TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 199

Short Stories with Peter: The Gift of the Magi

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

47 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Welcome to Short Stories with Peter, from Your English Toolbox.

Today, an original learning adaptation of The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry.

Listen for what the two people in this story are willing to give up for each other.

Della counted the money she had saved.

It was not enough to buy the gift she wanted for Jim, her husband.

I have so little, and tomorrow is Christmas.

Della looked at her long, beautiful hair.

It was her greatest treasure.

She put on her old coat and hurried to a shop that bought hair.

Will you buy my hair?

The shopkeeper offered her twenty dollars.

Della agreed, and soon her hair was cut short.

With the money, she searched the shops for something worthy of Jim.

At last, she found a simple chain for his treasured watch.

She hurried home and curled her short hair, wondering what Jim would think.

Jim stood in the doorway and stared at her.

Della, what happened to your hair?

I sold it so I could buy your Christmas present.

Jim held out a small package.

I bought you the combs you have always admired.

Della opened it and saw the beautiful combs.

She hugged them close, then gave Jim the chain for his watch.

Jim smiled sadly.

I sold my watch to buy your combs.

For a moment, neither of them spoke.

Their gifts could not be used as they were.

But each had given up a treasure to make the other happy.

Their love was the real gift.

End of the story.

Now, let’s dive into the language and break down some of the key vocabulary from the story.

Della saved money over time.

To save up means to keep money until you have enough for something.

She gave up her hair for a gift.

To give something up means to stop keeping or doing it, often because of a choice.

Jim held out a package.

To hold out means to extend something towards another person.

A treasure can be a valuable object or something deeply precious to you.

In the story, the watch and Della's hair are treasures.

Their presents were thoughtful, even though neither could use them as planned.

Now you try.

If you keep a little money each week for a bicycle, what are you doing?

You are saving up.

If you stop keeping a habit because you choose something else, what might you do?

You might give it up.

Visit the episode page for the complete transcript and vocabulary practice.

Thank you for listening to Short Stories with Peter.

Until next time, take care.