

“The Gift of the Maji” by O. Henry

EBSRs: The answers are underlined.

Number 1, Part A

What conflict does O. Henry introduce in the beginning of the story?

- Della had embarrassed herself and was blushing.
- Della did not have very much money, and Christmas was coming.
- Della had 60 pennies that she had saved.
- Della decided that life was made of sniffles, sobs, and smiles.

Number 1, Part B

Which of the following does NOT support your answer for number 1, part a?

- And 60 cents of it was in pennies.
- Pennies saved one and two at a time...
- The next day would be Christmas.
- ...With sniffles predominating...

Number 2, Part A

Reread lines 14-24 of the story. What is ironic about this passage?

- The letterbox was in a vestibule on another floor.
- The middle name Dillingham suggests that the couple was wealthy.
- Electric doorbells were available when this story was written.
- Della always greeted Jim with a hug.

Number 2, Part B

Which two pieces of evidence below supports your answer for number 2, part a?

- “...a letterbox into which no letter would go...”
- “...and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring.”
- “...thereunto was a card bearing the name “Mr. James Dillingham Young.”
- “The ‘Dillingham’ had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity...”
- “...when the income was shrunk to \$20, the letters of “Dillingham” looked blurred...”
- “...whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home...”
- “...Which is all very good.”

Number 3, Part A

What irony is revealed at the end of the story (lines 167-186)?

- The couple managed to buy expensive gifts that could not be exchanged.
- Della and Jim had bought gifts that would last a long time.

- c. Della and Jim have sacrificed their most prized possessions to buy now useless gifts for each other.
- d. The title is about “maji” or wise men while Della and Jim weren’t very wise in their gift selections.

Number 3, Part B

Which two statements from the story support your answer for question number 3, part a?

- a. “Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present.”
- b. “The dull precious metal seemed to flash...”
- c. “I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs.”
- d. “...possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication.”
- e. “...two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house.”
- f. “They are the magi.”