

PBS Lesson Series

ELA, Grade 8, Lesson 20

Teacher Packet

Based on the plot and character development, what do you think will happen next In O.Henry's short story, "The Gift of the Magi"?

Write a narrative in which you create a possible ending for the story.

Be sure to use the same literary devices that O.Henry uses and keep in mind what you already know about the characters.

Plot and character:

- Jim and Della are poor, but they work hard and are happy in their relationship.
- Della is persistent when she wants something, and she wants to get Jim a very nice Christmas gift.
- Jim used to have a better job than he does now, so they haven't always struggled this much.
- They are very proud of two things: Jim's beautiful watch, and Della's beautiful hair.

Language:

- Metaphors
- Similes

Graphic Organizer

Character name	Description

Plot

Themes

Key details

Vocabulary word/word choice	Meaning

Literary device	Meaning

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Nimble	quick in action
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Key Details

- Jim and Della rent an apartment with furniture already in it called a furnished flat.
- They rent it at a really cheap price, and it is not a very nice apartment.
- Jim and Della are very proud of Della's hair and Jim's gold watch.
- Broadway reference – Jim bought the combs Jim on Broadway which means they were expensive and that he sacrificed to buy them much like Della sacrificed to buy her gift.

For there lay The Combs - the set of combs, side and back, that Della had **worshipped** long in a Broadway window.

For there lay The Combs - the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped long in a Broadway window. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers...

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But she hugged them to her bosom, or her chest, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim."

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James (Jim)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once lived in prosperity, or got along fine financially • Now makes a lot less money than he once did and he is somewhat ashamed by it • He is happily married to Della and they have a home together

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh,
oh!"

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Ecstatic	overwhelming excitement
Yearn	to crave or long for something
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Literary device	Meaning
Allusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a reference designed to call something to mind • a comical, or humorous, reference to something in society
Simile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a comparison or metaphor that uses like or as • can bring a scene to life and help you imagine it better
Imagery	visual symbolism
Metaphor	symbolic; the opposite of literal
Figurative language	non-literal language that helps readers to visualize what is being said
Sensory detail	language that appeals to your senses to help you to understand what is happening better
Direct address	the author talks directly to the reader

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Key Details

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- They rent it at a really cheap price, and it is not a very nice apartment.
- Jim and Della are very proud of Della's hair and Jim's gold watch.
- Broadway reference – Jim bought the combs Jim on Broadway which means they were expensive and that he sacrificed to buy them much like Della sacrificed to buy her gift.
- Connection between the reflection of the platinum and Della's spirit - shows the reader that the gift of the platinum fob chain was an authentic gift that represents Della's true inner self

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"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

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Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled. “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.”

And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house.

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- Della and Jim could certainly be accused of being a little short-sighted and maybe “foolish” in selling their most prized possessions for a Christmas present.
- But on the other hand, they are also very wise because they expressed their love through great sacrifice.
- Even though it didn’t work out with the gifts in the end, they both demonstrated how deeply they loved each other!
- So they were kind of foolish but also really wise and it worked out great in the end!

Plot

- Della has been working for months to save money and that all that she has to show for it is one dollar and eighty-seven cents.
- It's Christmas Eve and she does not have enough money to buy the gift for Jim that she wants to buy for him.
- Della sells her hair for \$20 so that she can buy Jim a nice Christmas gift.
- Della searches through all the stores to find the perfect Christmas gift for Jim. She finally finds it - a platinum fob chain, which will pair perfect with his watch. Della goes home, fixes her hair, and prepares for Jim's arrival.
- Jim comes home and is shocked to discover that Della has cut her hair.
- Della is worried that Jim will be upset, but in the end, he still loves her.
- Jim brings home a gift for Della.
- Della received some nice combs from Jim that she had been wanting for a really long time. She had seen them on Broadway in New York City so she knew they were expensive and that Jim put in great effort to get them.
- Della gave Jim his gift of the fob chain.
- Jim just smiled because he knew that he had sold his watch to buy Della's gift and that he could not use the chain with it.

Theme is a central idea that threads through a story.

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- Love can lead us to be foolish at times but it always makes us wiser in the end.
- True love requires selfless behavior.
- Happiness requires love, not money.

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Theme

- Love can lead us to be foolish at times but it always makes us wiser in the end.
- True love requires selfless behavior.
- Happiness requires love, not money.

In an essay, identify two key themes that emerged from the story of “The Gift of the Magi.”

Explain in detail how the author used various tools to develop these themes - tools like characters, vocabulary, key details, literary devices, etc.

Use specific details from the text to support your analysis and use at least three vocabulary words in your essay.