

Name :

“The Gift of a Winter Night: A Christmas Tale of Compassion and Sacrifice”

The winter wind howled through the narrow streets of Pinebrook, shaking the windows of the little apartment where fourteen-year-old Marcus lived with his mother. Money had been tight for months, and this Christmas felt heavier than any before. Marcus knew his mother worked double shifts at the diner just to cover rent, and even though she tried to smile, the exhaustion in her eyes told the truth. Still, she managed to decorate a tiny tree with old, mismatched ornaments. Marcus pretended not to notice how carefully she avoided mentioning gifts this year. He wanted to make Christmas feel special for her, but he had no idea how.

On Christmas Eve, Marcus was walking home from the library when he noticed a man sitting alone on a bench near the bus stop. The man was shivering under a thin jacket, his hands trembling as he tried to pull a piece of cardboard closer for warmth. People passed him without even looking. Marcus hesitated. He didn't have much—only the thick wool scarf his mother had knitted for him last winter. It was warm, soft, and one of the few things he treasured. But when he saw the man's pale, shaking hands, something inside Marcus shifted. Taking a deep breath, he approached the stranger and gently wrapped the scarf around the man's shoulders. “Merry Christmas,” Marcus whispered before walking away.

When Marcus returned home, his mother noticed the missing scarf immediately. He explained what had happened, expecting her to be upset. Instead, her eyes filled with tears—not of sadness, but of pride. She pulled him into a hug, telling him that Christmas was never about the size of a tree or the number of presents, but about the love and compassion people showed to one another. In that moment, Marcus realized he had given more than a scarf; he had given someone hope.

The next morning, Marcus and his mother woke to a soft snowfall and a small surprise at their doorstep—a wrapped package with a note that read, “Your kindness does not go unnoticed. Wishing you warmth this Christmas.” Inside were groceries, a warm blanket, and even a new scarf. Marcus smiled, understanding that acts of sacrifice have a way of returning in unexpected ways. That Christmas, their home felt warmer than it had in years, not because of decorations or gifts, but because the true spirit of Christmas—care, kindness, and sacrifice—had filled their hearts.



Questions :



1-Why did this Christmas feel especially difficult for Marcus and his mother?

2-What made Marcus decide to give his scarf to the man at the bus stop?

3-How did Marcus's mother react when she learned he had given away his scarf?

4-What surprise did Marcus and his mother find on Christmas morning?

5-What message about the Christmas spirit does the story highlight?

Circle the correct answer:

6-Marcus lived in a large house decorated with expensive ornaments. True /False

7-Marcus gave his scarf to a man who was shivering on a bench. True /False

8-Marcus's mother was angry when she learned he gave away the scarf. True /False

9-The gift left at their door included groceries and a blanket. True /False

10-The story shows that acts of kindness often create more kindness in return. True /False



11- Vocabulary Matching Activity

Match each word to the correct definition.

- A. Exhaustion
- B. Hesitated
- C. Shifted
- D. Approached
- E. Compassion
- F. Trembling
- G. Treasure
- H. Pride
- I. Unexpected
- J. Sacrifice

- ___ A deep feeling of sympathy and a desire to help others.
- ___ To stop briefly before acting because you are unsure.
- ___ Giving up something important to help someone else.
- ___ To value something very highly.
- ___ Very tired or worn out.
- ___ Happening suddenly without warning.
- ___ A feeling of satisfaction from your own or another's achievements.
- ___ Moving closer to someone or something.
- ___ Shaking slightly from cold, fear, or weakness.
- ___ A change in attitude, position, or feeling.



12-Use each vocabulary word in a complete sentence .

Exhaustion: _____

Hesitated: _____

Shifted: _____

Approached: _____

Compassion: _____

Trembling: _____

Treasure: _____

Pride: _____

Unexpected: _____

Sacrifice: _____



Answer Key – Vocabulary Matching

E – Compassion
B – Hesitated
J – Sacrifice
G – Treasure
A – Exhaustion
I – Unexpected
H – Pride
D – Approached
F – Trembling
C – Shifted

Answer Key – Sample Sentences

(Students' answers may vary; these are examples.)

Exhaustion – After working all night, she collapsed on the couch in complete exhaustion.

Hesitated – He hesitated before answering because he wasn't sure what to say.

Shifted – Marcus shifted his backpack to the other shoulder as he continued walking.

Approached – The dog wagged its tail as the children approached it slowly.

Compassion – She showed compassion by helping the injured bird.

Trembling – His hands were trembling from the freezing winter wind.

Treasure – I treasure the letters my grandfather wrote to me.

Pride – She felt pride when she saw her science project displayed in the hallway.

Unexpected – The unexpected snowfall caused school to close early.

Sacrifice – He made a sacrifice by giving his lunch to a friend who forgot theirs.