



## The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes

### Adventure LIII – The Adventure of the Three Garridebs

If there is such a thing as a guilty pleasure in the Canon, this story is mine. I know it isn't in the top tier of Watson's accounts for overall quality, but it's a favorite with me, and I can still remember where I was when I read its climactic scene for the first time: out on North Main Street, waiting for the Ashmont bus. But let me take one step back from that occasion. I was in my mid-thirties when I first began to read the Sherlock Holmes adventures, and one of the things that struck me was how exciting they were despite the relative rarity of violent action (we see its results, but not usually its occurrence) and the almost complete absence of love scenes. And then the sudden thunderbolt, when Killer Evans's revolver rang out and Holmes revealed "the depth of love and loyalty which lay behind that cold mask." Wonderful! Next up, a few comments and questions that I hope will set the Hounds on the trail of still more moments of revelation in this week's story, "The Three Garridebs."

Killer Evans: Early in the story, when he was posing as John Garrideb, Killer Evans said, "I've read of your tricks, Mr. Holmes..." By this time in the Master's career, had lots of criminals made themselves familiar with Holmes's methods? Did Killer Evans get his Garrideb idea from reading either "The Red-Headed League" or "The Stock-Broker's Clerk?" And if so, what ever made him think he could fool Holmes with his scheme?



Is there a Moorville, Kansas? I couldn't find the town on any of the maps that I own. If Moorville didn't exist, why did Evans put a fake town on his card? This criminal does seem to have had his limitations as a schemer, so why didn't he simply kill Garrideb?

Was he truly a “soft-hearted guy,” or was there a practical reason for using deception instead of violence? And why did Evans wait such a relatively long time between getting out of prison and approaching Nathan Garrideb?

Had Evans been a partner in Prescott’s counterfeiting operation? Why? They didn’t seem to be friends, and counterfeiting doesn’t require a violent partner. If they weren’t business associates or friends, then how did Evans learn the location of Prescott’s counterfeiting equipment?

Holmes and Watson: Watson appears to be living at Baker Street during this adventure. But why did Holmes open a drawer and hand a revolver to Watson instead of telling Watson to bring his own gun? And did anyone remember to load the guns? Does that explain why neither Holmes nor Watson fired a shot in response to Killer Evans’s attack? What made the “crash” when Holmes struck Evans with his gun? Do you think that Holmes would really have killed Evans if Evans had killed Watson?

As I read the shooting scene, Evans stuck his head out of the trap door, saw Holmes and Watson, diverted them with a little chit-chat, and then pulled out his gun and fired while he was still largely in the hole. This would at least explain how Holmes and Watson didn’t see him go for his gun. But how did Evans then sprawl on the floor when Holmes hit him? Did he first leap up and then sprawl? Have any athletic Sherlockians ever attempted to recreate this scene?

Why didn’t Holmes bring the police with him as he did in “The Red-Headed League?”

Did his injury have anything to do with Watson’s decision to move out? (See “The Illustrious Client,” which took place a few months after “The Three Garridebs.”) Did Watson’s injury have anything to do with Holmes’s decision to retire? Watson says this story may have been a comedy. I don’t see the comedy. Can anyone else find it?

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