

LITERATURE – 4A

Gillian Tolman's uncle, Septimus Gillian, has died. His lawyer, Tolman, has just read the will.

START THINKING ...

1 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

- What would you do with \$1,000?
- Do you prefer to spend or to save money? Why?
- Can money buy happiness? Why or why not?

ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS (1908) ○ Henry

'One thousand dollars,' repeated Lawyer Tolman, 'and here is the money.'

'You heard the reading of your uncle's will,' continued Lawyer Tolman. 'I do not know if you paid much attention to its details.'

5 I must remind you of one. You are required to render to us an account of the manner of **expenditure** of this \$1,000 as soon as you have disposed of it. I trust that you will so far comply with the **late** Mr Gillian's wishes.'

10 'You may depend upon it,' said the young man politely, 'in spite of the extra expense 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.

15 Old Bryson 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've a funny story to tell you.'

20 'I wish you would tell it to someone in the billiard room,' said Old 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. It's too sad and funny to go with the rattling of billiard balls. I've just come from my late uncle's firm. He leaves me an even thousand dollars. Now, what can a man possibly do with a
25 thousand dollars?'

'I thought,' said Old Bryson, 'that the late Septimus Gillian was worth something like half a million.'

30 'He was,' assented Gillian, joyously, 'and that's where the joke comes in. He's left his whole fortune to a bacteria. That is, some of the money goes to a man who is inventing a new bacteria.'

The rest goes to a hospital to get rid of the bacteria he's inventing! There are one or two trifling gifts on the side. The butler and the housekeeper get a seal ring and \$10 each. His nephew gets \$1,000.'

35 '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** was concerned.'

'Any other **heirs**?' asked Old Bryson.

40 'None. 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. Don't be superior and insulting, Old Bryson – tell me what a fellow can do with a thousand dollars.'

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

50 'A thousand dollars,' he said, 'means much or little. One man may buy a happy home with it. 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. It would provide an education to an **ambitious** boy. You could rent Madison Square Garden for one evening with it, and lecture your audience, if you should have one, on the
55 **precariousness** of being the heir to a fortune.'

'People might like you, Old Bryson,' said Gillian, always unruffled, 'if you wouldn't moralize. I asked you to tell me what I could do with a thousand dollars.'

60 '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.'

65 '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, for I've got to turn in an account for it, and I hate itemizing.'

Gillian phoned for a cab and said to the driver:

70 'The stage entrance of the Columbine Theatre.'

Glossary

will a piece of paper that says who will get your money, house, and things when you die

expenditure the total amount of money that a government or person spends

late no longer alive

allowance an amount of money that is regularly given to somebody

heir someone who will get another person's money and things when that person dies

ward a child who is under the legal protection of someone else

offensive likely to make people angry or upset

ambitious wanting to be successful or powerful

precariousness a situation which is likely to get worse

inflict to force someone to experience something very unpleasant

2 **▶▶4A.1** Read the text and listen.

3 Read the text again. Mark the sentences T (true), F (false) or DS (doesn't say).

- 1 Gillian has to prove to Lawyer Tolman what he will spend the money on.
- 2 Old Bryson is asleep when Gillian sees him.
- 3 Miss Hayden was Septimus's daughter.
- 4 Septimus was married.
- 5 The money could buy enough milk to save a hundred babies' lives.
- 6 Gillian doesn't think that Old Bryson is popular.

4 **READ BETWEEN THE LINES** Answer the questions. Give reasons and examples from the text.

- 1 How do you think Gillian behaved while Lawyer Tolman was reading the will?
- 2 Did Gillian work hard for his money? How do we know?
- 3 Why does Bryson tell Gillian to go to a sheep ranch? What does this tell us about their relationship?
- 4 Do you think Gillian is going to do what Lawyer Tolman told him to? Why or why not?

5 **VOCABULARY** Complete the sentences with the correct words from the glossary in the correct form.

- 1 When he died, the _____ President McKinley was replaced by Roosevelt in 1901.
- 2 It was common for people from wealthy families to receive an _____ if they chose not to work.
- 3 Many poor Americans didn't bother to write a _____ if they didn't have any money or property.
- 4 In 1901, the average American family's _____ was \$769 (\$21,500 today).
- 5 Until the 20th Century, marriage was often seen as a means to produce the _____ to the family name and fortune.
- 6 A hurricane _____ death upon 8,000 Americans in Texas in 1901.

6 Underline five words in the text that are new to you. Look them up in a dictionary and then write each of them in a sentence.

7 **ROLE PLAY** Work in pairs. Gillian meets Miss Lotta Lauriere at the theatre. He explains what has happened and asks for advice. Student A is Gillian, Student B is Lotta. Read the beginning of the conversation and then continue it with your own ideas.

GILLIAN Phew! You're still here!

LOTTA What is it, Bobby? I'm going on in two minutes.

8 **LISTENING** **▶▶4A.2** Listen to the next part of the story. Complete the summary.

Gillian gave Miss ¹ _____ \$1,000 (not from his uncle – he lied). He said he ² _____ her – she didn't feel the same. Tolman and Sharp took an ³ _____ out of the safe – a note from the uncle. If Gillian spends the money well, he gets ⁴ _____. If not, it goes to ⁵ _____ Hayden. Gillian says he spent the money on the ⁶ _____.

9 **▶▶4A.2** Listen again. Answer the questions.

- 1 How does Miss Hayden react when Gillian gives her the money?
- 2 What animal does Gillian compare himself to? What do you think this means?
- 3 How does Gillian travel to his lawyer's office?
- 4 What was the relationship between Miss Hayden and Gillian's uncle?
- 5 How do the lawyers feel about Gillian when he leaves?

WRITING An essay10 **WRITING** 'The finest inheritance you can give to a child is to allow it to make its own way, completely on its own feet.' (Isadora Duncan) Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Write an essay giving reasons for your view.

- 1 Paragraph 1 (Introduction): Say what the quotation means to you. Explain the key words. End the paragraph with your initial opinion.
- 2 Paragraph 2: Give arguments that support your opinion. Give clear examples and evidence.
- 3 Paragraph 3: Think about the opposite opinion. Give examples, but say why the argument is weak.
- 4 Paragraph 4 (Conclusion): Summarise your essay and restate your opinion in your first paragraph.

THINK STYLE**Irony**

The author uses irony (saying the opposite of what you mean in order to be funny) in the text. Gillian tells Old Bryson 'I've a funny story to tell you.' It is clear that Old Bryson will not find this story funny and that Gillian uses it to introduce his dilemma. The whole story is also ironic: he will only receive more money if he spends it well in the first place.

11 Read the quotes below. Why are they ironic?

- 1 'Mr President you can't say that Dallas doesn't love you.' (to President J.F. Kennedy before he was assassinated)
- 2 'The war to end all wars!' (by H.G. Wells about the First World War)
- 3 'Groups with guitars are on their way out.' (by a music producer who didn't want to be The Beatles' manager)