“The Monkey’s Paw” Literary Analysis Essay Prompt

Directions: Choose one of the following themes to write a four (4) paragraph essay on.

In the short story “The Monkey’s Paw,” W.W. Jacobs reveals his message that:

1. Interfering with fate will lead to sorrow and misfortune;
2. Unnecessary desire for wealth can often lead to despair; and
3. Fate has ultimate control of the future and is therefore a powerful force that should not be tampered with.

In a well-organized, four-paragraph essay, explain the development of one of Jacobs’ themes outlined above. Using concrete details from the text, you must include two literary devices that help support your analysis of that theme.

Thesis Statement Template:

In “The Monkey’s Paw,” W.W. Jacobs uses (literary device #1) and (literary device #2) to reveal his message that (choose one of the three themes above).

Criteria:
An “A” paper must meet the following requirements:

- 4 paragraphs in length
- Paper is focused, stays on topic always relating concrete details and commentary back to thesis statement
- Includes at least 4 direct quotations from the short story
- Follows appropriate essay structure
- Avoids spelling, grammar, and other written errors
- Analyzes concrete details (avoids simple summary of events)
- Closely adheres to MLA style and formatting guidelines.

You will need the following materials for class on Thursday:

- Your annotated MP story
- The MP Essay Literary Device Identification
- PowerPoint Notes
- Critical Thinking Worksheet
- SPP Essay Structure Handout
- This handout

Important Dates:

- Thursday 10/15: in-class essay
- Monday 10/19: in-class peer review and edits
- Wednesday 10/21: Final draft due! Typed, MLA format!
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