

The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry

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O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi* tells the story of a young and poor couple. Despite their poverty, they would go out of their way to ensure they gift each other. As Furman et al. (2019) note, Della Young and Jim would buy each other secret gifts during Christmas. The moral lesson of this sentimental story is the role of gift-giving in expressing love. The short story has been adapted into numerous films and other media since it was published in 1905. The ending of this story is a typical case of comic irony. In this story, Della discovers she only has \$1.87 to buy her husband a present (Furman et al., 2019). She sells her long hair at a nearby shop for \$20. She uses the money to buy her husband a dazzling pocket watch chain. Jim, on the other hand, gives Della ornamental combs. By buying each other Christmas gifts, Della and Jim express their invaluable love and make tremendous sacrifices. Reading *The Gift of the Magi* has taught me the meaning of true love.

The Gift of the Magi highlights the value of gift-giving. Based on this story, the value is not anchored in the gift itself but the sacrifices and genuine sentiments. The pair is a symbol of love, passion, and sacrifice. Della and Jim display love for each other by giving up their valuable belongings (Rehman et al., 2018). Della gives up her long hair to raise enough money to buy Jim a Christmas present. Furman et al. (2019) opine, "Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him" (p. 2). On the other hand, Jim sells the pricey pocket watch to buy his wife the decorative combs. Interestingly, Della can only use these ornamental combs once her hair has grown back out. O. Henry overtly challenges every person in love to embrace gift-giving as a symbol of love. Rehman et al. (2018) assert, "They sacrifice their belongings for the sake of expressing true and pure love..." (p. 264). Jim and Della sacrifice the most precious things to buy each other unique gifts on Christmas eve.

The sacrificial gifts draw attention to the profound love of Della and Jim for each other. Della had been saving all the pennies she could get for months. On Christmas eve, she gathered \$1.87, which she felt was too little to buy her husband a valuable gift. She had been overwhelmed by the numerous expenses she had to pay from her wages of \$20 a week. Zainuddin (2018) states, “Twenty dollars a week doesn’t go far” (p. 1). She had spent quite some time planning to buy Jim something special and sterling. She wanted to purchase something that could measure up to the honor of being his wife. Since she had limited options to raise enough funds, she sacrificed her own hair. She let her hair loose. She then visited Madame Sofronie’s shop with her long hair and sold it for \$20 (Furman et al., 2019). Della hunted all over town to find the present she wanted to buy. The beautiful pocket watch chain, a precious metal, flashed with a reflection of Della’s ardent and bright spirit. On the other hand, Jim displays his love for Della by sacrificing his only gold watch. This watch has previously been owned by his father and grandfather. The ornamental combs that Jim bought her demonstrate how far he went to prove his love for her.

The duo has shown that true love is no ordinary thing, thanks to their sacrificial gifts and incredible art of giving. O. Henry observed the significance of an individual’s willingness to sacrifice things they value to please their partner. Della and Jim make sacrifices with each other’s interests and their relationship in mind. The two partners’ actions can only be compared to the magi – the wise men who gave magnificent presents to the baby in the manger. They presented gifts that demonstrated their sacrifice and appreciation of Christmas. *The Gift of the Magi* shows that true love is built on extraordinary sacrifices. Poverty had constrained Della and Jim and barred them from buying pricey presents for Christmas Day from their pockets. However, since they loved each other so much, they resorted to making tremendous sacrifices.

References

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