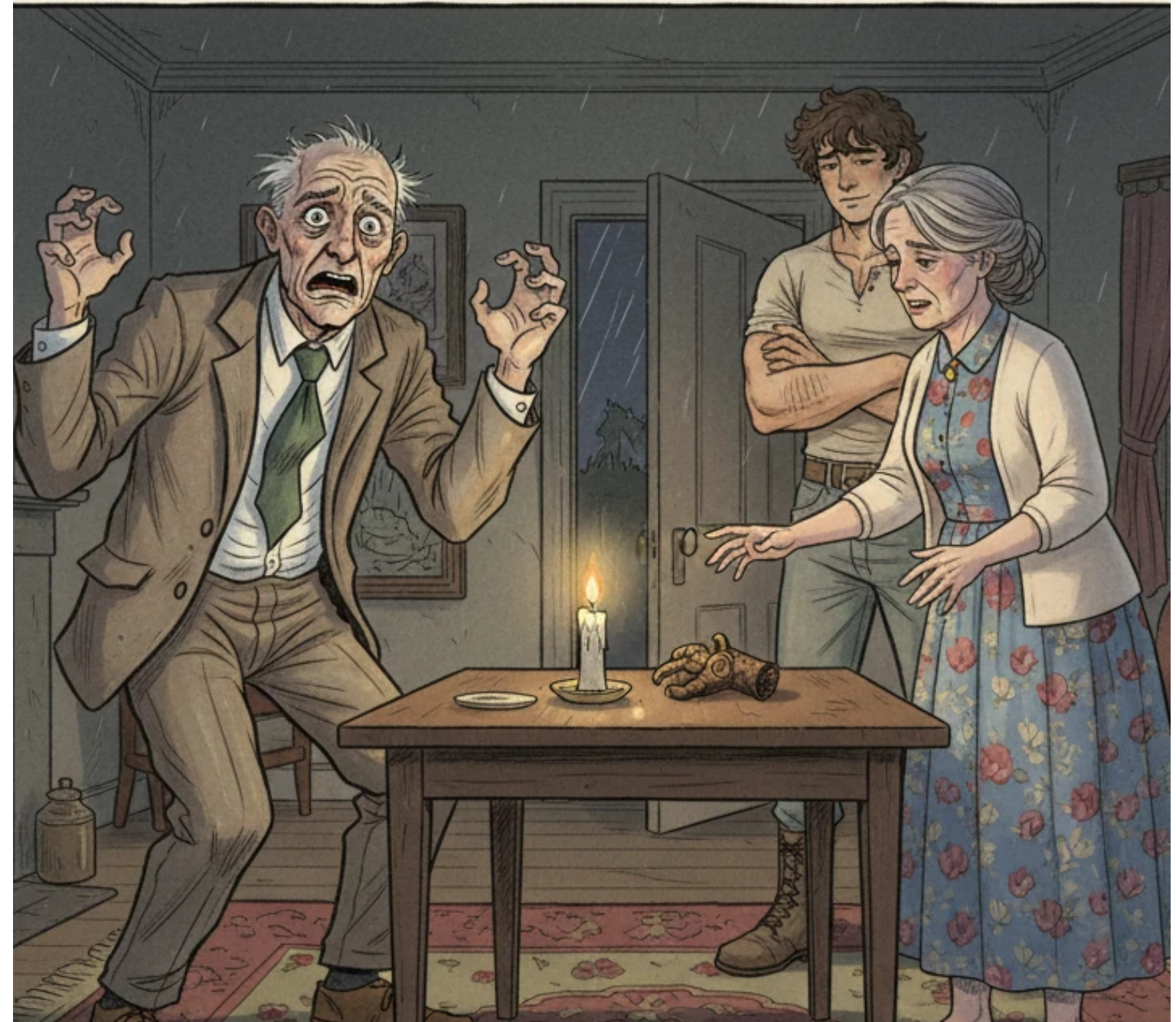


THE MONKEY'S PAW



The Monkey's Paw: A Tale of Fate

Mu Ryan

A TALE OF WISHES GRANTED AND LOST



On a cold and stormy night, the White family sits comfortably inside their warm cottage. Mr. White and his son Herbert are engrossed in a game of chess while Mrs. White watches them fondly from her knitting chair by the fire.



An old friend, Sergeant-Major Morris, arrives with stories of his travels in distant lands. He reveals a small, shriveled monkey's paw, claiming an old fakir placed a spell on it to show that fate rules people's lives.



Morris warns the family of the paw's dark power and tosses it into the crackling fireplace. Driven by a sudden curiosity, Mr. White quickly snatches the relic from the flames before it can be destroyed.



Following his son's lighthearted suggestion, Mr. White holds the paw and wishes for two hundred pounds to pay off their home. He cries out in shock as the paw twists and moves in his hand like a living snake.



The next morning, a well-dressed stranger stands hesitantly at the garden gate. He carries a heavy silence and a look of deep regret as he prepares to deliver news from the factory where Herbert works.



The stranger reveals that Herbert has been killed in a terrible machinery accident. As a gesture of sympathy, the company offers the family a sum of exactly two hundred pounds, the exact amount of the first wish.



A week of mourning passes in a blur of shadows and silence until Mrs. White is struck by a desperate realization. She begs her husband to use the second wish to bring their beloved son back to them.



Mr. White trembles as he holds the cursed object in the darkness of their bedroom. With a voice full of dread, he whispers the second wish, and the house becomes unnaturally still as they wait for an answer.



A faint, rhythmic knocking begins at the front door, growing into a thunderous pounding that shakes the very walls. Mrs. White rushes down the stairs, struggling with the heavy bolt to let her son inside.



Terrified of what mutilated form might be standing on the porch, Mr. White frantically searches for the paw to make his final wish. As the door finally swings open, the knocking stops, leaving only a cold wind and an empty, moonlit road.