

REVIEW ON THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

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All you get after reading the gift of the magi by O. Henry is pure feeling of love and devotion. The partners devote their most precious possessions to prove their love for one and the other. O. Henry masterfully illustrates that despite their severe financial problem, true love keeps them together, no matter how difficult their life gets. This story is short, simple and impressive that leaves the reader with no comment. The shocking ending gives the reader a mixture of pity and pleasure. When I read the story, in some ways, I thought that the man appeared more passionate than the woman although I do not know whether it was O. Henry's intention or not. I believe the hero in this story is only the husband because of three main reasons; the possession that he lost to surprise his beloved, his wife's wandering to find something for him after one year and his struggle to save his family in their financial crisis.

The first thing that made me realize how much he loves his wife was when he sells his most valuable item to buy those combs. As we read along the story we see that Jim's watch was gold and it was a family heritage, he uses the watch to make the wealthy janitor envy him.

"Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy."

Despite the value that the watch had for Jim, he sells it to buy the Christmas gift. He lost something that he would never return, no matter how much he tries. He gave Della not some combs in price of his watch but his family, his pride and his everything, instead, Della lost her hair as she mentioned, they will grow fast and there is nothing to worry about; and above all, she knew how Jim loved her hair as she prayed several times that Jim will accept her new face, she excluded him from enjoying it to buy something else for him. It is like taking Oxygen away from someone and offering them Mc. Donald's!

The second reason is that after a year, she does not know what Jim wants. She hardly saved money not knowing what to buy. The part which O. Henry writes:

"The next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present."

It suggests that Della had nothing in mind to go straight ahead and buy it, and in another part when Jim enters the house, O. Henry brilliantly gives the readers hints of what he needed:

"He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves."

As clear as crystal, how come a caring wife is not aware of her husband's needs?! He could live without the chain for his watch, but he needs an overcoat and gloves to keep him warm. Clothes are one of the human basic necessities and Della disregards this and buys something luxurious.

The third reason which made me not like Della as I liked Jim was that as the family has harsh money issues why does not Della work?! When Della goes to the store to sell her hair, we see that the shop keeper is a woman, therefore we can understand that women in that time, worked and it was not against any cultural, social norms. All Della did was staying at home, subbing and sighing of her poverty. When O. Henry describes Jim in the following extract, I hated Della more since despite her husband's hard efforts, she does not even consider working!

"The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two--and to be burdened with a family!"

Although there are some parts proving that Della gets discounts and try to save money, she could simply help her husband by working outside the house and share the burden of the expenses.

In short, as William Sydney Porter is a great writer of late 19th and early 20th century, no one can question his masterpieces. What I said earlier, was my own impression of how I felt about Della and Jim. Money is not the theme of only this story, there are so many other stories with the same theme. Lack of money brings misery to lives but the one and only thing that holds the family together is love.