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The excited chatter was silenced when the Court Bailiff reverently called out 'All rise' and the heavy, panelled door behind the elevated bench opened for the swift, theatrical entrance of the black robed, bewigged Judge I.L.Hanghem. He took his seat, shuffled some papers on the bench and adjusted the small wire-framed glasses to the end of his beak like nose before looking over the top and gesturing for the assembled throng to take their seats.

'You may bring in the jury, Bailiff'

The smaller door to the jury room was quietly opened and twelve sombre peers filed in to take their seats in the jury box - surreptitious glances towards the Defendant betraying what was about to unfold.

'Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, have you reached a unanimous verdict?' Judge Hanghem inquired as he penned the answer to 20a in the Quick Crossword in front of him.

The Foreman of the Jury stood, coughed timidly, glanced down at a small slip of paper in his hand to re-confirm the Jury's verdict and announced 'We have Your Honour'

Judge Hanghem stared at his newspaper with judicial gravitas, puzzling over 1a, then looked up at the Foreman and asked with equally judicial gravitas, 'In the matter of *The Crown* versus *Subbie*, do you find the defendant guilty or not guilty of the charge brought before him this day?'

The Foreman gulped once, re-checked the slip of paper in his now clammy hand and in a voice barely audible to the last row in the gallery, replied - 'We find the Defendant guilty, Your Honour' slumping into his seat to the sounds of gasps and murmurs rippling through the gallery.

The Judge paused for thought, considered the weighty decision he was about to make, then, in a moment of inspiration penned the answer to 12a. He

reached for the small black cloth before him, placed it on top of his wig then beckoned for the Defendant to rise.

'Mr *Subbie*, after due deliberation of the facts presented to the Court in this trial, a Jury of your peers has found you guilty of the charge before you, to wit, that you did wilfully murder the English Language. Due to the heinous nature of this crime, it is the decision of this court that you serve the maximum sentence permissible. Accordingly, you will be taken to a place of *Elocution* where you will be incarcerated for twenty eight days at which time you will be *elocuted* until you are well read.'

Pandemonium broke out in the Courtroom. Reporters rushed for the exit, jostling to be the first to file the breaking story. Angry cries of '*Elocution's too good for the bastard!*' rang out accompanied by shaken fists whilst sobbing and tears were few and far between.

'Order! Order in the Court!' shouted the Judge, pounding his gavel on the bench until a measure of peace was restored.

With Bailiffs holding the Defendant's arms, the Judge intoned with finality, 'Take him down'

It was then that the Defendant, *Subbie*, broke his silence -

'Stone the bloody crows Judge mate. Jeez, it's not like I done nothin' flamin' drastic for Gawd's sake. Yez are jokin' right? *Elocution*? Think I'd rather be dead....'