

# The gift of the magi by william sidney porter



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Comp1102 /Fall Mrs. Chambers The Gift of the Magi by William Sidney Porter

William Sidney Porter, better known under his pen name “ O. Henry”, born September 11 1862 in Greensboro North Carolina. Accused of embezzling bank fund, Henry was arrested and sentenced to three years in prison.

During this dark period in his life, he begin his literarycareerwith his stories that were to be collected in his first book “ Cabbage and Kings” (1904).

Henry left the stories mainly laid in New York, Central American and Western American. The majority of the stories that can be found, however, are set in Manhattan, New York City. In these works, Henry portrayed the atmosphere and the scenes of its restaurant and its old lodging houses really true to life. For this reason, Henry remains secure in the hearts of the public as, “ the prose laureate of Manhattan Island” (1945, Lewiston Journal Magazine Section). Finally he deserves rank with America’s greatest of the short story and hands down far and wide up to now.

His representative work The Gift of the Magi (1906) is an extremely moving story of a young couple who sell their best possessions, Della’s hair and Jim’s watch, in order to getmoneyfor a Christmas present for each other. The hair is cut and sold to buy a glorious watch chain, and the watch is sold to buy a beautiful comb, neither knowing that the present can no longer be of any use when offered to the loved one. After the first reading, the whole story seems tell about a funny story, but no one cannot laugh out. This essay focuses on the ending of The Gift of Magi.

It reflects the ambience ofhappinesswith sadness of the couple’s life. There is something deep inside this story. Many people studies Henry’s The Gift of

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Magi from different perspectives, such as analyzing the characteristics, the theme and also personal background of The Gift of Magi. The style of O. Henry's short novel's ending is well-known throughout the world of literature with its wit unexpected but reasonable results. From the beginning of the story, the young couple is characterized as their true love holder showing sincerity and loyalty through the way of sacrificing their precious treasure.

First, Della cries, " she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length"(The Gift of the Magi). Later Della makes up her mind to do one thing giving the readers an astonishing shock tempting to readers to shed tears right now. The only purpose is just to give present on Christmas. Della is full of pleasure, has thought that she would give her husband the most suitable gift on the Christmas Day, but a strong sense of anxiety accompany with her.

When Jim has returned home and stared at Della, a burst of complex feeling occurs to him, his inner world fraught with many unlucky ideas. By Della's explanation Jim has done the same thing as Della done for him, he has sold the watch to get the money to buy combs which Della loves for a very long time. Fortunately, the couple presents their most precious presents to each other, real presents is temporarily useless but their mutual love is true and lasting forever. There is no doubt that it embodies the life of happiness with sadness and deepens their love.

Here Henry presents the climax and later comments on, " the foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasure of their house"(The Gift of the Magi). The young couple indeed

sacrifices their precious possessions, the unwise aspect lies in their decision without telling each other ahead of time and the couple just wants to bring a surprise with great happiness to show their affection. Surprising ending is O. Henry's one signature. Della asks Jim to give her watch to see how it looks on it.

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbles down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled. Because Jim knows it useless right now, no watch any more. For both of them, losing their great treasure means nothing could make them proud of, but they have received one more important thing, a sense of pleasure and satisfaction. The poor couple creates a soft and gentle atmosphere to feel how much they love each other. Although Henry depicts the foolish children, "but in a 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 they are wisest. "(The Gift of the Magi) It denotes that their gifts are the most divine and pious proof to their incomparable true love. Therefore, the two foolish children, Della and Jim are the wisest. Since they receive the spiritual presents through their decision. They are the magi, and their gifts are the gifts of the magi. To sum up, even The Gift of Magi is just one section of life in American people who are struggling for life and searching for a better life with happiness and sadness in the cruel and suffering society.

There is much to be learned from the love of this couple. Works Cited 1. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O.\\_Henry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O._Henry). 2. Lewiston Journal Magazine Section, 1945. 3. Angell, Roger. "The Gift of the Magi: Interview. The New Yorker. Broadcast transcript. Morning Edition. Opposing Viewpoints Resource

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