

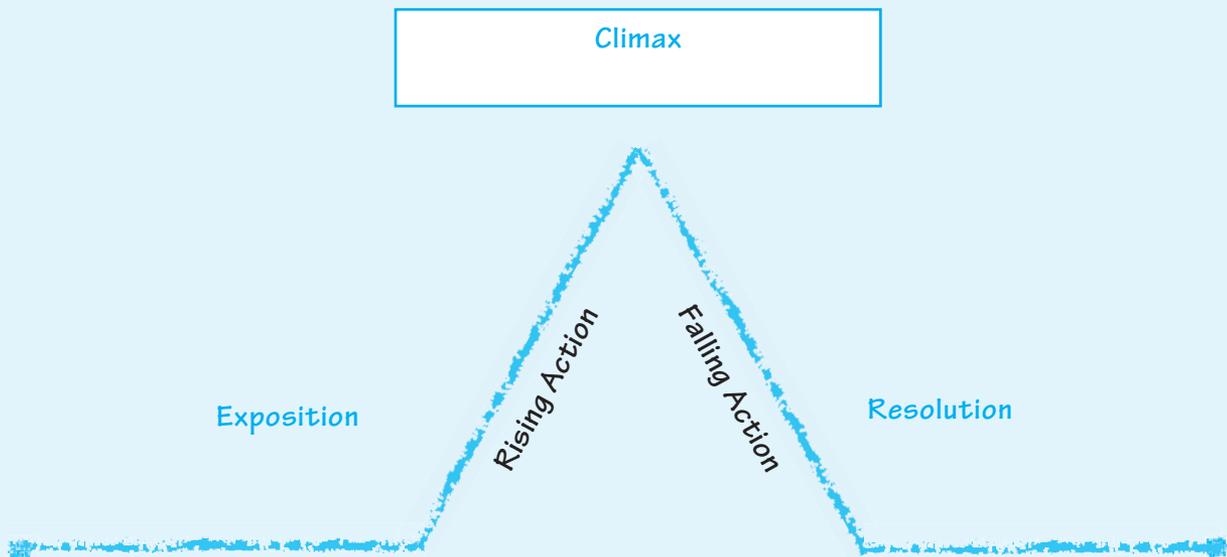
The Monkey's Paw • The Leap

Literary Analysis

A **plot** is all of the events that happen in a story. The plot includes a **conflict**, or a struggle. The plot follows a pattern like the one shown below. Use the chart to record events in the plot.

- **Exposition:** Background information about the characters and the story.
- **Rising action:** Events that increase the conflict.
- **Climax:** The highest point of the story. The conflict is about to be solved.
- **Falling action:** The things that happen after the climax.
- **Resolution:** The final outcome.

One way a writer builds tension is with **foreshadowing**. Foreshadowing gives details that hint at coming events.



Reading Skill

A **prediction** is a guess about what might happen. **Use your prior knowledge** and story details to make predictions. Think about human nature to predict how characters will act. Remember plots from other stories to predict events.

Word List A

Study these words. Then, complete the activity that follows.

dubiously [DOO bee uhs lee] *adv.* doubtfully

The repairman looked dubiously at the bent skateboard.

haste [HAYST] *n.* great speed, particularly when time is limited

His haste was so great he forgot to put on his shoes.

persisted [puhr SIS tid] *v.* continued steadily; refused to give up

The dog persisted in barking even when scolded.

preoccupied [pree AHK yoo pyd] *adj.* completely absorbed in something else

I was so preoccupied with work I did not hear the phone ring.

pursued [puhr SOOD] *v.* followed; strived for

The artist pursued her goal by painting every day.

torrent [TAWR uhnt] *n.* quick, violent flood; heavy rush of liquid

The torrent of rain completely soaked the lawn.

unnecessary [uhn NES uh ser ee] *adj.* not needed; not required

The extra-credit reading is unnecessary but helpful.

virtues [VER chooz] *n.* good qualities; morally excellent qualities

My grandfather's virtues include honesty and reliability.

Exercise A

Fill in each blank in the paragraph below with an appropriate word from Word List A. Use each word only once.

Adam and I were riding our bicycles when we were caught in a sudden [1] _____ of rain. The heavy downpour [2] _____, and we got wetter and wetter. Adam suggested that we stop for a while, but I became [3] _____ with getting home as quickly as possible. I sped up as Adam [4] _____ me at a safer speed. Unfortunately, in my [5] _____ to get home, I forgot the rules of safety. I lost control of my bicycle and crashed. Adam arrived and looked [6] _____ at the wrecked frame. He didn't say anything because he knew that scolding was [7] _____. Luckily, one of Adam's [8] _____ is that he never says "I told you so."

1. Underline the words that describe the torrent that Amy feels. Then, tell what a *torrent* is.
2. Underline the words that tell what the friends pursued. Then, describe a goal that you have *pursued*.
3. Underline the words that say what Jackie did in her haste. How you can tell if you are acting in *haste*?
4. Circle the words that name virtues that Jackie does not have. Describe *virtues* you look for in a friend.
5. Circle the word that means the opposite of unnecessary. Then, tell what *unnecessary* means.
6. Underline the words that tell what Amy did dubiously. Then, write what *dubiously* means.
7. Underline the words that describe the way in which Amy's doubts persisted. Give a synonym for *persisted*.
8. Underline the words that tell what happened because Amy was preoccupied. Write a sentence about what can make someone *preoccupied*.

Read the following passage. Pay special attention to the underlined words. Then, read it again, and complete the activities. Use a separate sheet of paper for your written answers.

“Hello, Amy, this is your old pal Jackie. Can you believe it’s been twenty-three years since geometry class?”

The instant she heard Jackie’s voice, Amy felt a torrent of emotions, as though she were being flooded by the past.

Amy and Jackie had been neighbors and best friends in high school, but they had pursued very different paths since then. Amy went to college, studied media and communications, and eventually became a news writer for a local radio station. Jackie moved to Mexico immediately after graduation, got married, and soon had four children.

“Can you meet for lunch?” asked Jackie. “Sorry about the last-minute call, but in my haste to catch the plane, I completely forgot to call you.”

Jackie had many virtues, but planning and time management skills were not among them. “No problem,” she told her friend, “advance warning isn’t required between friends—it’s unnecessary.”

Yet, Amy was surprised when a tall woman looked down at her. “Jackie,” Amy asked dubiously, questioning her own memory as well as the stranger, “is that you?”

“Of course it’s me,” said the woman. “I can’t have changed as much as all that, can I?”

Throughout lunch, Amy’s doubts about Jackie identity persisted. Jackie seemed to know the details of their high school years, but it was as if she had studied the facts from a book. By the end of lunch, Amy simply couldn’t believe that this woman was really her long-lost friend.

Then, Jackie said that she had a big favor she needed to ask, but Amy never heard the favor. She was completely preoccupied with her own internal questions. Was this stranger really her old friend, or was Jackie an imposter?

The Monkey's Paw

W.W. Jacobs



Summary An old friend visits the White family. He shows them a monkey's paw. He says that it can grant wishes. He warns the family not to take the monkey's paw. The Whites take it anyway and wish on it. The results are not what they expected.



Writing About the Big Question

Is there a difference between reality and truth? In “The Monkey’s Paw,” a family learns the truth behind a mysterious monkey’s paw. Complete this sentence:

People may try to verify the truth by _____

Note-taking Guide

Use this chart to keep track of the things that happen as a result of the Whites’ wishes.

Wish #1	Wish #2	Wish #3
Mr. White wishes for 200 pounds.		
↓	↓	↓
Herbert is killed at work. His parents receive 200 pounds.		

The Monkey's Paw

W.W. Jacobs

Activate Prior Knowledge

You probably have heard the expression "Be careful what you wish for." Explain what the sentence means. Why should someone be careful about wishing?

Literary Analysis

The **exposition** of a story gives background information. What important background information about the characters and their home is given in the bracketed paragraph?

Reading Check

Where has the sergeant major been for twenty-one years? Underline the sentence that tells you.

On a cold, windy night, the White family is gathered in their parlor. Mr. White is playing chess with his son, Herbert, and losing. Mrs. White is knitting by the fire. The family is waiting for a visitor, an old friend of Mr. White's. At last the visitor, Sergeant Major Morris, arrives. The sergeant major has spent twenty-one years in India. He entertains the White family with stories of his adventures. Mr. White asks his guest about a monkey's paw. The sergeant major does not want to talk about the paw. The White family wants to know more. At last, the sergeant major begins to tell them about the dried-up paw.



His three listeners leaned forward eagerly. The visitor absent-mindedly put his empty glass to his lips and then set it down again. His host filled it for him.

"To look at," said the sergeant major, fumbling in his pocket, "it's just an ordinary little paw, dried to a mummy."

He took something out of his pocket and proffered it. Mrs. White drew back with a grimace, but her son, taking it, examined it curiously.

"And what is there special about it?" inquired Mr. White as he took it from his son, and having examined it, placed it upon the table.

"It had a spell put on it by an old fakir," said the sergeant major, "a very holy man." "He wanted to show that fate ruled people's lives, and that those who interfered with it did so to their sorrow. He put a spell on it so that three separate men could each have three wishes from it."

His manner was so impressive that his hearers were conscious that their light laughter jarred somewhat.

“Well, why don’t you have three, sir?” said Herbert White, cleverly.

The soldier regarded him in the way that middle age is wont to regard presumptuous youth. “I have,” he said, quietly, and his blotchy face whitened.

“And did you really have the three wishes granted?” asked Mrs. White.

“I did,” said the sergeant major, and his glass tapped against his strong teeth.

“And has anybody else wished?” persisted the old lady.

“The first man had his three wishes, yes,” was the reply; “I don’t know what the first two were, but the third was for death. That’s how I got the paw.”

His tones were so grave that a hush fell upon the group.



Mr. White asks why the sergeant major keeps the paw, since his three wishes are used up. The soldier answers that he has thought about selling it, but he is afraid of the mischief that the paw might cause. He suddenly throws the paw into the fire. Mr. White quickly snatches the paw from the fire. Mr. White asks his friend to give him the paw. The sergeant major refuses, and tells Mr. White to burn the paw. Mr. White asks how to make a wish. The soldier tells Mr. White to hold the paw in the right hand and wish aloud. Mrs. White jokes about wishing for four hands. Very worried, the soldier tells them to wish for something

Reading Skill 

What **prediction**, or guess, can you make about the monkey’s paw and the White family? Circle details from the story that help you make your prediction.

Literary Analysis 

The events in a story make up its **plot**. A plot has exposition, rising action, a climax, falling action, and a resolution. The sergeant major tells the Whites the history of the monkey’s paw. What part of the **plot** is this?

Stop to Reflect 

Think about what you would do if you were in Mr. White’s position. Would you make the three wishes? Why or why not?

Vocabulary Development

jarred (jahrd) *v.* shocked because of an unpleasant noise
presumptuous (pri ZUMP choo uhs) *adj.* overly confident

TAKE NOTES

Reading Check

What is the first wish Mr. White makes? Underline the sentence in the text that tells you.

Reading Skill

Predict the results of Mr. White's wish.

Read Fluently

Read the underlined sentence. Circle any unfamiliar words. Use information from the sentence to guess the meanings of these words. Then, rewrite the sentence in your own words.

sensible. After supper, the Whites listen to more of the sergeant major's stories.

After he leaves, Mr. White tells his family that he paid his friend for the paw. The sergeant again had asked him to throw the paw away. Herbert jokes with his parents about being rich, famous, and happy.



Mr. White took the paw from his pocket and eyed it dubiously. "I don't know what to wish for, and that's a fact," he said, slowly. "It seems to me I've got all I want."

"If you only cleared the house, you'd be quite happy, wouldn't you?" said Herbert, with his hand on his shoulder. "Well, wish for two hundred pounds,¹ then; that'll just do it."

His father, smiling shamefacedly at his own credulity, held up the talisman, as his son, with a solemn face somewhat marred by a wink at his mother, sat down at the piano and struck a few impressive chords.

"I wish for two hundred pounds," said the old man distinctly.

A fine crash from the piano greeted the words, interrupted by a shuddering cry from the old man. His wife and son ran toward him.

"It moved," he cried, with a glance of disgust at the object as it lay on the floor. "As I wished it twisted in my hand like a snake."

"Well, I don't see the money," said his son as he picked it up and placed it on the table, "and I bet I never shall."



Mrs. White tries to reassure her upset husband. The three sit silently by the fire for a while. As his father and mother get up,

Vocabulary Development

dubiously (DOO bee us lee) *adv.* having doubts about whether something is true

1. **pounds** *n.* units of English currency, roughly comparable to dollars.

Herbert jokes that they might find a bag of cash sitting on their bed, with “something horrible” watching them. Before Herbert goes to bed, he thinks he sees a monkey-face in the fire. He shivers when he accidentally touches the paw.

In the bright sun of next morning, Herbert laughs at his fears. Mrs. White complains about the old soldier’s tall tales. Herbert jokingly asks his parents not to spend the money before he returns. Then, he leaves for work. No money arrives in the mail. Nothing has happened as Mr. and Mrs. White sit down to breakfast. Mr. White repeats that he is sure that the paw moved in his hand as he made his wish. Mrs. White notices a well-dressed stranger pacing at their gate. At last the stranger comes to their door. He acts and speaks awkwardly and finally tells the Whites that there has been a terrible accident at Herbert’s place of work. Herbert has fallen into the machinery and been killed. Mr. and Mrs. White are shocked. The visitor tells them that he represents Herbert’s employers and expresses their sympathy.



There was no reply; the old woman’s face was white, her eyes staring, and her breath inaudible; on the husband’s face was a look such as his friend the sergeant might have carried into his first action.

“I was to say that Maw and Meggins disclaim all responsibility,” continued the other. “They admit no liability at all, but in consideration of your son’s services they wish to present you with a certain sum as compensation.”

Mr. White dropped his wife’s hand, and rising to his feet, gazed with a look of horror at his

Literary Analysis 

Read the underlined passage. What part of the **plot** is this underlined passage?

Reading Skill 

Use your prior knowledge and think about other stories you have read. How do family members cope with the loss of a loved one? Make a **prediction** about what the Whites will do now.

Reading Check 

What information does the stranger give to Mr. and Mrs. White? Underline the sentence that tells you.

Vocabulary Development

inaudible (in AWD uh buhl) *adj.* too quiet to be heard

TAKE NOTES

Reading Check

What is the second wish?
Underline the sentence that tells what Mr. White wishes for.

Stop to Reflect

If you could give the Whites advice, what would you tell them?

What might you warn them about?

Literary Analysis

In what way does the second wish increase the tension of the story?

visitor. His dry lips shaped the words, “How much?”

“Two hundred pounds,” was the answer.

Unconscious of his wife’s shriek, the old man smiled faintly, put out his hands like a sightless man, and dropped, a senseless heap, to the floor.



Mr. and Mrs. White try to cope with their sudden loss. A week after Herbert’s funeral, Mr. White wakes in the night to find his wife looking for the monkey’s paw. Mrs. White realizes that they have two wishes left. They can wish for Herbert to be alive again. Mr. White is horrified. They argue. Mr. White tells his wife that Herbert was badly mangled and has been dead for ten days. Mrs. White doesn’t care. She drags her husband toward the door. Mr. White goes down to the parlor and takes up the paw. Sweating and afraid, he makes his way back to his wife.



Even his wife’s face seemed changed as he entered the room. It was white and expectant, and to his fears seemed to have an unnatural look upon it. He was afraid of her.

“*Wish!*” she cried, in a strong voice.

“It is foolish and wicked,” he faltered.

“*Wish!*” repeated his wife.

He raised his hand. “I wish my son alive again.”

The talisman fell to the floor, and he regarded it fearfully. Then he sank trembling into a chair as the old woman, with burning eyes, walked to the window and raised the blind.



Mr. White sits in his chair. Mrs. White peers out the window. The candle burns out. Nothing happens. The Whites return to bed. They lie awake in the darkness, listening to the clock, a stair-creak, a mouse. Finally, Mr. White gets up to light a candle. He strikes

a match to light his way downstairs. As he pauses to light a new match at the bottom of the stairs, he hears a soft knock at the door. Mr. White drops all his matches and freezes. He hears a second knock. Mr. White runs back to the bedroom and closes the door. He hears a third knock. Mrs. White asks about the sound. Another knock occurs. Mrs. White screams that it is Herbert and runs for the door. Mr. White catches her, begging her not to let it in. They hear another knock. Mrs. White breaks free and races down the stairs, telling Herbert that she is coming. Mrs. White cannot reach the top bolt of the door. She calls for her husband to help her.



But her husband was on his hands and knees groping wildly on the floor in search of the paw. If he could only find it before the thing outside got in. A perfect fusillade² of knocks reverberated through the house, and he heard the scraping of a chair as his wife put it down in the passage against the door. He heard the creaking of the bolt as it came slowly back, and at the same moment he found the monkey's paw, and frantically breathed his third and last wish.

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

Literary Analysis 

The **climax** is the high point of the story. How does the difference between what Mr. and Mrs. White are trying to do bring events to a climax?

Stop to Reflect 

Who do you think is outside the Whites' door? Explain.

Reading Skill 

What **predictions** that you made were correct? What helped you make these correct predictions?

Vocabulary Development

reverberated (ri VER buh rayt id) *v.* resounded, reechoed

2. **fusillade** (FYOO Asuh lahd) *n.* rapid firing, as of gunshots.

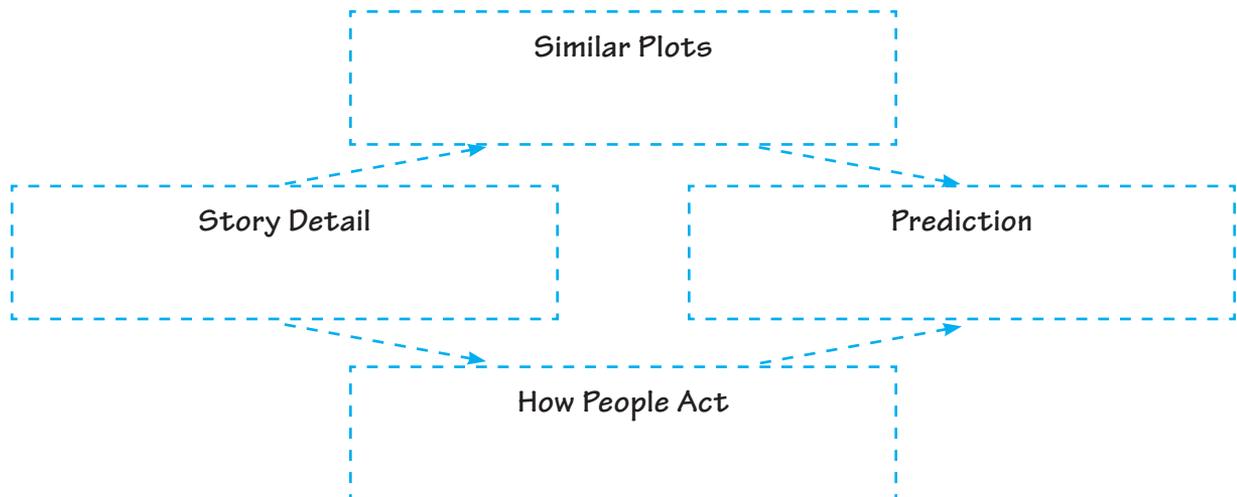
The Monkey's Paw

1. **Infer:** Mr. White wishes for 200 pounds. What painful event seems to follow from his wish?

2. **Draw Conclusions:** Sergeant Major Morris says the fakir warned that “fate ruled people’s lives, and that those who interfered with it did so to their sorrow.” Do the events of the story prove this point? Explain.

3. **Literary Analysis:** Writers **foreshadow** when they give details that hint at later events. Identify two details that foreshadow the tragic outcome of the first wish.

4. **Reading Skill:** Remembering plots from other stories and thinking about human nature can help you **predict** what will happen in a story. Use this chart to indicate how you **used your prior knowledge** to **make a prediction** about one of the wishes.



Writing: Sequel

Write a brief **sequel** to this tale in which someone else finds the paw. Answer the questions below to help you plan. Use your notes to help you write your sequel.

- How does the new person get the monkey's paw?

- How will he or she learn about the history of the monkey's paw?

- What does this person have, and what does he or she want?

- Will the person make a wish?

- What consequences will this person's wishes bring?

Listening and Speaking: Interview

Conduct an **interview** between a reporter and the Whites after the tragedy. Use the following lines to write five questions you could ask the Whites in your interview.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Word List A

Study these words from “The Leap.” Then, complete the activity that follows.

anticipation [an tis uh PAY shuhn] *n.* expectation; looking forward to
Our anticipation increased in the final inning of the ball game.

associate [uh SOH see ayt] *v.* to connect in the mind
Many people associate spring with the color green.

carelessly [KAIR luhs lee] *adv.* without care; without paying attention
The cat ran out because I carelessly left the back door open.

collapsed [kuh LAPST] *v.* fell down; broke down suddenly
During the earthquake, several buildings collapsed.

culprit [KUL prit] *n.* offender; person guilty of a crime or action
The police caught the culprit responsible for the broken window.

drama [DRAH muh] *n.* exciting or tense events
There was plenty of drama when the test answers were stolen.

overcoming [oh ver KUM ing] *v.* conquering; mastering; getting over
The athlete is overcoming all of her opponents.

radiance [RAY dee uhns] *n.* bright, glowing light
After so many days of rain, I miss the sun’s radiance.

Exercise A

Fill in each blank in the paragraph below with an appropriate word from Word List A. Use each word only once.

Before *Romeo and Juliet* began, you could sense the eager [1] _____ of the audience. When the curtain went up, stage lights cast their [2] _____, and the actors began. However, the [3] _____ soon took an unexpected turn. One of the set walls [4] _____, nearly hitting Romeo. Luckily, Juliet did a terrific job of [5] _____ the problem. She simply pushed the wall back up and kept going. After the show, the [6] _____ was discovered. One of the other actors had [7] _____ leaned against the wall. The play was a hit, but everyone in the audience will always [8] _____ *Romeo and Juliet* with falling walls.

Read the following passage. Pay special attention to the underlined words. Then, read it again, and complete the activities. Use a separate sheet of paper for your written answers.

On July 6, 1944, the sun's bright radiance lit up the afternoon sky in Hartford, Connecticut. More than 6,000 people decided to attend a matinee performance of the Ringling Brother and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Faces in the audience stared in eager anticipation, waiting for the next thrilling act. No one could have predicted that their happiness would soon turn to terror.

The circus was in progress when the drama shifted from the jugglers and gymnasts to the audience and the circus tent itself. Suddenly, a fire started. The flames spread with astonishing speed, becoming a raging inferno in moments. Why did the fire spread so quickly? One key factor was that the circus tent was painted with a mixture of wax and paraffin to make it waterproof.

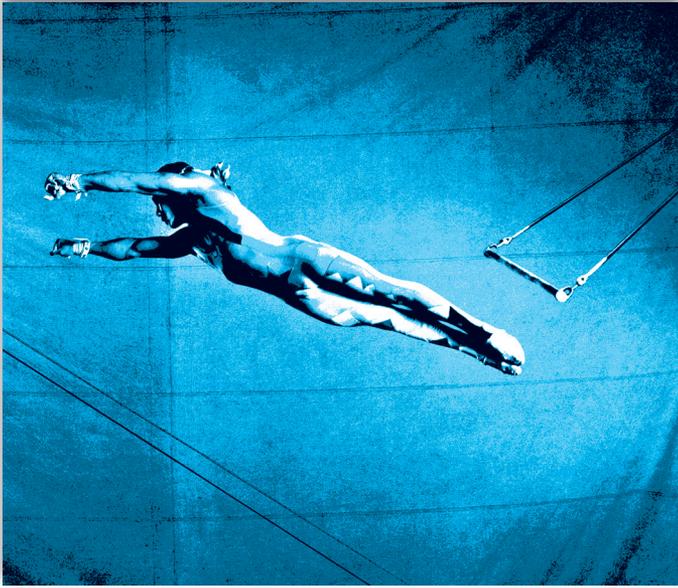
The huge tent quickly collapsed, falling to the ground as it burned. People inside the tent rushed to the exits. "There was pushing and shoving, people just frantic to get out of there. It was a mass exodus," recalled Eunice Groark, who was six years old at the time.

Although the tragic fire caused the deaths of 100 children and 68 adults, its cause remains a mystery. Was it started by a carelessly tossed match or cigarette? Or did someone intentionally set the fire?

In 1950, Robert D. Segee of Circleville, Ohio, said he was the culprit, claiming to have set the fire himself. He was convicted, but later investigators have cast doubt on his confession. After reopening the investigation in 1991, the case was reclassified as undetermined.

In the years after the fire, many people in Hartford could only associate the circus with sadness and loss. Overcoming feelings of fear has been difficult for survivors and witnesses. "I am still terrified," says Groark. "When I go to the movies or am in a big crowd, I need to find the exit." Soon, a memorial will be built in Hartford to honor those lost in this frightening tragedy

1. Underline the words that describe what the sun's radiance did. Then, tell what radiance means.
2. Underline the words that tell what the audience's anticipation was for. What might make you feel anticipation?
3. Underline the words that tell who and what the drama shifted to. Describe another situation with a lot of drama.
4. Underline the words that tell what happened to the tent when it collapsed. Tell what collapsed means.
5. Underline the words that name an action that might have been done carelessly. What can happen when an action is done carelessly?
6. Underline the words that tell what the culprit claimed. What is a culprit?
7. Circle two things that many people in Hartford associate with the circus. Then, tell something you associate with the circus.
8. Underline the words that tell what survivors had difficulty overcoming. Then, tell what overcoming means.



The Leap

Louise Erdrich

Summary The narrator tells of her mother’s life as a trapeze artist. An accident injures her and kills her first husband. She later marries a doctor and settles on his farm. While the narrator is a child, their house catches fire. The narrator is trapped in her bedroom. Her mother makes a brave attempt to save her.



Writing About the Big Question

Is there a difference between reality and truth? In “The Leap,” a daughter thinks about the truth in her life by contemplating how much she owes her mother. Complete this sentence:

Decisions that people make can affect the reality of their lives by _____.

Note-taking Guide

Use this chart to recall the different parts of the story’s plot.

Exposition	One Event in the Rising Action	Climax	One Event in the Falling Action	Resolution
The narrator’s mother was once a circus performer.				

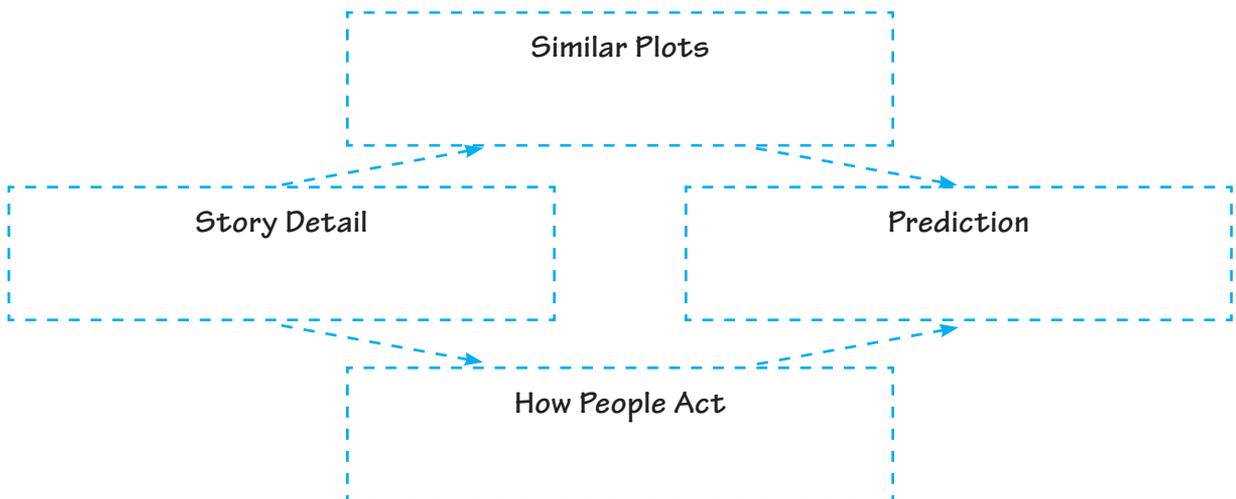
The Leap

1. **Respond:** Anna had an unusual life. Which event in Anna’s life surprised you the most? Why?

2. **Infer:** Near the end of the story, firefighters are trying to rescue the child. Why does the mother make the leap?

3. **Literary Analysis:** A **plot** is all of the important events that happen in a story. The **rising action** is the events that increase the **conflict**, or struggle. Describe two events in the rising action that increase the tension in the plot.

4. **Reading Skill:** You can often **use prior knowledge** to **make a prediction**. A prediction is a guess about what might happen. Fill in the chart below to show how you used prior knowledge to make a prediction about the outcome of the story.



Writing: Sequel

Write a brief **sequel** to “The Leap.” Tell another exciting episode in which the narrator’s mother uses her circus skills to rescue someone. Answer the following questions. Use your notes to help you write the sequel.

- Where will you set your sequel? List details about the place and time.

- Which characters will you use in the sequel?

- What are the characters doing and thinking in this sequel?

- What is the climax of the story?

Listening and Speaking: Interview

Use the following lines to write five questions you could ask the narrator of “The Leap” in your interview.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____