

Gift of the magi literary analysis essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

' Gift of the Magi' is an old tale that has been altered throughout the years. O. Henry (William Sydney Porter) composed this touching story within three hours of his deadline. Under the circumstances of the short amount of time he had to create the story, it is a charming showcase of his talents. The element of the ' Gift of the Magi' that captured my attention most was the characters. Their appearance on the outside did nothing to clue in the reader about their feelings for each other and their personalities.

The expert way that O. Henry chose to phrase and word his version of this delightful story captivates the reader's attention and leaves them wanting more. The characters in the story, Della and James Dillingham, through their selfless actions and immense love for one another, depict the magi. Mrs. James Dillingham Young is deeply in love with her husband.

The following quote from the story emphasizes this point: " But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called " Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. " (Henry 2013) Della stays in the apartment while Jim is away from home working. Della is the one responsible for creating that cherished sense of " home. "

It is that sense of home that helps define their love for each other, and makes their poor little apartment seem like a special place. It makes them feel like they are isolated from the rest of the population and in their own little world. Towards the beginning of the story, Della is distraught that Christmas Day is imminent. She is a very emotional person.

The fact that she doesn't have the perfect present for her husband yet and has little but one dollar and eighty-seven cents to spend on it makes her afflicted. (Rogers 1998) " Only \$1. 87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling – something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim. " (Henry 2013) Della is completely dedicated to " her Jim. " She spends a great deal of time just thinking about what to get him. In her point of view, Jim is someone very " rare and fine," who deserves something special.

Della is a loving, warm, and selfless woman. (May 2006) Her willingness to sacrifice for Jim conveys the depth of her love and devotion to him. " I had my hair cut off and sold because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again – you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. " (Henry 2013) The thing that appears to bother Della most about losing her hair is that Jim likes it so much. She's worried he won't find her pretty anymore. She barely seems to think about herself at all. That is true devotion. James Dillingham Young is a hardworking, dedicated husband.

He is constantly tired due to being overworked and that has slightly affected his physical condition. (May 2006) Nonetheless, Jim is happily married to Della. " He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two-and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves. " (Henry 2013) The one thing that keeps Jim going is his love for Della. She is his wife, his Della. In the story, the reader does not get as much exposure to Jim's feelings as they do for Della's, although,

throughout the story evidence points to Jim being just as devoted to Della as she is to him.

Just like Della, Jim gives up his most precious possession, a beautiful gold watch that had belonged to his father and his grandfather before him, to find a perfect gift for the person he loves. (Rogers 1998) “” Dell,” said he, “ let’s put our Christmas presents away and keep ’em a while. They’re too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on. “” (Henry 2013) Towards the end, in this section, Jim makes it known that he’s made the same sacrifice as Della has.

Just like her, he doesn’t seem to be terribly troubled by the sacrifice itself, he does not even seem affected emotionally in a negative way at its unexpected results. He just appears calm and happy. All that matters to him is that they are together on a wonderful holiday. This lovely couple is fortunate to have one another. Jim and Della’s sacrifice of their most prized possessions for a gift to one another is very touching. The Gift of the Magi” is about a young couple who sacrifice everything they have of value to give each other the best Christmas present.

When the word magi comes to mind, most people think of the magi as the “ three kings” or the “ three wise men” from the Christian bible. They were “ wise men” from the East who brought gifts to the infant Jesus. These magi were the ones who basically commenced the practice of giving Christmas presents in the first place. According to the story, the magi were wise folks.

The gifts that were given must have been the smartest, best gifts anyone could have chosen.

According to O. Henry, that makes the two characters in the story, Jim and Della, just like the magi because they gave each other the wisest gifts of all. But in the last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as these two are the wisest. Everywhere they are the wisest. They are the magi. ” (Henry 2013) Both Jim and Della have shown that they’re willing to sacrifice the most valuable thing they own to give something to the other. That makes their “ useless” gifts incredibly valuable after all. The selfless love they each feel for the other is personified in those gifts. As long as they have the gifts, they’ll be able to remember it.

The characters in the story, Della and James Dillingham, through their selfless actions and immense love for each other, depict the magi. Both Jim and Della have shown that they are each willing to sacrifice the most valuable thing they have to bring joy to one another. The kind of love that Jim and Della have can’t be bought, and it makes the gifts even more special and personal than what they traded in to buy the gifts, therefore making Della and Jim “ the magi” of the story. O. Henry truly captures the essence and meaning of Christmas in this captivating story.