Differences and Similarities between Mathilde and Della

*by Quang Huynh*

In the stories, the characters from “The Gift of The Magi” by Guy de Maupassant and “The Necklace” by O. Henry both have similarities, but they also both have differences. I will be discussing on how Della and Mathilde are different, but also how they are similar as well.

Della and Mathilde are both similar in their traits. Firstly, they are determined. Della was determined because she had spent so much time and determination to save up the $1.87 just so she could buy her husband a Christmas Gift. A quote from the text to support this is, “…she had only $.187 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months…” But for Mathilde, she showed determination when she fired her maid and rented a garret to decrease her expenses and pay the debt quicker. A quote from the story was, “That frightful debt had to be paid. She would have to pay it. She dismissed her maid and they rented a garret under the eaves.” Another trait that was similar amongst them is being clever. Mathilde was clever since she knew her husband’s exact savings, so she had asked the husband for a dress, since she knows that he has 400 francs exact. Something in the text is, “’…I think with 400 francs I could manage it.’ He turned a bit pale, for had set aside just that amount to buy a rifle.” But with Della, she was clever due to the way she had an idea to get more money so Della could buy a gift for her husband. Something that supported this was, “With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she cluttered out of the door and down the stairs down to the streets.” That is how Della and Matilde were both like each other.

Secondly, Mathilde and Della were clearly different from each other. Some character traits that demonstrate this is that Della is generous and how Mathilde is greedy. So, Della is generous for the way that she had sold her hair, which meant everything to her, so Della could buy something for her husband, Jim. The text states, “Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang over the window someday to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty’s jewels and gifts.” Which means Della’s hair would catch the Queen’s eyes, ignoring her own jewels to stare at that hair. But then, Mathilde was greedy because Mathilde wanted more than of what she had. For example, Mathilde already had a decent dress, but she had wanted a fancier dress, so she asked her husband to give her money for an evening dress. Once she had bought the dress, and she then wanted jewelry. The quote was, “There’s nothing more humiliating than to look poor among a lot of rich women.” Next, there is two more traits that states their differences. So, Mathilde had been selfish since she doesn’t think about her husband or anything that he does for her. Something in the text is, “She remained in her evening clothes, without the strength to go to bed, slumped in a car in the unheated room.” Also, Della has been selfless since she thinks about and cares for her husband, and would do anything for him even if it means losing her most prized possession. In the text, it states, “White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy…”

These were the similarities and differences of Della and Mathilde. OOOOOOOOOOOOF