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The Gift of The Magi (Kids Version)

O. Henry

Once upon a time, in a tiny little apartment in a big city, there lived a young couple named Della and Jim. They didn't have much money, but they had lots and lots of love.

Della and Jim each owned one very special treasure. Jim had a beautiful gold watch that had belonged to his father, and to his grandfather before that. And Della had long, shiny brown hair that fell all the way down past her knees, like a waterfall of chocolate.

It was the day before Christmas, and Della had a problem. She had counted her money three times. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all she had saved, penny by penny, for months and months.

"Oh no," sighed Della. "How can I buy Jim a wonderful Christmas present with only one dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

She sat down and cried a little. Then she stood by the window and thought. Then, suddenly, she had an idea.

Della looked in the mirror and let down her long, beautiful hair. She knew a shop that bought hair to make into wigs. Her eyes were shining.

She put on her old brown coat and her old brown hat and hurried down the street to the shop.

"Will you buy my hair?" Della asked.

"Twenty dollars," said the shopkeeper.

Snip, snip, snip! Off came Della's beautiful hair. But Della didn't mind one bit, because now she could buy Jim a real present.

She looked in every shop in town until she found it: a shiny silver chain for Jim's gold watch. It was perfect. Jim's watch hung on an old worn leather strap, and Della knew he would love a proper chain. She paid for it and skipped all the way home.

At home, Della curled her new short hair into little curls. "I hope Jim still thinks I'm pretty," she whispered.

At seven o'clock, Jim came through the door. He stopped and stared at Della. He

stared and stared, with a very strange look on his face.

"Jim, darling, don't look at me like that!" cried Della. "I sold my hair to buy you a Christmas present. It will grow back, I promise! Say 'Merry Christmas' and let's be happy!"

Jim smiled softly and hugged Della tight. Then he took a little package from his coat pocket.

"Open it," he said, "and you'll see why I was so surprised."



Della tore off the paper — and gasped. Inside were the combs! The beautiful, sparkly hair combs she had admired in a shop window for so long. Combs for the long, lovely hair she no longer had.

Della hugged them close and smiled through her tears. "My hair grows very fast, Jim!"

Then she jumped up and held out her present. "Now open yours! Give me your watch — I want to see how the chain looks on it!"

But Jim just sat down on the couch and smiled the gentlest smile.

"Della," he said, "let's put our presents away for a little while. They're too nice to use just now. You see... I sold my watch to buy your combs."

For a moment they just looked at each other. Then they laughed, and hugged, and sat down to their Christmas dinner together.

Della had no more long hair, and Jim had no more gold watch. But they had given each other the greatest gift of all: their love. And that made them the wisest gift-givers in the whole wide world.

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