

The Gift of the Magi

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A husband and wife sacrifice treasured possessions in order to buy each other Christmas presents.

Born William Sydney Porter in 1862, O. Henry lived a turbulent life including a brief spell in jail on a charge of embezzlement. Whilst there, he began writing and, once released, made a name for himself as a prolific short-story writer. He has ten collections and over 600 short stories in print. He died in 1910. P. J. Lynch is one of today's most talented and revered illustrators. He has twice won the Kate Greenaway Medal, in 1995 for *The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey*, and in 1997 for *When Jessie Came Over the Sea* (9780744569636). He is also the illustrator of the bestselling *A Christmas Carol* and *East O' the Sun and West O' the Moon* (9781844284986). P. J. lives in Dublin. O. Henry's classic story has been embellished in this adaptation performed by the St. Charles Players. In this production, Della is rummaging through the attic on a Christmas Eve with her granddaughter. This brings back memories of a Christmas Eve many years before, and she tells the story of how she and Jim Dillingham met and courted, leading to the story we know so well. All of the performers in this work are splendid. Della, young and not so young, is vivacious and full of spunk. Jim is a confident, ambitious young man who is smitten by Della.

Granddaughter cannot get enough of the story. While not faithful to the story in many respects (the setting, for example), this delightful and entertaining production is faithful to its spirit. M.T.F. AudioFile 2002, Portland, Maine-- Copyright AudioFile, Portland, Maine
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The Gift of the Magi, O. Henry's classic tale of the wisest gifts of Christmas, brought to life by P.J. Lynch's extraordinary art, is itself a gift to share and treasure. In a shabby New York flat, Della sobs as she counts the few coins she has saved to buy a Christmas present for her husband, Jim. A gift worthy of her devotion will require a great sacrifice: selling her long, beautiful hair. Jim, meanwhile, has made a sacrifice for Della that is no less difficult. As they exchange gifts on Christmas Eve, the discovery of what each has done fills them with despair, until they realize that the true gifts of Christmas can be found more readily in their humble apartment than in any fine store. O. Henry paints a masterly portrait of unflinching love, a haven from the harsh world outside. The poignancy of his story is captured in P.J. Lynch's eloquent art, wherein every glance, every gesture, tells a subtle truth.

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