



The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure LVIII – The Adventure of the Retired Colourman

There's a house with an overgrown garden...and a mighty unusual variety of roses! Our new story, of course, is *The Adventure of the Retired Colourman*. My questions and comments for this sinister tale:

She presumably volunteered to marry the old, pathetic, futile, miserable miser. She acquiesced to life in the slatternly house. She may have been an adultress. Not the most inspiring of characters, “and yet! — and yet!” why is it still possible to sympathize with Mrs. Amberley?

Does the game of chess have any actual bearing on the story?

Barker seems to be a pretty darned good detective. Is Holmes serious, or joking, when he says Barker is his “hated rival?”

“We we—” is a fairly thin indictment, though it's the best Dr. Ernest could do under the circumstances. Is it strong enough evidence to lay before a jury, or even before the Broadmoor commitment board?



Josiah Amberley lived at a time when retirement wasn't a universal practice. In those days, before old age pensions and social security, and when lifespans were shorter than we now enjoy, people could, and did, work until the day they died. There are precious few other retired persons in the canon. Irene Adler is said to be one, in the sense that she was retired from the operatic stage. Ferguson, the sea captain, retired to Three Gables before Mrs. Maberley took up residence there. Sherlock Holmes, of course, retired to Sussex at the end of his detective career.

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