



The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure XVI – The Adventure of the Cardboard Box

It's Boxing Day!

And in this box we have two severed, salted, mismatched, human...well you'll have to read this weekend's story, *The Cardboard Box*, to learn the particulars. Suffice it to say it's one of the most savage tales in the canon. It's also a story that calls to mind many questions and comments, among them:

If imitation is, as the saying goes, the sincerest form of flattery, does it follow that Holmes has changed his mind about Poe's detective?

Why would a ship's steward, a domestic afloat, have a working knowledge of sailors' knots? Can you narrow the list of CARD's victims down to just one? Who was victimized to the greatest degree, and why do you say so?

Who can tell us some anecdotes about Paganini that Holmes may have related to Watson?

Scotland Yard called upon their shorthand man to take down the murderer's statement verbatim. Shorthand has been used by officialdom for several thousand years, going back to the days of papyrus and clay tablets. It enjoyed a vogue in ancient Roman times when Senate speeches were preserved by famed shorthand secretaries like Marcus Tullius Tiro, who devised the Tironian Method. After the Dark Ages, shorthand was something of a lost art until the end of the 1500's, when the English stenographers Bright and Bales revived it. In the 1830's, shorthand was popularized by Sir Isaac Pitman, whose Pitman Method is distinguished by the



shading of pen strokes, heavy or light, with 204 short forms. Police in STUD (1881) relied on shorthand a couple of times, and they probably used the Pitman Method. Irish native John Robert Gregg developed a new type of shorthand in 1888. The Gregg Method is characterized by symbols based on longhand strokes, with 129 brief forms. Gregg's Method is easy to learn. It's swifter and smoother than earlier shorthand methods and may have been used to record the criminal statement in CARD (1889). Most people speak at a rate of 140 words a minute. The world record for shorthand was set during ACD's lifetime (1927) when an American stenographer achieved 282 words per minute for five continuous minutes. Whew!

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