

The Gift of the Magi

"The Gift of the Magi" is a short story by O. Henry about the challenges a young couple faces when they buy Christmas presents for one another with very little money. The husband and wife go out separately to purchase presents and, upon their return home, realize that their presents are useless. The young woman sold her hair to purchase a gold chain for her husband's watch. The husband, on the other hand, sold his gold watch to purchase hair clips for his wife. The story continues to personify a spirit of giving and selflessness by depicting two generous people who were thankful for the gift of each other's lives rather than for the material possessions they had been given.

This story, written in 1906, promotes the values of self-sacrifice and generosity. Though "The Gift of the Magi" was written over one hundred years ago, the message behind the story remains applicable in today's society. At the surface, the couple is happy with the little they have, but that interpretation barely encompasses the overwhelmingly pro-life message that O. Henry weaves into the text. Moreover, they are grateful to share their lives with each other selflessly. In that way, the gift of the "Magi" is not the watch or the clips, but the couple's selflessness. As a materialistic culture, we frequently hold the "what" in our lives dearer than we hold the "who." In "The Gift of the Magi," we see two people who acknowledge the intrinsic value of each other's lives because their gratitude for each other is not overshadowed by the material things they "get out of" their relationship.

The pro-life culture opposes the current societal attitude towards life that is fueled by selfishness. Tragedies such as abortions and euthanasia occur because people devalue life in its most helpless forms in favor of their own needs. Life for the couple in O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi" may have been difficult and their lives burdensome to each other, but they demonstrate pro-life values by graciously accepting the gift of each other's lives regardless of what they get from their relationship in return.

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