

MR. WHITE (*lights the candle*). There now ; there now. Go on up to bed. Go on, now—I'm a-coming.

MRS. WHITE. Whether I'm here or in bed, or wherever I am, I'm with my boy, I'm with——

(*A low single knock at the street door is heard.*)

(*Starting.*) What's that!

MR. WHITE (*mastering his horror*). A rat. The house is full of 'em.

(*There is a louder single knock ; she starts up. He catches her by the arm.*)

Stop! What are you going to do?

MRS. WHITE (*wildly*). It's my boy! It's Herbert! I forgot it was a mile away! What are you holding me for? I must open the door!

(*The knocking continues in single knocks at irregular intervals, constantly growing louder and more insistent.*)

MR. WHITE (*still holding her*). For God's sake!

MRS. WHITE (*struggling*). Let me go!

MR. WHITE. Don't open the door!

(*He drags her towards L. front.*)

MRS. WHITE. Let me go!

MR. WHITE. Think what you might see!

MRS. WHITE (*struggling fiercely*). Do you think I fear the child I bore! Let me go! (*She wrenches herself loose and rushes to the door which she tears open.*) I'm coming, Herbert! I'm coming!

MR. WHITE (*cowering in the extreme corner, L. front*). Don't 'ee do it! Don't 'ee do it!

(*MRS. WHITE is at work on the outer door, where the knocking still continues. She slips the chain, slips the lower bolt and unlocks the door.*)

(*Suddenly.*) The paw! Where's the monkey's paw?

(*He gets on his knees and feels along the floor for it.*)