

SIRENS OF THE SI-FAN

by Rick Lai

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The most memorable villainess to confront Doc Savage was Lo Lar. Although her husband, High Lar, was the nominal villain, she was the true brains behind a diabolical scheme to seize control of the world's aviation industry. She was born and raised among Asian pirates with a tradition of feeding captives to a giant octopus. A photo of her father showed him to be an incredibly ugly man. Otherwise, little is known about her origins. Her hidden background can be constructed when we consider the extraordinary physical resemblance between this she-devil and three female agents of Dr. Fu Manchu.

The Feathered Octopus (September 1937) by Lester Dent (writing as Kenneth Robeson) depicted Lo Lar as an extremely attractive Eurasian. She was not tall, but an exquisitely shaped gemlike woman. Her black eyes are large and almond-shaped. This description can also be applied to a trio of women from the works of Sax Rohmer: Zarmi in *The Hand of Fu Manchu* (1917), Lola Dumas in *President Fu Manchu* (1936) and Miska in *The Golden Scorpion* (1919).

The femme fatales employed by Fu Manchu often proved to be two-edged swords. They consistently either betrayed their master by falling in love with one of his enemies, or engaged in plots to supplant him as ruler of the Si-Fan, the most powerful crime syndicate in Asia. The outstanding exception to this rule was Zarmi.

The most loyal of the distaff underlings, Zarmi rarely permitted any man to touch her. Dressed in barbaric costumes, she performed exotic dances that invoked strong desires in men. If any of the male audience attempted to grab her, she would burn their skin with a cigarette or strike them with her sharp Malaysian dagger.

Zarmi appears to have suffered an extremely brutal death. At the conclusion of *The Hand of Fu Manchu*, the Si-Fan made its headquarters in underground caves beneath an English chapel once used to celebrate the Black Mass in centuries past. During a police raid, Dr. Petrie, the novel's narrator, discovered Zarmi's body in the catacombs. Her clothes were torn, her arms and throat covered with bruises, and her face contorted as if she had died from strangulation. Besides Zarmi laid the body of her attacker with the Malaysian dagger in his heart. He was Samarkan, a Greek member of the Si-Fan and former manager of a prominent London hotel.

The impression is given that Fu Manchu and his daughter, Fah Lo Suee, perished. With other members of the Si-Fan, the perfidious pair took a subterranean passage to a river where a Chinese yacht, the *Chanak-Kampo*, was waiting for them. The yacht was destroyed in a severe storm that caused no fewer than twenty shipwrecks of the English shore. Fah Lo Suee and her father returned in *Daughter of Fu Manchu* (1931), but Sax Rohmer offers no word of explanation concerning how they survived the sinking of the *Chanak-Kampo*. This is one of the greatest mysteries of the Fu Manchu saga.

The answer to this riddle may lie in the peculiar code of honor that governed the conduct of Fu Manchu. Despite being a ruthless megalomaniac, Fu Manchu will risk apprehension to save the lives of others to whom he feels morally obligated. In *President Fu Manchu*, he braved a police dragnet to perform a delicate operation on a young boy. When Zarmi failed to join him on the yacht, Fu Manchu would have concluded that she

was captured by the police. Reluctant to abandon such a loyal subordinate, Fu Manchu and his daughter left the *Chanak-Kampo* and returned to the English shore (1). He instructed the yacht's captain to continue its voyage, and the craft was wrecked by the subsequent storm.

It would not be beyond the resources of Fu Manchu to retrieve Zarmi's body from the morgue. Earlier Samarkan had been imprisoned. He faked his death by taking F. Kataleptis, a drug developed by Fu Manchu that induces an artificial state of catalepsy. By corrupting a prison guard, Samarkan was liberated from the mortuary.

If Fu Manchu also managed to gain possession of Zarmi's body before an autopsy could be performed, an interesting question is raised. Was Zarmi really dead? Zarmi may not have been killed by Samarkan, but merely battered.

Hidden in the darkness of the catacombs, the weakened Zarmi saw the approaching Petrie. Realizing that she was in no condition to offer resistance to Petrie, Zarmi swallowed a capsule of F. Kataleptis. Petrie was extremely familiar with this drug. If he performed a detailed examination of Zarmi, he would have correctly diagnosed her condition. Aware of Petrie's expertise in recognizing the symptoms of F. Kataleptis, the clever Zarmi contorted her features to create the image of death by strangulation. The drug froze this horrible expression on Zarmi's visage. Petrie was quite explicit in his account of the revulsion he felt upon viewing Zarmi's face. Therefore, he would not have been eager to undertake any more than a brief examination of the body.

Upon the removal of Zarmi from the morgue, Fu Manchu would have injected his antidote to F. Kataleptis. Could Zarmi and Lo Lar be the same person? Certain discrepancies between the pair can be easily reconciled. Zarmi spoke broken English, but Lo Lar's was flawless. In the intervening years, Zarmi could have polished her English. Lo Lar's exact age was not given in *The Feathered Octopus*. Zarmi could have been as young as seventeen in *The Hand of Fu Manchu*. Cay Van Ash's *Ten Years Beyond Baker Street* (1984) described a gap in Rohmer's novel in which Sherlock Holmes fought Fu Manchu and Zarmi. Van Ash gives 1914 as the year of these events. My Doc Savage chronology, *The Complete Chronology of Bronze* (1999), assigned the events of *The Feathered Octopus* to May-June 1937. If Lo Lar was Zarmi, then she would be at least forty. Nevertheless, she may not be looking her age. It should be noted that Fu Manchu perfected an elixir that could freeze or even reverse the aging process. The elixir was shared among the top leaders of the Si-Fan (2). For example, Fah Lo Suee displayed no signs of aging since the late 1920's.

The "Lo" in the name of Doc Savage's opponent suggests a possible connection with Fah Lo Suee. We do not know the true name of the treacherous offspring of Fu Manchu. Fah Lo Suee is a childhood nickname. *Daughter of Fu Manchu* translates it as "Sweet Perfume." A different translation, "Lily Blossom," is given in *The Wrath of Fu Manchu* (1973). The true name of Doc's antagonist could be Zarmi. She may have been a childhood playmate of Fah Lo Suee, and decided to take a nickname with the name "Lo" in it.

The name of Lo Lar may have a peculiar significance to Zarmi. Lo Lar is very similar to Lola. Inadvertently, Zarmi saved Fu Manchu from the fate that overcame the passengers of the *Chanak-Kampo*. In *The Bride of Fu Manchu* (1933), the overlord of the Si-Fan utilized a yacht called the *Lola*. It may very have been christened in honor of Lo Lar.

Another woman who resembled Lo Lar in the Fu Manchu series is Lola Dumas. She functioned as the Si-Fan's choice for First Lady of the United States. *President Fu Manchu* related how the Si-Fan infiltrated the presidential campaign of a third-party candidate, Harvey Bragg. Fu Manchu brainwashed one of Bragg's bodyguards to assassinate the politician. Upon Bragg's death, the presidential candidacy was assumed by Paul Salvaletti, an agent of the Si-Fan.

Salvaletti's fiancée was Lola Dumas, a glamorous socialite of New York. She was twice divorced. Her father, Emmanuel Dumas, was a shady businessman who claimed to be descended from Alexander Dumas, the author of *The Three Musketeers*.

Fu Manchu had an extremely low opinion of Lola. He felt she was overly promiscuous and untrustworthy. The lord of the Si-Fan attributed Lola's failings to characteristics that she had inherited from her father's bloodline. Since we are never told anything about Lola's mother, the possibility exists that Emmanuel's daughter and Lo Lar were half-sisters.

In the conclusion of *President Fu Manchu*, Salvaletti's presidential aspirations (3) collapsed when it was revealed that he had secretly married years earlier. The would-be bigamist and his legal wife were murdered for this indiscretion by Fu Manchu through the agency of venomous spiders. The shock of viewing the corpses caused Lola to collapse in a coma. At last report, she was critically ill inside a hospital.

The chances are that Lola recovered since a similar fate befell Lo Lar in *The Feathered Octopus*. High Lar's plan to feed Doc Savage to an octopus backfired. When High Lar was devoured instead by the monstrosity, his wife fell into a deep coma. Upon her recovery, she expressed repentance for her misdeeds. After surrendering all records of her criminal enterprises to Doc, she agreed to be an inmate of the Crime College, Doc's unique institution for rehabilitating criminals. The tendency of Lola Dumas and Lo Lar to fall into comas after a severe shock could have been inherited from a common mother.

It was the custom among Lo Lar's people for the husband to take the wife's name upon marriage. Her American husband took the alias of High Lar and became feared throughout the Pacific as the Feathered Octopus. Besides being a joke on his wife's name, the "High" could indicate that his marriage to Lo Lar made him the high priest of some barbaric cult. The deity worshipped by this ancient religion could have been some sort of winged octopus. As high priest, Lo Lar's husband could have claimed to be the human incarnation of this god, the justification for the title of Feathered Octopus.

The Si-Fan was a confederation of various cults such as the Thugs of India and the Assassins of Syria. In *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (1932), Sir Denis Nayland Smith, the archenemy of the Si-Fan, asserted that the native of the Pacific islands were indirectly controlled by that insidious organization. Smith's remarks hinted at the existence of some secret society associated with the Si-Fan in the Pacific. Since their criminal network was situated on the Pacific Island of Ral (Lar spelt backwards), Lo Lar and her husband must be the heads of this Si-Fan affiliate.

Lo Lar was raised by pirates. Her mother must have been a member of that criminal fraternity. She could have been Lo Lar's predecessor as high priestess of an octopus god. In the works of H. P. Lovecraft, we find frequent mention of Cthulhu, a dark god revered by disreputable seaman. The general appearance of this demonic entity roughly corresponds to a winged octopus. The god of Lo Lar's cult was probably a

distant avatar of Cthulhu (4). It is fortunate indeed that Lo Lar did not fully pierce the mysteries of her religion. A true priestess of Cthulhu could have called forth awesome monstrosities against Doc Savage.

Lovecraft's tales give us very little assistance in determining the name of Lo Lar's mother. We must confine ourselves to researching stories of illicit activities on the high seas. Lar could be a shortened version of Larsen. The activities of an amoral sea captain named Wolf Larsen were detailed by Jack London in *The Sea Wolf* (1904). Philip Jose Farmer identified Larsen as Doc's grandfather in *Doc Savage: His Apocalyptic Life* (1973, revised in 1975).

Death Larsen, Wolf's brother, was a supporting character in London's book. While he possessed all of this brother's brutal characteristics, Death Larsen lacked Wolf's capacity for learning. Unlike the self-educated Wolf, Death could barely read or write. Death's steamship, the *Macedonia*, was equipped with a canon. This was a rather odd addition to a vessel that was nominally engaged in seal-hunting. The *Macedonia* was actually involved on piracy as well as the smuggling of arms, opium and slaves.

The Larsen brothers were sworn enemies. After stealing Wolf's crew, Death left him to perish in a disabled vessel during 1893 (5). Since Wolf was Doc's grandfather, it seems apt that Death should be the grandfather of a criminal who fought the Man of Bronze.

Death Larsen could have fathered a daughter who rose to become a power among the Pacific pirates. She would correspond to the siren, the mythological woman who lured sailors to their doom. In Nordic legends, this lady is called a "Lorelei." The mother of Lola Dumas and Lola must have been named Lorelei Larsen.

Emmanuel Dumas and Death Larsen could have been partners in a smuggling operation. Lorelei became Emmanuel's mistress. Their daughter, born in 1895, was christened Lola, a name that combined the respective first two letters of her mother's first and last names. Lorelei and Emmanuel later separated, and Lola was left in her father's custody. Emmanuel's alleged ancestor, Alexander Dumas, had endowed his own illegitimate son with his surname. Emmanuel felt compelled to continue this tradition.

Lorelei then established herself among her father's contacts in the pirate community. Becoming a priestess of the sinister octopus cult (6), she married a leading member of the Si-Fan. Their daughter Zarmi, born in 1897, was a childhood friend of Fah Lo Suee. Young Zarmi expressed a desire for a nickname like her playmate. Remembering her other daughter, Lorelei call her second child Lo Lar.

Who was Lo Lar's father? In *The Feathered Octopus*, a photo of Lo Lar's father was glimpsed by Monk Mayfair, Doc Savage's assistant. Her father had a "homely" and "wizened" face. Such an ugly man might have felt compelled to wear a mask. A careful scrutiny of Lo Lar's third double, Miska, will allow us to identity this unattractive man. *The Golden Scorpion* is peripherally related to the Fu Manchu series. Fu Manchu made a brief unnamed appearance in the novel. The Si-Fan was replaced by the Sublime Order. This is probably an allusion to the Sublime (or Sacred) Order of the White Peacock, a prestigious tong to which the top members of the Si-Fan belonged.

The Oriental villain of *The Golden Scorpion* was Fo-Hi, a man with yellow eyes like a tiger. This is his only verified facial characteristic. He was only seen in public wearing a cowl or a veil. A protégé of Fu Manchu, Fo-Hi used F. Katalepsis to kidnap scores of Western scientists for the Sublime Order. The venom of the black scorpion of

India was the basis for the drug. A golden scorpion became the token of identification among Fo-Hi's adherents. Fo-Hi was also connected to an opium-smuggling network smashed by Gaston Max of the French Surete in Rohmer's *The Yellow Claw* (1916).

Miska was an unwilling pawn of Fo-Hi. Her mother was French, and her father was Syrian. According to Miska, her father was a Wali (holy man) in the city of Aleppo. During a plague, Miska was sent with her mother to her uncle's house in Damascus. The caravan carrying them was attacked by bandits. Miska's mother was killed, and she was sold as a slave to Fo-Hi. Threatening to transform Miska into a living corpse with F. Katalapsis, Fo-Hi forced her to assist in his abduction of scientists.

Miska was freed from her servitude from with the apparent death of Fo-Hi. Cornered by Scotland Yard and Gaston Max, Fo-Hi stuck a gong that generated disintegrating sound waves. This gong was an invention of Henrik Ericksen, whose devices play an important role in later Fu Manchu novels. Fo-Hi disappeared in a cloud of smoke. The general consensus was that he committed suicide rather than be captured. Of course, his demise could have been an illusion to cover his escape through a secret passage (7). Miska probably married Keppel Stuart, an expert on tropical diseases and snake poisons.

Fo-Hi had wanted Miska for himself. Hopelessly in love with her, Fo-Hi refused to use his powers of hypnotism to seduce her. In a moment of desperation, Fo-Hi asserted he was begging Miska in a way he had pleaded to no other woman. Fo-Hi's obsession could be explained of Miska bore an uncanny resemblance to a woman from his past.

Opium smuggling could have brought Death Larsen and Fo-Hi into contact. Through her father, Fo-Hi met Lorelei and successfully wooed her. Fo-Hi must have worn his mask because his face was physically repellent. Despite his ugliness, Lorelei succumbed rather easily to Fo-Hi's charms. The marriage of Fo-Hi and Lorelei resulted in the birth of Lo Lar.

Miska's resemblance to Lorelei can be rationalized if they were cousins. There doesn't seem to be anything sinister in Miska's forebears at first glance. A critical investigation of other works by Sax Rohmer indicates otherwise. As the keeper of a sacred relic of the prophet Mohammed, Hassan of Aleppo from *The Quest of the Sacred Slipper* (1919) could be accurately described as a Wali. He was also the hereditary leader in Syria of the Hashishin (the Assassins). This ancient order performed murder under the influence of hashish. A slipper of Mohammed was stolen from Hassan. Trailing the thief to England, Hassan ordered several murders before successfully recovering the slipper. The Hashishin surfaced as a component of the Si-Fan in *Daughter of Fu Manchu*. They were now under the leadership of Sheikh Ismail (8), who endorsed a movement to replace Fu Manchu with Fah Lo Suee as head of the Si-Fan.

Miska's father had reportedly died by the time of *The Golden Scorpion*. The novel transpired in 1915 (9). Although *The Quest of the Sacred Slipper* wasn't published in book form until 1919, it was actually serialized in *Short Stories* during 1913-14. Consequently, the events of *The Quest of the Sacred Slipper* happened before *The Golden Scorpion*. The novel transpired during "Indian summer" (i.e. autumn). I would place *The Quest of The Sacred Slipper* in the fall of 1912. There are no obstacles to the death of Hassan of Aleppo transpiring between 1912 and 1915.

If Hassan was Miska's father, then Ismail must be the uncle from Damascus. Fu Manchu and Fo-Hi used Miska as a hostage to force Hassan of Aleppo to bring the Hashishin under the domination of the Si-Fan. In order to avenge the treatment of Miska, Ismail joined Fah Lo Suee's rebellion against Fu Manchu.

The Hashishin created killers capable of hiding in places that a normal man could not. Young boys were confined for eight hours a day in a wooden frame until they reached puberty. These children grew up to be dwarves. In order to perform this vicious practice, Hassan of Aleppo would have to buy slaves. He could have purchased them from Death Larsen in some secret port along the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf.

Hassan might have also had a sister who eloped with Larsen. A Lorelei's mother, she would have told her daughter of the dark rites of the Hashishin. As an adult, Lorelei searched for a similar society and stumbled upon the octopus cult. Since Lorelei gave her daughter an Arabic name, the name of Larsen's bride must be Zarmi.

After his wife's death, Fo-Hi attempted to romance her cousin Miska. How did Lorelei die? The near rape and her murder by Samarkan may provide the answer. *The Sea Wolf* refers to an incident where Wolf Larsen raped a pair of Japanese women. Farmer's biography of Doc Savage suggested that one of these ladies was the grandmother of John P. Marquand's Mr. Moto. What happened to the other woman?

There are some curious references to Japan in the Fu Manchu novels. *President Fu Manchu* contained a remark that the Black Dragon Society of Japan was an offshoot of the Si-Fan. In *The Return of Dr. Fu Manchu* (1916), Sir Denis Nayland Smith was nearly decapitated with a samurai sword. Fu Manchu boasted that this blade was originally the possession of a Japanese family that he exterminated.

From these threads, a history can be woven. The other woman raped by Larsen was driven by her sense of shame to commit hara-kiri. Her relatives swore vengeance against the Larsen clan. Later they became one of the founding families of the Black Dragon Society (10). In its early years, the Society was part of the Si-Fan. When they learned that the niece of Wolf Larsen was also a member of the Si-Fan, these Black Dragons dispatched assassins to rape and murder Lorelei. The success of their mission caused Fo-Hi to demand justice from Fu Manchu. Together they attacked the Black Dragons. This warfare resulted in a permanent rift between the Japanese underworld and the Si-Fan.

Fo-Hi and Fu Manchu believed that they liquidated all of the Black Dragon family responsible for Lorelei's death. One member survived (11). He decided to revive the vendetta by targeting Lorelei's daughter. Samarkan was bribed to make Zarmi die the same way as her mother. With the real death of Samarkan and her own fake demise, Zarmi buried herself among the pirates of the Pacific by adopting her old nickname of Lo Lar. Believing that Zarmi was really dead, the Black Dragon Society made no further attempts on her life.

So far, evidence has been offered in this article that Zarmi (alias Lo Lar) was a relative of two female agents of the Si-Fan. She was also the relative of two other women who worked for the most powerful tong in China.

The Si-Fan entered a period of dormancy between *The Hand of Fu Manchu* and *Daughter of Fu Manchu*. Cay Van Ash's "A Question of Time" from *The Rohmer Review* #17 (August 1977) indicates that the Si-Fan fell into disarray in 1914 and was revived in 1928. During this period, various tongs attempted to carry out the objectives

of the Si-Fan. One tong was the Sublime Order of the White Peacock. Fo-Hi committed crimes in their name in 1915. Another tong appeared in a series of three stories and one novel set in the Limehouse district of London during 1919-24 (12).

All of these stories were linked by a Limehouse residence. The house originally belonged to Zani Chada, a Eurasian merchant. As told in “Kerry’s Kid” from Rohmer’s *Tales of Chinatown* (1922), Lou Chada, Zani’s son, committed a murder. Zani tried to cover up his offspring’s crime by kidnapping the son of the investigating police official, Chief Inspector Red Kerry. Zani’s act of abduction led to his own arrest.

When Zani went to prison, his house came into the possession of a Eurasian woman known as Madame de Medici. She bore an extraordinary resemblance to Fah Lo Suee. The two women had black hair, bell-like voices and black hair. The only significant difference was the color of their eyes. Fah Lo Suee’s were green like her father’s. Madame de Medici’s were yellow like Fo-Hi’s. In “The Key to the Temple of Heaven” from *Tales of Chinatown*, Madame de Medici stole a valuable Chinese relic from a British collector. “The Black Mandarin,” first published in 1922 and collected in *Tales of East and West* (1932), pitted Madame against Paul Harley, a private detective from other stories and novels by Rohmer (13). Madame was revealed to be the operative of the Black Mandarin, a master criminal wanted in four countries for various crimes. When the Black Mandarin died, Madame fled the country (14).

The house of Zani Chada then passed into the hands of Burma Chang, a man whose murder formed the plot for *Yellow Shadows* (1925). The crime was investigated by Red Kerry, now a Superintendent (15). In the course of his investigations, Kerry learned that the house was reserved for the London representative of the most powerful tong in China. Zani Chada, Madame de Medici and Burma Chang all functioned in this role. Burma was murdered because Satsu Kuhna, an unscrupulous adventurer wanted to steal a golden lotus, the tong’s most powerful talisman (16). After Satsu’s schemes were foiled (17), Kerry permitted the golden lotus to be given to Suzee Che Lo, a Eurasian woman whose father was a prominent member of the tong. She returned the artifact to its rightful owners.

Besides being another woman with “Lo” in her name, Suzee Che Lo looked like a curious blend of Fah Lo Suee and Lo Lar. Suzee Che Lo had ivory skin like Fah Lo Suee and eyes like Lo Lar. It could also be argued that that her skin was like Madame de Medici’s. Madame had a long and violent career. She was responsible for at least one monarch losing his throne. As a spy in World War I, she cost the Allies more lives than the disastrous Gallipoli campaign of 1915. She was probably in her late thirties in the early 1920’s. Madame de Medici could be Suzee Lo Che’s mother. Regarding her father, Suzee spoke of him being a tong member in the past tense. He was probably dead by the time of *Yellow Shadows*. He could have been the Black Mandarin. The color of the Black Mandarin’s eyes was never mentioned. They could have been black like Suzee Che Lo’s.

Neither Madame de Medici nor Suzee Che Lo belonged to the tong. Suzee Che Lo explained that women were not allowed to join that organization (18). However, the tong did entrust missions to female relatives of its members. Suzee Che Lo identified her father as one of Burma Chang’s predecessors as the tong’s London representative. The Black Mandarin probably was technically the London emissary, but delegated those duties to Madame de Medici in order to travel widely to commit crimes.

These tales concerning the house of Zani Cha can be indirectly linked to the Fu Manchu series. Gaston Max, Fo-Hi's nemesis, made a brief cameo in a Paul Harley story, "At the Palace da Nostra" in *Tales of East and West*. Fo-Hi and Madame de Medici clearly co-exist. Fo-Hi could be the father of Madame de Medici since their eyes were so similar. Madame could also be the half-sister of Fah Lo Suee because of their strong resemblance. According to Cay Van Ash's "A Question of Time," Fah Lo Suee could have been born in 1899. This would make her only fifteen when she first appeared in *The Hand of Fu Manchu*. Fah Lo Suee's mother was an unnamed Russian woman. It is possible that Fo-Hi and Fu Manchu had different romances with the same woman. Fo-Hi's liaison would have transpired much earlier. Madame de Medici was probably born in 1883. When she was around twenty, she gave birth to Suzee Che Lo. Born in 1903, Suzee Che Lo would then have been twenty-one in *Yellow Shadows*.

Who was the mother of Madame de Medici and Fah Lo Suee? The answer is implied by Fah Lo Suee's initial appearance in *The Hand of Fu Manchu*. Her father was attempting to present her as the Lady of the Si-Fan, a legendary goddess venerated by his organization. Surprisingly, she had "dull gold" hair. Her hair would be black in all subsequent appearances. She must have dyed it. Perhaps her mother had been a blonde. Fah Lo Suee may have been attempting to pay tribute to her.

The history of a Russian woman with blonde hair was given in Talbot Mundy's *Guns of the Gods* (1921). The lady was known as Princess Sonia Omanoff. She was the mother of Yasmini, an adventuress who figured in many other stories and novels by Mundy. Elsewhere I assigned years to various aspects of Sonia's career (19). In Moscow during 1884, Sonya had murdered her husband, Prince Omanoff. Sonia was sentenced to death, but the punishment was commuted to working in the Siberian mines. The Russian intelligence service rescued her by offering her an assignment. She was sent to France in order to romance the Maharajah of Silapore, Bubru Singh. The Russian government was then plotting to weaken the British in India. Bubru and Sonia were married in Paris. In Silapore in 1885, Sonia gave birth to their daughter, Yasmini. In 1886, Bubru died in an accident. The throne of Silapore then passed to Bubru's nephew, Gungadhura. Sonia and her daughter lived in a secluded palace. Sonia died during 1900.

It seems unlikely that the Russian intelligence service would arbitrarily seize on Sonia in 1884 to perform a mission of seduction. She must have been a Russian agent before her marriage to Prince Omanoff. The Russian government must have sent her to India in the early 1880's to discover information about secret societies that could be employed against the British. Fo-Hi was active in India. Besides helping Fu Manchu manufacture F. Katalopsis from the indigenous black scorpion, Fo-Hi had links to the Thuggee cult. While seeking to contact the Thugs, Sonia romanced Fo-Hi in order to gain information. As a result, she gave birth to the woman known as Madame de Medici in 1883. Not wishing to be encumbered by an illegitimate daughter, she relinquished her offspring to Fo-Hi. Eager to leave the Russian secret service, Sonia married Prince Omanoff (20). When the marriage ended disastrously, Sonia was faced with a long arduous imprisonment. The Russian espionage network saw the opportunity to regain her services.

Sonia lived as Bubru's widow in Silapore for many years. Her brother-in-law, Gungadhura, was an unscrupulous man. It would not be far-fetched to imagine that he was involved with the Thugs. Through his Thuggee contacts, he could have met Fo-Hi

NOTES

1. The original version of this article was published in *Nemesis Incorporated* #20 (August 1985). Although this article has been lengthened and revised for this subsequent printing, the explanation of Fu Manchu's survival of the *Chanak-Kampo* wreck is identical. In 1987, two years after the publication of my article, Cay Van Ash's *The Fires of Fu Manchu* explained the master criminal's survival by stating that he was "not aboard" the *Chanak-Kampo*.
2. One major figure in the Asian underworld that was deliberately excluded from receiving Fu Manchu's elixir was the title character of Popular Publications' *The Mysterious Wu Fang*. The magazine had a regular feature, "The Temple of Death" by Robert J. Hogan, in which Wu Fang spoke to the audience. In "The Temple of Death" from the December 1935 issue, Wu Fang indicated that his scientists attempting to create an immortality elixir for his own personal use. Clearly Fu Manchu wasn't sharing with him.
3. There are many problems with Salvaletti as a viable presidential candidate in 1936. Besides being an Italian-American engaged to a divorced woman, he was an immigrant. The Constitution forbade him from running for President. In "Some Chronological Observations on the Fu Manchu Series," I offered a theory about the "true events" on which this novel was based. The theory reconciles the novel with the hard facts of American politics of the 1930's.
4. I believe that Cthulhu's avatar was also known as Kurch, the Blood Monster. The cult of Kurch, also known as the Nameless Ones, had flourished in the Far East for two thousand years at the start of the twentieth century. The Kurch cult figured in "The Case of the Chinese Curio Dealer" from William Hope Hodgson's *Captain Gault* (1917), the tales of a British smuggler. All the Captain Gault stories were reprinted in *The Boats of the Glen Carrig and Other Nautical Adventures* (Night Shade Books, 2003). An idol of Kurch appeared in Hodgson's story, but it was never described. The Nameless Ones could be synonymous with the octopus cult.
5. In *The Sea Wolf* (chap, 14), Johansen the Swede noted that he last wrote to his mother ten years ago. The year of Johansen's letter was given as 1883. The novel must be set in 1893.
6. Another member of the octopus cult seems to be Lotus Burma, a female pirate who battled Peter the Brazen in "The Octopus of Hong Kong" and "Kingdom of the Lost." Originally published in *Argosy* during the 1930's, both stories can be found in *The Compleat Adventures of Peter the Brazen: Volume II* (The Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, 2003) by George F. Worts. On her father side, Lotus was descended from the Barbarossa clan, a group of Arabian pirates. Her mother was a Chinese noblewoman. Lotus fed her enemies to a giant octopus. Since no other members of the Barbarossa clan utilized this punishment, Lotus most likely was taught this murderous practice by her mother, who was probably an octopus cult member contemporary with Lorelei Larsen. Another member of the octopus cult was most likely Goonong Besar, the Malaysian tyrant of a remote island in

- Seabury Quinn's "The Isle of Missing Ships," a Jules de Grandin adventure that first appeared in *Weird Tales* (February 1926), Like Lo Lar and Lotus Burma, Goonong also had a carnivorous octopus.
7. For the theory that Fo-Hi survived to adopt the new alias of Mr. Lu, see "Peter the Brazen Vs. Fu Manchu," my article published as an appendix in *The Compleat Adventures of Peter the Brazen: Volume II*.
 8. Sheik Ismail from *Daughter of Fu Manchu* could be the same individual as Sheikh Ismail Ebn al As who appeared in "The Lady of the Lattice" and "The Secret of Ismail" from Rohmer's *Tales of Secret Egypt* (1918). Both of the stories also featured drug dealer Joseph Malaglou, who would later be murdered in Van Ash's *The Fires of Fu Manchu*.
 9. For the chronological placement of *The Golden Scorpion*, see "Some Chronological Observations on the Fu Manchu Series."
 10. The Black Dragon Society was formed in 1901. Its name was derived from the Amur River in Manchuria. The name of the river translates into English as "Black Dragon."
 11. I believe this survivor to be Marquis Sumuru. He was identified as a member of the Black Dragons in Sax Rohmer's *Sinister Madonna* (1956). The Marquis was driven to commit suicide by his wife in 1942.
 12. The chronological assignment of these stories was determined in my "Partners in Crime: Fu Manchu and Carl Peterson."
 13. Besides *Tales of Chinatown* and *Tales of East and West*, Harley also appeared in stories from *Salute to Bazarada and Other Stories* (1939). Harley was the main character in two novels, *Bat-Wing* (1921) and *Fire-Tongue* (1921). He also appeared in two short stories, "Red Mist" and "The Voice of Kali." Neither of these stories appeared in a collection of Rohmer's short fiction.
 14. Under the variant name of Madame de Medicis, she also appeared in "The Treasure of Taia," a 1926 short story reprinted in *The Wrath of Fu Manchu*. The story was set in Egypt.
 15. Prior to *Tales of Chinatown* and *Yellow Shadows*, Kerry appeared in *Dope* (1919).
 16. The Black Mandarin could only be identified to his followers by a black patch in the palm of his hand. Some observers believed it was a bruise, but I suspect that it was a black tattoo in the shape of a lotus.
 17. Satsu succumbed to a deadly poison, but his henchman, the pockmarked Wu Fang, was still at large. This character can't be the same Wu Fang as the title character of Robert J. Hogan's short-lived pulp series. On the other hand, he could have changed his name and relocated in New York. A pockmarked criminal named Wu King was the head of the Hip Sing Tong there in *President Fu Manchu*. The Hip Sing Tong of New York was in chaos in the late 1920's due to the embezzlement of most of its funds by a treacherous treasurer (see Ian Fleming's *Doctor No*). An outsider could have easily taken over the secret society.
 18. Rohmer never gave this secret society a formal name, but another writer did. In August Derleth's "The Adventure of the Camberwell Beauty" from *The Return of Solar Pons* (1958), Fu Manchu was identified as the brains behind both the Si-Fan and the Brotherhood of the Lotus. Derleth must have meant the tong associated

with the golden lotus. “Brotherhood” would emphasize their lack of female members.

19. See my article, “Yasmini of India.”

20. Talbot Mundy referred to Yasmini’s mother as “the Princess Sonia Omanoff.” The statement implied that Omanoff was Sonia’s married name. We don’t know her maiden name.