

**Q Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey backyard. 2017**

Ans. The above lines are from O. Henry's short story, 'The Gift of the Magi'. Della had been saving for months to buy a good gift for Jim. She counts her savings and realizes that all she had is \$1.87. Being disappointed, she has a good cry after which she powdered her face and stood looking out of the window. She sees a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. The environment is dull and colourless, similar to her financial situation.

**4. Give a character analysis of Della.**

Ans. Della is a young woman married to Jim, who she loves a lot. She wants to buy him a Christmas present worthy of him. She stays at home, while her husband goes to work. She has beautiful long hair that falls below her knees and is almost like a garment. We come to know more about Della than Jim because we see more of her than Jim in the story. She doesn't think twice before sacrificing her hair to get a good gift for Jim.

She is a resourceful person as we see her repair the damage of the haircut by giving herself curls. She displays both joy and tears without inhibitions as we see on multiple occasions. The words 'bulldozer' and 'slender' both are used to describe her. She can be tough when the situation demands her to be so. In Della, we find a vibrant young woman, who knows that love is far above materialistic things.

**5. Give a character analysis of Jim.**

Ans. Jim is a young man of twenty-two. He is thin and very serious. He goes to work and earns twenty dollars a week. He loves his wife and does not think before selling his precious gold watch, a family heirloom. He does it so he can buy her a set of expensive combs she has coveted and yearned for. He has a quiet strength and many sterling qualities. Like Della, he too puts love above materialistic things.

**6. Give a character analysis of Madame Sofronie.**

Ans. Madame Sofronie is the owner of a shop that sells all kinds of hair goods. She is described as large, too white, chilly and unlike the ‘Sofronie’. She’s fat, despite being in the business of beauty. She might be a foreigner. She lacks warmth in her behaviour. Sofronie of Cioara was a Romanian Orthodox saint. There is nothing saintly about Madame. In a single sentence, O. Henry has said much about Madame Sofronie. She also doesn’t show any signs of being impressed by Della’s lovely hair.

**7. Why does Della turn pale for a moment as she hears Jim’s step on the stair?**

Ans. On hearing Jim’s step on the stair, she became pale for a moment as she was scared of Jim’s reaction to her having cut and sold her hair. Her hair was one of the prized possessions of their household in addition to Jim’s gold watch. She wanted to buy a good gift for Jim, something worthy of him. Despite saving up for months, all that she had was one dollar and eighty-seven cents. Catching sight of her reflection in the pier-glass gave her the idea of selling her hair.

**8. Why does Della say, “My hair grows so fast, Jim” in “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry?**

Ans. Della says, “My hair grows so fast, Jim” in O. Henry’s ‘The Gift of the Magi’ to reassure Jim that her hair would grow back soon and she would be able to use the beautiful tortoiseshell combs he bought for her hair. The combs that she had long coveted without the slightest hope of having them for herself, are hers now. Yet, the beautiful tresses, in which the combs were just the right shade to wear in have vanished. Hugging the combs to her bosom, she says, “ My hair grows so fast, Jim! “

**9. Discuss the indications that the couple is poor in “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry.**

Ans. There are several indications that the couple is poor in ‘The Gift of the Magi’. Jim earns twenty dollars a week which isn’t enough for them to meet all their requirements. They live in a flat for which they have to pay a rent of \$8 every week. Della bargains while buying provisions for the house, so she can save a bit there. Jim requires an overcoat and gloves. Della’s clothes are old. The furniture in the flat is old and shabby. On Christmas, Eve Della counted her savings three times and saw that she only had one dollar and eighty-seven cents. She sold her precious hair to buy a gift for Jim. Similarly, Jim too didn’t have money to buy a good gift for Della. He sold his family heirloom to buy combs for her.

**11. Show how the ‘twist in the tale’ makes the story of Jim and Della a moral lesson.**

Ans. Jim and Della sacrificed their precious things to buy each other a fitting gift. The gifts turned out to be of no use for both of them. Della could not use the set of combs that Jim bought for her as her hair was gone. Jim could not use the fob chain as he had sold his watch to pay for her combs. This ‘twist in the tale’ tells us about the true meaning of Christmas, love and sacrifice. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life. O. Henry’s story brings out the essence of love and sacrifice in the tale of Jim and Della.

**12. What was the financial condition of the two young couples?**

Ans. Jim earns twenty dollars a week which isn’t enough for them to meet all their requirements. They live in a flat for which they have to pay a rent of \$8 every week. Della bargains while buying provisions for the house, so she can save a bit there. Jim requires an overcoat and gloves. Della’s clothes are old. The furniture in the flat is old and shabby. From all the above information given by the author, we can see that their financial condition is not good.

**13. Give a description of the flat Della and Jim used to live in.**

Ans. Della and Jim, were a young couple who lived in a furnished flat, which cost \$ 8 per week. The flat was not extraordinary to be described and had the appearance of something lacking and inadequate. In the lobby below was a letterbox in which letters could not be inserted and an electric bell which did not ring. The flat had a few things like a shabby little couch, pier-glass between the windows, a table near the door and a worn carpet. It also had a card with the name, ‘James Dillingham Young’.

**14. How does the narrator express the pride of the couple for their possessions?**

Ans. The narrator says that there are two things in their house that Jim and Della are proud of, Jim’s gold watch which is a family heirloom and Della’s beautiful long hair. If the queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window to belittle the queen’s great wealth. If King Solomon had been the janitor with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his gold watch every time he passed, to make him envious. It is through these comparisons that the narrator expresses the pride of the couple for their possessions.

^ 6. How did the next two hours pass by for Della?

Ans. The next two hours passed very swiftly for Della. She had acquired money after selling her hair and she had in the past spent many a happy hour contemplating buying a nice gift for Jim. Now that she has the money, nothing is preventing her from getting something suitable for him. She goes to several shops and searches for the perfect gift, something worthy of the honour of being owned by Jim. Her search eventually bears fruit and she finds the right gift for him- a simple platinum fob chain that he can use with his gold watch.

7. Why did Jim's expression terrify Della?

Ans. When Jim entered the flat, he closed the door and stopped right in his tracks. On seeing Della, he stood as still as a hunting dog would at the scent of game. He stared at her with a peculiar expression on his face and it terrified her not to be able to understand the expression in his eyes. It was not anger, surprise, disapproval, horror or any of the sentiments that she had prepared for.

8. Why did Della quickly change from being joyous to crying hysterically?

Ans. When Della opened Jim's gift, she was ecstatic to see the set of beautiful tortoiseshell combs and gave a joyful cry. She had worshipped them in a Broadway shop window and craved for it without the least hope of ever owning it. The realization that the long-coveted combs were hers made her joyous but further realization that the beautiful hair in which the combs could be worn were gone made her hysterical.

9. O' Henry calls Della and Jim 'Two foolish children'.  
Do you think they are really foolish? Why or why not?

Ans. O. Henry called Della and Jim two foolish children as they unwisely sacrificed the greatest treasures of their house for each other. They are not at all foolish as they have made the sacrifice due to their love for one another. They have prioritized love above material things. Though young, they can understand and value love above materialism. True love necessitates sacrifice and giving.

10. Is the title of the story 'The Gift of the Magi'  
appropriate? Justify.

Ans. The title of the story 'The Gift of the Magi' is appropriate. The Magi were wise men, who came from the East and visited Jesus after His birth, in Bethlehem. They brought with them gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The magi invented the art of giving Christmas presents. They were wise men capable of giving wise gifts. Jim and Della are the wisest among all who practice the art of gifting. They gave up their most precious possessions to give each other the best Christmas gift. All those who give gifts like Jim and Della did are the magi and the wisest people.

**1. Bring out the relation between Della and the queen of Sheba.**

Ans. The queen of Sheba ruled the kingdom of Sheba in Southwestern Arabia. She visited King Solomon, after hearing about his fame and his relationship with God. She came to test him with difficult questions. In comparing Della and the queen of Sheba, O. Henry tries to show that though the queen had everything, even she would be envious of Della's gorgeous hair. Della's hair is so long that it falls below her knees. If the queen lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window to belittle the queen's great wealth.

**2. Bring out the relation between Jim and King Solomon.**

Ans. King Solomon was the son of King David and Bathsheba. He was the king of Israel, known for his wisdom and great wealth. The author says that if King Solomon had been the janitor with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his gold watch every time he passed, to make him envious. Jim's gold watch was a family heirloom and was one of their prized possessions, of which both Della and he were proud of.

**3. Show how the 'twist in the tale' makes the story of Jim and Della a moral lesson. 2017**

Ans. Jim and Della sacrificed their precious things to buy each other a fitting gift. The gifts turned out to be of no use for both of them. Della could not use the set of combs that Jim bought for her as her hair was gone. Jim could not use the fob chain as he had sold his watch to pay for her combs. This 'twist in the tale' tells us about the true meaning of Christmas, love and sacrifice. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal life. O. Henry's story brings the essence of love and sacrifice out in the tale of Jim and Della.

**4. Examine the significance and appropriateness of the title of the story.**

Ans. The title is both significant and appropriate. The Magi were wise men, who came from the East and visited Jesus after His birth, in Bethlehem. They brought with them gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The magi invented the art of giving Christmas presents. They were wise men capable of giving wise gifts. Jim and Della are the wisest among all who practice the art of gifting. They gave up their most precious possessions to give each other the best Christmas gift. All those who give gifts like Jim and Della did are the magi and the wisest people.

**27. What did Della do after reaching home? 2018**

Ans. After reaching home, Della thought that before Jim saw her, it would be wise to ‘repair’ her looks after the loss of her beautiful hair. She used her curling irons to give herself a head full of tiny curls. This made her look like a truant schoolboy.

**28. What was the condition of the card which bore its owner’s name?**

Ans. The card was not in a good condition and they were thinking of shortening “Dillingham” to “D”.

**29. Where did Della look at her reflection?**

Ans. Della looked at her reflection in the pier-glass between the windows of the room. Such glasses were usually there in \$8 flats. A thin person could see their reflection in the longitudinal strips.

**30. How old was Jim and how did he look?**

Ans. Jim was twenty-two years old. He looked thin and very serious.

**31. What is Jim’s answer to Della regarding her looks without her long hair?**

Ans. Jim tells Della that a haircut wouldn’t reduce his love for her. He loves her the same with or without her long hair.

**32. What lay in the package that Jim had bought for Della?**

Ans. In the package, there was a set of combs that Della had been yearning for. The combs were expensive, made from tortoiseshell and just the right shade to wear in her tresses which she had sold.

**21. What habit did Della have and what did she whisper about when she heard Jim's steps on the stairs?**

Ans. Della had the habit of saying a silent prayer about simple things in daily life. When she heard Jim's steps on the stairs, she prayed that he would think that she is still pretty even though her crowning glory, her hair, had vanished.

**22. How did Jim behave when he stepped inside the room?**

Ans. Once Jim stepped inside the room and closed the door, he stopped right in his tracks. On seeing Della, he stood as still as a hunting dog would at the scent of game. He stared at her with a peculiar expression on his face and it terrified her not to be able to understand the expression in his eyes.

**23. What did Della think was the reason for Jim's odd behaviour?**

Ans. Jim reacted to Della's haircut in a way that she had not anticipated at all. He just kept looking at her with a peculiar expression. Della thought that the reason for Jim's odd behaviour was his disappointment at her haircut. She assured him that it would grow back again.

**24. How did Della try to coax Jim into thinking that she was still pretty?**

Ans. Della said that her hair grew very fast and it would soon grow out. She also said that she is the same even without her hair and reminded him that he likes her as she is.

**25. How was the hair of Della?**

Ans. Della had long hair which fell below her knees. The length of her hair made it appear like a garment for her. It rippled and shone like a cascade of brown waters. Della's beautiful hair was one of the prized possessions of the Young household.

**26. Why was Della worried that Jim would be displeased? 2018**

Ans. Della was worried that Jim would be displeased about her selling her hair because her hair was a matter of pride for both of them. In addition, her new short hair might draw comparisons with a Coney Island chorus girl.

**15. Why do you think, Della has the 'brilliant sparkle still in her eyes' even as she ran out of the door and into the street?**

Ans. Della looked at her reflection in the pier-glass and an idea came to her. This brightened up her face and made her eyes shine. She thought of selling her beautiful hair, which was very long and fell below her knees. This sale would enable her to get enough money to buy a good gift for Jim. Happy at finding a solution to her problem, she rushes out of her flat to accomplish the sale of her hair.

**16. What did Della ask Madame Sofronie and what was her answer? 2019**

Ans. Madame Sofronie owns a shop which sells hair goods of all kinds. Della asked her if she would buy her hair. The proprietor asked her to remove her hat and show her hair. Madame Sofronie does not show that she is impressed by Della's gorgeous hair and offers to pay twenty dollars for it.

**17. Did Della bargain with Madame about the price of her hair? What did she say to her, then?**

Ans. Della did not bargain with Madame about the price of her hair. Once Madame Sofronie assesses her hair and offers to pay twenty dollars for it, Della tells her to give it to her quickly. Della wants the transaction to take place soon as it is Christmas Eve and she wants to buy a gift for Jim.

**18. Why was the gift chosen by Della for Jim 'like him'?**

Ans. After two hours of searching for the perfect gift, Della finally finds what she had been looking for. The object in concern was a simple platinum fob chain, without any decorative elements to enhance its appearance. The chain was like Jim in quietness and value. The chain was simple and proclaimed its value by substance alone without any ornamentation. Jim had a quiet strength in him and was worthy because of the many sterling qualities in him.

**19. Once home, what did Della do to 'repair' her looks?**

Ans. Upon reaching home, Della thought that before Jim saw her, it would be wise to 'repair' her looks after the loss of her beautiful hair. She used her curling irons to give herself a head full of tiny curls. This made her look like a truant schoolboy.

**20. What did Della think Jim would say to her about the way she looked now? 2016**

Ans. Della thinks that if Jim didn't kill her, he would say that she looked like a Coney Island chorus girl. Coney Island is a tourist destination in New York known for its amusement park. A chorus girl is a part of a singing group. At that time, chorus girls had short hair.

## **1. Who were the Magi? 2017**

Ans. The Magi were wise men, who came from the East and visited Jesus after his birth, in Bethlehem. They brought with them gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

## **2. Why was Della worried?**

Ans. Della was worried because she despite saving for months, she didn't have enough money to buy a Christmas present for her husband, Jim. All she had was \$ 1.87.

## **3. What did Jim do to get a gift for Della? 2017 2019**

Ans. Jim was the proud owner of a gold watch handed down to him by his father and grandfather. He sold this watch to get money to buy a gift for Della since he didn't have sufficient money to buy a befitting gift for her.

## **4. What was Jim's reaction when he returned home?**

Ans. When Jim returned home and set eyes on Della, he stood as still as a hunting dog would at the scent of game. He stared at her with a peculiar expression on his face and it terrified her not to be able to understand the expression in his eyes. It was not anything that she had anticipated.

## **5. Why did Della count her money three times?**

Ans. Della counted her money three times because she could not believe that it was so less, despite having saved for months to buy a Christmas gift for her husband, Jim. She had only one dollar and eighty-seven cents, which was not sufficient to buy a gift appropriate for Jim.

## **6. What did Della do after she realized she had very little money with her?**

Ans. Della was very disappointed at the scarcity of her funds for buying Jim a present for Christmas. She flopped down on the couch and had a good cry, after which she got up and composed herself. Glancing at her reflection in the pier-glass, gave her an idea on how she could raise money by selling her beautiful long hair.

## **7. How did Della get the 1.87 Cents in gift of the magi**

Ans. Della got the 1.87 Cents in the gift of the magi by bargaining with the people who provided provisions like the grocery, the butcher, and the vegetable man.

## **8. What makes the author come to the conclusion that 'life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating'?**

Ans. Della's disappointment and subsequent tears led the author to conclude that life has its share of ups and downs. There are joyful times and sad times, but the sad occasions outnumber the joyous occasions.

**9. Describe Della's flat?**

Ans. Della lived in a furnished flat, which cost \$ 8 per week. The flat was not extraordinary to be described and had the appearance of something lacking and inadequate. In the lobby below was a letterbox in which letters could not be inserted and an electric bell which did not ring. The flat had a few things like a shabby little couch, pier-glass between the windows and a worn carpet. It also had a card with the name, 'James Dillingham Young'.

**10. Why did everything look grey to Della that morning?**

Ans. That morning Della was upset as she lacked sufficient funds to buy a worthy Christmas present for Jim. She was upset and sad. The colour gray is an emotionless colour often associated with loss or depression. Hence, everything looked gray to Della that morning.

**11. What had Della planned all along?**

Ans. Della had planned to buy a nice, fine, rare and sterling present for Jim on the occasion of Christmas. She wanted to be worthy of the honour of being owned by Jim. She had spent hours in happy thoughts about this and had been saving up for several months.

**12. What idea came to Della's mind as she stood looking at her reflection in the pier-glass?**

Ans. As Della stood looking at her reflection in the pier-glass, an idea came to her mind, which brightened up her face and made her eyes shine. She thought of selling one of their prized possessions, her beautiful hair, which was very long and fell below her knees. This sale would enable her to get enough money to buy a good gift for Jim.

**13. What were the two possessions of the James Dillingham Young of which they both were very proud? 2016**

Ans. There were two prized possessions in the Young household in which both of them took great pride. One was Jim's gold watch, a family heirloom, handed down to him by his father, which in turn was passed down to him by his father. The other was Della's beautiful long hair shining and rippling, that fell below her knees.

**14. What was enough for Jim to do to make King Solomon envious?**

Ans. King Solomon was the king of Israel, known for his wisdom and great wealth. The author says that if King Solomon had been the janitor with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his gold watch every time he passed, to make him envious.