

Start

**SCROOGE** You're another of them. A clerk earning fifteen shillings a week.....thinking you have a right to a merry Christmas....I'll retire to Bedlem. Get on with your work.

**BOB** Yes, sir. I'm sorry, sir.

*SCROOGE at once starts adding up rows and columns of figures.....Cratchit too tries to work.....but he is too cold....he goes to the fire and pokes it about...but nearly puts it out and has to blow on the ashes to try to keep it alive...then he attempts to creep past SCROOGE to get some coal...*

**SCROOGE** Cratchit! Coal is an expensive commodity. I work out to a penny exactly what we need and when we need it. Get on with your work.

**BOB** It seems to be particularly cold today, sir.

**SCROOGE** Then get on with your work. There's nothing like work for getting a man's mind off things like the weather.

**BOB** Just one shovel full, please, sir.

**SCROOGE** No, Cratchit. We have used all the coal we need for today. Don't let me have to tell you again - get on with your work.

**BOB** Yes, sir.

*BOB sits down, frozen - and pathetically tries to warm himself over the light of the candle...and SCROOGE continues to add his figures...getting very worried.*

**SCROOGE** Cratchit.

**BOB** Yes, sir.

**SCROOGE** Come here, Cratchit.

**BOB** Yes, sir.

**SCROOGE** Cratchit - three times I have checked the Petty Cash total for this week.

**BOB** Yes, sir, I left the details on your desk... it came to six shillings and eightpence, sir.

**SCROOGE** It comes to five shillings and eightpence, Cratchit. I tell you I have checked it three times.

**BOB** Yes, sir, but the coal and the candles sir account for....

**SCROOGE** There are no receipts for coal and candles, Cratchit. Furthermore, I did not authorise the expenditure of an additional shilling on coal and candles.

**BOB** Well, there was none left, sir.

**SCROOGE** Of course there was none left. You waste them.

**BOB** Certainly there were no candles....

**SCROOGE** I am not interested in your candles. Use daylight, Cratchit. You light the candles too soon. Daylight is cheaper. Do you understand.

**BOB** Well, sir, I.....

**SCROOGE** Do you understand?

**BOB** Yes, sir. But....

**SCROOGE** I am glad you understand, Cratchit. I shall deduct the shilling from your salary so that the accounts will in no way be inconvenienced. That will be all, Cratchit.

**BOB** But, sir. please.

**SCROOGE** That will be all, Cratchit. Fetch me the Book of Debtors.

**BOB** Yes, sir.

*BOB goes miserably for the book and Scrooge continues to add and check his columns of figures.*

*BOB returns with the book....*

**SCROOGE** *(Looking up a particular entry.)* Ah, yes, I thought as much. His debt should have been paid yesterday. Was it?

**BOB** No sir.

**SCROOGE** *(After a pause.)* Continue, Cratchit.

**BOB** Well, sir the people came, but ...

**SCROOGE** And when did they come?

**BOB** When you were at the Exchange, sir.

SCROOGE                    You asked them to wait.

BOB                         They couldn't wait, sir.

SCROOGE                    So why didn't you take their money and give them a receipt. I've told you often enough.

BOB                         Well sir.....

SCROOGE                    Why?

BOB                         Sir - they hadn't got any money, so I couldn't take it.

*He is unable to go on....*

SCROOGE                    Well? Well?

BOB                         Well, sir, they said they would be able to pay next week and I said - well, I said that I was sure you would understand, sir.

SCROOGE                    You said what? Well? *(BOB is too afraid to speak.)* I shall take out a summons at once, Cratchit. If people do not pay their debts then they must go to prison for it, and their goods must be confiscated...

BOB                         Oh, they will pay, sir. I'm sure of that.

SCROOGE                    You're sure of that! And do not interrupt me. Do you suppose I should be where I am now if I had the same attitude as yours, Cratchit?

BOB                         They will pay, sir. They just need a little more time.

SCROOGE                    And they shall get a little more time, Cratchit. In the debtors prison.

BOB                         But, sir, it's Christmas.

SCROOGE                    Christmas - humbug! What has Christmas to do with it? Get back to your work Cratchit before you ruin me.

BOB                         Yes, sir.

Stop

---

*And CRATCHIT goes back to his work..*

*Two portly gentlemen arrive, very business-like, fussing with papers. They see BOB CRATCHIT first.*

1st GENT                    Is this - is this Scrooge and Morleys? *(CRATCHIT indicates SCROOGE.)* Ah, thank you, yes. Yes. *(They move to SCROOGE.)*