

Love and Tokens in Literature

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Abstract:

This term paper explores how tokens, like rings, letters, and flowers, and small objects represent love in literature as well as other items. These tokens arouse emotions, feelings, and love, and the objects work as a bridge between lovers, they “tokens” fill the emotional gap when they are apart and make them feel good. From ancient epics to modern novels, they represent promise, trust, and memory. For example, Juliet's gift of a ring to Romeo represents an eternal commitment in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, instead of the family fights. The similar thing happens in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, like a locket holds Elizabeth's miniature portrait, deepening Darcy's affection.

The paper discusses the roles of tokens in building tension and influencing fate. For instance, Heathcliff's locket containing Catherine's hair endures beyond death, In Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, for illustrating the affecting power of love. Tokens most of time carry double meanings: they may be gifts of hope or betrayal, as seen in Desdemona's handkerchief in *Othello*, which sparks jealousy. They highlight universal themes: the weakness and strength of love. Simple things gain heartfelt value through sentiment, influencing plot and character growth. This research paper helps readers and scholars to understand the use of symbolic language in storytelling. Ultimately, tokens prove love more than words, captured in enduring objects. By examining these aims and motifs, we can see literature as a mirror to human hearts. Having defined the timeless role of love tokens across literature, and now this study delves into specific works to trace their evolution. We begin with an introductory overview, followed by an examination of key texts.

Keywords: Love Tokens, Symbolism in Literature, Emotional Representation, Character Development, Romantic Motifs.

Introduction:

In literature, love has always been a big part of novels and stories. Writers use it to show their emotions, feelings, dreams, and heartbreaks. But love is not just words; it is shown through “tokens.” A token is a small gift or object that stands for love, trust, or a promise, like rings, letters, or flowers. These tokens carry profound meaning without a single word. In literature, tokens make love feel tangible and touchable. They help readers see the bond between lovers, even when they are apart. From old tales to modern books, tokens appear everywhere. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Juliet gives Romeo a ring as a sign of her love. It's a simple thing, but it shows deep feelings and love, and it means forever. Shakespeare uses it to portray young, passionate love that defies family hatred. We can see in ancient myths that tokens were also considered magical and powerful. Odysseus's wife Penelope preserves his bed as a love token of their marriage in Homer's *Odyssey*. It proves her faithful heart after 20 years, and it reveals the deep love and endless emotions she feels. These stories show tokens as bridges over time and distance. and these Tokens are not always happy. But they can warn of danger or lost love. A locket with Heathcliff's hair breaks Catherine's heart in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. It shows her torn love between two men. Later, in 20th-century works, tokens get modern twists. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* uses a shirt from Gatsby's past as a token of lost wealth and love for Daisy. It reminds us of dreams that fade.

Why do tokens matter? They make love “feel” real. A letter smells like the sender. A lock of hair holds a memory. Tokens turn big emotions into small, holdable things. They let characters (and readers) hold on to love, even in tough times. Today, in books like *The Notebook* by Nicholas Sparks, a notebook becomes the token that reunites lovers after years have passed. Love tokens teach us promises can last. In short, love tokens in literature are more than props. They are hearts in object form, symbols of hope, pain, and forever bonds. While ancient tokens promised fidelity across time, modern ones often demand sacrifice of the self. This shift is perfectly captured in O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*.

The Gift of the Magi:

The story tells of a young married couple, James, known as Jim, and Della Dillingham. The couple has very little money: “One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a

time by bulldozing the grocer, the vegetable man, and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas". (Henry, P,7) There is a poor couple named Della and Jim who are planning a Christmas gift, but they do not have enough money to buy gifts. Della has been collecting money for many days, but it is not enough to buy a gift for Jim, and she is very nervous about it. This reveals the deep love and affection Della has for Jim, as she attempts to collect money from various sources by bargaining with people like the grocer, the vegetable man, and the butcher to save money and purchase a special gift for him. And "Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch, which had belonged to his father and his grandfather. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window someday to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy". (P,8) They are financially poor, but they are rich in heart and soul, and they love each other very much. They do not have enough money to buy special Christmas gifts for each other, but they have something special that is essential for them. Jim has a gold watch that belonged to his father and grandfather, and Della has long, beautiful gray hair, which is her pride and joy. They have immense love for each other. And Della says that "If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, 'before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! What could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?' Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stairs away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying a little silent prayer about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: 'Please God, make him think I am still pretty.' (P,9) Because Della loved Jim very much, and she wanted to buy a special gift for him on Christmas Day, but she had only a few pennies, which were not enough to buy him a lovely gift. So, Della cut off her long, beautiful hair, which was her pride and joy, and sold it to get money to buy a Christmas gift for her husband, Jim. After cutting off her long beautiful hair, she thinks that I will be pretty for my husband or not, she was very nervous, as usually happens in a girl's mind, because hair plays a vital role in a girl's life, it multiplies their beauty therefore she prays to God, that Please God, make him think I am still

pretty, which shows her selfless sacrifice and deep love for him. "Dell, said he, 'let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just now. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs.' And now suppose you put the chops on. The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house". (P,11) Jim also sold his watch, which he inherited from his father and grandfather and which was very valuable to him, to purchase combs for Della's long, beautiful hair. But Della already cut off her long, beautiful hair to buy the watch chain. This highlights the mutual sacrifice inherent in their deep love. They do not care about their valuable things. Actually, their presents were useless, but their emotions and feelings were valuable. The key idea is that true love is shown through selfless giving; they sacrificed their most prized possessions, Jim's watch and Della's hair, to buy gifts for each other. Mutual sacrifice makes gifts useless yet priceless; obsessive preservation makes them grotesque. William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* inverts this dynamic: the token is no longer exchanged but stolen from death.

A Rose for Emily:

The story "A Rose for Emily" tells the tale of the lonely life and odd relationships of Miss Emily Grierson, who was raised in isolation by her father. "We had long thought of them as a tableau, Miss Emily, a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door. So when she got to be thirty and was still single, we were displeased exactly, but vindicated; even with insanity in the family, she wouldn't have turned down all of her chances if they had really materialized". (Faulkner, P,123) Emily's father was a very domineering person rather than affectionate. His masterful position shows his controlling nature, which prevented Emily from experiencing romantic love. It does not mean she was unlucky or incapable of love; she was lucky, capable, and wanted to experience romantic love and affection, but she simply had not had a genuine opportunity in her life due to her father. It also happens in real life. Suppose someone wants to experience romantic love in their life, but their parents do not allow them to do so. The same thing is happening with Emily because her father is not allowing this thing. "So the next day we all said, 'She will kill herself,' and we said it would be the

best thing. When she had first begun to be seen with Homer Barron, we had said, 'She will marry him.' Then we said, 'She will persuade him yet,' because Homer himself had remarked—he liked men, and it was known that he drank with the younger men in the Elks' Club—that he was not a married man. Later, we said, 'Poor Emily,' behind the jalousies as they passed on Sunday afternoon in the glittering buggy, Miss Emily with her head high and Homer Barron with his hat cocked and a cigar in his teeth, reins and whip in a yellow glove". (P,126) She loved to Homer secretly and planning to marry Homer Barron and she bought many things for him, like men's clothing and a toilet set, these gifts are considering the traditional tokens of love, but it was only an illusion that was never going to happen in real life because she was a high class family background and he was a lower class family background so society did not accept it. The same thing happens in our society; we often consider a person's family background before marrying them, which is a harsh reality of our society. So she poisoned him. "The man himself lay in the bed. For a long while, we just stood there, looking down at the profound and fleshless grin. The body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace, but now the long sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love, had cuckolded him". (P,130) She was a wealthy woman, but her father's domineering personality had a profound impact on her life. She was deeply in love with Homer Barron, who came from a poor, lower-class background. She wanted to marry him, but society would not accept their marriage because of the difference in their social status. But Emily did not want to lose her love. So, she hides Homer Barron's corpse in her bed after she poisoned him, because she wanted to preserve a moment of love; the body is a token of her obsessive love, which shows her possessive and domineering nature toward him. This act is unnatural and repulsive. "Then we noticed that on the second pillow was the indentation of a head. One of us lifted something from it, and leaning forward, that faint and invisible dust dry and acrid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron-gray hair". (P,130) She was so obsessed with Homer Barron, and she poisoned him because she did not want to lose her love. She preserved his corpse as a means of keeping their relationship alive even after his death. After his death, she started sleeping beside his corpse, treating him as a lover. It shows Emily's secret and extreme level of love. The grey hair on the pillow beside Homer's rotting corpse is a haunting reminder of her love. After Miss Emily's death, the townspeople go into her house and discover the shocking truth: Emily had kept the dead body of Homer, whom she loved, in a locked room for many years. A corpse freezes love in time; a necklace mortgage it. Guy de Maupassant's *The Necklace* binds love through debt, not death.

The Necklace:

The Necklace is a famous short story about a woman named Mathilde Loisel who is unhappy with her average, middle-class life. She dreams of wealth and luxury. But she was poor, and one day she received an invitation to a party. Then, she borrowed a beautiful diamond necklace from a rich friend to appear wealthy and impress others at the party. And “She was one of those pretty, charming young women born into a working-class family, as if by some error of fate. She had no dowry, no hopes, no way of ever becoming famous, understood, loved, or the wife of a rich, distinguished man; she agreed to be married off to a low-ranking clerk in the Ministry of Public Education”. (Maupassant, P,3) Mathilde Loisel was a pretty and elegant young lady who was dissatisfied with her social status because she aspired to marry a wealthy and distinguished man, leading a luxurious life and enjoying it to the fullest. However, she was not the master of her own fate, so she married a poor, middle-class clerk due to the absence of a dowry. It is said that no one is the master of their fate. Because God writes everything in our fate, no one has the power to change the word of God, and it is also the reality of our society. No one wants to marry a poor girl because she has nothing to give as a dowry. And she says, “I... I... I’ve lost Madame Forestier’s necklace.” He stood up, panic-stricken: “What! . . . But how!... That’s impossible!” And they looked in the folds of her dress, in her coat, in the pockets, everywhere. They couldn’t find it. “Are you sure you still had it when we left the ball?” he asked. “Yes. I remember touching it in the lobby of the Ministry.” “But if you’d lost it in the street, we would have heard it fall on the ground. It must be in the cab.” “Yes, probably. Did you get its number?” “No. Did you see what it was?” “No.” They stared at each other, devastated. Then Loisel got dressed.” (P,7) Mathilde Loisel and her husband were a poor couple who loved each other deeply. They were planning to attend a party, but she did not have a lovely dress to wear. Loisel bought herself a pretty dress, but he did not have enough money to buy jewellery, so she borrowed a necklace from her friend “Loisel” because she wanted to look gorgeous and wealthy women in the party and her temporary transformation into wealthy women gave her the value of high society, but she lost the necklace in the party then took immense debt to replace the lost necklace. This demonstrates their extreme love and sacrifice for one another. “And borrow he did, asking a thousand francs from one person, five hundred from another, five louis here, three louis there. He signed for loans, accepted ruinous conditions, dealt with moneylenders and every kind of loan shark. He committed himself for the rest of his life, risked signing for loans without even knowing whether he could pay them back”. (P,7/8) After losing

the necklace at the party, they were very nervous because they did not have enough money to replace it. So, Loisel borrowed money at extremely high interest rates from many people, bought a new necklace, and returned it to her friend. And he returned all the borrowed money gradually. This shows the selfless sacrifice and true love from her husband. When jewels are bankrupt, letters are redeemed. Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* replaces borrowed diamonds with a borrowed truth – Darcy's letter.

Pride and Prejudice:

It is about the Bennet family, focusing on the relationship between Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy. At first, they dislike each other due to a misunderstanding and pride, but over time, they come to understand and develop affection for each other. "In vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you." Elizabeth's astonishment was beyond expression. She stared, colored, doubted, and was silent. This he considered sufficient encouragement, and the avowal of all that he felt and had long felt for her, immediately followed. He spoke well, but there were feelings besides those of the heart to be detailed, and he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride". (Austen, chap34,p.185) Initially, Darcy was proud and arrogant due to his wealth and social class. Elizabeth, who came from a middle-class family, had initially insulted her and her family due to their social status, but after talking with her, he realised that she was a good girl. Although she came from a middle-class family background, he began treating her kindly. And he expressed his love for her; it was the first time he had openly shown his affection. He offered to dance with her, but she rejected him because of his arrogance. But he was in love with her; we can say that it was a one-sided love so far. Then he wrote a letter. "Be not alarmed, madam, on receiving this letter, by the apprehension of its containing any repetition of those sentiments or renewal of those offers which were last night so disgusting to you. I write without any intention of paining you, or humbling myself, by dwelling on wishes which, for the happiness of both, cannot be too soon forgotten. The effort which the formation and the perusal of this letter must occasion, should have been spared, had not my character required it to be written and read. You must, therefore, pardon the freedom with which I demand your attention; your feelings, I know, will bestow it unwillingly, but I demand it of your justice". (chap35, p.192) People often value things only after they are lost. It also happens in real life; the same thing Darcy does here, he did not give value to Elizabeth, but after Elizabeth's rejection, he wrote her a letter, humbly requesting that she value his feelings. He showed respect toward Elizabeth and explained that he was not responsible for the separation of Jane and

Bingley. Because Elizabeth thought that he was the person who separated her sister Jane and Bingley, and he did not propose again, showing respect for her feelings. And “From such a connection she could not wonder that he would shrink. The wish of procuring her regard, which she had assured herself of his feeling in Derbyshire, could not in rational expectation survive such a blow as this. She was humbled, she was grieved; she repented, though she hardly knew of what. She became jealous of his esteem when she could no longer hope to reap the benefits from it. She wanted to hear of him when there seemed the least chance of gaining intelligence. She was convinced that she could have been happy with him when it was no longer likely they should meet”. (chap59, p.338) Elizabeth initially thought that Darcy was an arrogant and ill-mannered person, and he separated my sister from Bingley, but actually, he did not separate them; he helped them financially. After knowing the truth, she changed her mind and heart toward him and started feeling something for Darcy; she began to fall in love with him. She became humble and wanted to marry him, but she believed that it was too late. Her misunderstanding led to the separation between Darcy and Elizabeth. And “Elizabeth was too embarrassed to say a word. After a short pause, her companion added, ‘You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings remain unchanged from last April, please let me know immediately. My affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me on this subject forever’. (chap58, p.345) After all this, Elizabeth realized that Darcy was not a bad person; he was actually a good person who loved her deeply, but did not show it openly. He also gave her the power to reject him; this is the actual love, giving someone the power of rejection, but his love and affection remained unchanged. This is real love because, after being rejected, you still love someone; it is scarce in the real world. And she said, “‘I do, I do like him,’ she replied, with tears in her eyes, ‘I love him. ’” Indeed, he has no improper pride. He is perfectly amiable. You do not know what he really is; then pray do not pain me by speaking of him in such terms.’ ‘Lizzy,’ said her father, ‘I have given him my consent. He is the kind of man, indeed, to whom I should never dare refuse anything which he condescends to ask. I now give it to you if you are resolved to have him. But let me advise you to think better of it’. (chap59, p.347) Here, Elizabeth is emotional and confesses her love for Darcy. It was a heartfelt moment of joy and relief; her tears and words are a testament to her complete acceptance of Darcy, as she realizes that she was wrong in her initial judgment of his personality. But now she has changed her thoughts and emotions to express her deep love for him. She fearlessly expressed her love for Darcy, because there is no place for fear in love, and she overcame her misunderstanding, pride, and

got married. A letter saves love from pride; a ring delivers it to death. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* returns us to the origin of love tokens, where a single object seals fate.

Romeo and Juliet:

Romeo and Juliet is a tragic love story. It is the story of two young lovers, Romeo and Juliet, who come from feuding families. These families are often at odds and frequently engage in conflict with each other. Despite this, Romeo and Juliet meet at a party and instantly fall in love. "O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright! It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear—Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear! So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows, As the younger lady o'er her fellows shows. The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand And, touching hers, bless my rude hand. Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night". (Shakespeare, P,55 ACT 1. SC. 5) It is said that love is blind, and here Romeo is completely enamoured with Juliet at first sight. When someone falls in love, they often praise their beloved and compare them to beautiful things. Romeo likens Juliet to a bright torch in the dark or a precious jewel glowing in the night, showing his adoration and unwillingness to hear anything negative about her. Exaggeration is often found in love, as when someone loves someone, they tend to overstate their appreciation for their beloved. Exaggeration is allowed in love; therefore, Romeo exaggerates and compares his beloved to a bright torch and a precious jewel. And said, "O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied? Juliet: What satisfaction canst thou have tonight? Romeo: The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine. Juliet: I gave thee mine before thou didst request it; And yet I would it were to give again. Romeo: Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love? Juliet: But to be frank and give it thee again. And yet I wish for the thing I have. My bounty is as boundless as the sea, My love as deep; the more I give to thee, The more I have, for both are infinite. I hear some noise within. Dear love, adieu!" (P,77/79 ACT 2. SC. 2) Romeo is upset and asks Juliet to leave his feelings unfulfilled. He wants her love, but she has already given it to him, and he is unaware of it. A similar situation occurs in life, where someone loves you, but you are unaware of it. And you are confused whether she really likes me or not. I mean, you are in a dilemma, just like Romeo is in a dilemma about whether Juliet loves him or not, but he finally realizes that she does.

“Romeo: If I profane with my unwortheiest hand This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this: My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss. Juliet: Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much, Which mannerly devotion shows in this; For saints have hands that pilgrims’ hands do touch, And palm to palm is a holy palmers’ kiss”. (P,57 ACT 1. SC. 5) When lovers become comfortable with each other, they begin to flirt and express their feelings and emotions, enjoying their life together. Here, Romeo and Juliet are doing the same thing, delighting in their shared moments. And Romeo, shaking and holding hands, is like a holy kiss. Still, today's love is different from Romeo and Juliet's love, as it often involves vulgarity, kissing, and shameless behavior. However, I think this is not love, but rather lust for them. “If good, thou shamest the music of sweet news By playing it to me with such a sour face. Nurse: I am weary, give me leave awhile. Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunt I have! Juliet: I would thou hast my bones, and I thy news. Nay, come, I pray thee speak. Good, good nurse, speak. Nurse: Jesu, what haste! Can you not stay awhile? Do you not see that I am out of breath?” (P,105 ACT 2. SC. 5) The nurse is acting as a messenger, delivering a ring from Romeo to Juliet that confirms his love and intention to proceed with their marriage plan. However, she is intentionally delaying the message, and Juliet is frustrated by the nurse’s slow response; she cannot afford the delay. In real life, some parents do not allow love marriages, so lovers may flee their homes and marry secretly in court, because they love each other deeply and cannot live apart. Romeo and Juliet face similar opposition. They want to marry each other, but their families do not allow it, so they marry secretly. “O, you the doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss A dateless bargain to engrossing death! Come, bitter conduct; come, unsavory guide! Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on The dashing rocks thy seasick weary bark! Here’s to my love! [Drinks.] O true apothecary! Thy drugs are quick. Thus, with a kiss, I die. [Falls.]” (P,227 ACT 5. SC. 3) True lovers do not care about the consequences; because they love very much to each other and they are ready to do anything for their love because it is the most essential thing in their lives. They can fight the whole world for their love, as Romeo does for Juliet; he drinks the poison and says goodbye to life and joins her in death. This was the extreme level of love, we can also see in our society, that some lovers do extreme things, like they commit suicide and hang out for their lover. Shakespeare’s ring had no prop – Georgian lovers wore the same tokens. Before integrating, let us step out of fiction into Sally Holloway’s *The Game of Love in Georgian England, Courtship, Emotions, and Material Culture*:

The Game of Love in Georgian England, Courtship, Emotions, and Material Culture:

In Georgian England, especially during the courtship era, the game of love was considered an important and strategic part of life. People viewed courtship as an exciting sport with strong emotional components or as a tactical game. To show their love and affection, couples used love letters, special words, and sentimental items like flowers, miniature portraits, and hair strands. "A lover's gaze remains a part of falling in love, making the eye a vitally important part of the body in transmitting a person's feelings. Courting couples described their eyes as the keys to their hearts, with the poet Judith Cowper writing to Martin Madan in 1723 that 'my Heart is in my Eyes.'¹⁷ Fifteen years later, the heiress Elizabeth Jeffreys wrote to Charles Pratt that her eyes revealed 'the trouble of my Heart, they are, as you have told me often, very telltale'.¹⁸ A lover's gaze was a key component of romantic novels, where men and women were continually directing a loaded 'look' or 'glance' toward their beloved". (Holloway, P,73) In Georgian England, gazing into one another's eyes was a significant aspect of being in love. Individuals believed the eyes could express inner feelings, much like a window to the soul. For instance, in 1723, poet Judith Cowper sent her lover, Martin Madan, a letter in which she stated that her eyes contained her heart, implying that her look expressed her love. Thus, in 1738, Elizabeth Jeffreys informed Charles Pratt that her eyes depicted the sentiments of her heart, as he frequently observed. In existing romantic novels, lovers' looks or glances are often portrayed as strong means of conveying love and intimacy. "The touch of a loved one sanctified gifts, and either symbolically or literally formed part of the human body. The act of touching objects imbues them with a particular emotional power that could transcend life on earth. Goethe's sentimental hero Werther asked to be buried in his blue frock coat and buff-yellow waistcoat because his love Charlotte had 'touched them and thereby made them holy'. Concealed in his pocket was a red ribbon that she had worn on her breast the first time they met, which he had begged to have and kissed 'a thousand times'. Now it was to be buried with him to lie with his body eternally, and literally become a part of it. As Barthes notes, "Every object touched by the loved being's body becomes part of that body, and the subject eagerly attaches himself to it". (P,78) In Georgian England, things that a loved one had touched became similar to part of the person's body. The act of touching gives these objects an emotional meaning that is sacred or powerful, and even extends beyond the bounds of life. For example, in Goethe's novel, Werther wanted to be buried in his blue coat and yellow waistcoat because his beloved, Charlotte, had touched them and thus

rendered them sacred to him. He also treasured a red ribbon that she wore when they first met, upon which he had kissed many times, and hid it in his pocket. He wanted it to accompany him in the grave, like a fragment of her, remaining with him perpetually. As Barthes explains, things the one you love has touched form part of them, and human beings hold them with deep affection. "Courting couples repeatedly described reading and writing letters while touching gifts such as portraits and locks of hair. This ritualized process served to create feelings of love during prolonged periods of separation. As Sara Ahmed has argued, once objects have been 'judged to bring happiness', they come into use as 'happiness-means, as what we might do, or what we might have, to reach happiness'.⁷⁵ Each of the objects described in this chapter represents something we might have, or might use, to achieve the feeling of being in love". (Holloway, P, 83) In Georgian England, lovers who were apart from each other would exchange gifts, such as miniature portraits or pieces of hair, and correspond with each other through letters. These movements were in themselves little rituals which made them feel close to one another and maintained their love strong even when apart. For Sara Ahmed, objects that we believe bring us happiness, such as these love tokens, become instruments we use to feel that happiness. In essence, such gifts, such as a letter or a locket, were things couples would treasure to make them feel intimate and loved even when they were apart. Holloway's touch-starved Georgians prefigure our emoji-pressed thumbs: the ritual of touch never dies.

Conclusion:

Love tokens change over time, but they never disappear or fade. For example we can see in these stories like O. Henry's, they are sacrificed combs and chains; in Faulkner's work, she preserves a corpse and hair; in Maupassant's tale, she loses her necklace over years; in Austen's writings, letters represent the truth; and in Shakespeare's plays, a ring and a kiss are exchanged in death. Across centuries, the forms of tokens change from hair to combs, necklaces to letters, and rings to ribbons, but their purpose and motifs remain the same: to make infinity tangible. and Holloway's Georgian lovers touched portraits to feel distant hearts; they followed the same ritual. Tokens show love's flexibility by reducing vast emotions to a single, physical point of contact. This is the gift of literature to readers: not grand symbols, but simple objects made holy by feelings. For example, a comb, a corpse, a borrowed necklace, a letter, and a ring illustrate that true love needs no wealth, just faith that is visible and prominent. By examining these themes and symbols, we can see our own

lives in a new light: every kept ticket stub, pressed flower, or saved message is a token, showing that love, like literature, lives on in the things we can touch.

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