

The Gift of the Magi

It was Christmas Eve. Though this was a time of happiness for most, Della Young was far from happy. Since she and her husband Jim Young lived in poverty, she was left with only \$1.87 to buy a Christmas present for him. Della looked out the window, contemplating what she should do next. Her eyes began to drift to her flowing, beautiful hair.

Though they didn't have much, the Youngs had two things that they were very proud of. One was Jim's gold pocket watch, passed down as a family heirloom. The other was Della's hair. As she looked at her hair, she began to think of a way to make some more money for Jim's Christmas gift. A tear fell down her cheek as she realized what she must do.

She put on her coat and ran to the nearby hairdresser, Madame Sofronie.

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame Sofronie. "I'll give you \$20 for yours."

After Madame Sofronie cut off her hair, Della ran all over town, looking for the perfect gift for Jim. She found it at last. It was a platinum pocket watch chain—absolutely perfect for Jim's treasured gold watch. She paid \$21 for it and hurried back with the remaining 87¢.

Back at home, Della sat in front of the door, anxiously holding the watch chain in her hands. She was nervous. Would Jim still think she was beautiful? The door opened, and Jim stepped in. As he looked at Della, she saw that he looked confused.

"Jim," she cried, "don't look at me like that! I cut off my hair and sold it—I couldn't stand to have a Christmas without giving you a present! You don't care about my hair, right? It's Christmas! Let's be happy."

Jim put his arms around Della.

"Nothing like that could ever make me love you any less, Della," he said. "But this is why I reacted the way I did."

Jim took a package out of his coat. He pulled off the paper to reveal beautiful combs, with jewels embedded within them.

"Awww!"

Della held the combs to her heart, and at last, looked up.

"My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

Then she showed Jim the platinum watch chain.

"I cut off my hair to buy you this chain for your gold pocket watch!" she said. "Isn't it perfect, Jim? Bring out your watch. Let's see how they look together."

Jim sat down and smiled.

"Della," he said, "I sold my watch to buy you the combs. Let's put away our gifts for a while. I think this is such a beautiful Christmas."

And so, this is the story of two young gift-givers who were the wisest, much like the Magi. For each sold the most valuable thing they owned to buy a gift that the other would adore the most.