

The Gift

Story Source: Public Domain, adapted by Center for Urban Education

One windy day in March, Mary Miller was on her way to school when she looked in a store window. She saw lovely red apples. "Oh", she said, "how lovely! If only Mamma could have one!"

Mary's mother was very poor. She had been a nurse ever since Mary's father died. She had worked hard to earn a living for herself and Mary. But now she had become sick. She was obliged to lie in bed all day, and when Mary was away at school, the house was very lonesome. She missed her little angel. That is what she called Mary. Mary took care of her mother. She cooked her food. Mostly she cooked soup. They could not afford fresh fruit. She would sing to her at night.

She was usually a good student, but that day she made so many mistakes that the teacher looked at her in surprise. She was not paying attention. She was thinking about her mother and the apples.

When school was dismissed, Mary started home. She had gone only a short distance when she saw a man in front of her drop his wallet. Running quickly forward she picked it up. There must be a good deal of money in it, thought Mary. How I wish I could keep it. Then I could buy Mamma a red apple and so many other things she needs.

She knew this would not be right, so she hurried after the man. Touching him on the arm, she said, "Please, Sir, you dropped your wallet."

"Thank you," said the man taking the wallet. Then noticing how poorly she was dressed, he said, "Why did you not keep the wallet?"

"Because that would be stealing," replied Mary. "But," she continued honestly, "before I thought I must give it back to you, I did wish I could keep it, for then I could buy Mamma a red apple."

He smiled kindly and said, "You are a good little girl to return my wallet. I would like to give you a little present and then you can buy a red apple." He handed her a dollar and then said goodbye.

Mary was so surprised that she ran to the store. The storeowner happened to look out and saw the same little girl who stood looking so longingly in at his window in the morning. He quickly picked out the biggest, roundest, reddest apple he could find. He took it out to Mary and said, "Would you like this one?"

She took the apple and gave him the dollar. No charge, he said, returning it. She thanked him—"for my mother," and he smiled and gave her another. "For you, too," he said. When Mary reached home with her treasures, she found her mother fast asleep. She put the apples and dollar on a plate where her mother could see them when she awoke.

When Mrs. Miller was told the wonderful story, she kissed her little daughter and said, "You see, dear, it always pays to be honest and truthful."

CCSS Anchor Reading Standard 1. **Read closely** to determine what the text says **explicitly** and to **make logical inferences** from it; **cite specific textual evidence** when writing or speaking to **support conclusions** drawn from the text.

1. Sequence: Which event happened first? Which happened last?
2. Character Traits: Name one character. What is one trait you infer that character has? Explain why you think that.
3. Motive: What is something that person does? Why do you think that person does that?
4. Summarize: Summarize the story in four sentences. Tell about the characters and what they do.
5. Main Idea: What do you think is the main idea of the story? Why?