

One Thousand Dollars

- O. Henry

O. Henry was the pen name of William Sydney Porter, (1862-1910) a great American short-story writer, and a master of surprise endings. O' Henry wrote about the life of ordinary people in New York City. Typical of 'O' Henry's stories is a twist of plot, which turns on an ironic or coincidental circumstance. Although some critics were not so enthusiastic about his work, the public loved and admired it. Among his more famous stories must be included "The Gift of the Magi", "The Last Leaf", and the present story.

This is one of the most popular stories of O. Henry. In this story the story teller describes the reactions when the will of his late uncle is out. The narration is full of humour, and the readers will enjoy reading it.

"One thousand dollars," repeated Lawyer Tolman, solemnly and severely, "and here is the money."

Young Gillian gave a decidedly amused laugh as he fingered the thin package of new fifty-dollar notes.

"It's such a confoundedly awkward amount", he explained, genially, to the lawyer, "If it had been ten thousand a fellow might wind up with a lot of fireworks and do himself credit. Even fifty dollars should have been less trouble."

"You heard the reading of your uncle's will," continued Lawyer Tolman, professionally dry in his tones. "I do not know if you paid much attention to its details. I must remind you of one. You are required to tender to us an account of the manner of expenditure of this \$1,000 as soon as you have disposed of it. The will stipulates that. I trust that you will so far comply with the late Mr. Gillian's wishes."

"You may depend upon it," said the young man, politely, "in spite of the extra expenses it will entail. I may have to engage a secretary. I was never good at accounts,"

Gillian went to his club. There he hunted out one whom he called Old Bryson.

Old Bryson was calm and forty and sequestered. He was in a corner reading a book, and when he saw Gillian approaching he sighed, laid down his book and took off his glasses.

"Old Bryson, wake up," said Gillian. "I have a funny story to tell you"

"I wish you would tell it to someone in the billiard room," said Old Byson. "You know how I hate your stories."

"This is a better one than usual," said Gillian, rolling a cigarette; "and I'm glad to tell it

solemnly / sələmli /

awkward / 'ɔ:kwəd /

wind / wɪnd /

sequestered / sɪ'kwɛstəd /

usual / ju:ʒuəl /

to you. It's too sad and funny to go with the rattling of billiard balls. I've just come from my late uncle's firm of legal corsairs. He leaves me an even thousand dollars. Now, what can a man possibly do with a thousand dollars?"

"I thought," said Old Bryson, showing as much interest as a bee shows in a vinegar cruet, "that the late Septimus Gillian was worth something like half a million,"

"He was", assented Gillian, joyously," and that's where the joke comes in. He's left his whole cargo of doubloons to a microbe. That is, part of it goes to the man who invents a new bacillus and the rest to establish a hospital for doing away with it again. The butler and the housekeeper get a seal ring and \$10 each. His nephew gets \$1,000,"

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

"Tons," said Gillian, "Uncle was the fairy godmother as far as an allowance is concerned", I can stand three ciphers with a figure one in front of them.

"Any other heirs?" asked Old Bryson.

"None", Gillian frowned at his cigarette and kicked the upholstered leather of a divan uneasily. "There is a miss Hayden, a ward of my uncle who lived in his house. She's a quiet thing-musical-the daughter of somebody who was unlucky enough to be his friend. I forgot to say that she was in on the seal ring and \$10 joke, too. I wish I had been. Then I could have had two bottles of *brut*, tipped the waiter with the ring, and had the whole business off my hands. Don't be superior and insulting, Old Bryson-tell me what a fellow can do with a thousand dollars,"

Old Bryson rubbed his glasses and smiled. And when old Bryson smiled, Gillian knew that he intended to be more offensive than ever.

"A thousand dollars," he said, "means much or little. One man may buy a happy home with it and laugh at Rockefeller. Another could send his wife South with it and save her life, A thousand dollars would buy pure milk for one hundred babies during June, July and August and save fifty of their lives. You could count upon a half hour's diversion with it at faro in one of the fortified art galleries. It would furnish an education to an ambitious boy. I am told that a genuine Corot was secured for that amount in an auction room yesterday. You could move to a New Hampshire town and live respectably two years on it. You could rent Madison Square Garden for one evening with it, and lecture your audience, if you should have one, on the precariousness of the profession of heir presumptive",

"People might like you, Old Bryson" said Gillian, almost unruffled, "if you wouldn't moralize. 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 only one logical thing you could do. You can go buy Miss Lotta Lauriere a diamond pendant with the money, and then take yourself off to Idaho and inflict your presence upon a ranch. I advise a sheep ranch, as I have a particular dislike for sheep",

"Thanks", said Gillian, rising. "I thought I could depend upon you, Old Bryson. You've hit on the very scheme. I wanted to chuck the money in a lump. I've got to turn in an account for it, and I hate itemizing,"

Gillian phoned for a cab and said to the driver. "The stage entrance of the Columbine Theatre,"

Miss Lotta Lauriere was assisting nature with a powder puff, almost ready for her call at a crowded matinee, when her dresser mentioned the name of Mr. Gillian.

“Let it in,” said Miss Lauriere, “Now, what is it, Bobby? I’m going on in two minutes”.

“Rabbit-foot your right ear a little’, suggested Gillian, critically. “That’s better, It won’t take two minutes for me. What do you say to a little thing in the pendant line? “Oh, just as you say,” carolled Miss Lauriere.

“My right glove, Adams”. “Say, Bobby, did you see that necklace Della Staey had on the other night? Twenty two hundred dollars it cost at Tiffany’s. But, of course.” “Pull my sash a little to the left, Adams,”

“Miss Lauriere for the opening chorus! Cried the call boy without.”

Gillian strolled out to where his cab was waiting.

“What would you do with a thousand dollars if you had it?”, he asked the driver.

“Open a s’loon,” said the cabby promptly and huskily. “I know a place I could take money in with both hands. It’s a four-story brick on a corner. I’ve got it figured out. Second story-Chinks and chop suey; third floor-manicures and foreign mission; fourth floor-poolroom. If you was thinking of putting up the cap.”

“Oh, no,” said Gillian, “ I merely asked from curiosity. I take you by the hour, Drive till I tell you to stop,”

Eight blocks down Broadway Gillian poked up the trap with his cane and got out. A blind man set upon a stool on the sidewalk selling pencils. Gillian went out and stood before him.

“Excuse me”, he said, “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 guess you are all right”, said the pencil dealer, “to ride in a cab by daylight. Take a look at that, if you like”. He drew a small book from his coat pocket, and held it out, Gillian opened it and saw that it was a bank deposit book. It showed a balance of \$1,785 to the blind man’s credit.

Gillian returned the book and got into the cab.

“I forgot something,” he said, “you may drive to the law offices of Tolman & Sharp, at- Broadway,”

Lawyer Tolman looked at him hostilely and inquiringly through his gold-rimmed glasses.

“I beg your pardon,” said Gillian, cheerfully, “but may I ask you a question? It is not an impertinent one, I hope. Was Miss Hayden left anything by my uncle’s will besides the ring and the \$10?”

“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.

carolled / 'kærəld /
promptly / prɒmptli /

manicures / məˈnɪkjʊə / hostilely / hɒstaili /
drew / drem /

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

“I've just come from old Tolman's,” he explained. “They've been going over the papers down there. They found a-Gillian searched his memory for a legal term-“they found an amendment or a postscript or something to the Will, It seemed that the old boy loosened up a little on second thought and willed 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 laid the money beside her hand on the desk.

Miss Hayden turned white, “Oh!”, she said, and again, “Oh!”

Gillian half turned and looked out of the window.

“I suppose, of course,” he said, in a low voice, “that you know I love you”.

“I am sorry”, said Miss Hayden, taking up her money.

“There is no use?” asked Gillian, almost light-heartedly.

“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 paper and pen, and then went back to her secretaire.

Gillian made out his account of his expenditure of the thousand dollars in these words:

“Paid by the black sheep, Robert Gillian, \$1,000 on account of the eternal happiness, owed by Heaven to the best and dearest woman on earth.”

Gillian slipped his writing into an envelope, bowed and went his way.

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

“I have expended the thousand dollars,” he said, cheerily, to Tolman of the gold glasses,” and I have come to render account of it, as I agreed. There is quite a feeling of summer in the air-do you not think so, Mr. Tolman?” He tossed a white envelope on the lawyer's table. “You will find there a memorandum, sir, of the modus operandi of the vanishing of the dollors.”

Without touching the envelope, Mr, Tolman went to a door and called his partner, Sharp. Together they explored the caverns of an immense safe. Forth they dragged as trophy of their search a big envelop sealed with wax. This they forcibly invaded, and wagged their venerable heads together over its contents. Then Tolman became spokesman.

“Mr. Gillian”, he said, formally, “there was a codicil to your uncle's Will. It was intrusted to us privately, with instructions that it be not opened until you had furnished us with a full account of your handling of the \$1.000 bequest in the will. As you have fulfilled the conditions, my partner and I have read the codicil. I do not wish to encumber your understanding with its legal phraseology, but I will acquaint you with the spirit of its contents.

“In the event that your disposition of the \$1,000 demonstrates that you possess any of the qualifications that deserve reward, much benefit will accrue to you. Mr. Sharp and I are named as the judges, and I assure to you that we will do our duty strictly according to justice-

woman / wʊmən /

caverns / kævən /

reward / rɪ'wɔ:d /

with liberality. We are not at all unfavorably disposed toward you, Mr. Gillian, But let us return to the letter of the codicil. If your disposal of the money in question has been prudent, wise, or unselfish, it is in our power to hand you over bonds to the value of \$ 50,000, which have been placed in our hands for that purpose. But if-as our client, the late Mr. Gillian, explicitly provides-you have used this money as you have used money in the past-I quote the late Mr. Gillian-in reprehensible dissipation among disreputable associates-the \$ 50,000 is to be paid to Miriam Hayden, ward of the late Mr. Gillian, without delay. Now, Mr. Gillian, Mr. Sharp and I will examine your account in regard to the \$ 1,000. You submit it in writing, I believe, I hope you will repose confidence in our decision.”

Mr. Tolman reached for the envelope. Gillian was a little the quicker in taking it up. He tore the account and its cover leisurely into strips and dropped them into his pocket.

“It's all right” he said, smilingly. “There isn't a bit of need do bother you with this. I don't suppose you'd understand these itemized bets, anyway. I lost the thousand dollars on the races. Good-day to you, gentlemen”,

Tolman & Sharp shook their heads mournfully at each other when Gillian left, for they heard him whistling gaily in the hallway as he waited for the elevator.

Glossary

confoundedly	-	annoyingly
to render	-	to present an account for payment
to entail	-	to involve something as necessary
sequestered	-	quiet and apart from other people
corsair	-	a pirate, especially along the Barbary coast. (hence it is used in derogatory sense)
cargo of doubloons	-	consolidations
<i>brut</i>	-	very dry champagne offensive. causing somebody to feel insulted
faro	-	a gambling game
Corot	-	a French painter (1796-1857)
precariousness -		danger
heir presumptive	-	an heir who may lose her or his legal right if another heir with a stronger claim is born.
ranch	-	a large farm for raising horses, cattle or sheep
to inflict	-	to make somebody suffer
to chuck	-	to throw something carelessly
Matinee	-	an afternoon performance of a show
I can stand three ciphers	with a figure one in front of this-	I can spend 1000 dollars
chinks	-	Chinese people.
chop svey	-	a Chinese dish

decision / dɪ'sɪʒn /

leisurely / 'leɪʒəli /

whistling / 'wɪsl /

manicure	-	care and treatment of hands and nails
poolroom	-	a room for playing a game similar to snooker
impertinent	-	rude; not showing respect
secretaire	-	a desk used for writing
modus operandi	-	method of working or dealing with a task
memorandum	-	a written note
cavern	-	a large and dark cave
to wag	-	to move a part of one's body quickly from side to side
codicil	-	a later addition to a will
bequest	-	a thing that one leaves to somebody else when one dies
to encumber	-	prevent something from moving
phraseology	-	working
to accrue	-	to increase over a period of time
prudent	-	showing care for future
reprehensible	-	deserving blame or criticism
dissipation	-	wastage made foolishly
gaily	-	cheerfully

Exercises

Word Power

A) Fill in the blanks with the words given below:

(Memorandum, accrue, render, bequest, impertinent, wagging, entail)

- Here is the money. You can spend it as you like. You have to _____ an account of the expenditure within a week.
- Keep your money in a bank. It will _____ interest.
- This job will _____ a lot of hard work. You must think twice before you accept it.
- The dog is _____ its tail. Does it want something?
- I have only asked your name, Is it _____ ?
- Before dying, the old man left a _____ to each of his two sons.
- He sent a detailed _____ to his boss about the incident.

B) Find words form the text for following expressions:

1. afternoon performance of a show
2. produce books, newspapers etc. by printing
3. a building in which horses are kept.
4. cheerfully
5. that is suggested indirectly or understood.
6. make an attempt
7. boredom
8. take somebody somewhere in a car, taxi etc.
9. showing care for future.
10. write or say something formally in careful and clear way
11. become liquid as a result of heating.
12. Care and treatment of hands and nails.
13. Beg or implore.
14. A piece of fabric or paper used to for cleaning lips and fingers.
15. Rest yourself in a chair.
16. A Large and dark cave
17. A collection of valuable things such as gold, silver etc.
18. Try very hard to achieve something.
19. A type of material that is made of string, thread or wire woven together.
20. danger

C) Use following expressions in sentences of your own:

1. pen name
2. awkward amount
3. disposed of
4. laid down
5. took off
6. hunted out
7. frowned at
8. art gallery
9. rabbit-foot
10. loosen up
11. black sheep

12. modus operandi
13. to wag (something)
14. to be prudent
15. to repose confidence in

Comprehension

1. Choose the correct alternatives and complete the sentences:

(i) **One thousand dollars were given to Gillian on the condition that**

- a. he will spend it in a week.
- b. he will render an account of expenditure.
- c. he will spend it in one lot.
- d. he will not spend it in gambling.

(ii) **Gillian said he would have to engage a secretary because**

- a. he had a lot of work to do.
- b. he got one thousand dollars.
- c. he wanted to spend the money.
- d. he had to render an account and he was not good at it.

(iii) **O' Henry has compared Bryson's interest in Gillian's story with**

- a. a bee's interest in a vinegar cruet.
- b. a cat's interest in a pot of milk.
- c. an eagle's interest in its prey.
- d. a child's interest in a piece of chocolate.

(iv) **Miss Hayden was**

- a. old Gillian's grand-daughter
- b. old Gillian's ward
- c. old Gillian's niece
- d. old Gillian's sister

2. Answer the following questions in one sentence each:

1. Why did the lawyer give Gillian the money?
2. Why did Gillian call the amount of one thousand dollars a confoundedly awkward amount?
3. Who bestowed the amount upon Gillian?
4. Why did Gillian go to the club?
5. "Bryson was sequestered", which sentence in the story shows this quality of Bryson?
6. What did Gillian consider as a joke in his uncle's will?
7. What did old Gillian bestow upon Miss Hayden?

8. What would Gillian have done if his uncle had bestowed upon him a seal ring and ten dollars?
9. Why did Gillian want to spend the money at one go?
10. What did the lawyer tell Gillian when he submitted his account?

3. Answer the following questions in three or four sentences each:

1. Was Gillian satisfied with the amount his uncle bestowed upon him? Justify your answer by quoting the sentences from the text.
2. How did the author describe Bryson's reaction when Gillian told him about one thousand dollars?
3. Why did Gillian call his uncle 'the fairy godmother'?
4. How did Gillian react to Bryson's suggestions for spending the money?
5. Why did Gillian go to Columbine Theatre? Why was he disappointed there?
6. What did Gillian tell miss Hayden before giving her one thousand dollars?
7. Why did Gillian take back the envelope containing the account from the lawyer and tear it?

(4) Answer the following questions in about 150 words each:

1. What did Bryson suggest Gillian to spend one thousand dollars?
2. What type of man was young Gillian?
3. What do you mean by codicil? What was the codicil to old Gillian's will? Why did he make this arrangement?
4. How did young Gillian feel about miss Hayden? What acts of his suggest what he felt for her?
5. What are the various alternates that Gillian told Old Bryson for spending One Thousand Dollars.

Grammar

Look at the following sentences:

1. A part of it goes to the man **who invents a new bacillus.**
2. She is a ward of my uncle **who lived in his house.**
3. There he hunted out one **whom he called old Bryson.**

All these sentences have two clauses. The highlighted clauses are called **relative clauses**. They are also called **adjective clauses** because they perform the function of adjectives i.e., describing a noun or a pronoun in the principal clause. Can you identify the nouns/pronouns that the underlined clauses describe?

These clauses may occur with or without relative pronouns. These relative pronouns vary slightly according to whether they refer to persons or things,

and according to whether they are subjects or objects of a verb or in the possessive case. They do not vary for singular or plural or masculine or feminine.

Look how relative pronouns are used in the following sentences:

1. The man who stole your watch has been arrested .
 2. The girl who you were talking to a little while ago is my sister.
 3. The boy whose book you are reading is a friend of mine.
 4. The girl you were playing with is in class XI.
 5. The book (that) your are reading is written by my father.
- In sentence 2 'who' has been used in place of 'whom' In modern English 'whom' is very rarely used.

In sentence 4 no relative pronoun has been used. In sentence 5 'that' can be deleted.

Join the following pairs of sentences using one of them as a relative clause.

1. The girls serve in the shop.
The girls are the owner's daughter.
2. People are trapped in a lift.
The film is about these people.
3. The girls are always complaining about their long hours.
He employs the girls.
4. We saw it.
It astonished us.
5. The ladder began to slip.
I was standing on the ladder.
6. The car broke down after two kilometers.
I hired the car.
7. This is the picture.
The picture caused a lot of controversy.
8. The film is about a spy.
The spy's wife betrayed him.
9. You need information .
This book will give you the information.
10. She gave me a sweater.
She knitted it herself.

Speaking Activity

Irony:

In irony there remains always a root sense of dissembling, or of a difference between what is spoken or done and what is actually the case or what the audience knows in advance. Usually, there are two kinds of irony:

- i. **Verbal irony or Irony of words** It consists in a statement in which the implicit meaning intended by the speaker is different from that which he asserts, not knowing the reality.

A good example of verbal irony is hidden in the opening sentence of Jane Austin's **Pride and Prejudice**: 'It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must lie in want of a wife', but the ironic implication is that a single woman is in want of a real husband.

- ii. **Dramatic irony or Irony of situation.** It involves a situation in a play or a story in which the audience knows the reality which the speaker or character is ignorant of.

The character does not have the knowledge of actual circumstances or expects the opposite of what fate has decided for him, while the audience already knows the reality or his fate.

Shakespeare's Tragedies, **Macbeth** and **Hamlet** abound in scenes which provide good examples of dramatic irony.

Find examples of both the types of ironys in the story and discuss them in groups. Each group then presents what conclusions they have come to about.

- (1) How it is a verbal irony give examples.
- (2) Which is the irony of situations in the story give examples.

Writing Activity

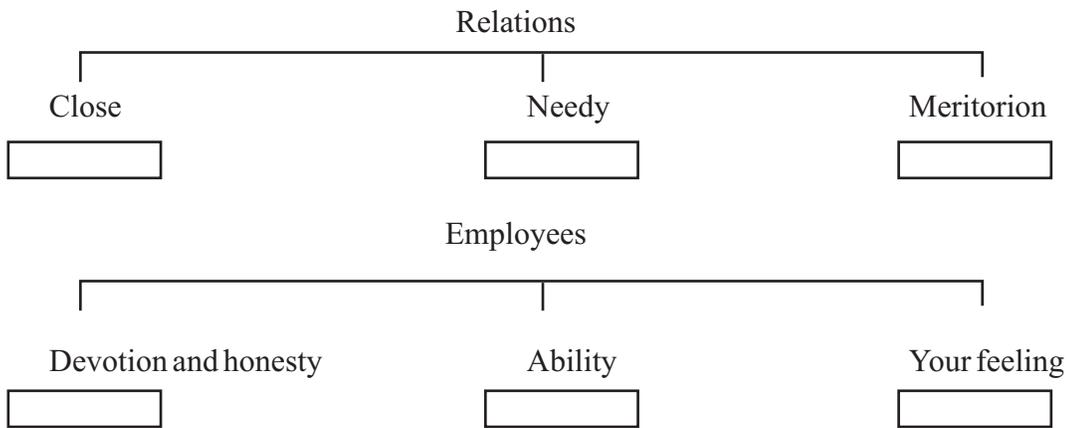
- (1) Suppose you have been given rupees one crore and asked to spend it in one month, the condition is that you will not spend it in reprehensible dissipation, how will you spend it?
- (2) Taking the cue form the story write the story in the form of dialogues. All the characters speak for themselves.
- (3) If you were Gilliani uncle how would you destribute your money in your relatives and your employees. You have two sons and one daughter and four employees ----- One manager, one accountant, two house keepers and you have the following assets One home with furnishiings, one factory (sick), a car and a farm house, cash in fixed deposits about 20,00,000 and gold ornaments worth 10,00,000. Use the legal terms form the text to complete your document.

Consider the following before writing your will:

- (1) Close relatives
- (2) Needy relatives
- (3) Deserving on the basis of merit

- (4) Devotion of your employee
- (5) Your feelings towards them
- (6) Ability

Now bequeath your property and wealth and other assets to the following in proper proportions.



Think it over

What will happen to people’s property if there was no legal procedures for inheritance?

Things to do

Enact the play you have written the dialogues for in your class or school.