

8 August, 1935.

A strange day in Shanghai. As I walk the streets, cannot escape the sense of being followed, watched. Not in the manner all foreigners are, mind; rather, because someone or something knows what we're about, and hopes to stop us uncovering the truth. Or uncovering IT, perhaps.

Woke early to find B.T. and Q.F. eager to get to work, young Miss S.B. & and A.L. also champing at the bit. (Why do Americans think it's chomping at the bit? Sound bloody stupid when they muff it.)

Tho was eager to go to police station, B.T. convinced us to go to PENSION MONTIGNY first. Despite Frog name, in International ~~Confess~~ Concession. Mistress of the house a Frog stewed in American butter & then pickled in whiskey (yes a drunk, on & on about 'sleeping off a toot,' bit rotten but suited to her squalid demesne.

BT convinced her to let us into the room, but found nothing within (despite evident stench). Got sample of spot on floor that stank worst. Nutmeg. Chemicals. 'Christmas & cleaning supplies' as someone put it. Baffling. Shifty American Frog - name Jenny Simone - mentioned in passing someone involved in the case, but refused to say more til I squeezed it out of her. Also got name of detective presiding over Fr. E's case, one D.I. Vasserman.

Turned out to be a Sikh fellow across hall, name Darvish Singh. Pissy, armed, refused to let us in till BT pushed him in and stepped thru into room. We all followed, and looked about. Singh armed, thought I might have to disarm him but BT talked him down. Talked of knowing Fr. E., of chats about religion. What the bloody hell a Sikh would have to say to a Catholic Priest about such matters, Christ only knows, but said Fr. E came to the door night of death, troubled. Some bloody curious question about spiritual nonsense, power to kill at a thought, but a power that demanding to be used? Claims didn't see body. Capey. (More of Singh later.)

Proceeded on to Municipal Police Station, to talk to Vasserman. Hell of a fine chap, Good British police offer. by the look of him, but flummoxed by the case. Played the kindly uncle policeman, encouraging and offering to help solve it for im, and the lad bought into it with all he had. Did seem quite alarmed by the evidence all. Surely knew Fr. E - office was fucking festooned with bloody fucking Catholic rubbish, stomach-turning sight. Gave us case files, and BT - or was it QF? - convinced him to release the body to us after case closed. No puns, however. Bloody impediment, but not the lad's fault. Hands tied, and I know too well how bloody hard bureaucrats on colonial police when it comes to any form of advancement.

Gave us a look at the body before we departed. Bloody frightful. Thought little Miss B. might faint, but

she held strong. Had a funny look in her eye as she saw it, tho'. Body withered, shrunken, face contorted with scream. Like a murdered man, but murdered by whom? (Or WHAT?) Unnatural. Lacerations about torso (strange config.) and tiny punctures on carotid. Reminded me of bloody v. bats feeding on cows up around Zomba Plateau. Vermin somehow same everywhere. Set B.T. off on some little ramble about a damned paper by Armitage himself, some business about sky vampires or something of that nature. Bela Lugosi in Shanghai? Need a pun. Guns, plural. MANY puns.

All this time A.B. was off at his Men's Club, THE SHANGHAI CLUB. Assumed he was off amid more of his kind (hairy faeries, as Bob used to put it, or at least that's my idle suspicion), marveling at the longest bar in the world and at pretty Chinese lads tending it, but turns out he was in fact busy with useful work after all... came back having met some rural Minnesotan bipuip in the State Dept. (!), full to bursting with lurid tales. Assassination of in Black Lotus came up again. This time, shooter was dark, turbaned. Surely cannot be coincidence? We shall have to look more closely at our new friend Mr. Singh.

Speaking of new friends, Wassily was tailing us. Had him into a restaurant for lunch and recruited him into our service as a paid contact, though I still don't trust him terribly much. He claims ANOTHER murder happened this morning, Fatty Chang, body desiccated like Fr. E's.

Clearly someone has the artefact FR. E. wrote about, or else perhaps Bela Luposi felt a hankering for dumplings dipped in Chinese blood? Suspect Singh has the mirror. He is hiding something, but how much more?

Sent Wassily on his way happy. Bloody Russian thug. 'Poet' my arse.

Remaining lines of questioning to look into:

* Must tail Singh. Suspect he assassinated Fatty Chang. (Why is everyone named after bloody body parts? Is it favored among Chinamen?)

* Yellow Mountain Caves at Wutsing(?)?

* The whore at the hospital, surely on the mend by now. Before she recovers and disappears, must question her.

* Black Lotus Club, Big Ears: place to get guns? Perhaps. Prefer elsewhere, and then go to BL Club armed. (Heavily.) MUST get armed soon.

* 4 Fingers - same cause of death as Fr. E, just this morning, and desiccated already? Murdered in Int'l District, if I recall correctly? We go hunting Bela Luposi tonight, perhaps? But what's the tie to Big Ears?

* Singh seems linch-pin. Best tail him. Especially when night falls.

* Dying for a proper bottle of Scotch.

And it's barely afternoon, now & strange feeling in the streets of this city persists. Ugh. Would rather be back in Arkham, in Millie's arms, than anything else. Should post her a letter soon, let her know we've arrived safe. And get her something nice before we leave. Carved Chinese box, perhaps, or some other exotic thing that catches eye.