

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Key Quotes Analysis - Bartleby, the Scrivener

Directions: Read each quote below and identify its speaker and the character(s) who relate to it. Then, circle the theme(s) listed in the Themes Key that apply to each quote. Some quotes may lack a direct speaker (such as if the quote is an unnamed narrator) or have no related characters. In those cases it is fine to leave the “Speaker” or “Related character(s)” fields blank.

Themes Key

- 1 Passive Resistance
- 2 The Disconnected Workplace
- 3 Isolation and the Unreliability of Language
- 4 Charity and Its Limits

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| I am a man who, from his youth upwards, has been filled with a profound conviction that the easiest way of life is the best. | Speakers: |
| | Related character(s): |
| | Related Themes: 1 2 3 4 |

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| Nothing so aggravates an earnest person as passive resistance. If the individual so resisted be of a not inhumane temper, and the resisting one perfectly harmless in his passivity; then, in the better moods of the former, he will endeavor charitably to construe to his imagination what proves impossible to be solved by his judgment. | Speakers: |
| | Related character(s): |
| | Related Themes: 1 2 3 4 |

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| To befriend Bartleby; to humor him in his strange willfulness, will cost me little or nothing, while I lay up in my soul what will eventually prove a sweet morsel for my conscience. But this mood was not invariable with me. The passiveness of Bartleby sometimes irritated me. I felt strangely goaded on to encounter him in new opposition... I might as well have essayed to strike fire with my knuckles against a bit of Windsor soap. | Speakers: |
| | Related character(s): |
| | Related Themes: 1 2 3 4 |

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| ... Ah, happiness courts the light, so we deem the world is gay, but misery hides aloof, so we deem that misery there is none. | Speakers: |
| | Related character(s): |

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| | Related Themes: 1 2 3 4 |
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| "At present, I would prefer not to be a little reasonable," was his mildly cadaverous reply. | Speakers: |
| | Related character(s): |
| | Related Themes: 1 2 3 4 |

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| "...Good-bye, Bartleby, and fare you well." But he answered not a word; like the last column of some ruined temple, he remained standing mute and solitary in the middle of the otherwise deserted room. | Speakers: |
| | Related character(s): |
| | Related Themes: 1 2 3 4 |

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| It was the circumstance of being alone in a solitary office, up stairs, of a building entirely unhallowed by humanizing domestic associations...which greatly helped to enhance the irritable desperation of the hapless Colt. | Speakers: |
| | Related character(s): |
| | Related Themes: 1 2 3 4 |

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| ...charity often operates as a vastly wise and prudent principle—a great safeguard to its possessor. Men have committed murder for jealousy’s sake, and anger’s sake, and hatred’s sake, and selfishness’ sake, and spiritual pride’s sake; but no man that ever I heard of, ever committed a diabolical murder for sweet charity’s sake. | Speakers: |
| | Related character(s): |
| | Related Themes: 1 2 3 4 |

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| Yes, Bartleby, stay there behind your screen, thought I; I shall persecute you no more; you are harmless and noiseless as any of these old chairs... At last I see it, I feel it; I penetrate to the predestinated purpose of life... Others may have loftier parts to enact; but my mission in this world, Bartleby, is to furnish you with office-room for such period as you may see fit to remain. | Speakers: |
| | Related character(s): |
| | Related Themes: 1 2 3 4 |

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| <p>...it often is, that the constant friction of illiberal minds wears out at last the best resolves of the more generous.</p> | Speakers: |
| | Related character(s): |
| | Related Themes: 1 2 3 4 |

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| <p>The yard was entirely quiet. It was not accessible to the common prisoners. The surrounding walls, of amazing thickness, kept off all sounds behind them. The Egyptian character of the masonry weighed upon me with its gloom. But a soft imprisoned turf grew underfoot. The heart of the eternal pyramids, it seemed, wherein, by some strange magic, through the lefts, grass-seed, dropped by birds, had sprung.</p> | Speakers: |
| | Related character(s): |
| | Related Themes: 1 2 3 4 |

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| <p>Dead letters! does it not sound like dead men? ... Sometimes from out the folded paper the pale clerk takes a ring:—the finger it was meant for, perhaps, moulders in the grave; a bank note sent in swiftest charity:—he whom it would relieve, nor eats nor hungers any more; pardon for those who died despairing; hope for those who died unhoping; good tidings for those who died stifling by unrelieved calamities. On errands of life, these letters speed to death. Ah, Bartleby! Ah, humanity!</p> | Speakers: |
| | Related character(s): |
| | Related Themes: 1 2 3 4 |