

CONLYFE

M A G A Z I N E

Featuring

**LAUREN RAY
COSPLAY**

&

**COOPER
CREATIVE ART**

**GET
STARTED
ON
TWITCH IN**

10
Easy
Steps

**BRINGING
BACK THE
CHRISTMAS
GHOST STORY**





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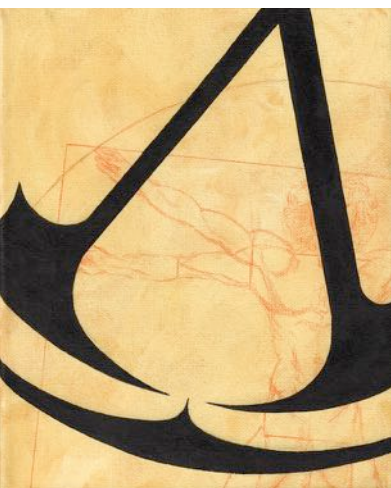
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FROM THE EDITOR

First of all let me take the time to thank you for taking the time to pick up and read our inaugural edition. Conlyfe Magazine is the culmination of years of love and passion not only for the comic con convention circuit but for all of the artists, cosplayers, and organizers who work so diligently to make them happen year after year.

I fell in love with Comicons when I started working the artist alley at The Heart of Texas Comic Con in Waco, Tx. Back then I was a naive artist

Like Thanos, 2020 has come along with the intent to break our spirits and force us to hide away in our homes. Since the pandemic started, countless people have not only lost loved ones but are grappling with the loss of their income in part due to the lack of conventions taking place around the country. What was becoming an over-saturated market has now become a faint hope that one day we will all be able to see one another in person again.

Until then, Conlyfe Magazine will be here to help you reunite with your fandoms and keep the Convention Life Alive!



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THE JOURNAL OF JACKSON WEAVER, ESQ.

By: Rob Laundry

It's the "High Holy Season" again, and with that comes early sunsets, trick or treating and of course, ghost stories. In this short story by author and scholar Rob Laundry, a family moves into a new home only to find out that the previous tenants never left!

June 23: We've finally picked our house! Carrie and I are going down to sign the papers tomorrow. It's bigger than we really need right now, but hopefully we'll fill it with smaller versions of ourselves. Can't believe the price we got on it!

July 1: Moving day. So glad to get out of this crappy rental. Kinda surprised by how much stuff we have. This is gonna take all day...

July 2: Our first morning in our house. We slept on the mattress on the floor, surrounded by boxes, but still, we're here. Carrie helped unpack the kitchen and I cooked our first meal. Big country breakfast. Got to have energy to unpack, right?

July 10: Really should have taken some vacation time for unboxing. It's starting to look like a home, though. Neither of us has gotten much sleep. Carrie insists she hears a baby crying. Probably just nerves from the move.

July 12: No sleep for, what, five, six nights now. And now Carrie's got me convinced that I hear a baby, too. Weird wind noises, maybe? Going to try to figure it out tonight, if we can figure out where it's coming from.

Later: Figured out which room the sound is coming from. Explored it high and low, but still couldn't pinpoint the exact location. While we were in the bedroom in question, heard a loud crash. Ran downstairs to find all the dishes in one cabinet had fallen out. Going to call a contractor in the morning and see if there's something wrong with the cabinets. They look level to me, but all my tools are still packed up somewhere, so who knows?

July 15: Contractor came by today. Gave the whole house the once-over. Couldn't find anything wrong. This is starting to get a little freaky...

July 17: We went for a walk this morning. Met some of the neighbors. When we told them which house we had taken, they looked at us like we were crazy. Neighborhood legend is that it's haunted. Nobody could tell us why.

July 18: Heard footsteps on the stairs last night. Went out to investigate, but nothing there. Neighbor's ghost talk must have gotten to me. We're both jumpy as hell.

July 14: More steps. More crying. And it sounds like something is moving in the walls. Starting to see how we got this much house for so little money. Carrie thinks we should call a psychic, and lord help me, I'm starting to think she may be right.

July 15: Called a psychic. She can't make it out for a couple of weeks. Hope we can hold it together that long. Nerves are raw. Every conversation turns to an argument. Neither of us is sleeping. How does a dream become a nightmare so quickly?

July 17: Almost hit Carrie this afternoon. Stopped myself, barely. This house has made us crazy.

July 19: Dan at the office suggested an exorcist. Not something I believe in personally, but I'm tempted to try it. Something's gotta give. How does one find an exorcist? Craigslist? I have no idea.

July 20: Locked in the bedroom. Carrie won't stop screaming. Footsteps in the hall. Voices? I don't know what's real and what's my imagination anymore. We need help.

July 21: Someone or something is definitely in the house. Carrie won't let me out of the room to check. Tried calling the cops. Both cell phones are dead.

Later: Something is pounding on the door. No answer when I ask who they are. Carrie is crying uncontrollably and shaking with fear. Trying to stay strong for her. Door is starting to splinter. I need a weapon. There's nothing here. It's through the door oh god help it's coming. It's coming!

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Submit your work to info@conlyfemmagazine.com or conlyfemmagazine@gmail.com

ARTIST ALLEY



Kary Cooper of Cooper Creative Art, isn't the typical artist that you would expect to find in the artist alley your local convention. His passion for art started at a young age where he would sit and watch his grandmother create beautiful oil paintings. She would also take him to local art shows where he was exposed to the many different styles on display. It was there that he developed his love for being creative and his

desire to share that with the world. There were many times where he would sit at her booth, pencil and paper in hand, sketching whatever painting that she was currently working on.

Sadly, he drifted from this passion for several years and funneled his creativity into his career of being an Architect. It wasn't until college when he took an oil painting class, that the "art spark" was reignited. He continued to paint for

a couple of years before life took him away from art again. It would be another five years before he would be reintroduced to art.

At this time he went to a convention in Dallas with his then girlfriend (now wife) Rebecca, and some friends. Afterwards, he and his friends were sitting around looking at his older paintings when they told him "Man you can really paint! You should have a table and sell your work." One would think that this would be the incentive needed to push forward, but as Kary stated "it was flattering, but I never took it seriously." It wasn't until the next year that Kary booked a table at FanExpo Dallas and so began his journey into the wondrous whirlwind that is artist alley.

What Kary loves about being a part of the convention community is the artwork and "seeing all the different takes on the same thing. Everyone might do a Jack Skelington, but nobody does it the same way. It shows a love and a passion for the original work, but it also lets them tell you how they feel about that...I love it!"

You can find Kary in the Artist Alley of just about every convention in Texas, and even in Louisiana. Oftentimes he's at his table with his wife Rebecca, and they are two of the most welcoming and accessible artists that we have had the pleasure of getting to know. If you would like to find more about Kary or Cooper Creative Art you can subscribe to their social media.

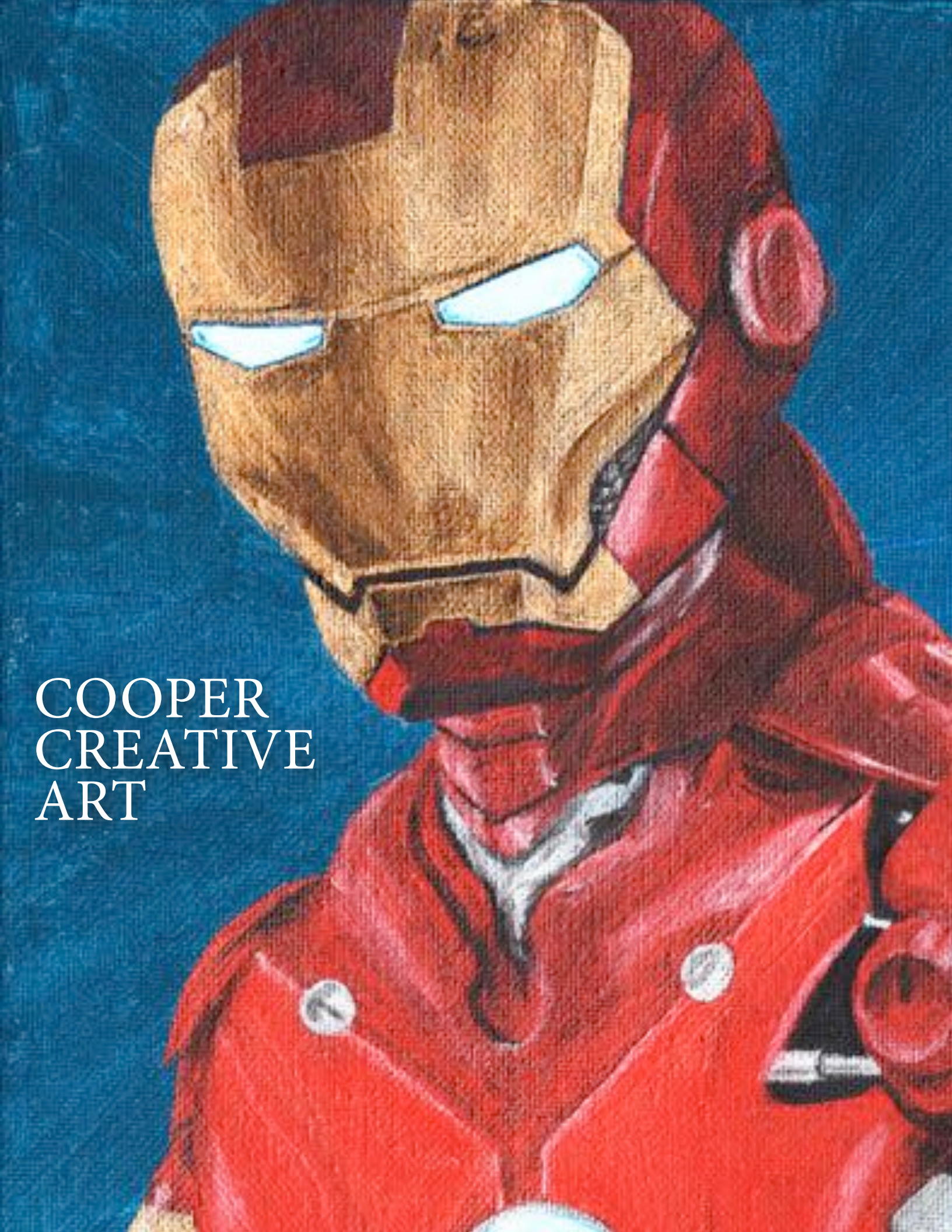
Facebook:

[coopercreativeart](#)

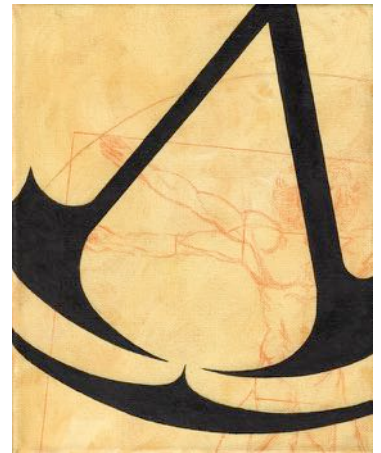
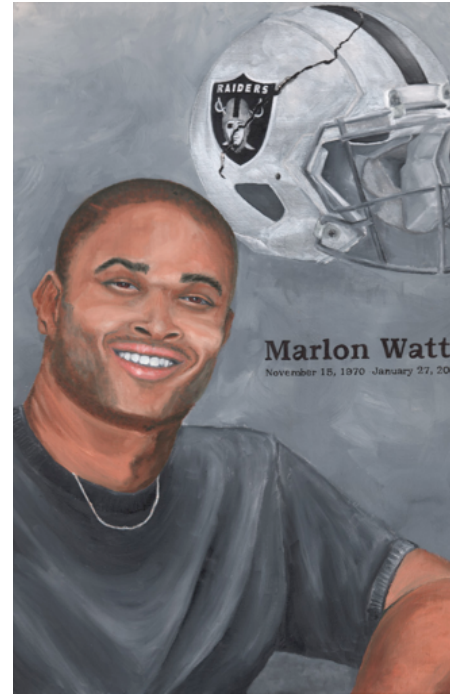
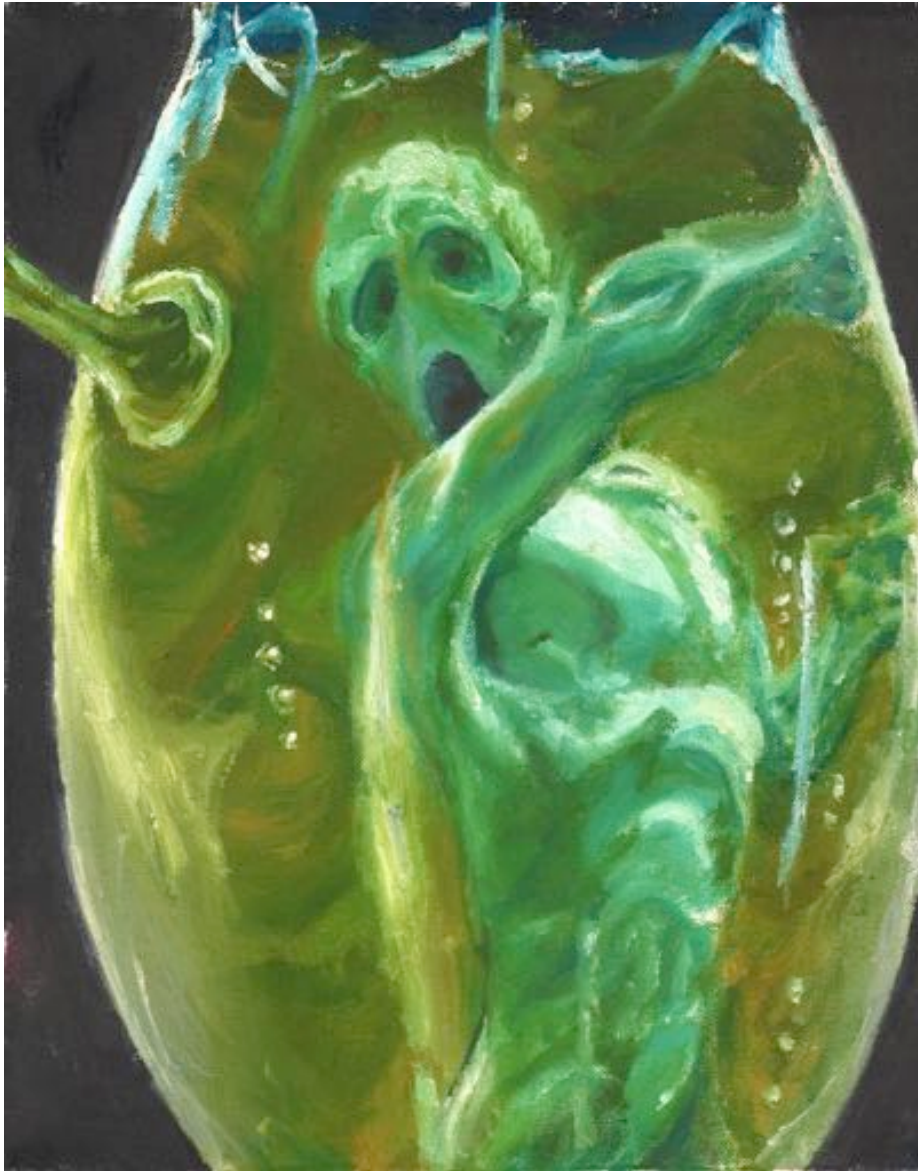
Website:

www.coopercreativeart.com





COOPER
CREATIVE
ART





DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

In the time of covid

By: Marlow Whetsel

“The ancient green dragon rolls its verdant, shimmering shoulders back, throwing his head up into the air. As he turns his head down towards you, a cone of gas billows out of his mouth towards you. Make a constitution saving roll.”

“I roll a 25!”

“Are you wearing your mask of protection?”

“No. It doesn't match my tunic.”

“You take 77 points of poison damage.”

Dungeons and Dragons in the middle of Covid is problematic to say the least. Scheduling and running a game was hard before, now it feels impossible. Suddenly, DMing is not the most complicated part of the game.

As a Dungeon Master, part of my role is scheduling game nights. Finding a time and a place to get together is not always easy. To do it on a regular basis is even harder. Initially the gaming stores and other gathering places were closed. So, if you do not play at a person's residence, you have nowhere to go. On top of that, gatherings of people over a certain number are banned, even in homes.

I am currently running an all women's group through the campaign *Rage of Demons: Out of the Abyss*. Our group, W.A.N.D. (We Ain't

No Damsels) consists of mothers, professionals, students, thespians, retail and fast food workers. It is our therapy. Game nights are our girls nights out, or in. We have had a couple of people move, so we had already tried bringing players in via Facetime. It worked OK. But, it left the player that was logging in for the game with a feeling of disconnect. When Covid came around, we decided to try using Zoom. It met all of our needs as a group. We could see each other's faces. It also has a simple interface. I went ahead and signed up for the “Pro” plan. You can have up to 100 people in a “meeting.” But, let's face it, I will never need that many people. But, the important thing is that you are not stifled by the 40 minute limit of the free subscription. With the Pro account, you can go up to 24 hours without being kicked off and having to log in, again. I also get 1Gb storage. That's right, you can record your game. And, let me tell ywwow, it is super handy to be able to go back and rewatch what happened in your last game.

My only concern was the battle map. I am a very visual player and DM. When a group is facing a single enemy, I can do a fine job of keeping up with effects, hit points, conditions and the like. But, when there are multiple enemies, I need my map. I set up a second account for my cell phone that I used for my camera map. But, I

could not figure out where to place the phone. My husband, in one of his many moments of brilliance, pulled out the stand I bought for doing hand embroidery. And, it worked like a dream! It is super adjustable. It gave a fantastic view of the map. I will say that I plan on painting around the bases of the minis in vibrant colors so that I can distinguish between them with ease.

“The thing that I did not anticipate about playing in this time of insanity is how each other in the real world”

Another advantage of playing with Zoom is that you can message the players individually. For example, your player makes an investigation check. You can message that player directly to inform what they find. Since they are the only one with the information, it prevents metagaming and gives the player the freedom to respond in character. Let's face it, they may not want to share everything they find with the group. Or, if you have the player that took the *Observant* feat and now has a passive perception of 29. Without



them. This allows me to look at their sheet with them as necessary.

Is playing online better than playing in person? No. But, it is far better than not playing at all. With all of the technology available to us, we really do not have an excuse not to play. Especially in a time when we need to find togetherness where we can.

**Dungeons & Dragons logo© HABSRO Inc 2020.*

throwing off the pace of the game, or clueing in the other players, you can tell them about

the three dark shapes lurking in the treetops ahead. Or, let them know that the rogue is swiping the coin pouch from the NPC the group is traveling with.

Normally, we have visitation before, during a couple of breaks, and after the game. But, now we are so isolated from each other, that half our time is spent visiting. I made a point to take more breaks than normal to allow for conversation

and other distractions that come about by everyone being in their own home. (So many cute pet moments.) It allowed for less overlap of conversation and game play.

Lastly, if you do not have a subscription to DnDBeyond, I recommend that you do so. I currently have the D&D Beyond Master membership. There are a lot of benefits, but the relevant one here is that I can create a campaign, giving my players access to all of the character building options I have. They can use them to build the characters online, and I have access to



MARLO

Marlow is an avid role player and Dungeon Master with over five years of experience under her belt. In addition she is a talented writer and enjoys creating unique and imaginative worlds for her players and utilizing storytelling as a creative outlet.

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LAUREN RAY COSPLAY



By: William McKeever

She walks around the convention floor flawlessly in her Hawkwoman cosplay as men, women, and children all rush to take pictures with her. She doesn't fuss or get upset but instead welcomes each person with a smile and a courteous "Thank you." Having done cosplay in one form or another and gone to numerous conventions over the years, she is used to the praise. Not only do the fans come to take a picture with a beloved character, but they also want to see the extraordinary amount of detail, effort, and time that Lauren puts into her cosplay designs. For instance, in her latest edition (Hawkgirl), she changed the mechanism that allowed her wings to expand, from a simple pulley system to hydraulics, and it has made a world of difference in the realism that it portrays.

Hawkgirl is her favorite cosplay because it's the culmination of years of learning, studying, practicing, and making mistakes. She goes on to state, "I've learned that I made so many mistakes like buying the wrong

actuators. Like, I didn't know that there was a difference between heavy machinery actuators and high-speed actuators. I thought all actuators were the same."

Lauren got into the hobby as an outlet for her creativity and to express her love of fandoms. Along the way, she discovered herself and a passion that would help drive her throughout the years. When asked what she would advise she would give to newbies, her love and support shined through when stating: "Everyone has to start somewhere, and even if yours is the most basic, you're learning. Things are not perfect the first time you've done them...if you get them right the

first time, then I don't know if you actually learned anything."

Lauren's biggest fan is her sister Katie, her convention roadie, manager, hairstylist, public relations liaison, and head cheerleader. Katie makes sure that the cosplay holds up and helps Lauren put on and take off any of the more complicated pieces of her designs. She also helps by providing that solid foundation of moral support that most cosplayers can have a difficult time finding. At any given moment, you can see Lauren smiling broadly and posing for pictures, but if you look closely, you will see Katie standing just off to the side, ready to step in and help



"Everyone has to start somewhere, and even if yours is the most basic, you're learning. Things are not perfect the first time you've done them...if you get them right the first time, then I don't know if you actually learned anything."

should the need arise. These sisters share a familial bond few can truly understand, and this incredible connection is not one that the two women take lightly.

Lauren is continuously striving to make the best cosplay she can and be a role model to her young daughter and other young girls who want to get into cosplay but suffer from fear or doubt. When she first started making cosplay five years ago, there were only a handful of youtube videos and websites that she could turn to for help. Today, however, thanks to shows like Heroes of Cosplay and

Cosplay Melee, and dozens of other youtube channels springing up, cosplay has become much more mainstream. This new market saturation allows for more and more people to enter the realm comfortably and feel safe in doing so. When asked what makes her different from most cosplayers, the answer is the same thing that drives her to cosplay in the first place. In fact, the realism that people don't see is that Lauren has dyslexia. It's not a fact that she shares with many people, as it was a struggle she maintained for her entire life. Over the years, she has learned to take what some might see as an added difficulty and turn it into an advantage. This advantage might not have been possible if not for the world of cosplay. "It's weird how you learn

“It’s weird how you learn to hone other skills because you can’t do other things the same way people can, so you learn to do things differently, and over-achieve and other ways to cover.”



to hone other skills because you can't do other things the same way people can, so you learn to do things differently, and over-achieve and other ways to cover.”

For Lauren, public speaking engagements can turn into nightmares filled with enough anxiety to bring most people to their knees. However, when viewing her in her full co-play and convention setting, she maintains an almost mythical sense of calm. Lauren does not let dyslexia define her, nor does she allow it to stop her from being a role model to her daughter and countless other women and girls who admire her.

These days Lauren is busy running Lauren Ray Cosplay and being a devoted mother and loving wife. Lauren is truly one of the most amazing people, and we at Conlyfe Magazine are glad to have the honor

of interviewing her for our inaugural edition.

If you would like to know more about Lauren or Lauren Ray Cosplay, be sure to follow her on social media.

Facebook:
Laurenraycosply
Inststagram:
laurenraycosplay





Featured Game Integrations

View All

Upgrade your stream with these stream integrations for the most popular games on Twitch.

A screenshot of the Twitch website's extension page. A large, semi-transparent purple rectangle with the white Twitch logo is centered over the page. Behind the logo, various game integration cards are visible, including one for 'Fortnite Stats' by SEIZEAD. The background shows a dark-themed interface with game thumbnails and extension cards.

Discover Extension

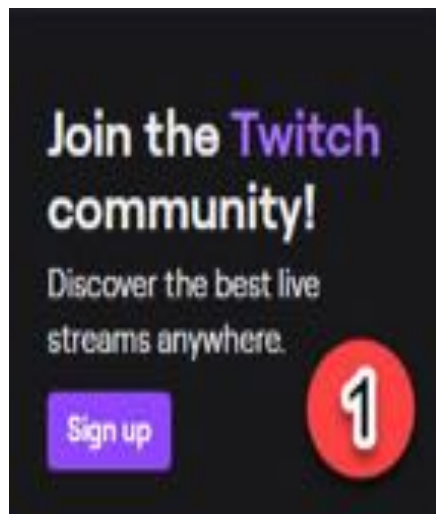
A horizontal row of five dark grey extension category cards. Each card has a purple circular icon at the top left and a 'View All' button at the bottom. The categories are:

- Extensions for Games:** Extensions built to work with specific games.
- Schedule & Countdowns:** Share your streaming schedule and encourage your viewers to keep coming back.
- Loyalty and Recognition:** Reward viewers for showing their support with leaderboards and other tools.
- Streamer Tools:** Tools that help you improve your stream so that you can focus on making great content.
- Viewer Engagement:** Fun ways to allow your audience to engage with you.

GETTING STARTED ON twitch in 10 EASY STEPS

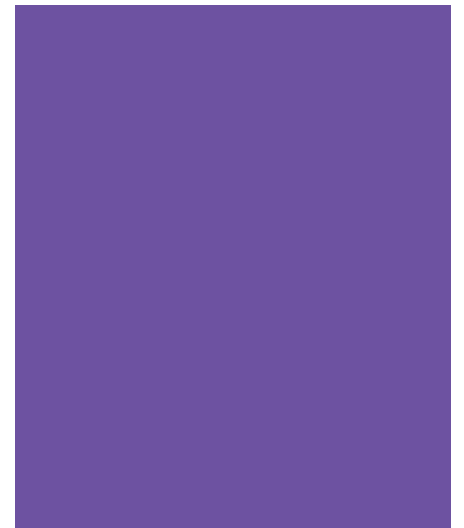
By: Jinxie G.

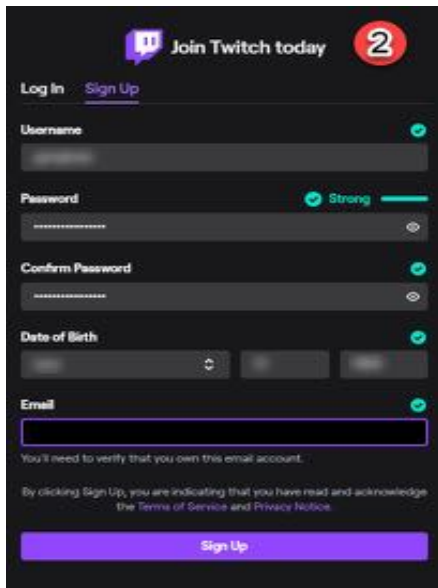
Whether you want to try your hand at streaming or watch and support your favorite streamers, you'll want to sign up for a Twitch account in order to reap all the benefits. The website offers multiple genres when it comes to streaming, from gaming to crafts to comedy. Plus, if you're an Amazon Prime member, Twitch will give you free games and game-related items, and you can host watch parties for Amazon Prime TV shows and movies!



Step 1:

Go to Twitch.tv and click on the sign up button in the upper right corner of the website.





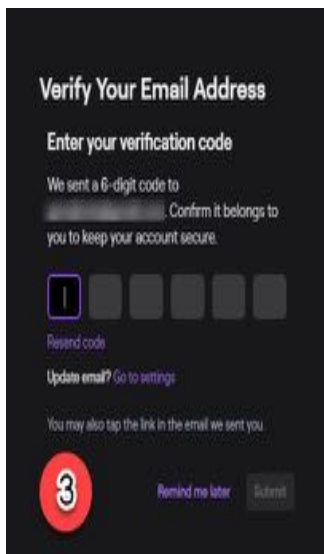
Step 3:

Think of a good username you'd like to use in chat and make it a strong one that will stand out, especially if you intend to stream. Select a strong password, and enter your date of birth and a preferred email address. This email is where you'll receive

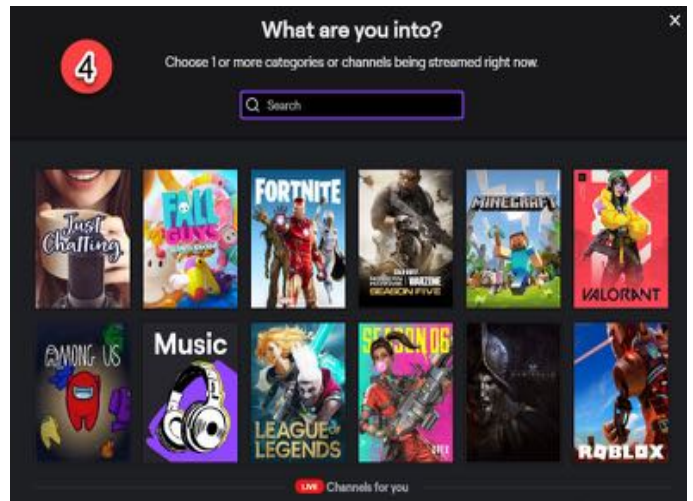
notifications and news from Twitch. Then review the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy, and click Sign Up.

Step 3:

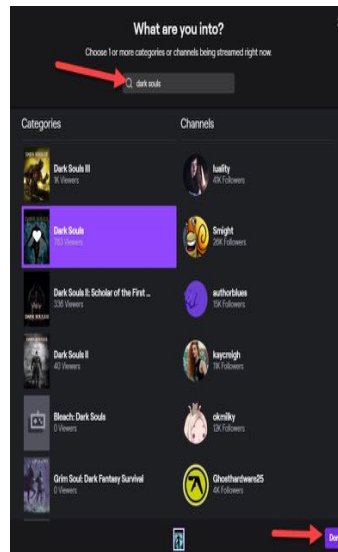
Verify your email by entering the code sent to your preferred email address.



Congratulations! You now have a Twitch account. You're ready to Follow and/or Subscribe to your favorite streamers, and you're almost ready to start streaming yourself, if you choose to do so. Now to choose your content. And yes, there's a dark mode feature for those who prefer/need it.



Step 4:

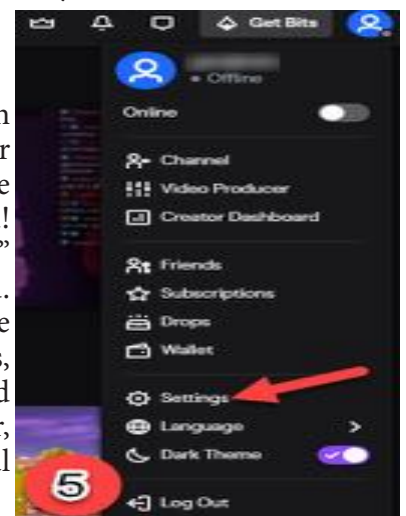


What livestreams are you into? Looking for a specific game series or topic? Twitch will give some suggestions, but you can always write something in the search box. Of course, we're going to choose Dark Souls because it is one of the premiere games series to livestream on Twitch, along with whatever has just released. You'll always find someone playing a

Dark Souls game. If you find a channel you enjoy, hit that Follow or Subscribe button! Subscriptions on Twitch come in three tiers: Tier 1 = \$4.99, Tier 2 = \$9.99, and Tier 3 = \$24.99. Some streamers make that Tier 3 subscription worth your while.

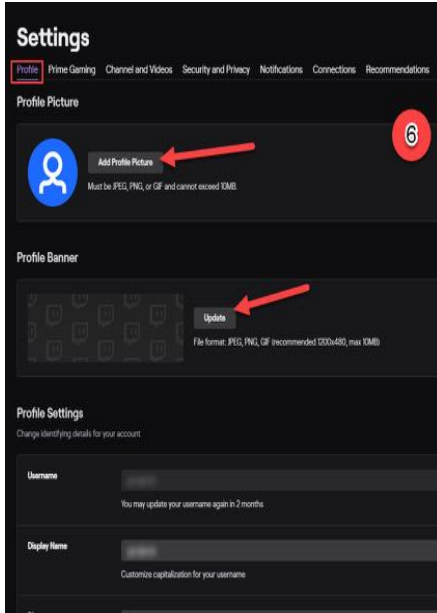
Step 5:

Select the person icon in the upper right corner of the screen. That's you! Now select "settings" from the menu. Here you can change your Profile settings, like your avatar and background banner, and other personal information.



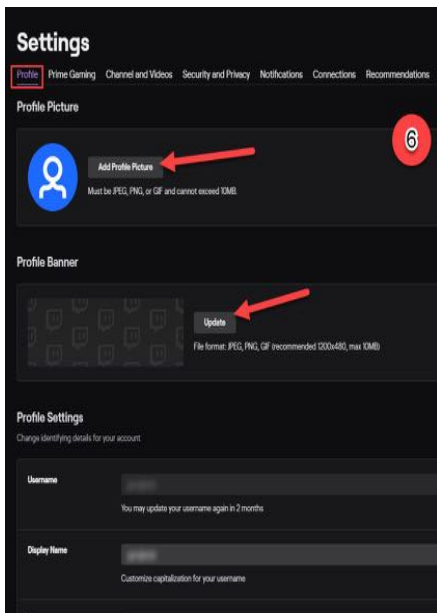
Step 6:

Add your avatar. Twitch will recognize JPEG, PNG, and GIF format. Dimensions shouldn't exceed 256x256 pixels or a 10MB file.



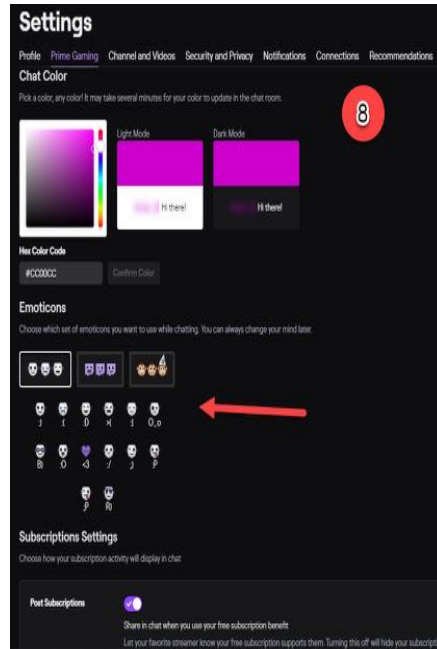
Step 7:

Add your profile banner as well. The dimensions should not be larger than 1230x380 pixels or 10MB.



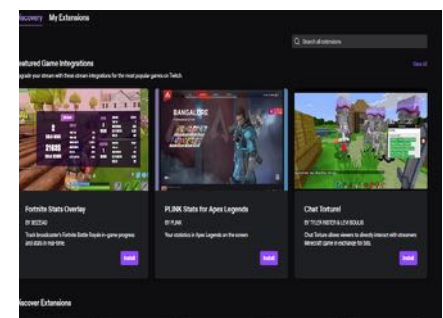
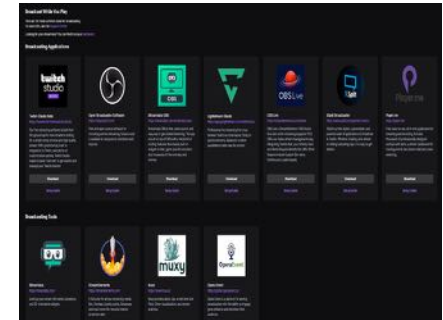
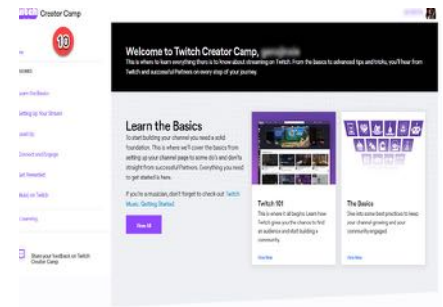
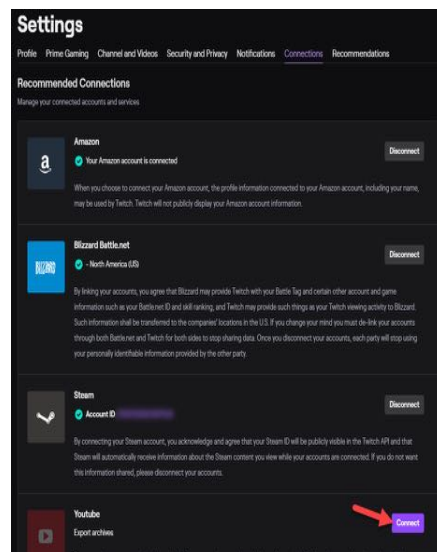
Step 8:

Under Prime Gaming, you can select the color you want your username/display name to appear as in chat. This is also the place to choose a basic set of emoticons.



Step 9:

Don't forget to connect your other accounts, especially if you have Amazon Prime. This is where you can connect your gaming console(s) and gaming accounts like Steam.



Step 10:

That's it! You're all set to watch your favorite streams on Twitch, or create your own. Now, if you're ready to set up for streaming yourself, head on over to Twitch's Creator Camp. Once you've completed that, you can install applications and extensions to help you set up for streaming whatever you like. Just make sure it adheres to the Terms of Service.



THE MONKEY'S PAW

The Monkey's Paw

By: W.W. Jacobs

For our first Halloween edition, we are going to introduce one of our favorite horror short stories of all time. We hope you enjoy this classic tale as much as we do.

I

WITHOUT, the night was cold and wet, but in the small parlour of Laburnam Villa the blinds were drawn and the fire burned brightly. Father and son were at chess, the former, who possessed ideas about the game involving radical changes,

putting his king into such sharp and unnecessary perils that it even provoked comment from the white-haired old lady knitting placidly by the fire. "Hark at the wind," said Mr. White, who, having seen a fatal mistake after it was too late, was amiably desirous of preventing his son from seeing it.

"I'm listening," said the latter, grimly surveying the board as he stretched out his hand. "Check."

"I should hardly think that he'd come to-night," said his father, with his hand poised over the board.

"Mate," replied the son.

"That's the worst of living so far out," bawled Mr. White, with sudden and unlooked-for violence; "of all the beastly, slushy, out-of-the-way places to live in, this is the worst. Pathway's a bog, and the road's a torrent. I don't know what people are thinking about. I suppose because only two houses on the road are let, they think it doesn't matter."

"Never mind, dear," said his wife soothingly; "perhaps you'll win the next one."

Mr. White looked up sharply, just in time to intercept a knowing glance between mother and son. The words died away on his lips, and he hid a guilty grin in his thin grey beard.

"There he is," said Herbert White, as the gate banged to loudly and heavy footsteps came toward the door.

The old man rose with hospitable haste, and opening the door, was heard condoling with the new arrival.

The new arrival also consoled with himself, so that Mrs. White said, "Tut, tut!" and coughed gently as her husband entered the room, followed by a tall burly man, beady of eye and rubicund of visage.

"Sergeant-Major Morris," he said, introducing him.

The sergeant-major shook hands, and taking the proffered seat by the fire, watched contentedly while his host got out whisky and tumblers and stood a small copper kettle on the fire.

At the third glass his eyes got brighter, and he began



to talk, the little family circle regarding with eager interest this visitor from distant parts, as he squared his broad shoulders in the chair and spoke of strange scenes and doughty deeds; of wars and plagues and strange peoples.

"Twenty-one years of it," said Mr. White, nodding at his wife and son. "When he went away he was a slip of a youth in the warehouse. Now look at him."

"He don't look to have taken much harm," said Mrs. White, politely.

"I'd like to go to India myself," said the old man, "just to look round a bit, you know."

"Better where you are," said the sergeant-major, shaking his head. He put down the empty glass, and sighing softly, shook it again.

"I should like to see those old temples and fakirs and jugglers," said the old man. "What was that you started telling me the other day about a monkey's paw or something, Morris?"

"Nothing," said the soldier hastily. "Leastways, nothing worth hearing."

"Monkey's paw?" said Mrs. White curiously.

"Well, it's just a bit of what you might call magic, perhaps," said the sergeant-major off-handedly.

His three listeners leaned forward eagerly. The visitor absentmindedly 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?" inquired 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.

"If you've had your three wishes, it's no good to you now, then, Morris," said the old man at last.

"What do you keep it for?"

The soldier shook his head. "Fancy, I suppose," he said slowly.

"If you could have another three wishes," said the old man, eyeing him keenly, "would you have them?"

"I don't know," said the other. "I don't know."

He took the paw, and dangling it between his front finger and thumb, suddenly threw it upon the fire. White, with a slight cry, stooped down and snatched it off.

"Better let it burn," said the soldier solemnly.

"If you don't want it, Morris," said the old man, "give it to me."

"I won't," said his friend doggedly. "I threw it on the fire. If you keep it, don't blame me for what happens. Pitch it on the fire again, like a sensible man."

The other shook his head and examined his new possession closely. "How do you do it?" he inquired.

"Hold it up in your right hand and wish aloud," said the sergeant-major, "but I warn you of the consequences."

"Sounds like the Arabian Nights," said Mrs. White, as she rose and began to set the supper.

"Don't you think you might wish for four pairs of hands for me?"

Her husband drew the talisman from his pocket and then all three burst into laughter as the sergeant-major, with a look of alarm on his face, caught him by the arm.

"If you must wish," he said gruffly, "wish for something sensible."

Mr. White dropped it back into his pocket, and placing chairs, motioned his friend to the table. In the business of supper the talisman was partly forgotten, and afterward the three sat listening in

an enthralled fashion to a second instalment of the soldier's adventures in India.

"If the tale about the monkey paw is not more truthful than those he has been telling us," said Herbert, as the door closed behind their guest, just in time for him to catch the last train, "we shan't make much out of it."

"Did you give him anything for it, father?" inquired Mrs. White, regarding her husband closely.

"A trifle," said he, colouring slightly. "He didn't want it, but I made him take it. And he pressed me again to throw it away."

"Likely," said Herbert, with pretended horror. "Why, we're going to be rich, and famous, and happy. Wish to be an emperor, father, to begin with; then you can't be henpecked."

He darted round the table, pursued by the maligned Mrs. White armed with an antimacassar. 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, 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 hands 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."

"It must have been your fancy, father," said his wife, regarding him anxiously.

He shook his head. "Never mind, though; there's no harm done, but it gave me a shock all the same."

They sat down by the fire again while the two men finished their pipes. Outside, the wind was higher than ever, and the old man started nervously at the sound of a door banging upstairs. A silence

unusual and depressing settled upon all three, which lasted until the old couple rose to retire for the night.

"I expect you'll find the cash tied up in a big bag in the middle of your bed," said Herbert, as he bade them good-night, "and something horrible squatting up on top of the wardrobe watching you as you pocket your ill-gotten gains."

He sat alone in the darkness, gazing at the dying fire, and seeing faces in it. The last face was so horrible and so simian that he gazed at it in amazement. It got so vivid that, with a little uneasy laugh, he felt on the table for a glass containing a little water to throw over it. His hand grasped the monkey's paw, and with a little shiver he wiped his hand on his coat and went up to bed.

II

IN the brightness of the wintry sun next morning as it streamed over the breakfast table Herbert laughed at his fears. There was an air of prosaic wholesomeness about the room which it had lacked on the previous night, and the dirty, shrivelled little paw was pitched on the sideboard with a carelessness which betokened no great belief in its virtues.

"I suppose all old soldiers are the same," said Mrs White. "The idea of our listening to such nonsense! How could wishes be granted in these days? And if they could, how could two hundred pounds hurt you, father?"

"Might drop on his head from the sky," said the frivolous Herbert.

"Morris said the things happened so naturally," said his father, "that you might if you so wished attribute it to coincidence."

"Well, don't break into the money before I come back," said Herbert, as he rose from the table. "I'm afraid it'll turn you into a mean, avaricious man, and we shall have to disown you."

His mother laughed, and following him to the door, watched him down the road, and returning to the breakfast table, was very happy at the expense of her husband's credulity. All of which did not prevent her from scurrying to the door at the postman's knock, nor prevent her from referring somewhat shortly to retired sergeant-majors of bibulous habits when she found that the post brought a tailor's bill.

"Herbert will have some more of his funny remarks, I expect, when he comes home," she said, as they sat at dinner.

"I dare say," said Mr. White, pouring himself out

some beer; "but for all that, the thing moved in my hand; that I'll swear to."

"You thought it did," said the old lady soothingly.

"I say it did," replied the other. "There was no thought about it; I had just---What's the matter?"

His wife made no reply. She was watching the mysterious movements of a man outside, who, peering in an undecided fashion at the house, appeared to be trying to make up his mind to enter. In mental connection with the two hundred pounds, she noticed that the stranger was well dressed and wore a silk hat of glossy newness. Three times he paused at the gate, and then walked on again. The fourth time he stood with his hand upon it, and then with sudden resolution flung it open and walked up the path. Mrs. White at the same moment placed her hands behind her, and hurriedly unfastening the strings of her apron, put that useful article of apparel beneath the cushion of her chair.

She brought the stranger, who seemed ill at ease, into the room. He gazed at her furtively, and listened in a preoccupied fashion as the old lady apologized for the appearance of the room, and her husband's coat, a garment which he usually reserved for the garden. She then waited as patiently as her sex would permit, for him to broach his business, but he was at first strangely silent.

"I--was asked to call," he said at last, and stooped and picked a piece of cotton from his trousers. "I come from Maw and Meggins."

The old lady started. "Is anything the matter?" she asked breathlessly. "Has anything happened to Herbert? What is it? What is it?"

Her husband interposed. "There, there, mother," he said hastily. "Sit down, and don't jump to conclusions. You've not brought bad news, I'm sure, sir" and he eyed the other wistfully.

"I'm sorry----" began the visitor.

"Is he hurt?" demanded the mother.

The visitor bowed in assent. "Badly hurt," he said quietly, "but he is not in any pain."

"Oh, thank God!" said the old woman, clasping her hands. "Thank God for that! Thank----"

She broke off suddenly as the sinister meaning of the assurance dawned upon her and she saw the awful confirmation of her fears in the other's averted face. She caught her breath, and turning to her slower-witted husband, laid her trembling old hand upon his. There was a long silence.

"He was caught in the machinery," said the visitor

at length, in a low voice.

"Caught in the machinery," repeated Mr. White, in a dazed fashion, "yes."

He sat staring blankly out at the window, and taking his wife's hand between his own, pressed it as he had been wont to do in their old courting days nearly forty years before.

"He was the only one left to us," he said, turning gently to the visitor. "It is hard."

The other coughed, and rising, walked slowly to the window. "The firm wished me to convey their sincere sympathy with you in your great loss," he said, without looking round. "I beg that you will understand I am only their servant and merely obeying orders."

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 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.

III

IN the huge new cemetery, some two miles distant, the old people buried their dead, and came back to a house steeped in shadow and silence. It was all over so quickly that at first they could hardly realize it, and remained in a state of expectation as though of something else to happen--something else which was to lighten this load, too heavy for old hearts to bear.

But the days passed, and expectation gave place to resignation--the hopeless resignation of the old, sometimes miscalled, apathy. Sometimes they hardly exchanged a word, for now they had nothing to talk about, and their days were long to weariness.

It was about a week after that that the old man, waking suddenly in the night, stretched out his hand and found himself alone. The room was in darkness, and the sound of subdued weeping came from the window. He raised himself in bed

and listened.

"Come back," he said tenderly. "You will be cold."

"It is colder for my son," said the old woman, and wept afresh.

The sound of her sobs died away on his ears. The bed was warm, and his eyes heavy with sleep. He dozed fitfully, and then slept until a sudden wild cry from his wife awoke him with a start.

"The paw!" she cried wildly. "The monkey's paw!"

He started up in alarm. "Where? Where is it? What's the matter?"

She came stumbling across the room toward him. "I want it," she said quietly. "You've not destroyed it?"

"It's in the parlour, on the bracket," he replied, marvelling. "Why?"

She cried and laughed together, and bending over, kissed his cheek.

"I only just thought of it," she said hysterically. "Why didn't I think of it before? Why didn't you think of it?"

"Think of what?" he questioned.

"The other two wishes," she replied rapidly. "We've only had one."

"Was not that enough?" he demanded fiercely.

"No," she cried, triumphantly; "we'll have one more. Go down and get it quickly, and wish our boy alive again."

The man sat up in bed and flung the bedclothes from his quaking limbs. "Good God, you are mad!" he cried aghast.

"Get it," she panted; "get it quickly, and wish--- Oh, my boy, my boy!"

Her husband struck a match and lit the candle. "Get back to bed," he said, unsteadily. "You don't know what you are saying."

"We had the first wish granted," said the old woman, feverishly; "why not the second?"

"A coincidence," stammered the old man.

"Go and get it and wish," cried the old woman, quivering with excitement.

The old man turned and regarded her, and his voice shook. "He has been dead ten days, and besides he--I would not tell you else, but--I could only recognize him by his clothing. If he was too terrible for you to see then, how now?"

"Bring him back," cried the old woman, and dragged him toward the door. "Do you think I fear the child I have nursed?"

He went down in the darkness, and felt his way to the parlour, and then to the mantelpiece. The talisman was in its place, and a horrible fear that

the unspoken wish might bring his mutilated son before him ere he could escape from the room seized upon him, and he caught his breath as he found that he had lost the direction of the door. His brow cold with sweat, he felt his way round the table, and groped along the wall until he found himself in the small passage with the unwholesome thing in his hand.

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.

He sat until he was chilled with the cold, glancing occasionally at the figure of the old woman peering through the window. The candle end, which had burnt below the rim of the china candlestick, was throwing pulsating shadows on the ceiling and walls, until, with a flicker larger than the rest, it expired. The old man, with an unspeakable sense of relief at the failure of the talisman, crept back to his bed, and a minute or two afterward the old woman came silently and apathetically beside him.

Neither spoke, but both lay silently listening to the ticking of the clock. A stair creaked, and a squeaky mouse scurried noisily through the wall. The darkness was oppressive, and after lying for some time screwing up his courage, the husband took the box of matches, and striking one, went downstairs for a candle.

At the foot of the stairs the match went out, and he paused to strike another, and at the same moment a knock, so quiet and stealthy as to be scarcely audible, sounded on the front door. The matches fell from his hand. He stood motionless, his breath suspended until the knock was repeated. Then he turned and fled swiftly back to his room, and closed the door behind him. A third knock sounded through the house.

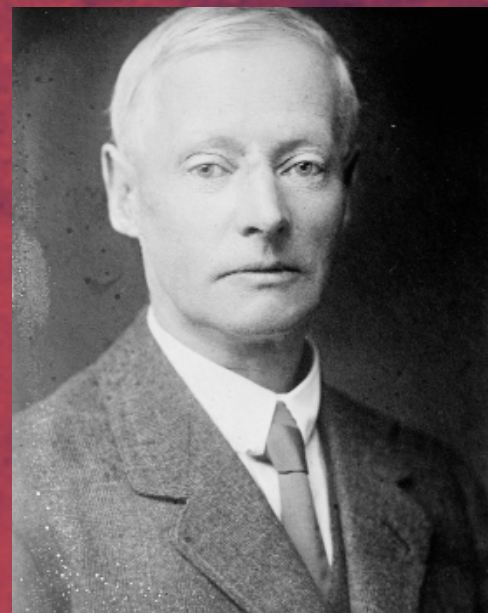
"What's that?" cried the old woman, starting up. "A rat," said the old man, in shaking tones--"a rat. It passed me on the stairs."

His wife sat up in bed listening. A loud knock resounded through the house.

"It's Herbert!" she screamed. "It's Herbert!"

She ran to the door, but her husband was before her, and catching her by the arm, held her tightly. "What are you going to do?" he whispered hoarsely.

"It's my boy; it's Herbert!" she cried, struggling mechanically. "I forgot it was two miles away.



William Wymark Jacobs

(8 September 1863 – 1 September 1943)

Jacobs was an English author of short stories and novels. During his career, he was best known for his farcical comedies involving dockside and rural Essex characters. He occasionally wrote horror stories and today is most famous for "The Monkey's Paw" (1902).

