

Name:

Date:

Response to Literature Questions for "The Bet"

1. Do you agree with the lawyer that "To live anyhow is better than not at all?"
2. Why do you think the lawyer takes the bet? What do you think this says about his life?
3. What does the lawyer mean when he says that "desires are the worst foes of the prisoner"? Is this true?
4. What are "classics"? How would they differ from novels of "light character"?
5. In the sixth year the lawyer devours over six hundred volumes of language, philosophy and history. Why do you think he is so motivated?

6. The lawyer writes in his letter, "The geniuses of all ages and of all lands speak different languages, but the same flame burns in them all." What does he mean by this? Is this true?

7. A paragraph in the second half of the story begins, "It was dark and cold in the garden. Rain was falling. A damp cutting wind was racing about the garden, howling and giving the trees no rest." How does this language and atmosphere relate to what is going on in the story?

8. The lawyer once saw the two millions as "paradise," but now he despises the money. Why?

9. Why does the banker have contempt for himself after reading the lawyer's letter?

10. In what ways is the lawyer a different man at the end of the story?

11. Would you take such a bet? For 5 years? For 1 year? Why or why not?