“The Monkey’s Paw” by W.W. Jacobs

Directions: Use textual evidence from the story to support all answers.

Chapter 1 Questions:

1. How does Mr. White approach the game of chess as he plays with his son? What might this reveal about his personality?
2. When Mr. White states that he’d like to go to India, just like Sergeant-Major Morris, Morris tells him “better where you are.” In what way might this be a foreshadowing clue?
3. Morris tells Mr. White that the old fakir who owned the monkey’s paw put a spell on it to “show that fate ruled people’s lives, and that those who interfered with it did so to their sorrow.” How might this information about the monkey’s paw be a foreshadowing clue?
4. After Mr. White retrieves the monkey’s paw from the fire, give examples of foreshadowing clues, provided by Morris, that build suspense or hint at what might happen later in connection with the monkey’s paw.
5. Give examples of Herbert White’s attitude towards the monkey’s paw.
6. Why does Mr. White at first have trouble making a wish on the monkey’s paw? What does he end up wishing for?

Chapter 2 Questions:

1. Using details from the first page of chapter two provide examples of Mrs. White’s contradictory feelings about the monkey’s paw and the wish that Mr. White made.
2. When the well-dressed stranger appears at their home, what foreshadowing clues are provided that hint at the message that he brings will not be a positive one?
3. When the stranger arrives, what clues can the reader use to make an inference that Mrs. White believes he is rich? What inference can the reader make about why Mrs. White believes the stranger has come?
4. How was Mrs. White able to make the inference that her son was dead?
5. How is the end of chapter two an example of situational irony?

Chapter 3 Questions:

1. How are the behaviors of Mr. and Mrs. White different at the start of chapter 3?
2. In what ways has Mrs. White’s attitude about the power of the monkey’s paw changed?
3. Why might Mr. White say that to bring back their son would be “foolish and wicked”?
4. In what way does Mrs. White have power over her husband in the early parts of this chapter?
5. How does Mr. White react when he hears the knocks at the door?
6. Using clues from the story:
7. Make an inference as to what Mr. White believes is on the other side of the door.
8. Next, make an inference as to what Mr. White made for his “third and last wish.”
9. Finally, make an inference as to why Mr. White made this wish.