

(*Eyeing it with disgust.*) Bun—? What for?

HERBERT. That yarn takes it.

(*MR. and MRS. WHITE are delighted.*)

SERGEANT. Mean to say you doubt my word?

MRS. WHITE. No, no! He's only taking you off.—You shouldn't, Herbert.

MR. WHITE. Herbert always was one for a bit o' fun!

(*HERBERT puts the bun back on the table, comes round in front and, moving the chair out of the way sits cross-legged on the floor at his father's side.*)

SERGEANT. But it's true. Why, if I chose, I could tell you things—— But there! you don't get no more yarns out o' me.

MR. WHITE. Nonsense, old friend. (*He puts down his glass.*) You're not going to get shirty about a bit o' fun. (*He moves his chair nearer MORRIS'S.*) What was that you started telling me the other day about a monkey's paw, or something? (*He nudges HERBERT, and winks at MRS. WHITE.*)

SERGEANT (*gravely*). Nothing. Leastways, nothing worth hearing.

MRS. WHITE (*with astonished curiosity*). Monkey's paw——?

MR. WHITE. Ah—you was tellin' me——

SERGEANT. Nothing. Don't go on about it. (*He puts his empty glass to his lips—then stares at it.*) What? Empty again? There! When I begin thinkin' o' the paw, it makes me that absent-minded——

MR. WHITE (*rises and fills the glass*). Yaid you always carried it on you.

SERGEANT. So I do, for fear o' what might happen. (*Sunk in thought.*) Ay!—ay!

MR. WHITE (*handing him his glass refilled*). There. (*He sits again in the same chair.*)

MRS. WHITE. What's it for?