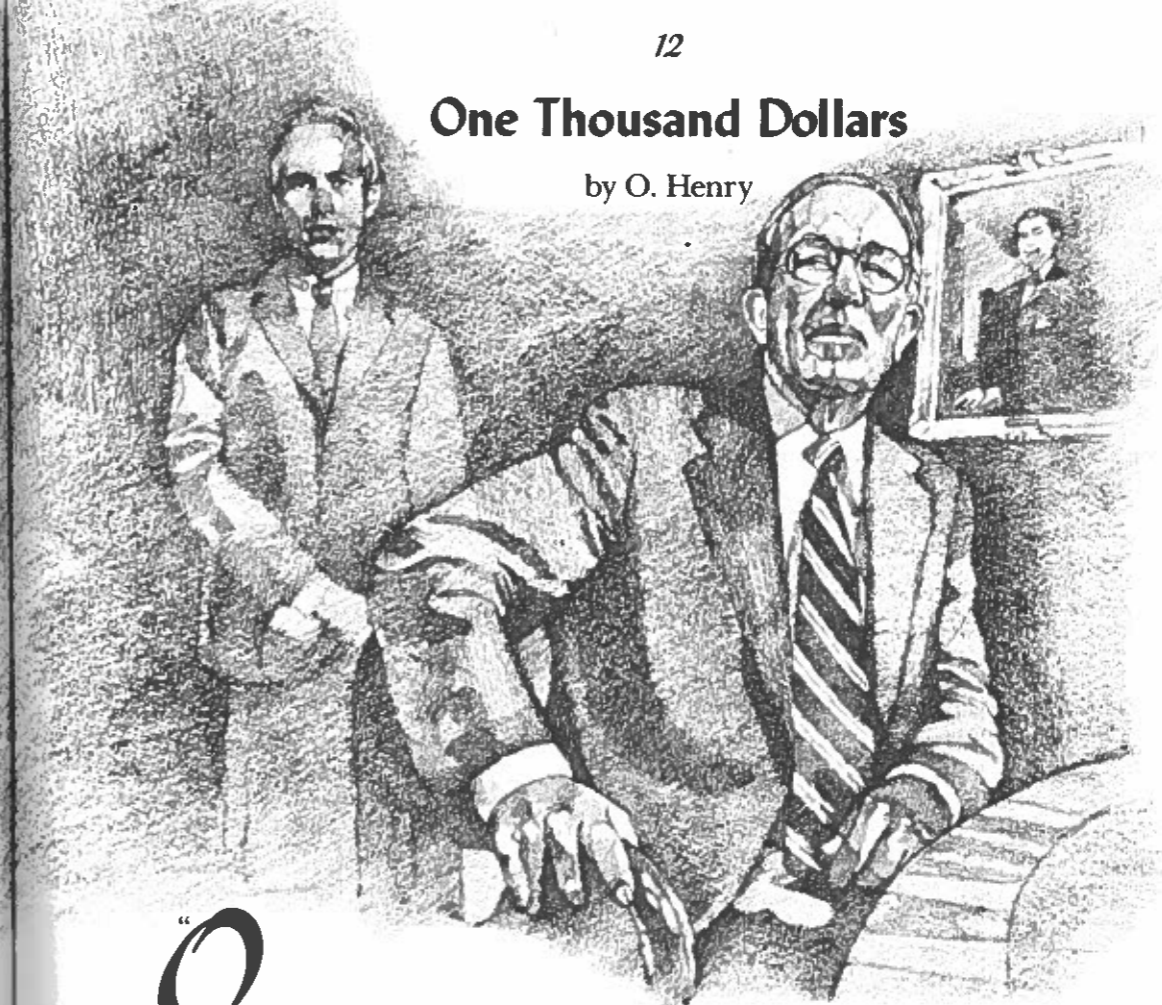




One Thousand Dollars

by O. Henry



“One thousand dollars,” said lawyer Tolman, seriously. He held out his hand. “And here is the money.”

Robert Gillian smiled as he took the thin package of new fifty-dollar bills. “It’s such an awkward amount,” said Gillian to the lawyer. “If it had been ten thousand dollars, it would have been easier. I might have done something really terrific with it. And fifty dollars would have been less trouble.”

“You heard the reading of your uncle’s will,” continued lawyer Tolman. “I don’t know if you paid much attention to its details. I must remind you of one. You must give us an account of *exactly* how you have spent this thousand

dollars. You must do it as soon as you have spent it all. The will states that clearly. I trust that you will follow your late uncle's wishes."

"You may count on it," said the young man, politely. "I will do it in spite of the extra expense it will cause me. I may have to hire a bookkeeper to help me. I was never very good at figuring accounts."

Gillian went to his club. There he hunted out someone who was known as Bryson.

Bryson was in a corner reading a book. When he saw Gillian approaching, he sighed and put down his book. Then he closed his eyes.

"Wake up, Bryson," said Gillian. "I've got a funny story to tell you."

"I wish you would tell it to someone else," said Bryson. "You know how I hate your stories."

"This is a better one than usual," said Gillian. "And I'm glad to tell it to you. I've just come from my late uncle's lawyer. I learned that my uncle left me exactly one thousand dollars in his will. Now what can a person do with a thousand dollars?"

"I thought," said Bryson, "that your uncle, the late Septimus Gillian, was worth something like half a million dollars."

"He was," agreed Gillian, smiling. "And that's where the joke comes in. He left his entire fortune to science. That is, part of it goes to the person who discovers a new disease. And the rest goes to a hospital for finding a cure for it. There are one or two small gifts on the side. The butler and the housekeeper each get a cheap ring and ten dollars. As for me, I get one thousand dollars."

"You've always had plenty of money to spend," said Bryson.

"Tons," agreed Gillian. "Uncle Septimus was very generous. He gave me an excellent **allowance**."

"Are there any other **heirs**?" asked Bryson.

"No one else was left anything," said Gillian. Gillian frowned. Then he shuffled his feet uneasily. "There is a young woman, a Miss Hayden. She was a **ward** of my uncle and lived in his house. She's quiet, musical—the daughter of somebody who was unlucky enough to be his friend. I forgot to say that she was also left a ring and ten dollars. I wish Uncle Septimus had left me that, too. Then I would have had a ten-dollar lunch. I would

have given the waiter the ring as a tip. And I would have had the whole business off my hands." Gillian paused. Then he said, "Tell me, Bryson. What's a fellow to do with one thousand dollars?"

Bryson cleaned his glasses and smiled. And when Bryson smiled, Gillian knew that he was going to be insulting.

"A thousand dollars," said Bryson, "may mean much or little. It depends on the spender. To one person, a thousand dollars may be a fortune. To another, it might be nothing more than pocket change. As for you, Gillian, I suggest you take the money. I suggest you rent a hall for the evening. Then you might lecture your audience—if anyone shows up—on the problems that come from inheriting some money from a wealthy uncle."

"People might like you, Bryson," said Gillian, "if you wouldn't joke so. I asked you to tell me what I could do with a thousand dollars."

"You?" said Bryson, with a gentle laugh. "Why, Bobby Gillian, there's just one thing for you to do. You can go buy Miss Lotta Lauriere a diamond pin with the money. That's my suggestion."

"Thanks," said Gillian, rising. "I thought I could depend upon you, Bryson. You've hit on just the thing! I wanted to spend the money all at once in a lump sum. You see, I've got to turn in an account of how I spend it. And I hate listing things and keeping records."

Gillian called for a cab and said to the driver:

"The stage entrance of the Columbine Theater. Then wait there for me."

Miss Lotta Lauriere was in her dressing room powdering her face. She was getting ready to go on stage at a crowded **matinee**. The stage manager mentioned to her that Mr. Gillian had dropped by.

"Let him in," said Miss Lauriere. "Now what is it, Bobby? I'm going on in two minutes."

"This won't take two minutes. How would you like a little diamond pin? I can pay three zeros with a figure one in front of them."

"Oh, whatever you say," said Miss Lauriere without much interest. "Say, Bobby, did you see that diamond necklace Della Stacey had on the other night? Twelve thousand dollars it cost. But of course—"

"Thirty seconds and you're on," called the stage manager to Miss Lauriere.

"I've got to go now," said Gillian. And he strolled out to where his cab was waiting.

"What would you do if you suddenly found a thousand dollars?" he asked the driver.

"Open a little luncheonette," said the driver, promptly. "I know just the place. I could rake in money with both hands. Now if you were thinking of putting up the cash. . . ."

"Oh, no," said Gillian. "I was just curious. Drive till I tell you to stop. I'll rent your cab by the hour."

Eight blocks down Broadway, Gillian got out. A blind man sat on a stool on the sidewalk selling pencils. Gillian stood before him.

"Excuse me," said Gillian. "But would you mind telling me what you would do if you had a thousand dollars?"

"You got out of that cab that just drove up, didn't you?" asked the blind man.

"I did," said Gillian.

"I thought so," said the blind man. "I could hear the car door slamming shut. Well, then, take a look at this if you like."

He took a small book from his pocket and held it out. Gillian opened it and saw that it was a bank book. It showed a balance of \$1,785 in the blind man's account.

Gillian returned the bank book and got back into the cab.

"I forgot something," he said. "You may drive to the law offices of Tolman and Sharp at 39th Street and Broadway."

Lawyer Tolman, a bit surprised, looked curiously at Gillian. "I beg your pardon," said Gillian, cheerfully. "But may I ask you one question? It's not out of order, I hope. Did my uncle leave Miss Hayden anything besides the ring and the ten dollars?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Tolman.

"I thank you very much, sir," said Gillian. And out he went to his cab. He gave the driver the address of his late uncle's home.

Miss Hayden was writing letters in the library. She was small and slender and dressed in black. But you would have noticed her eyes. Gillian drifted in with his air of regarding the world with amusement.



"I've just come from Tolman, the lawyer," Gillian explained. "They've been going over my uncle's papers down there. They found an amendment or something to the will. It seems that my uncle loosened up a little on second thought. He left you a thousand dollars. I was driving up this way and Tolman asked me to bring you the money. Here it is. You'd better count it to see if it's right." Gillian put the money next to her hand on the desk.

Miss Hayden turned pale. "Oh!" she said, and repeated, "Oh!"

Gillian half turned and looked out the window.

After a few moments, he said in a low voice, "I suppose, of course, that you know I love you."

"I am sorry," said Miss Hayden, taking up the money.

"There is no use?" asked Gillian, almost lightly.

"I am sorry," she said again.

"May I write a note?" asked Gillian, with a smile. He seated himself at the big library table. She supplied him with a paper and pen. Then she waited, staring out of the window.

Gillian made out his account of how he had spent the thousand dollars. This is what he wrote:

"Paid by Robert Gillian, the outcast of the family, one thousand dollars to Miriam Hayden, the best and dearest woman on earth."

Gillian slipped the note into an envelope. Then he bowed to Miss Hayden and went on his way.

His cab stopped again at the offices of Tolman and Sharp.

"I have spent the thousand dollars," he said cheerfully to Tolman. "And I have come to give you an account of how I have spent it. There is quite a feeling of summer in the air. Don't you think so, Mr. Tolman?" He tossed a white envelope on the lawyer's desk. "You will find a note inside. It tells how I have disposed of the thousand dollars."

Mr. Tolman did not touch the envelope. He went to a door and called his partner, Mr. Sharp. Together they walked to a large safe at the back of the office. From the safe they took a large envelope which was sealed. They opened the envelope and read together the sheet of paper inside. Then Mr. Tolman spoke for them both.

"Mr. Gillian," he said, "there was a *codicil*—an addition—to your uncle's will. It was given to us privately. Your uncle instructed us not to read it until you had given us a written account of how you spent the thousand dollars. As you have done this, my partner and I have read the addition to your uncle's will. I won't bother you with its legal phrases. But I will tell you what it means.

"If you have spent the money in a wise, unselfish, or thoughtful way, we are to hand over to you fifty thousand dollars. This sum of money has been set aside for that purpose. But if you have used this money as you have used money in the past—foolishly and wastefully—the fifty thousand dollars is to be paid to Miriam Hayden without delay. Now, Mr. Sharp and I will read your account of how you spent the thousand dollars."

Mr. Tolman reached for the envelope that Gillian had left on the desk. Gillian was a little quicker, however, in picking it up. Gillian slowly ripped the envelope into pieces. Then he dropped the pieces into his pocket.

"It's all right," Gillian said, smiling. "There's no need to bother you with this. All you would see is a list of bets. I lost the thousand dollars at the race track. Good day, gentlemen."

Tolman and Sharp nodded sadly at each other.

And Gillian, whistling cheerfully, turned on his heels and left.

GETTING THE MEANING OF THE STORY. Complete each of the following sentences by putting an *x* in the box next to the correct answer. Each sentence helps you get the meaning of the story.

1. Robert Gillian told Miriam Hayden that
 a. he loved her.
 b. she owed him a thousand dollars.
 c. she would receive fifty thousand dollars.
2. Bryson advised Gillian to spend the thousand dollars
 a. to open a luncheonette.
 b. on a diamond pin for Lotta Lauriere.
 c. at the race track.
3. Gillian discovered that the blind man
 a. had no money.
 b. had \$1,785 in the bank.
 c. could really see.
4. According to an addition to the will, Gillian would be paid fifty thousand dollars if he
 a. became successful in business.
 b. married Miss Hayden.
 c. spent the thousand dollars unselfishly or thoughtfully.

× 5 =
NUMBER CORRECT YOUR SCORE

REVIEWING STORY ELEMENTS. Each of the following questions reviews your understanding of story elements. Put an *x* in the box next to the correct answer to each question.

1. What happened last in the *plot* of the story?
 a. Gillian visited Lotta Lauriere.
 b. Gillian ripped the envelope into pieces.
 c. Miss Hayden gave Gillian a pen and paper.
2. Which group of words best *characterizes* Gillian?
 a. cheerful, amusing, happy-go-lucky
 b. serious, sad, poor
 c. selfish, thoughtless, angry
3. Pick the sentence that best tells the *theme* of this story.
 a. A man who is disappointed in love gets even with the woman who has turned him down.
 b. A young man's actions show that he cares more about the woman he loves than he cares about money.
 c. Nothing is more important in life than having a lot of money.
4. Which statement best describes O. Henry's *style* of writing?
 a. There is no humor in his stories.
 b. His stories are long and very difficult to understand.
 c. His stories have surprise endings.

× 5 =
NUMBER CORRECT YOUR SCORE

EXAMINING VOCABULARY WORDS. Answer the following vocabulary questions by putting an *x* in the box next to the correct answer. The vocabulary words are printed in **boldface** in the story. If you wish, look back at the words before you answer the questions.

- Miss Hayden was a ward of Uncle Septimus. As used in this sentence, the word *ward* means
 - a. a section in a hospital.
 - b. part of a jail.
 - c. a person who is under the care of another.
- Gillian always had plenty to spend because he received a large allowance from his uncle. Which of the following best defines the word *allowance*?
 - a. a sum of money given regularly
 - b. an expensive car
 - c. toys and games
- Miss Lauriere was getting ready to go on stage at a crowded matinee. What is the meaning of the word *matinee*?
 - a. an afternoon show
 - b. a subway car
 - c. a large store
- Robert Gillian and Miriam Hayden were named heirs in Uncle Septimus's will. What are *heirs*?
 - a. wise lawyers
 - b. people who are left money or property
 - c. friends or companions

× 5 =
 NUMBER CORRECT YOUR SCORE

ADDING WORDS TO A PASSAGE. Complete the following paragraph by filling in each blank with one of the words listed in the box below. Each of the words appears in the story. Since there are five words and four blanks, one word in the group will not be used.

About 600 years ago, Marco Polo, an Italian explorer, _____₁ China. He was very _____₂ to discover that the people there used paper money. In Italy and _____₃ countries around the world, coins were used to pay for goods. The Chinese were probably the first people to make and use _____₄ made of paper.

money	visited
other	
spend	surprised

× 5 =
 NUMBER CORRECT YOUR SCORE

THINKING ABOUT THE STORY. Each of the following questions will help you to think critically about the selection. Put an *x* in the box next to the correct answer.

- Why did Gillian say that he lost the thousand dollars at the race track?
 - a. He wanted Miriam Hayden to receive fifty thousand dollars.
 - b. He thought he was playing a joke on the lawyers.
 - c. He was the kind of person who couldn't stop telling lies.
- We may infer that Gillian ripped up the envelope because he
 - a. was embarrassed that he lost the money gambling.
 - b. was very upset that Miss Hayden didn't love him.
 - c. didn't want the lawyers to read the note he had written.
- The last sentence of the story suggests that when Gillian left the lawyers, he felt
 - a. happy.
 - b. sad.
 - c. foolish.
- Which one of the following statements is true?
 - a. Everyone knew that Miss Hayden was secretly in love with Gillian.
 - b. Uncle Septimus wanted to reward Gillian for changing.
 - c. Bryson was always happy to hear Gillian's stories.

× 5 =
 NUMBER CORRECT YOUR SCORE

Thinking More about the Story. Your teacher might want you to write your answers.

- Do you think that Robert Gillian will ever tell Miriam Hayden about how he helped her obtain the fifty thousand dollars? Explain your answer.
- At first, Gillian planned to buy a diamond pin for Lotta Lauriere. Why didn't Gillian buy her the pin?
- At the end of the story, Gillian left the offices of Tolman and Sharp. What do you think the lawyers might have said to each other about Gillian after he was gone?

Use the boxes below to total your scores for the exercises.

GETTING THE MEANING OF THE STORY
 +
 REVIEWING STORY ELEMENTS
 +
 EXAMINING VOCABULARY WORDS
 +
 ADDING WORDS TO A PASSAGE
 +
 THINKING ABOUT THE STORY

▼
Score Total: Story 12