

The story continues...

Frederick sighed. 'Perhaps you're right,' he said. 'And, after all, what have I got to lose? Well, the truth is that up until two years ago, I was leading a very simple and predictable life. I had a steady job, a beautiful home and a loving family. Then, all of a sudden, something happened that changed everything. My whole world just fell _____'

Frederick broke _____. He seemed a little uneasy.

'Go _____' Lady Prescott said gently.

'Well, it's a very long story,' Frederick replied. 'And I don't really know where to begin.'

'Try the beginning,' said Lady Prescott, putting a straw into her milkshake.

'I'm in no hurry. I'm going to drink this very, very slowly.'

Frederick took a deep breath and picked _____ the story again. 'My mother is a nurse in a small hospital,' he said. 'She looks after sick children. She's a wonderful, extraordinary woman and she works incredibly hard.'

One day, I drove _____ to the hospital to pick my mother up after work. We were going out to dinner. I parked the car and, as I was walking through one of the wards, I could hear a child crying very softly. I looked _____ and saw a little boy. He must have been about eight or nine. He was so ill that he couldn't sit up in bed properly. He had to lie _____ pillows all day long. It was terrible. He was pale, lifeless, too weak to move.

The next day, I rang _____ the manager of the hospital and asked about the little boy. She told me that all the children in that ward had problems with their kidneys.

"And is there nothing you can do?" I asked.

"I'm afraid not," she said. "What we really need is half a dozen kidney machines. Then the children would be able to get _____ of bed and walk _____ the ward. But, unfortunately, the hospital is very short of money. We're so hard _____ that we can't afford to buy one machine, let alone six. So, I'm afraid the children will just have to suffer."

When I put down the phone, I felt terribly disturbed. It was so sad, so shocking, so unfair. I decided that I had to find a way to help the children. I couldn't stand by and do nothing.

At first, I couldn't think what to do. But then – all of a sudden – I came _____ with an idea. I was a bank manager and a lot of money passed _____ my hands. During a normal working day, I would write out ten, maybe twelve, official cheques for different things – stationery, coffee, furniture, stamps and so on. I'd worked at the bank for thirty years, so everybody knew me. And nobody ever checked _____ on what I was doing. I suppose I had an honest face and they just trusted me!

One afternoon – it was a Wednesday – I called my secretary into the office and told her to cancel my appointments. When she'd left the room, I took the phone _____ the hook and drew the curtains. Then I took the official cheque book _____ of the safe and wrote a cheque to myself!

Pay Mr F. Carruthers,

£100.00 only

Signed Frederick Carruthers.

It was breathtakingly, outrageously simple. A bank manager stealing money from his own bank!