

# UNIT ONE



1. *Gifts of the Magi*
2. *No Marriage, No Apologies*



*A. Gifts of the Magi**After O. Henry*

TEXT

This story was written at the time when men did not wear their watches on their arms as they do now, but in their pockets, with a chain. Women had long hair of which they were very proud, and they put combs at the sides and back.

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. Della counted it three times. One dollar and eighty-seven cents, and the next day would be Christmas. She sat down and cried. Della was Mrs. James Dillingham-Young. She and her husband lived in two rooms at the top of a building in a poor part of New York. Once Jim,

Della's husband, had work which paid him thirty dollars a week; but now he got only twenty. Jim and Della loved each other very much.

Della stopped crying. She stood by the window and looked out. Tomorrow would be Christmas day and she had only one dollar eighty-seven cents with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, and this is all she had got. She had spent many happy hours planning something nice for him, something fine and beautiful which was really worthy of Jim.

Suddenly she turned quickly round and stood in front of the looking-glass. Her eyes were shining brightly, but her face had lost its color. She quickly pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

There were two possessions of Mr. and Mrs. Young in which they took great pride. One was Jim's gold watch. That watch had belonged to his father and before that to his grandfather. The other proud possession was Della's hair: it was beautiful hair: it flowed down her back like a golden river.

She quickly did up her hair again. She put on her old coat and the old brown hat, ran down the stairs and out into the street. She stopped at a shop: "*Madame Sofrone, Hair-goods of all kinds*". She ran up the stairs.

"Will you buy my hair?" said Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take off your hat and let me see it."

Down flowed the river of gold.

Madame lifted the hair in her hand. "Twenty dollars," she said.

"Give it me quickly," said Della.

For the next two hours Della was searching the shops for Jim's present. She found the present at last. It had certainly been made for Jim and for no one else. It was good enough to go with his watch. In the past Jim sometimes did not like to take out his watch because it had no chain; but, with that chain on his watch, Jim might look at the time in any company.

When Della reached home she set to work to do something to her hair, and her head was covered with little curls which made her look like a schoolboy.

At seven o'clock the evening meal was ready.

Jim was never late. She held the watch-chain in her hand and sat on a corner of the table near the door through which he always came in. Then she heard his step on the stairs. She said a little prayer: "Please, God, make Jim think I am still pretty." The door opened and Jim came in. He looked very thin and serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two. He needed a new coat.

Jim stopped inside the door and stood there. His eyes were fixed on Della. There was a strange look in them. It was not anger, nor surprise. Della could not understand that strange look. He simply stood there looking at her — looking.

Della got off the table and went to him.

"Jim dear," she said, "don't look at me in that way. I — I had my hair cut off and I sold it, because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. My hair will grow again. You don't mind, do you? I had to do it. My hair grows very fast. Say 'Happy Christmas', Jim, and let's be happy. You

don't know what a beautiful present I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" said Jim, as if he hadn't quite understood the fact yet.

"Yes, I've cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well without my hair? I'm just the same girl without my hair, aren't I?"

Jim looked about the room. "You say your hair is gone?" he said.

"You don't need to look for it," said Della. "I tell you it's sold. It's sold; it's gone. And this is the evening before Christmas, Jim. I sold it for you. It may be that 'the hairs of my head are numbered'; but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I get the meal ready, Jim?"

Jim took Della in his arms and kissed her. Then he took a packet out of his coat pocket and put it on the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Della," he said. "I don't think there's anything that you could do to your hair which would make me love my girl any less. But, if you will undo that packet, you will see why I was rather surprised at first."

Della undid the packet and gave a cry of joy. Then she began to cry. For there lay the combs! The set of combs, side and back, which She had looked at so long in the window of a shop. They were beautiful combs with jewels in them, just the right colour for her hair. She had looked at them and wanted them, yet never hoped to possess them. Now they were hers; but the hair for which she had wanted them was gone.

She looked up at Jim with tear-filled eyes. Then, with a smile, She said, "My hair grows so fast, Jim."

She jumped up and cried, "Oh! Oh! Oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him in her open hand. The bright gold shone.

"Isn't it beautiful, Jim? I hunted all over the 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."

Jim did not obey. He sat down, and put his hands behind his head and smiled.

"Della," he said, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep them for a time. They're too nice to use just at present ... I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. Now shall we have our evening meal?"

The Magi brought presents to Jesus Christ on the first Christmas of all Christmases. They first had the idea of giving Christmas presents. They were wise. Here I have told you this story of two foolish children in a poor set of rooms who gave up for each other his or her greatest treasure. They chose their presents unwisely; but those gifts which are the sign of real love are the best gifts of all. □

## NOTES

1. O. Henry: 欧·亨利(1862—1910), 原名威廉·西德尼·波特(William Sidney Porter), 出生于美国南部北卡罗来纳州的一个小镇, 父亲是医生。15岁起就在药房当学徒, 后来做过办事员、制图员、会计员、银行出纳员、编辑、专栏作者和漫画家。1895年他被控盗用了银行帐款而被判了5年徒刑。在监狱里他开始以“欧·

亨利”的笔名创作短篇小说。出狱后移居纽约，以写短篇小说为生。欧·亨利作品甚多，以情节取胜，结局往往出人意外。本文选自由 Michael West 改写的 *Singing Wind and Other Stories* (1977)。

2. Magi: Magus 的复数形式, the Magi 指向刚出生的耶稣·基督朝圣并奉献礼物的东方三个贤者, 俗称东方三博士 (the three Magi)。
3. put combs at the sides and back: 将梳子插在头的两边和脑后。
4. That was all: (一美元八十七美分)全在这儿了。
5. She had been saving ... she had got: 几个月来她勒紧裤腰带, 一分钱也不舍得花, 结果就攒了这么点钱。
6. which was really worthy of Jim: 与吉姆真正相称的礼物。
7. She quickly pulled down ... to its full length: 她很快将头发解开, 让它披散下来。
8. it flowed down her back like a golden river: 仿佛一条金色的河流从她的后背倾泻下来。
9. did up her hair again: 又将头发挽了起来。
10. "Madame Sofrone, Hair-goods of all kinds": "索弗郎女士商店, 经营各种头发制品"。
11. Down flowed the river of gold: 该句为全部倒装句, 主语是 "the river of gold"。
12. searching the shops for Jim's present: 跑遍几家商店, 为吉姆挑选礼物。
13. It had certainly ... no one else: 这简直就是为吉姆一个人制造的。
14. to go with his watch: 与他的表相配。



15. but, with that chain ... in any company: 可是, 有了这条表链, 吉姆就可以当着任何人的面看时间了。
16. set to work: 动手; 着手。
17. There was a strange look in them: 两眼里露出一种奇异的目光。
18. aren't I: aren't 是 am not 的否定缩略形式, 只用于口语中。
19. It may be that ... my love for you: 我头上的头发也许是数得清的, 但是我对你的爱谁也数不清。
20. I don't think ... love my girl any less: 我想, 无论你对你的头发做了什么, 我也不会因此对我心爱的妻子减少半点爱。(本句包含两个形容词性从句。that 从句修饰 anything; which 从句修饰的也是 anything, 但关系代词用 which。此外, which 从句是一个含蓄的虚拟式, 故用 would。)
21. For there lay the combs!: 因为纸包里放着几把梳子! (本句使用了全部倒装结构。)
22. with tear-filled eyes: 眼含热泪地。
23. They chose their presents ... the best gifts of all: 他们选择礼物时欠考虑, 然而这些礼物却象征着真正的爱情, 是最好的礼物。

## READER'S QUIZ

□ Glance over the text quickly ONCE and see if you can

answer the following questions.

1. What were men and women proud of at the time when the story was written?
2. Where did Della and her husband live? Were they a wealthy couple?
3. What had Della been planning before Christmas Day came?
4. How did Della get this one dollar and eighty-seven cents?
5. What were two possessions of Mr. and Mrs. Young in which they took great pride?
6. For what purpose did Della sell her treasured golden hair?
7. Why did Della choose the watch-chain as her present to her husband?
8. How did Della feel when she was waiting for her husband to come back?
9. Why was Jim rather surprised when he first saw Della without her beautiful hair?
10. Was Jim very unhappy with Della when he learned that she had sold her hair just to buy him a present? What did he say about it?

## VOCABULARY

□A. Use each of the following terms in a sentence.

1. to wear
2. to take pride in
3. to be worthy of
4. to pay
5. to fix one's eyes on

6. to set to work
7. to live through
8. to number
9. to hunt
10. to undo

□B. Match the term in the left column with one which has a SIMILAR meaning in the right column.

- |                  |                                                    |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1. looking-glass | △ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a. grave     |
| 2. put on        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> b. tearful     |
| 3. serious       | △ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> c. fair      |
| 4. count         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> d. mirror      |
| 5. tear-filled   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> e. wear        |
| 6. gift          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> f. belongings  |
| 7. sign          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> g. disappeared |
| 8. gone          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> h. add up to   |
| 9. pretty        | △ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> i. symbol    |
| 10. possessions  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> j. present     |

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & APPRECIATION

1. On what occasions do you receive presents?
2. Do you think it is unwise of Mr. and Mrs. Young to give up for each other his or her greatest treasure? What comments do you make about their choice?
3. Where do you think the climax of the story lies?
4. What is the theme of the story? How do you feel about the end of the story?
5. Explain the meaning of the story's title.

# Christmas

## speed reading

In England, Christmas is the most important of all the “Bank Holidays” in the year. Two important things, apart from religious significance, help to set this holiday apart from all others: the customs of giving gifts and the habit of spending it with the family.

In the present highly commercialized age we are reminded of Christmas many weeks before the event. In the shops special Christmas displays appear and outside them are the special Christmas decorations. In the shopping centres of very large towns decorations are put up in the streets. In London thousands of people flock into (拥进) the centre of the town to see the decorations in Oxford Street, Regent Street, Piccadilly and elsewhere. The advertisements in all the newspapers remind us incessantly (不停地) that there are “Only x more shopping days to Christmas”. The post office vans are covered with brightly coloured posters (海报) exhorting (敦促) us to “Post Early for Christmas”, for hundreds of millions of Christmas cards and millions of parcels are sent every year. Everywhere one turns, one is made aware that Christmas, which comes “but once a year”, is coming once again.

Many people deplore (对……感到痛惜) what they consider the over-commercialization of a sacred (神圣的) holiday, but, underneath all the business activity, a great deal of genuine Christmas

spirit is to be found. The custom of giving presents to one's family and friends is a very pleasant one so long as one remembers that it is the spirit behind the gift which matters most and not the gift itself. And how good it is at Christmas to return to the family home and meet parents, grandparents and as many aunts, uncles and cousins as can be accommodated. Without twentieth-century means of transport, many families would be denied the Christmas reunion.

On Christmas Eve, the traditional ritual of hanging up a stocking at the foot of the bed is performed by millions of excited children. During the day the Christmas tree will have been dressed. All is now ready for the great morning, which comes round soon enough, in spite of the efforts of many of the younger children to stay awake until Santa Claus (or Father Christmas, as some call him) steals in to deliver the presents they have asked him for.

Christmas Day is spent quietly at home. The excitement of all the presents is hardly over before it is the time for the traditional Christmas dinner: turkey, duck or chicken with rich fruity Christmas pudding afterwards. At tea-time the crackers are pulled. The evening is spent in games, merriment and more eating and drinking. There is always Boxing Day (the Bank Holiday after Christmas Day) on which to recover, if all the excitement and food have proved a little too much. □

### *Comprehension Exercise*

- 1. Decide which answer best completes the following statements according to the information in the passage.
- 1. Christmas differs from the other holidays in that \_\_\_\_.

- A. it is one of the most important holidays in England
  - B. it is the only religious holiday in the western world
  - C. people must come back for the reunion dinner on Christmas Eve
  - D. people have the habit of giving gifts and spending the holiday with the family
- ☐ 2. We are reminded of Christmas many weeks before the event because \_\_\_\_.
- A. everyone is busy posting the Christmas cards
  - B. the shopping centres are overcrowded with the shoppers
  - C. people are told by the newspapers that Christmas is only once a year
  - D. people can see the special decorations put up everywhere
- ☐ 3. What the gift matters most is that \_\_\_\_.
- A. the Christmas gift should be genuine
  - B. the Christmas gift should not be commercialized
  - C. the genuine Christmas spirit is to be found behind the gift
  - D. the Christmas gift should be good and pleasant
- ☐ 4. Many people are filled with sorrow because \_\_\_\_.
- A. all the commercial activity is sacred at Christmas time
  - B. Christmas is such a sacred holiday that it should not be overcommercialized
  - C. they no longer feel the genuine Christmas spirit in the highly commercialized age
  - D. the shopping centres have gone too far in their advertisements
- ☐ 5. On Boxing Day, people \_\_\_\_.
- A. spend their time in games, merriment and more eating and

drinking

- B. spend their time watching boxing games on TV
  - C. recover themselves from too much excitement and food
  - D. enjoy the traditional Christmas dinner in the evening
- ☐ II. Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F) according to the information given in the passage.
- ☒ 6. Christmas is a holiday of religious significance.
  - ☒ 7. We are reminded of the coming Christmas by all the commercial activity.
  - ☐ 8. The post office urges us to post early for Christmas because there are millions of cards and parcels sent at one time.
  - ☐ 9. Without such modern transportation means as cars or trains, many families would have to live through Christmas without the Christmas reunion.
  - ☐ 10. The excitement of all the presents is hardly over until it is the time for the traditional Christmas dinner.





## 2. No Marriage, No Apologies

Jennifer Steinhauer

TEXT

After a 22-year marriage that ended in divorce, Cynthia Stech says she has finally figured out how to manage love.

She has a romantic interest, he has moved into her house in Kalamazoo, Mich., and that is probably how things are going to stay.

"I'm not sure that marriage isn't an option," said Ma. Stech, 59, an office manager who began living with Fred Tremdlay, 66, a year and a half ago. "But we haven't figured out why we would do it. Clearly we are not starting a family, and we're not planning a 30-year partnership. We're just grate-