

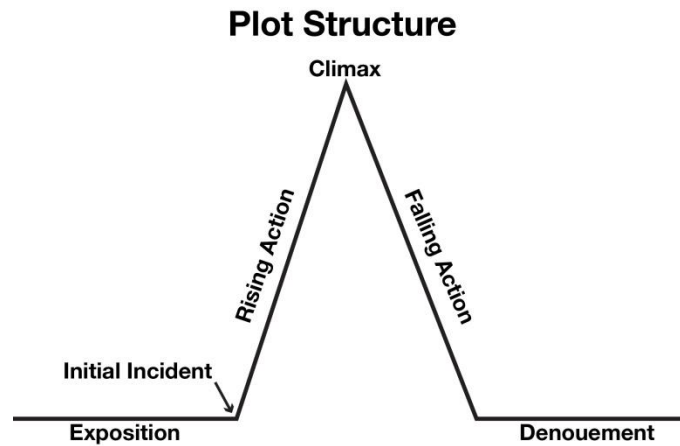
Short Story Observation Chart

Read this **Short Story Observation Chart** on the next two pages to deepen your understanding and appreciation of Jim Parsons' story.

Short Story Title	"Every Person Gets Their Due— Especially on Christmas Eve: Unforgettable Memories of a Father's Values"	Author	Jim Parsons
Point of View			
Check the box that describes the point of view from which this story is told. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> first person <input type="checkbox"/> objective <input type="checkbox"/> limited omniscient <input type="checkbox"/> omniscient		"Third, my dad was responsible to the person who left his own family on Christmas Eve night to open his gas station to fill a 5-gallon gas can so another father could take care of his own family's needs – this gas station owner is the unknown hero in this story" (p. 3).	
Characterization			
Character Name	Father		
Character Types Circle all that apply.	round flat	dynamic static	stock foil
			antagonist protagonist
Essential Questions			

<p>Check the box next to the essential question that most applies to this story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What does it mean to live well? <input type="checkbox"/> What roles do success and failure play in the pursuit of living well? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How does integrity, or a lack of integrity, affect one's ability to live well? <input type="checkbox"/> What are the benefits to ourselves, or to those around us, in using our skills and talents? <input type="checkbox"/> In what way can a person change the course of his or her life through a single action? <p>Explain in five to eight (5–8) sentences how you would answer this essential question based upon your reading of this story. Include at least two quotations, along with page numbers, from the story to support your ideas about the essential question.</p>	<p>People who show integrity in their lives can really inspire other people. In this story, Jim's father didn't do anything heroic, but his actions impressed his family so much that they are still inspired by this story decades later. His father could have easily just told the kids that they had to spend Christmas at their grandfather's house and get their presents from Santa the next day, but he didn't do that. He trudged through a snowstorm to get gas for the car and got them all home in time. He also could have easily asked the gas station owner to just give him one gallon of gas. It would have been easier to carry through the storm, but he wanted to buy enough gas to make it worth the effort the owner made to open up his store on Christmas Eve. These small actions taught the narrator what living with integrity meant, and he has carried these lessons with him his whole life. The importance of this lesson shows in the narrator's quotation, "As the eldest of the family left alive, this family mythology lives in my bones and I hope in my actions. I still carry with me the values of that Christmas Eve night, sometimes as heavily as my father carried that gas up that hill in the deep snow" (p. 4).</p>
Theme Statement	
<p>Write a one-sentence theme statement that captures the story's message about the human condition or insight into life.</p>	<p>People who live their lives with integrity can be powerful inspirations to others.</p>

Read this part of the **Short Stories Observation Chart** to understand how the plot elements work together to deepen the reader's analysis of the story. You will complete similar charts on new stories in your next assignment.



Plot Structure

Exposition	
What essential information regarding setting, mood, or characters is introduced in the exposition of this story?	We learn about the personality of the dad, who was a physically small man, and who did not call attention to himself, especially compared to the narrator's grandfather who was large in both size and personality. We also learn about the narrator's family, their Christmas traditions, as well as the setting of the story (both the time period, the homes of the father and grandfather, and the season.
What antecedent events are included, if any? These are events that occurred before the main story began and provide background for the story.	We learn about three events that occurred before the action of the story actually begins, and these events help the reader understand the dad's actions later in the story. The first event was when the narrator saw his father "chatting with a sulking, scruffy, reluctant biker" (p. 1), showing how he was interested in other people, even those who were different from him. Even late in life when he suffered from dementia, he was still kind and caring to others, as shown when he "worked the hallways" in the nursing home (p. 1), the second antecedent event in the story. We also learn that he joined the Canadian Armed Forces in World War II, even though he was under-aged, and though he was a decorated

	war veteran, he never spoke about it, and that third antecedent event shows how humble the father was.
Initial Incident	
Describe the initial incident <u>and</u> the primary conflict it introduces.	It was Christmas Eve. So far eight inches of snow had fallen, and the narrator, his dad, and his brothers were becoming snowed in at the grandfather's house. The conflict was that they needed to get home in time for Christmas and weren't sure if they would be able to. Shortly after this, during the rising action of the story, the dad realized the car was also out of gas, increasing the tension in the story.
Climax	
Identify the story's climax and explain why it is the highest point of tension and/or the turning point in the story.	Jim's father convinced the owner of the town gas station to open up his store and sell him five gallons of gas. Then his father lugged the heavy gas can to the gas station and then back home through the snowstorm.
Denouement (Resolution)	
How is the conflict resolved, if at all? If it is not resolved, explain how the story ends.	While there the resolution isn't stated explicitly, because it doesn't say that Jim's father made it home with the gas in time for them to get home for Christmas (and Santa), the reader assumes he did, particularly since the narrator said he still carries with him "the values of that Christmas Eve night" so many years later.