

Box and Cox by John Maddison Morton

M/M SmS, SS, R&D, Kn

Cox. No, you don't! (*Stopping him.*) I'll not lose sight of you till I've restored you to the arms of your intended.

Box. *My* intended? You mean *your* intended.

Cox. No, sir - yours!

Box. How can she be *my* intended, now that I'm drowned?

Cox. You're no such thing, sir! and I prefer presenting you to Penelope Ann.

Box. I've no wish to be introduced to your intended.

Cox. *My* intended? How can that be, sir? You proposed to her first!

Box. What of that, sir? I came to an untimely end, and you popped the question afterwards.

Cox. Very well, sir!

Box. Very well, sir!

Cox. You are much more worthy of her than I am, sir. Permit me, then, to follow the generous impulse of my nature - I give her up to you.

Box. Benevolent being! I wouldn't rob you for the world! (*Going.*) Good morning, sir!

Cox. (*Seizing him.*) Stop!

Box. Unhand me, hatter! or I shall cast off the lamb and assume the lion!

Cox. Pooh! (*Snapping his fingers close to BOX's face.*)

Box. An insult! to my very face - under my very nose! (*Rubbing it.*) You know the consequences, sir - instant satisfaction, sir!

Cox. With all my heart, sir! (*They go to the fire-place, R., and begin ringing bells violently, and pull down bell-pulls.*)

Both. Mrs. Bouncer! Mrs. Bouncer!

MRS. BOUNCER runs in, L. C.

Mrs B. What is it, gentlemen?

Box. Pistols for two!

Mrs B. Yes, sir. [*Going.*]

Cox. Stop! You don't mean to say, thoughtless and imprudent woman, that you keep loaded fire-arms in the house?

Mrs B. Oh, no - they're not loaded

Cox. Then produce the murderous weapons instantly!

Exit MRS. BOUNCER, L. C.

Box. I say, sir!

Cox. Well, sir?

Box. What's your opinion of duelling, sir?

Cox. I think it's a barbarous practice, sir.

Box. So do I, sir. To be sure, I don't so much object to it when the pistols are not loaded.

Cox. No: I dare say that *does* make a difference.

Box. And yet, sir - on the other hand - doesn't it strike you as rather a waste of time, for two people to keep firing pistols at another, with nothing in 'em?

Cox. No, sir - no more than any other harmless recreation.

Box. Hark ye! Why do you object to marry Penelope Ann?

Cox. Because, as I've observed already, I can't abide her. You'll be happy with her.

Box. Happy? Me! With the consciousness that I have deprived *you* of such a treasure? No, no, Cox!

Cox. Don't think of me, Box - I shall be sufficiently rewarded by the knowledge of my Box's happiness.

Box. Don't be absurd, sir!

Cox. Then don't you be ridiculous, sir!

Box. I won't have her!

Cox. I won't have her!

Box. I have it! Suppose we draw lots for the lady - eh, Mr. Cox?

Cox. That's fair enough Mr. Box.

Box. Or, what say you to dice?

Cox. With all my heart! Dice, by all means. *[Eagerly.]*