
BOUNCER

BOUNCER: He's gone at last! I was in fear Mr. Box should come in before Mr. Cox went out. Luckily they've never met yet; for Mr. Box is hard at work at a newspaper office all night, and doesn't come home till morning, and Mr. Cox is busy making hats all day long, and doesn't come home till night; so that I'm getting double rent for my room, and neither of my lodgers is any the wiser for it. Now, let me put Mr. Cox's things out of Mr. Box's way.

BOX: (*without*) Pooh — pooh! Why don't you keep your own side of the staircase, sir? (*Enters — puts his head out of door again, shouting*) It was as much your fault as mine, sir! I say, sir. It was as much your fault as mine, sir!

BOUNCER: Dear, dear, Mr. Box! What a temper you are in to be sure! I declare, you are quite *pale*.

BOX: What colour would you have a man to be who has been setting up long leaders for a daily paper all night?

BOUNCER: Oh, certainly, Mr. Box! (*Going.*)

BOX: Stop! Can you inform me who the individual is that I invariably encounter going down stairs when I'm coming up, and coming up stairs when I'm going down?

BOUNCER: (*confused*) Oh—yes—the gentleman in the attic, sir.

BOX: Oh! There's nothing particularly remarkable about him, except his hats. I meet him in all sorts of hats — white hats and black hats — hats with broad brims, and hats with narrow brims; in short, I have come to the conclusion that he must be associated with the hatting interest.

BOUNCER: Yes, sir! And they tell me that's why he took the *hattics*!

BOUNCER - COX - BOX

BOX: Instantly remove that hatter!

COX: Immediately turn out that printer!

BOUNCER: Well — but, gentlemen —

COX: Explain! (*pulling him around*)

BOX: Explain! (*pulling him around*) Whose room is this?

COX: Yes, whose room is this?

BOX: Doesn't it belong to me?

BOUNCER: No!

COX: There! You hear, sir, it belongs to me!

BOUNCER: No, it belongs to both of you!

COX AND BOX: (*together*) Both of us!

BOUNCER: Gents, don't be angry. But you see, this gentleman, (*pointing to BOX*) only being at home in the day time, and that gentleman (*pointing to COX*) at night, I thought I might venture, until my little back second floor room was ready —

COX AND BOX: When will your little back second floor room be ready?

BOUNCER: Why, tomorrow.

COX: I'll take it!

BOX: So will I!

BOUNCER: Excuse me, but if you both take it, you may just as well stop where you are.

COX AND BOX: True.

BOUNCER: Now don't quarrel, gentlemen. I'll see if I can't get the other room ready this very day.

COX

COX: I bought a mutton chop. (*puts chop on table*) Good gracious! I've forgot the bread. Hallo! What's this? A roll, I declare. Come, that's lucky! Now then to light the fire. Hallo! (*seeing the lucifer box on table*) Why, it's empty! I left one in it — I take my oath I did. Why, the fire *is* lighted. Where's the gridiron? *On* the fire, I declare. And what's that on it? Bacon? Bacon it is! Well, now, 'pon my life, there is a quiet coolness about Bouncer's proceedings that's almost amusing. He takes my last lucifer — my coals—and my gridiron, to cook his breakfast by! No, no — I can't stand this! Come out of that. (*pokes fork into bacon, and puts it on a plate on the table, then places his chop on the gridiron, which he puts on the fire*) Now then, for my things. (*opens door, and goes out, slamming the door after him*)

BOX

BOX: (*suddenly showing his head from behind curtains*) Come in—come in! I wonder how long I've been asleep! (*suddenly recollecting*) Goodness gracious! my bacon. (*leaps off bed and runs to the fireplace*) Hallo, what's this? A chop? Whose chop? Bouncer's, I'll be bound. He thought to cook his breakfast while I was asleep — with *my* coals too — and my gridiron. Ha, ha! But where's my bacon? (*seeing it on table*) Here it is! Well, 'pon my life! And shall I curb my indignation? Shall I falter in my vengeance? No! (*digs the fork into the chop and throws chop out the window*)

COX - BOX

COX: What a disgusting position!

BOX: Will you allow me to observe, if you have not had any exercise today, you'd better go out and take it?

COX: I shall not do anything of the sort, sir.

BOX: Very well, sir.

COX: Very well, sir. However, don't let me prevent *you* from going out.

BOX: Don't flatter yourself, sir. I shall retire to my pillow.

COX: I beg your pardon, sir. I cannot allow any one to rumple my bed.

BOX: *Your* bed! Hark ye, sir, can you fight?

COX: No, sir.

BOX: No? Then come on.

COX: Sit down, sir, or I'll instantly call "Police!"

BOX: I say, sir —

COX: Well, sir?

BOX: Although we are doomed to occupy the same room for a few hours longer, I don't

see any necessity for our cutting each other's throat, sir.

COX: Not at all. It's an operation that I should decidedly object to.

BOX: And, after all, I've no violent animosity against you, sir.

COX: Nor have I any rooted antipathy to you, sir.

BOX: Besides, it was all Bouncer's fault, sir.

COX: Entirely, sir.

BOX: Very well, sir!

COX: Very well, sir!

BOX: Do you sing, sir?

COX: I sometimes dabble in a serenade.

BOX: Then dabble away.