

THE PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL BANKER

By Rod

Based on Matthew 18 vv 23-35.

CAST

Narrator A

Narrator B

King Mervyn Male. The tallest of the three

Diamond Bob Male. Medium height.

Penny Short Female. The smallest

KM, DB and PS are standing in a line. Those who remember John Cleese and the Two Ronnies in the Frost Report will be able to picture the set up that we try to play on.

A Once upon a time there was a king. *[KM steps forward one pace]*

B His name was Mervyn.

A He was Governor of all he surveyed. *[KM scans around. DB steps forward and tugs forelock to KM. Then PS steps forward and does the same. DB then turns to PS and forces her also to tug forelock to him]*

B Morning Guv'nor.

A One day King Mervyn was examining his accounts. *[KM collects account book.]* He noticed that one of his subjects..

B Diamond Bob

A .. ran a bank that owed millions..*[KM produces LARGE DEBT sign and hangs it around DB's neck]*

B and millions..

A and millions of pounds.

B That's a lot of money, that is.

A Indeed, so he called Diamond Bob to account and ordered him to pay his debt. *[KM gestures to this effect]*

B "I can't" wailed Bob. *[DB appeals open handed]*

A "In that case", said King Mervyn, "I will have to close your bank and throw you out on to the streets."

- B "Please give me more time," begged Bob. *[DB drops to knees begging]*
- A "Why should I?" asked Mervyn.
- B "There's been a world recession," said Bob. "Everyone's struggling. The investment arm of the bank has lost a lot of money."
- A "OK" said Mervyn, "I will bail out your bank." *[Helps DB up]*
- B "Thank you" said Bob.
- A "But you will have to set an example" said Mervyn. *[Wags finger]*
- B "Of course" said Bob. *[Nods]*
- A "By not awarding yourself any bonuses."
- B "What?" exclaimed Bob. *[DB waves hand animatedly]* "How will I be able to afford to pay for my second home, and my yacht. If I sell up everyone will think the bank is struggling. It will have no chance of survival. *[Pause –said quietly]* Unless, of course, I fix the Libor rates ."
- A "What?" said Mervyn.
- B "Oh, nothing", said Bob.
- A "All right", said Mervyn, "You can keep your bonuses and you can keep your bank. I will pay off all your debt." *[Removes LARGE DEBT from DB's neck and throws a way]*
- B "Oh thank you, thank you," said Bob. *[DB puts hands together in gesture of thanks. He then walks out to the front, goes round the back and returns to place having picked up his account book]*
- A And off he went.
- B When he got back to his bank, Diamond Bob examined the accounts of all those who owed money. This included the account of a small businesswoman called Penny Short. *[Both KM and DB look down on her – she looks up at them]*
- A Make up your mind. Was she small or short?
- B Both. She ran a small business , but she was short on payments. She owed hundreds.. *[DB produces SMALL DEBT sign and hangs it round her neck]*
- A And hundreds
- B And hundreds of pounds.
- A That's quite a lot of money.

- B Diamond Bob certainly thought so, and he called Penny Short to account. He ordered her to repay her debt.
- A “I can’t” wailed Penny. *[Appeals open handed]*
- B “In that case”, said Diamond Bob, “I will have to close your business and throw you out on to the streets.”
- A “Please give me more time,” begged Penny. *[PS drops to knees begging]*
- B “Why should I?” asked Bob.
- A “There’s been a recession,” said Penny. “Everyone’s struggling. I invested heavily in sunhats when I heard we were in drought – but it has been raining ever since.” *[Produces and puts on sunhat. Holds out hands to feel rain]*
- B “You must pay what you owe me now,” said Bob “ or I will repossess your car, your house and all your furniture.”
- A “No, please give me more time” begged Penny. “The sun is bound to shine soon.” *[Looks up for sun hopefully]*
- B “No,” said Bob, “it is too late.” And he took away Penny’s car, her house and all her furniture – and threw her out on to the street. *[Seizes sunhat and kicks her forward. She picks herself up, walks round back and collects copy of Big Issue. She then returns to her place where she sits holding up Big Issue]*
- A Bob seems to have made a big issue of Penny’s debt.
- B He certainly did.
- A That seems a bit unfair seeing how King Mervyn had let him off his debt – which was much much bigger. *[MK now walks past PS, buys copy of Big Issue and opens up. Reveals headline “Bob Closes Down Penny”]*
- B Yes, you are right. And when Mervyn found out, he wasn’t happy. He summoned Diamond Bob before him again. *[MK returns to place.]*
- A “You wicked banker,” he said. “I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. You should have had mercy on your fellow citizen as I had mercy on you.”
- B So he took away his bank, his bonuses and his reputation and threw him out on to the street. *[MK gives Big Issue to DB and shoves him to the ground.]*
- A So Diamond Bob got his comeuppance in the end. *PS and DB shuffle places so DB ends up sitting on ground where PS was. PS is now standing next to MK.]*

B Actually it was more of a go-down- ance. [*MK and PS are looking down at DB who is looking up at them*]