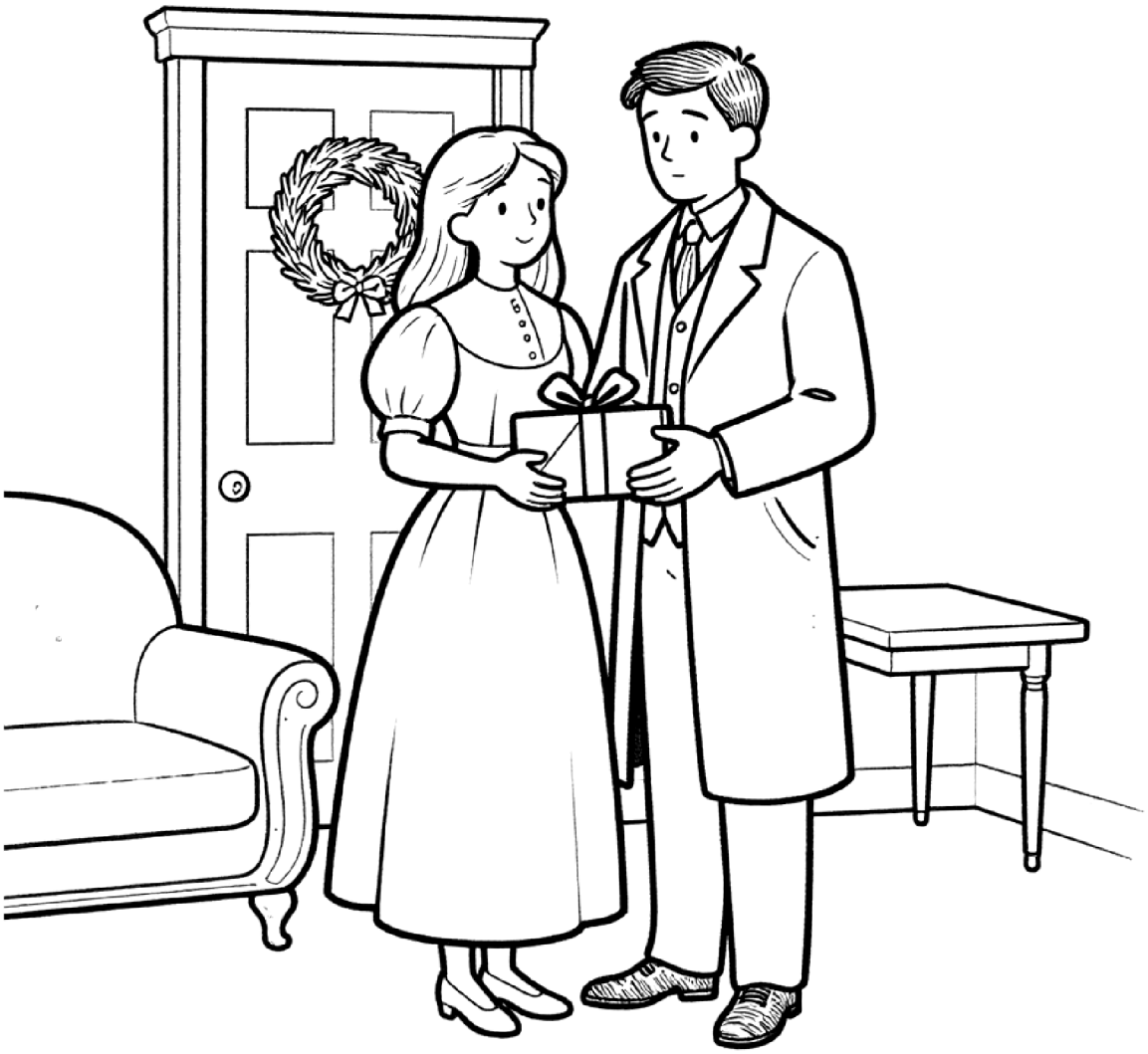
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Gift of the Magi

A Christmas Story



“One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all.” And sixty cents of it was in pennies.

Della had saved them one and two at a time, asking the grocer and the butcher for every penny off.

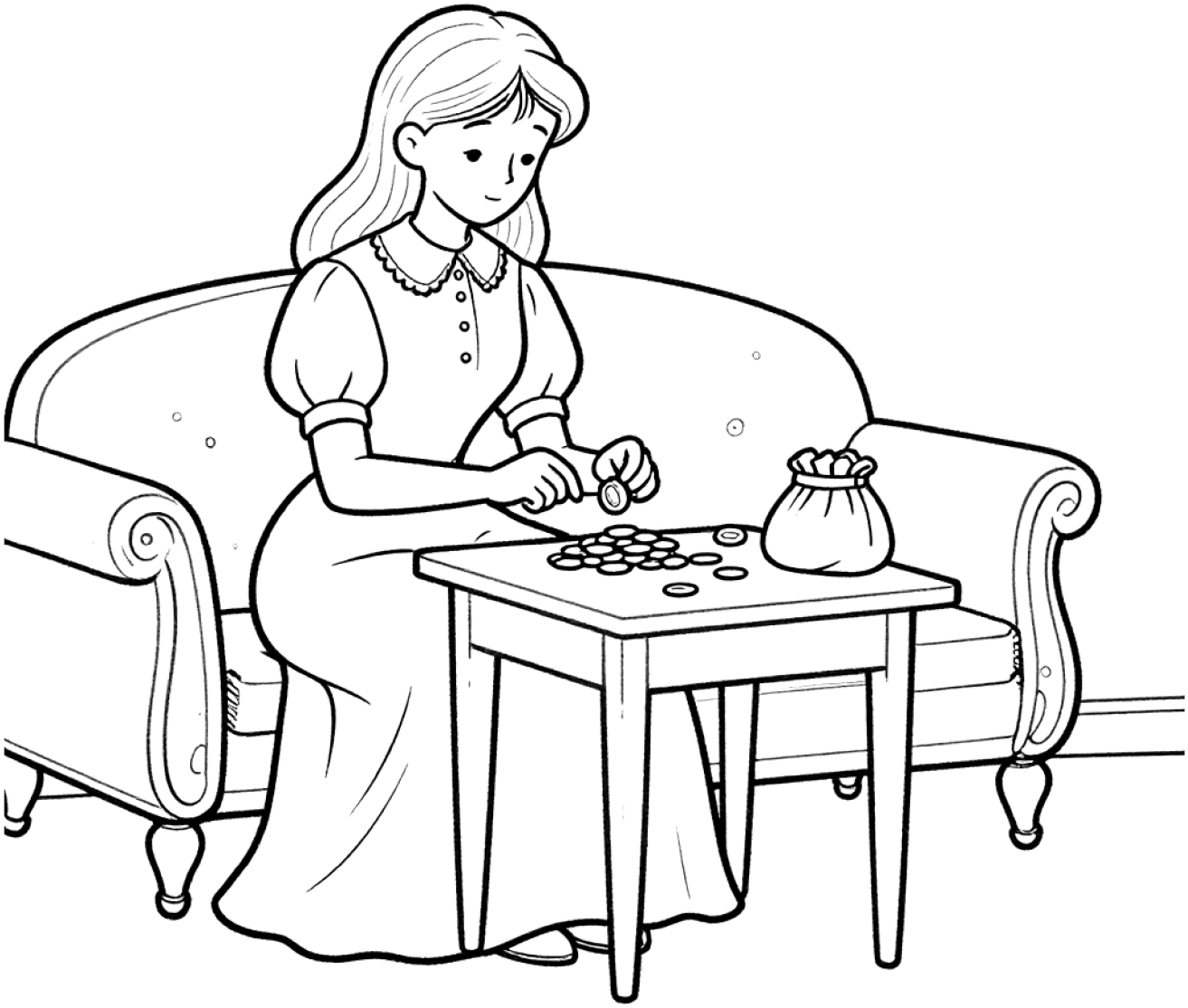
TALK ABOUT IT

Who do you think the pennies are for?

This book belongs to _____



One Dollar and Eighty-Seven Cents



She counted the money three times. It was still one dollar and eighty-seven cents.

And the next day would be Christmas.

So Della sat down on the shabby little couch and cried.

TALK ABOUT IT

Della saved for a long time and still did not have enough. Have you ever saved up for something?

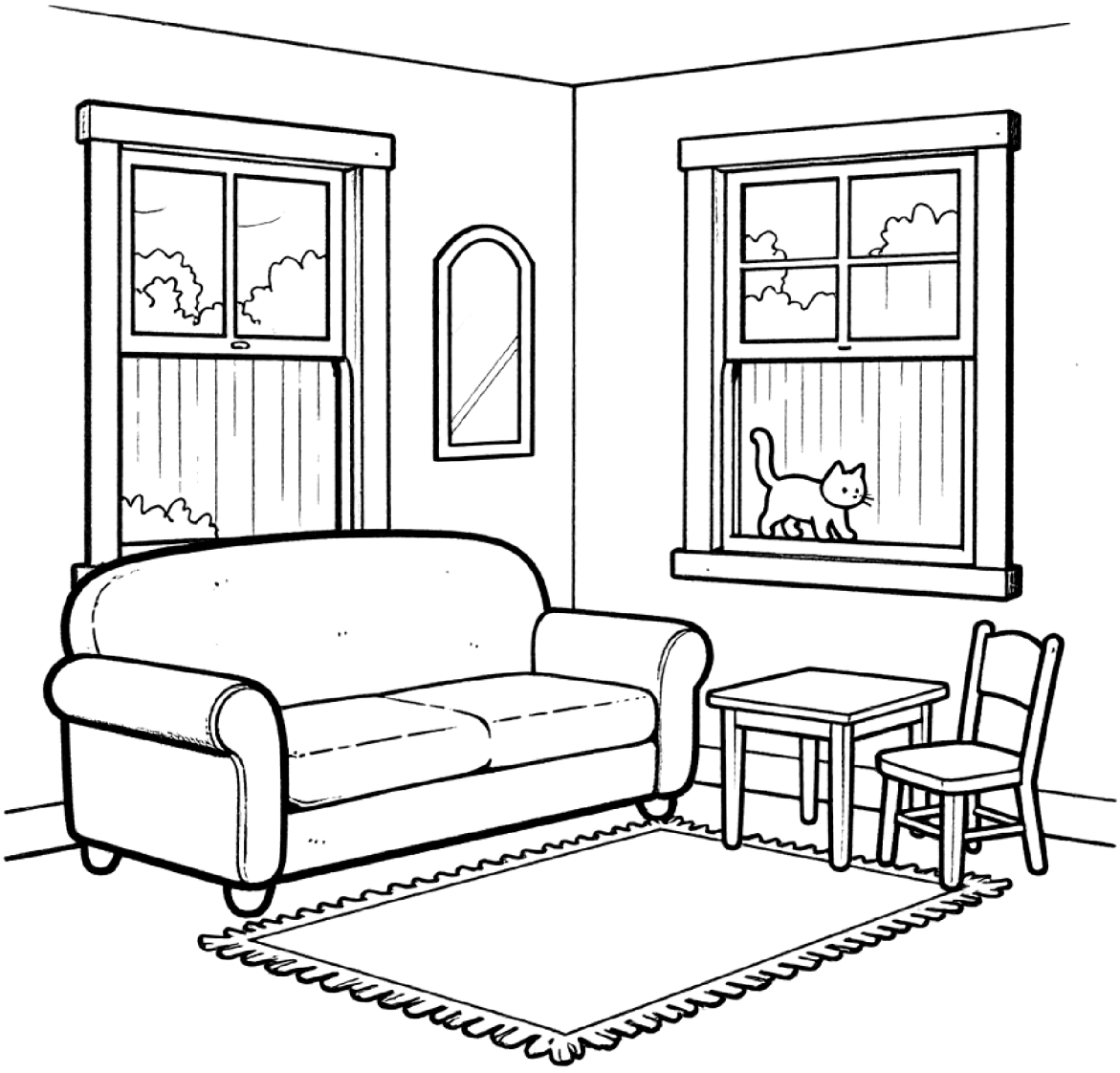


Think about it

1. How much money did Della have?

- ○ Twenty dollars
- ○ One dollar and eighty-seven cents
- ○ Eight dollars

The Little Flat



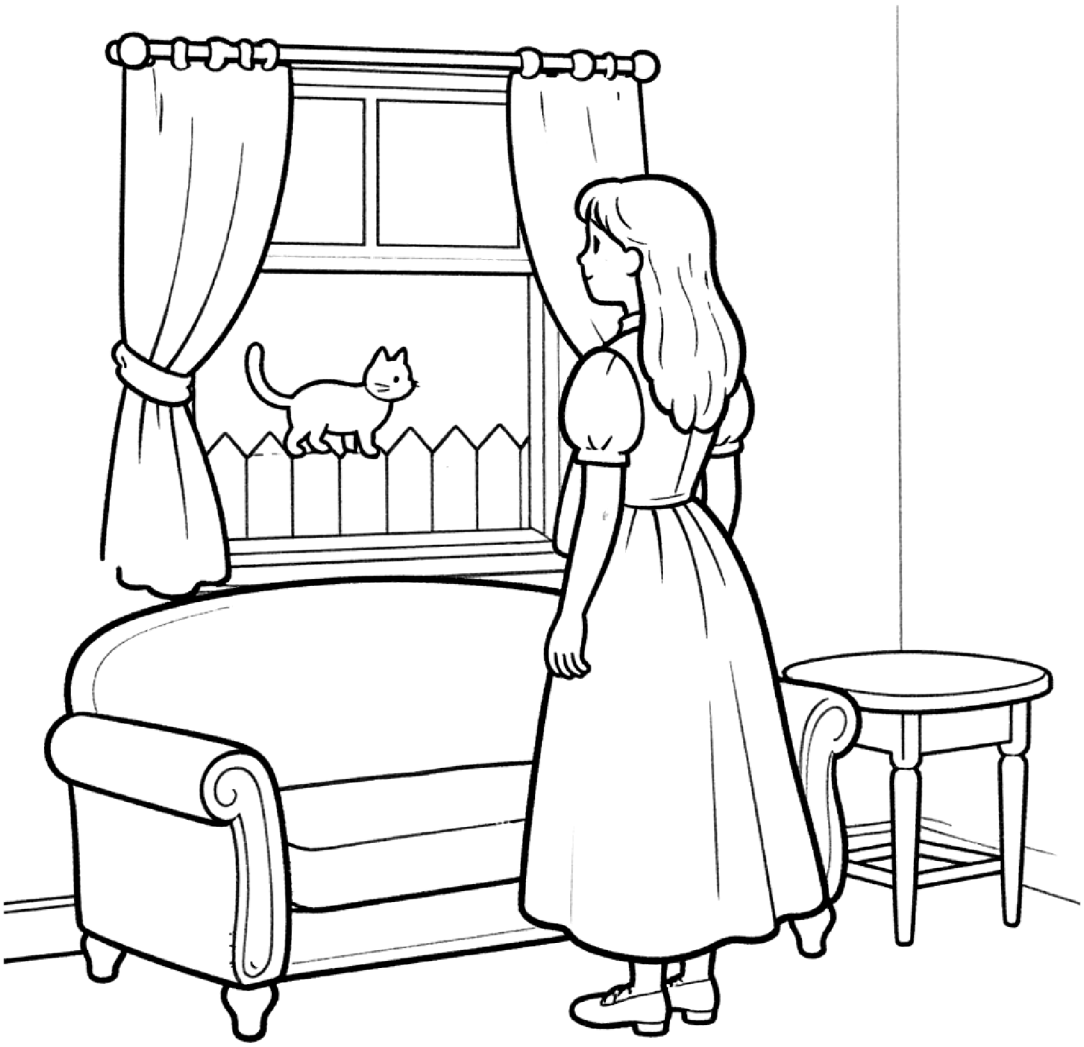
Della and her husband Jim lived in a small rented flat in New York. It cost eight dollars a week. The couch was worn, the carpet was worn, and out the window Della could see a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard.

Jim worked hard, but he earned only twenty dollars a week, and “Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far.”

Still, whenever Jim came home, Della hugged him tight. She wanted to give him something fine for Christmas, something almost good enough for Jim.

TALK ABOUT IT

Their home was plain and worn. What do you think made it a happy home anyway?

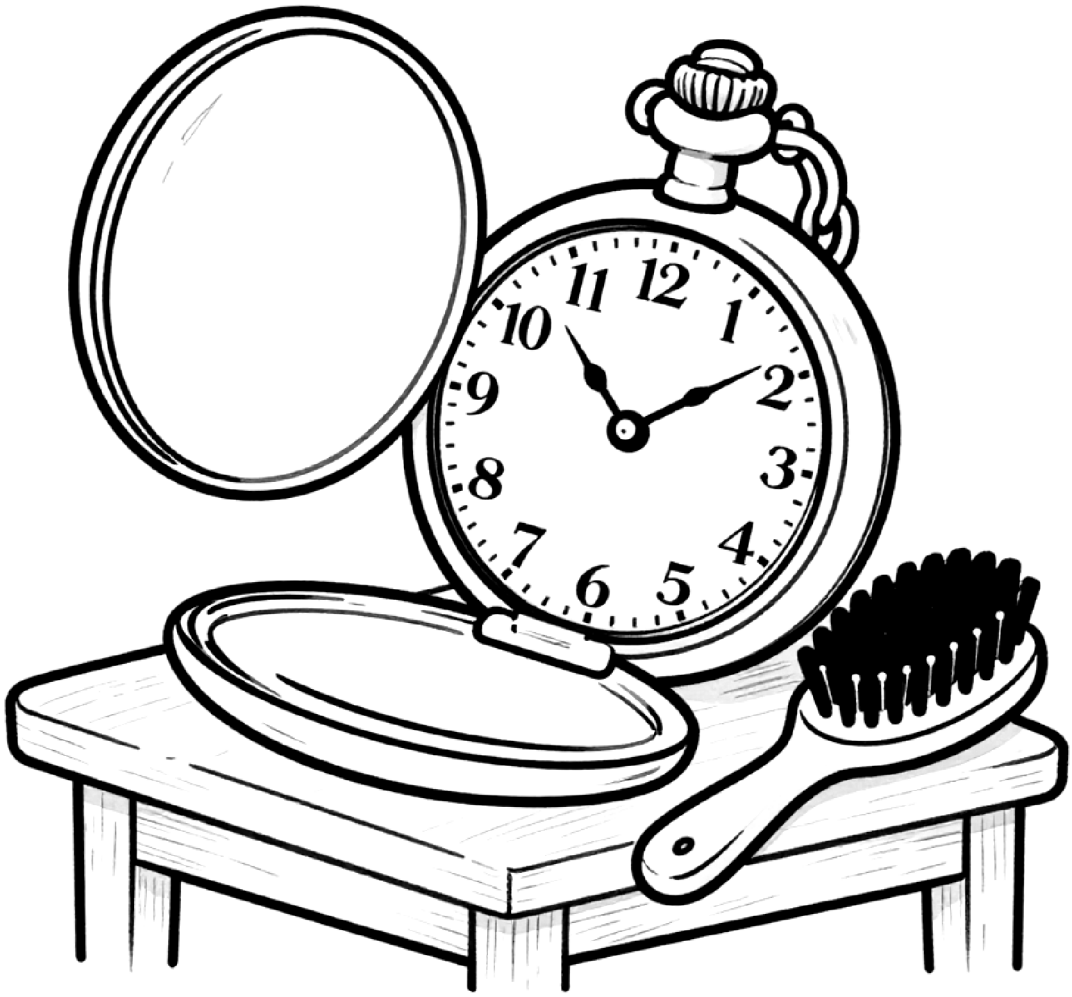


Think about it

1. What did Della see out the window?

- ○ A snowman
- ○ A gray cat on a gray fence
- ○ A big Christmas tree

Two Treasures



Della and Jim had two things they were very proud of.

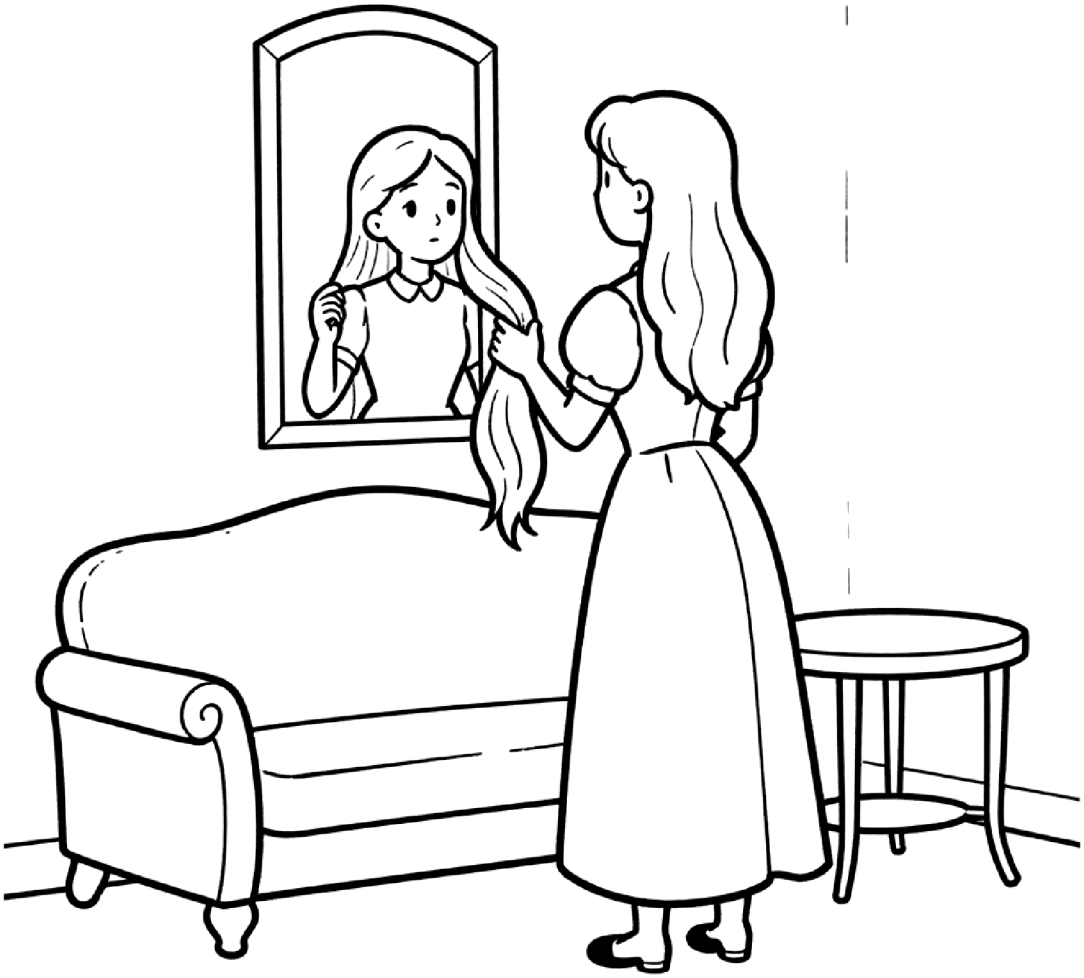
One was Jim's gold watch. It had been his father's, and his grandfather's before that.

The other was Della's hair. It was long and brown and shining, falling about her like a waterfall of brown water, all the way down past her knees.

Della looked at her hair in the mirror for a long time. A tear or two fell on the worn red carpet. Then she put on her old brown jacket and her old brown hat, and hurried out the door.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think Della is about to do? Why might it be hard for her?

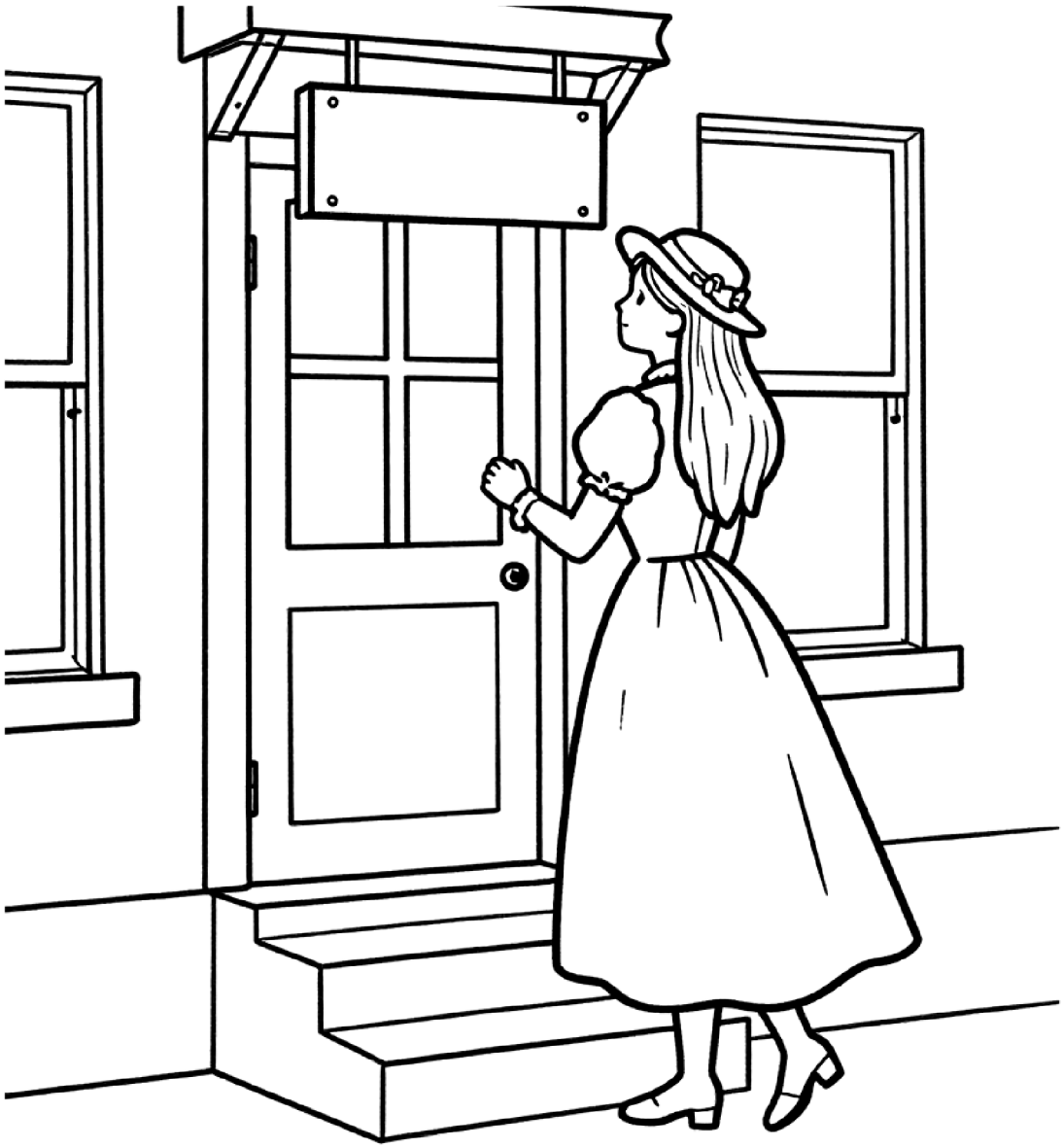


Think about it

1. Whose watch had it been before it was Jim's?

- ○ His friend's
- ○ His father's and grandfather's
- ○ A shopkeeper's

Madame Sofronie



Down the street, a sign said: “Madame Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds.” Della ran up the stairs.

“Will you buy my hair?” she asked.

“I buy hair,” said Madame. “Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it.” Down rippled the brown waterfall.

“Twenty dollars,” said Madame.

“Give it to me quick,” said Della.

TALK ABOUT IT

Della did not stop to think twice. What does that tell you about how much she loved Jim?



Think about it

1. What did Della sell?

- ○ Her coat
- ○ Her long hair
- ○ Her couch

2. Would you give up your favorite thing for someone you love? What would make it worth it?

The Perfect Present



For the next two hours Della searched every shop in town. At last she found it: a chain for a pocket watch, made of shining platinum, “simple and chaste in design.” It was just like Jim: quiet, and worth a great deal.

Jim's watch was grand, but he wore it on an old leather strap, and sometimes he looked at it secretly so no one would see the strap.

The chain cost twenty-one dollars. Della had twenty dollars from her hair and one dollar and eighty-seven cents from her savings. She paid, and hurried home with just eighty-seven cents left.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think Della picked a chain for Jim's watch?



Think about it

1. What did Della buy for Jim?

- ○ A new coat
- ○ A chain for his watch
- ○ A pair of gloves

Waiting for Jim



At home Della curled what was left of her hair into tiny close curls all over her head. She looked in the mirror for a long, long time.

Then she made the coffee and got the chops ready to cook for dinner. Jim was never late.

Della sat on the corner of the table near the door, holding the chain. When she heard his step on the stairs, she whispered a little prayer: “Please God, make him think I am still pretty.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Della was nervous about what Jim would think. Have you ever been nervous to show someone something?



Think about it

1. What did Della pray?

- ○ For more money
- ○ That Jim would think she was still pretty
- ○ For snow

Jim Comes Home



The door opened and Jim came in. He was thin and very serious, and only twenty-two. He needed a new coat and had no gloves.

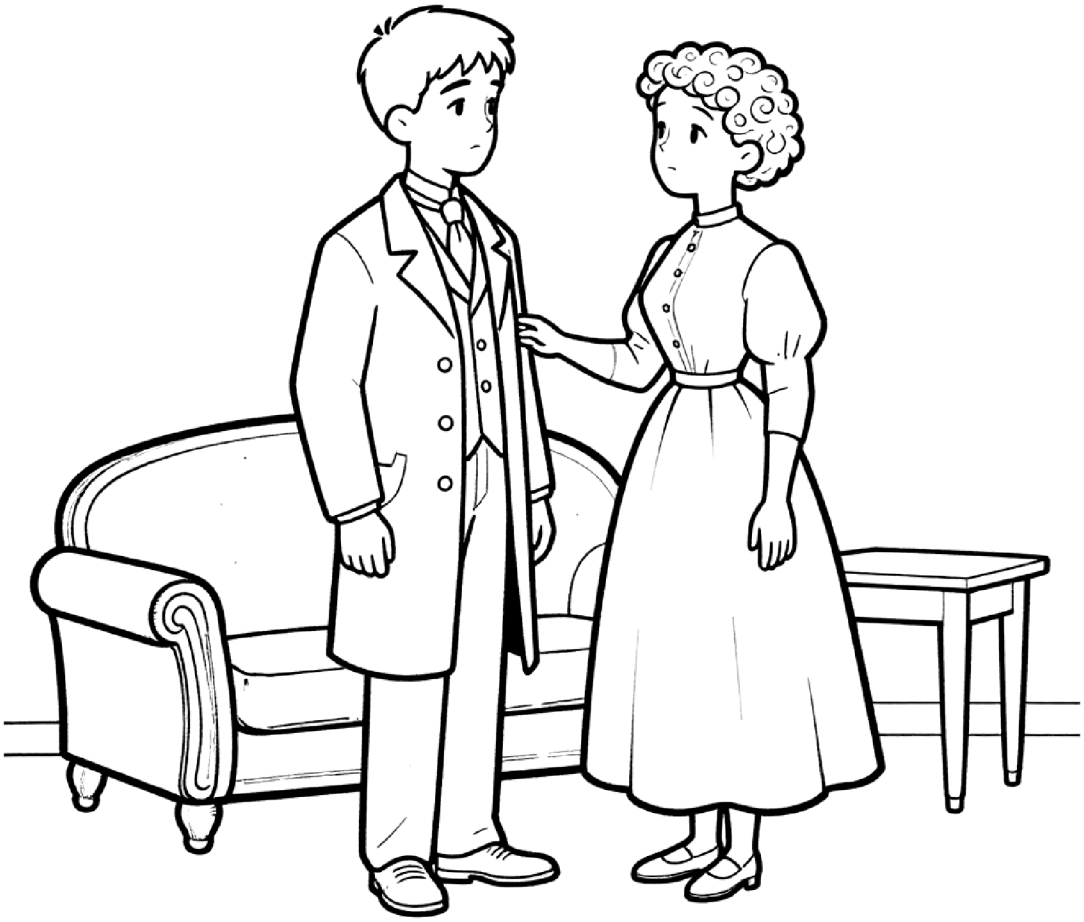
He stopped. He stared at Della's hair with a strange look she could not understand.

“Jim, darling,” Della cried, “don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again.”

“Don't you like me just as well, anyhow?” she asked. “I'm me without my hair, ain't I?”

TALK ABOUT IT

Della said she was still the same person without her hair. What makes you, you?



Think about it

1. Why did Della sell her hair?

- ○ She was tired of it
- ○ To buy Jim a Christmas present
- ○ Madame asked her to

The Combs



Jim woke up as if from a dream and held Della close.

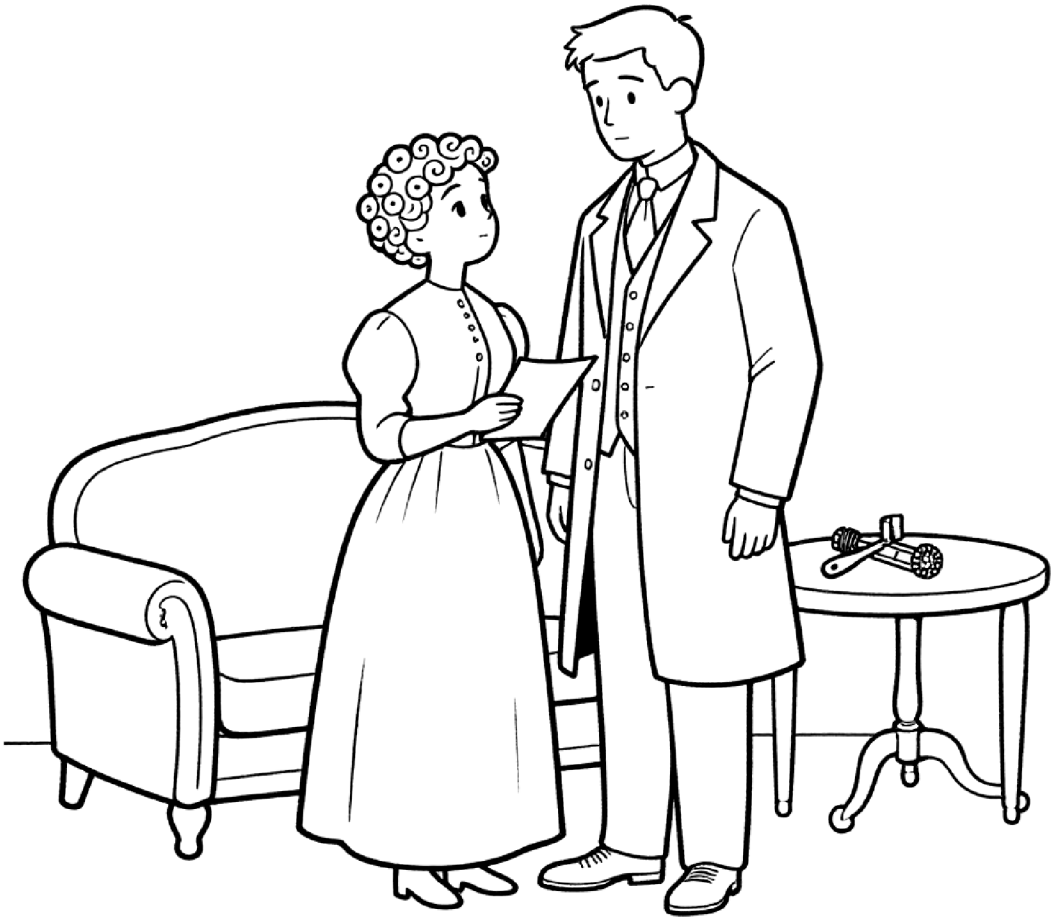
“I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less,” he said. Then he set a little package on the table.

Della opened it, and gasped. Inside were the combs: a whole set of beautiful tortoise-shell combs with jewels on the edges. She had wished for them for a long time in a shop window on Broadway. Now she had no long hair to wear them in.

Della hugged them and smiled through her tears. “My hair grows so fast, Jim!”

TALK ABOUT IT

Jim said nothing could make him love Della less. How do you think that made her feel?



Think about it

1. What was Jim's present for Della?

- ○ A watch
- ○ A set of combs for her hair
- ○ A new hat

Give Me Your Watch



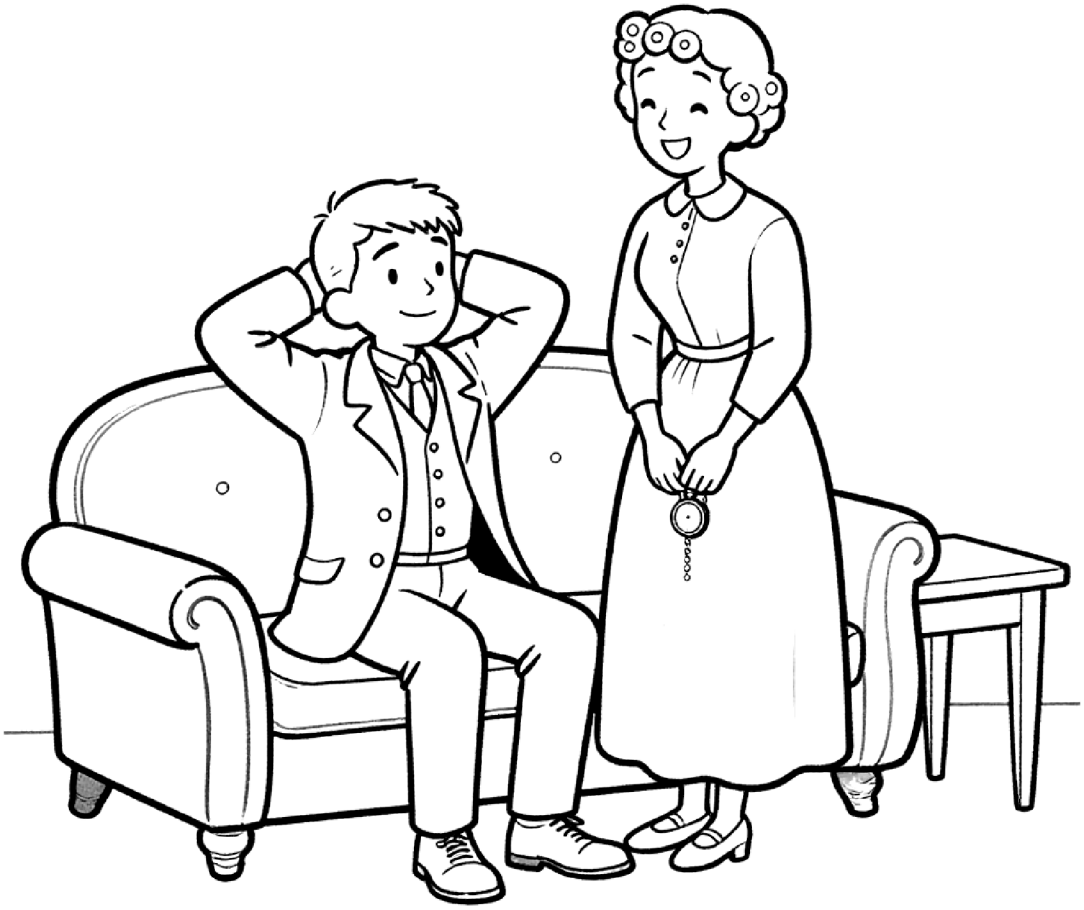
Della jumped up and held out the chain on her open hand. “Isn't it a dandy, Jim? You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it.”

Jim did not give her the watch. He sat down on the couch, put his hands behind his head, and smiled.

“Dell,” he said, “let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on.”

TALK ABOUT IT

Each of them gave away their treasure for the other. How do you think they felt when they found out?



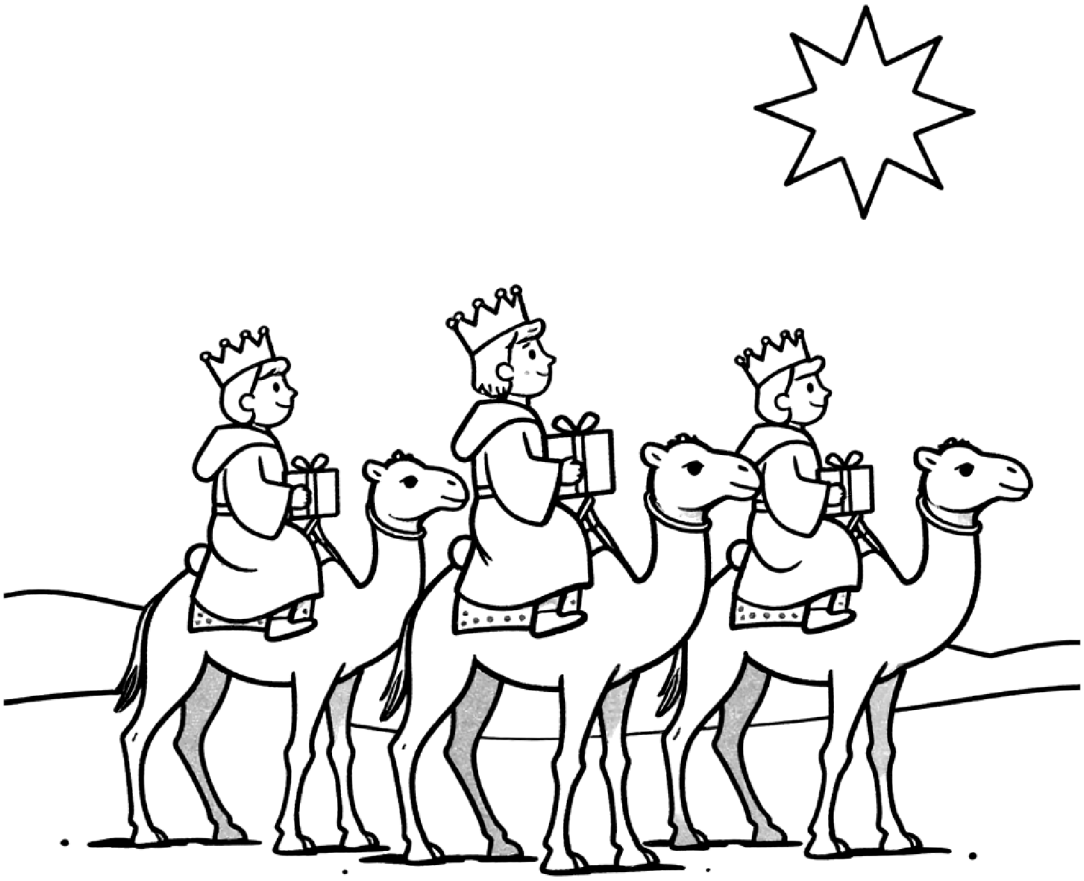
Think about it

1. How did Jim pay for the combs?

- ○ He saved pennies
- ○ He sold his gold watch
- ○ He borrowed money

2. Now neither present can be used. Were the presents wasted? Why or why not?

The Wise Ones



O. Henry tells us the magi were "wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents."

He calls Della and Jim "two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house."

"But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi."

The wisest gift is a heart of love that puts someone else first.

TALK ABOUT IT

O. Henry calls Della and Jim the wisest givers of all. Why do you think giving up something you treasure for someone you love is wise?



Think about it

1. Why does O. Henry call Della and Jim the wisest?

- ○ They spent the most money
- ○ They each gave up their treasure out of love
- ○ Their presents were the most useful

2. What could you give someone this Christmas that money can't buy?

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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