

SCENE 68

INT. DAY. RESTAURANT

M. S. side view of the two men at table. CAMERA PANS to M. C. U. of ACCOUNTANT.

COVER: C. U. of COLLEAGUE'S hands cutting up food and eating.
Back of ACCOUNTANT'S head. REVERSE ANGLE.

THE ACCOUNTANT AND A COLLEAGUE ARE SITTING AT A TABLE EATING LUNCH. THE ACCOUNTANT IS TALKING ABOUT BARTLEBY WITH ANIMATION, TRYING TO JUSTIFY HIMSELF TO HIS COLLEAGUE. THE COLLEAGUE IS MAINLY INTERESTED IN HIS LUNCH. FOR HIM IT IS A SIMPLE MATTER - FIRE BARTLEBY. WE HEAR THE GENERAL BACKGROUND OF A RESTAURANT.

COLLEAGUE: Why don't you just sack him? Could I have the salt, please?

ACCOUNTANT: (PASSING THE SALT) Sack him? I know it seems the obvious solution, but I can't quite bring myself to. He's so utterly civil, so dignified... (THE COLLEAGUE SHRUGS AND GOES ON EATING) ... He's actually a very efficient worker except that he refuses to do certain things from time to time. It's a sort of ... passive resistance.

COLLEAGUE: Oh yes, what's he against?

ACCOUNTANT: Nothing, nothing. It's a mood; it's his manner. If I humour him a bit, I feel he'll come round. He could be a first class clerk. He needs someone to take him in hand. In another firm, he wouldn't have a chance.

CUT TO

SCENE 69

INT. DAY. RESTAURANT

C. U. of COLLEAGUE

THE COLLEAGUE LOOKS UP AND SMILES SOURLY.

COLLEAGUE: No, he'd be sacked immediately.

CUT TO

SCENE 70

INT. DAY. RESTAURANT

REVERSE ANGLES over the shoulders.
C. U. of COLLEAGUE's plate, knife and fork. TILT UP to reaction on his face as he begins to speak.

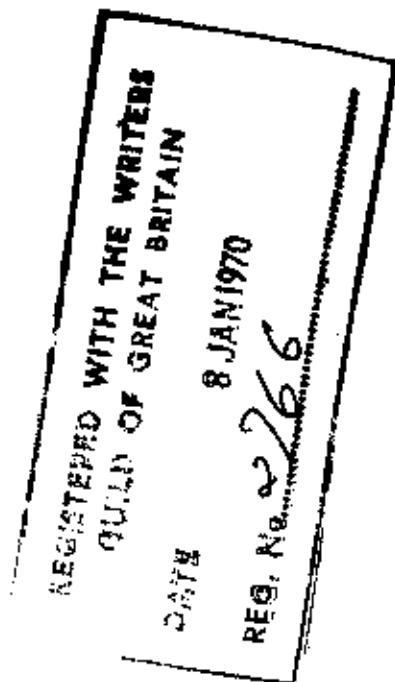
THE MEAL PROGRESSES. A WAITER'S HANDS ARE SEEN TO CLEAR THE TABLE OF PLATES AND UTENSILS. THE ACCOUNTANT IS HALF THINKING TO HIMSELF, HALF TALKING TO HIS COMPANION AS HE BECOMES CAUGHT UP WITH REFLECTIONS ABOUT BARTLEBY'S REBELLION. AGAINST HIM.

ACCOUNTANT: Funny, I always end up giving him a chance even though he irritates me. I'm damned if I'm going to let him get away with it. But then I just wonder how far he'll go. I wonder how far he would go.

COLLEAGUE: You ought to listen to yourself. You're obsessed with this character. Do yourself a favour. Get rid of him. People in the profession are beginning to talk about it. Your Bartleby will queer your reputation and put off clients.

(THE ACCOUNTANT BEGINS TO PERCEIVE THAT HIS JUDGEMENT IS CONFUSED. HIS PRUDENCE AND HIS BUSINESS SENSE ARE STIRRED)

ACCOUNTANT: Really? Well there's a limit. But you know he's there first thing in the morning and last thing at night. In his way, he works hard. I'll bring him round yet. If not he'll have to go.



Excerpt ends here

CUT TO

SCENE 71

EXT. DAY. PARK

M.S. PAN onto BARTLEBY.

IT IS THE END OF AUTUMN OR EVEN WINTER. FEW LEAVES ARE LEFT ON THE TREES. PILES OF LEAVES HAVE BEEN COLLECTED BY THE GARDENERS.

Cont'd over ...