This is going to be so fun!

JULES: I'm sure it is. I've never been to one before.

GERRY: Seriously? You've *never* gone to a haunted house? They're super common in my hometown. First time I've gone to one in quite some time.

JULES: You've never gone to this one before?

MIMIC:

Was that my voice?

My voice... what is my voice...

The other people here... are they... me?

Do they all look like me?

Who else stole my voice?

How are they me...?

...

...

Am I real?

What, what're you doing?

There can only be one of us.

No please, don't!

GERRY: Nope! It's not this DIY often. You know the old cider house down on... is it Montresor Street?

JULES: I do, thing's been there since... too long. Why didn't the town publicize it though, it sounds cool.

GERRY: Well, they didn't. It's this one person-- They do this thing where they convert old buildings into one night only horror fun houses.

JULES: Put your belt on.

GERRY: Belts, shmelts, you're the one driving.

JULES: So the mysterious funhouse in the old cider house *isn't* creepy.

GERRY: Oh no, completely un-creepy.

JULES

Which is why // you didn't--

GERRY

// Precisely *why* I didn't--

GERRY: You first.

JULES: You go.

JULES: ..tell me.

GERRY: ...tell you.

GERRY: It's going to be fun. I promise. We're here!

JULES: I thought you told me this--

GERRY: It'll look better on the inside, I'm sure.

JULES: This thing is creepy.

GERRY: Thom Yorke creepy.

JULES: Do you smell it? Smells like cider still. Cider mixed with rot. It's got memory, history.

GERRY: Who--

JULES: Screech owls. They sound pretty sometimes.

GERRY: Fuck!

JULES: It's ok! Just owls.

GERRY: You ok?

JULES: Does something feel... off?

GERRY: Hmm no!

JULES: It just feels weird here.

GERRY: Oh.

GERRY: We don't need to be here long. JULES: Nevermind, it's fine! I'm fine.

GERRY: You sure Jules?

JULES: I'm fine. I'm good.

GERRY: Gross! No kisses.

JULES: Fine, fine. Let's go in.

GERRY: This door isn't up to code. JULES: This is so weird.

EMCEE: Boo!

GERRY: Woh!

EMCEE: Hello hello! Welcome to the Pop-Up Horror House, currently in the Montresor Cider House! So good to see you, you got here just in time.

GERRY: Oh whew!

JULES: Just in time?

EMCEE: There's *pretty* strict rules on the number of people per go through. It's best experienced by oneself or in duos like you. Plus, for code purposes-- this building is old! Like, *hellishly* old.

GERRY: So you're the guy who does this! *Love* your work, so cool we could be here. This stuff is to die for.

EMCEE: You're too kind!

GERRY: So how do we do the do!

JULES: I've never been out to something like this.

EMCEE: No one's been! Every funhouse is uniquely designed. You come in, get frightened, you go. New rooms every time I set up. You're going to go up those steps to the first room.

GERRY: Eeeeeee!!! So excited

EMCEE: Remember! It's not the being together. It's the becoming something else together. Up you go! Enjoy.

GERRY: Did you see the cider press? It's tinier than I thought it would be.

JULES: No, I didn't notice it.

GERRY: I'm delighted you decided to come.

JULES: Delighted?

GERRY: Mhm! Delighted. I like this type of stuff. The weird, the indie, the mysterious. Growing up north, this stuff is common. So I think I tried to find hints of it here. Which is pretty uncommon. You didn't do much our first semester, even if I tried to get you to come out. Not like there's much to do out here, university is kind of out in the boonies my mom tells me. My point is... it's nice to be here with you.

JULES: Gerry...

JULES: Oh lovely, creepy music. Is this stuff...

GERRY: Mock-up blood or gore. Some mud. My shoes suffer for the pursuit of fun.

JULES: Grotty.

GERRY: Cool.

JULES: Uh...

GERRY: It's the set-up for the story, every horror thing like this has a story. Like, we're cops going into the murderer's house or killer clowns from high school, so on so forth.

JULES: Right.

EMCEE: Well, well, well. You two must think you're so cool. You must be pretentious, or hopelessly stupid, or the both of them combined! First big night of your life, first precipice to new you. You chose this old dump on your own, so unlucky you. Or lucky you. I'm hoping you're enjoying this little shindig. I'll let you in on my little secret. I'm going to hunt you down. Join my collection. Let's see you get moving.

GERRY: See, it's fun!

JULES: I... don't see how.

GERRY: Onto the next.

JULES: Gerry, going to be honest, I despise this.

GERRY: It's just the first room! We don't know 'bout this one.

JULES: First room, creepy music, creepy monologue, gross footsteps. This room...

GERRY: Bloody footprints going into one of the two doors. Choices, choices.

JULES: Well?

GERRY: You pick.

JULES: Why?

GERRY: Your next step! The new you! I'm being extreme, obviously but, choose our door! Choose where we go from here.

JULES: Well I feel like I've been tricked. We're supposed to go in the direction of the blood. This one's just some old closet... hold on, is there no...

EMCEE: Motherfucker, my nose!

JULES: Nope! Nope! Nope!

GERRY: Ooo... immersive! They were just trying to jump you. You good in there? Sorry bout it...

EMCEE: I'm fine...

JULES: Let's just go.

GERRY: You're not enjoying yourself.

JULES: I'm trying to. I don't... I shouldn't ruin this. I'm ruining this.

GERRY: You're not. I promise, ok?

JULES: Ok. I just feel... nevermind.

GERRY: Tell me.

JULES: I'm enjoying our time together. Not so much the context, but...

GERRY: Next time, you pick something.

JULES: The next door?

GERRY: Not entirely. Next time we go out.

JULES: I--

GERRY: Ooo look! One of those... touch? Feel things? You know, like you put rubber gloves filled with flour to be *corpses* or something.

JULES: Didn't your mother tell you not to put your digits in weird things?

GERRY: Nope! She supported it.

GERRY: It's like...pudding mixed with jelly? Ewww there's some plums in here too I think, for eyes. Flour filled gloves, told you so. How deep is this-- OUCH.

JULES: You ok? Lemme see? Jesus fuck your bleeding!

GERRY: No it's not mine--fuck! Why is there so much! I think it's... is this someone's piercing? I--

JULES: Move over.

JULES: OH MY FUCKING GOD.

GERRY: IT'S BLOOD. OH MY GOD IT'S BLOOD. YOU KNOW THE SMELL OH MY GOD I--

JULES: Gerry, Gerry chill, we just need to get out of here, we just need to go--

GERRY: OH MY GOD, OH MY GOD, OH MY GOD, OH MY GOD.

JULES: COME ON!

JULES: They locked the door!

EMCEE: Hey there, kiddos. Enjoying yourselves?

GERRY: FUCK YOU! WHY DID YOU-- HOW DID YOU!

JULES: Gerry, get behind me.

GERRY: Jules--

JULES: GET BEHIND ME, GERRY.

EMCEE: Did you like my set-up? Best I've done yet. First time I've let myself use the other bodies, thought it would up the terror. Just feels wrong lugging them in the truck between pop-ups. I've got quite the collection. Mush 'em up, turn them into their own creepy thing.

JULES: You fucking psycho.

EMCEE: Wrong. I'm just quite the excellent host. The two of you... you've got something nice. I enjoyed seeing it. You'll be fine specimens of my collection.

GERRY: STOP IT! STOP! JULES, THE CIDER PRESS!

EMCEE: No, no, no, hold on this isn't--

JULES: God, I hope this works. I'm sorry.

JULES: It's stuck! Gerry, help!

EMCEE: Hold on! Listen to me! Listen to me!

JULES: Gerry!

GERRY: We're done listening to you. I'm so sorry, but this is on you.

GERRY: We killed someone.

JULES: We killed something... in self defense.

GERRY: You chose.

JULES: How?

GERRY: You chose me, you put yourself in front. You... protected me.

JULES: You protected me in the end there. We're both protecting us.

GERRY: There's... something I need to tell you-- to tell us.

JULES: ... Me too.

Listen Close, Listen Well stars...
Isabella Capelli as Mother and Gerry.
Avi Fidler as Son.
Jackie Marino-Thomas as Jules.
Kashaun McGhee as Sergeant and Lawyer.
Jeff Pfeiffer as Father and Truth.
And, Solomon Troupe as Narrator and Emcee.

Listen Close, Listen Well was...
Directed by Audrey Gregory.
With Erin Renee Russo as our Assistant Director.
Matthew Bock as our Stage Manager.
And, Steven Gross as our Dramaturg.

Neill Hartley provided Dialect Coaching.
Peter Stamerra was our crew member.

All of the incredible Sound Design and Editing that you hear was done by Allie Britt.
Listen Close, Listen Well includes “The Monkey’s Paw” written by W.W. Jacobs and adapted by Steven Gross, “Seities” written by Ian Farrell, and “Funhouse” written by Amir Gad.

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