

Short Stories with Peter: The Monkey's Paw by W. W. Jacobs (Abridged B1–B2 Level)

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

8 learning entries

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

1

grant a wish

DEF

to make something that somebody wishes for become real

The person or magical power grants the wish, while the wish itself comes true. Grant sounds more formal than give and is common in tales and fantasy.

The paw grants wishes, but each one has a terrible price.

If you could grant one wish, what would it be?

2

come true

DEF

to become real or happen in the way somebody hoped

The subject is normally a dream, hope, prediction or wish. We say a wish comes true, but a person grants or fulfils it.

Morris admits that his wishes came true.

Her dream of studying abroad finally came true.

3

tempt fate

DEF

to take an unnecessary risk that may cause bad luck or trouble

We use this idiom when somebody behaves too confidently or tests their good fortune, as if inviting something bad to happen.

Morris warns Mr White not to tempt fate.

We have won three games, but let us not tempt fate by celebrating early.

4

interfere with fate

DEF

to try to alter events that seem destined to happen

Interfere with usually suggests unwanted or unwise involvement. In the story, fate is treated like a natural order that people should not disturb.

The holy man believed that people should not interfere with fate.

The legend warns anyone who tries to interfere with fate.



5

in recognition of

DEF

as a public or formal acknowledgement of somebody's work, service or achievement

A formal phrase common in awards, professional announcements and official compensation. It explains the reason for giving something.

The company offers money in recognition of Herbert's service.

She received an award in recognition of her work in the community.

6

at any cost

DEF

regardless of the danger, difficulty, sacrifice or price involved

This emphatic phrase shows absolute determination. Depending on the context, it can sound brave, desperate or dangerously obsessive.

Mrs White wants Herbert back at any cost.

Winning matters, but not at any cost.

7

bring someone back

DEF

to cause someone to return to a place, situation or former condition

This phrasal verb can mean return a person physically, restore them to a role, or revive them in a supernatural context. The surrounding words reveal which meaning applies.

Mrs White begs her husband to bring Herbert back.

The new manager brought two experienced designers back to the team.

8

be careful what you wish for

DEF

used to warn that getting what you want may have unexpected and unpleasant consequences

This fixed warning is often shortened to careful what you wish for. It is usually said when a desirable result could hide a serious disadvantage.

The Monkey's Paw gives a dark meaning to be careful what you wish for.

You want a job with more responsibility, but be careful what you wish for.

