

Read the text, then do the exercises (You may use the dictionary).

ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS

(in The Ransom of Red Chief and other stories, O. Henry, Black Cat, 2004.)

One thousand dollars,” repeated Lawyer¹ Tolman. “And here is the money.” His voice was formal and distant.

Young Gillian laughed as he touched the small package of money. “It’s such an awkward amount²,” he said to the lawyer. “With ten thousand dollars you can really have fun. Even fifty dollars are less of a problem.”

“You heard your uncle’s will³,” continued Lawyer Tolman. “Did you listen carefully? Remember that you must tell us exactly HOW you spend the \$1000, as soon as you spend it. It is best that you write a list for us. These were Mr Gillian’s last wishes.”

“Of course I will,” said the young man politely. “Perhaps I’ll need a secretary to help me write the list.”

Gillian put the small package of money into his coat pocket⁴ and went to his club. At his club he looked for old Bryson, who was forty years old and calm. He was reading a book and took off his glasses when he saw Gillian.

“Wake up, Old Bryson,” said Gillian. “I have a funny story to tell you.” “Why don’t you tell it to someone else,” said old Bryson. “You know I hate your stories.” “This one is better than usual,” said Gillian. “It’s sad and funny. My uncle left me one thousand dollars in his will. Now what can a man do with a thousand dollars?”

“I thought your uncle was a very rich man with about half a million dollars,” said old Bryson, showing very little interest. “He was,” said Gillian happily. “That’s why it’s so funny. He left one part of his money to the scientist who will discover a new germ⁵. And the other part to build a hospital that will destroy the germ! Then the butler⁶ and the housekeeper got a special ring and \$10 each. And I got \$1000.”

“You have plenty of money to spend,” said Old Bryson. “Oh yes, plenty,” said Gillian. “My uncle was very generous with me.” “Are there any other heirs⁷?” asked old Bryson. “None⁸, except for Miss Hayden, a ward⁹ of my uncle who lived in his house. She’s a quiet girl, the daughter of one of his friends. Now tell me, old Bryson, what can a man do with a thousand dollars.”

Old Bryson cleaned his glasses and smiled. Gillian knew that when Old Bryson smiled he was going to be very offensive. “A thousand dollars can be a lot of money or very little money,” he said. “A man can buy a home with it and be very happy. You can buy milk for one hundred babies for three months and save their lives. It can give an ambitious boy an education. A man can buy a real Corot painting, You can also live well in a New Hampshire town for two years. But you, Bobby Gillian, can do only one thing. You can buy Miss Lotta Lauriere a diamond pendant¹⁰ with the thousand dollars.”

“Thanks,” said Gillian. “I knew you could solve the problem.”

Gillian phoned for a taxi. He said to the driver, “Please take me to the Columbine Theater.” Miss Lotta Lauriere was getting ready for her performance. When she saw Gillian she said, “What is it, Bobby? I have a performance in two minutes.” “This won’t take two minutes. Would you like a little pendant? I can spend a thousand dollars on it.”

“Oh, all right,” said Miss Lauriere. “Where is my hat? Bobby, did you see the necklace¹¹ Della Stacey was wearing the other night? It cost two thousand two hundred dollars at Tiffany’s. But, all right...” “Miss Lauriere, you’re on stage in a minute!” cried the manager of the theater.

Gillian returned to his taxi. “What can a man do with one thousand dollars?” he asked the driver. “Open a saloon,” said the driver immediately. “I know a perfect place for a saloon, where I could make lots of money and...” “Please drive until I tell you to stop,” said Gillian.

They drove down Broadway and Gillian saw a blind¹² man on the sidewalk. He was sitting on a chair and selling pencils, Gillian got out of the taxi and stood in front of him. "Excuse me," he said. "But what can you do with a thousand dollars?" "You just got out of the taxi, didn't you?" asked the blind man. "Yes, I did," said Gillian.

"I think you're a gentleman, if you ride a taxi during the day. Take a look at this, please." He took a small book from his coat pocket and gave it to Gillian. Gillian opened it and saw that it was a bank deposit book. It showed a sum of \$1785. Gillian returned the bank deposit book and got into the cab¹³.

"I forgot something," he said. "Drive to the law offices¹⁴ of Tolman and Sharp." Lawyer Tolman looked at him severely through his glasses.

"Excuse me," said Gillian cheerfully. "May I ask you a question? Did my uncle leave Miss Hayden anything besides the ring and the ten dollars?"

"Nothing," said Mr Tolman.

"Thank you very much, sir," said Gillian and he returned to his taxi.

He gave the driver the address of his late uncle's home.

Miss Hayden was writing letters in the library. She was small and thin, and she wore¹⁵ black clothes. But she had lovely eyes.

Gillian entered and said, "I was at the lawyer's office and he found an additional clause to my uncle's will. It seems that he left you one thousand dollars. Mr Tolman asked me to bring you this money. Here it is. Please count it to see if it's right. Gillian put the money near her hand on the desk. Miss Hayden's face turned white, "Oh!" she said and again, "Oh!" Gillian turned and looked out of the window.

"I think you know that I love you," Gillian said.

"I am sorry," said Miss Hayden, taking her money.

"Then, there is no hope?" asked Gillian.

"I am sorry," she said again.

"May I write a note?" asked Gillian with a smile. He sat down at the big library table. She gave him some paper and a pen. Gillian wrote:

Paid by Robert Gillian, \$1000 to the best and dearest woman in the world, for all the happiness she brings to people.

Gillian put his note into an envelope and went away. His taxi stopped again at the law offices of Tolman and Sharp. "I spent the thousand dollars," he said happily, "and I am here to tell you exactly how I spent them." He threw¹⁶ the white envelope on the lawyer's table. Mr Tolman did not touch the envelope and went to a door and called his partner, Mr Sharp. Together they opened the big safe¹⁷. They took out a large envelope and slowly opened it. "Mr Gillian," Mr Tolman said formally, "there is a codicil¹⁸ to your uncle's will. He gave it to us privately. It can be opened only after you spend the thousand dollars. This is what it says:

Dear Robert,

Spend the thousand dollars wisely¹⁹ and carefully and you will receive \$50.000 in bonds²⁰. Spend the money carelessly and foolishly²¹, as you did in the past, and the \$50.000 in bonds will go to Miriam Hayden, my ward.

Your uncle,

Septimus Gillian

"Now, Mr Sharp and I will examine your note and then decide."

Mr Tolman put out his hand to take the note, but Gillian was quicker. He took it and tore²² it into little pieces and put them in his pocket.

"Oh, it's all right," he said smiling. "I don't want to disturb you with this. I lost the thousand dollars at the horse races. Good day you, gentlemen."

Tolman and Sharp looked at each other and shook their heads. Gillian left and whistled²³ happily as he waited for the elevator²⁴.