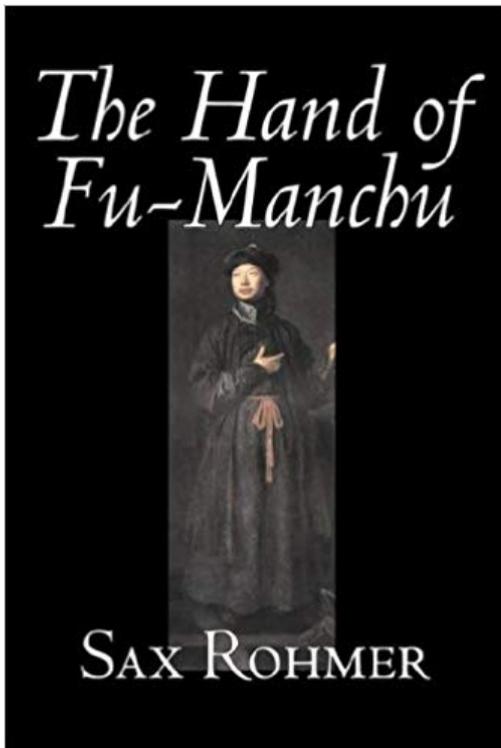


The Hand of Fu-Manchu by Sax Rohmer, Fiction, Action & Adventure by Sax Rohmer



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I had closed the window to exclude the yellow mist, but subconsciously I was aware of its encircling presence, walling me in, and now I found myself in such a silence as I had known in deserts but could scarce have deemed possible in fog-bound London.

A quick footstep approached the door, and there came a muffled rapping upon the panel.

I leapt across the room and threw the door open. Nayland Smith stood before me.

"If I am to believe what the Chief has told me today," he said, "strange things are ahead of us."

I stared at him wonder-stricken. . . .



Reviews of the **The Hand of Fu-Manchu by Sax Rohmer,** **Fiction, Action & Adventure by Sax Rohmer**

BroWelm

Found in my eBook mystery anthology, this bit of relatively light pleasure is about 95 years old. Intrepid Scotland Yard man Nayland Smith works with storyteller Dr. Petrie to battle the threat of the evil Chinese group Si -Fan and its most potent member, the titular Fu Manchu. Forgive me for spoilers, but in spite of the perception that Fu Manchu had been mortally wounded, it proves to not be the case. The timing of the book, after Sherlock Holmes, but well before James Bond (and Indiana Jones, and Ludlum and, and, and...) shows in the book. The obvious comparison of Smith and Dr. Petrie to Holmes and Dr. Watson seems unavoidable, although there's little of Holmes-style deductive reasoning here. The latter spy characters may, if anything, show more, with the nemesis of foreign evil and myriad bad guys (and girls) clever enough to greatly challenge our heroes (with weapons, hypnosis, scary critters, and more). Largely set in the hidden little corners of bustling London, there are harrowing narrow escapes and moments of serendipitous good luck, as well as the requisite setbacks. The stereotyping of 'Easterners' is ugly by today's standards, but in the context of the time of writing, maybe at least understandable - the fears of the unknown. While this was the first of three Fu Manchus in my anthology, it is apparently the third or so of some dozen Fu Manchus. When in the mood for more good fun, or as a break from heavier reading, I will surely return to Rohmer and the series, probably researching first to see which one comes first. I'd recommend it. It's good writing, but also wonderful intrigue and characters and setting.

Moogura

In this, the third of 14 Fu Manchu books that Sax Rohmer gave the world, Comm. Nayland Smith and Dr. Petrie continue to battle the evil genius Fu Manchu. This book introduces the Si-Fan, a mysterious Eastern organization dedicated to conquering the Western world. The book follows directly from the previous two volumes, and includes several familiar characters. Thus, a reading of the previous books is recommended before going into this one. I'd give this book one star less than the previous two, if only because, as good a writer as Rohmer is, some of the sections of the book are, for me anyway, too vaguely drawn. The geography of the Si-Fan house and of the chapel of Monkswell, for example, are quite hard to picture; your imagination will be working overtime in these sections. (Perhaps this is deliberate on the part of the author?) Several plot points (Hale's mysterious chest, a woman who may or may not be a supreme Empress of sorts) are left in the air, possibly to be resolved in future volumes. There ARE some outstanding set pieces in the book, including the forced operation on Fu-Manchu's bullet-ridden skull and the insect-guarded labyrinth under Graywater Park. The book also features poisonous flowers, an opium den, mysterious codes, a hashish house, kidnappings, fires, leopards, storms and on and on. The pace, as usual for the Fu books, is quite breathless. There's no way that a reader will be bored.

Nuadabandis

THE HAND OF FU-MANCHU (original title: THE SI-FAN MYSTERIES) was first published in 1917. It follows on directly from THE RETURN OF DR. FU-MANCHU and completes Rohmer's original FU MANCHU trilogy. Like the first two entries in the series, the book's episodic quality betrays its magazine serial origins. The closest equivalent to Rohmer's breathtaking, non-stop literary set pieces is an INDIANA JONES movie. Rohmer is far superior because he remains rooted in the classic mystery style of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Join tireless Nayland Smith (Burmese Police Commissioner), his loyal companion/narrator Dr. Petrie, Superintendent Weymouth of Scotland Yard, eccentric Egyptologist Sir Lionel Barton, and the beautiful and exotic slave girl, Karamaneh as they take on the brilliant, deadly, but always honorable Dr. Fu-Manchu, the seductive Zarmi, the wizened John Ki, and Fu-Manchu's mysterious daughter. THE HAND OF FU MANCHU is a sterling example of a bygone era when morality was black and white and books like this were nothing more than good, clean fun.

Heraly

Not as good as the first two Fu-Manchu books, perhaps partly due to a fair lack of Fu-Manchu.

He does have some excuse though, being shot in the head at the end of the last book, and hence assumed dead by our ertswhile heroes.

It seems he is not, though, just in a bad way, and as such, abducts a top surgeon, and Petrie to assist. Or, at least his crew does, he is having problems just sitting up and talking with a bullet in his head.

They set their sights on the Si-Fan organisation, the overlords of the good Doctor, and perhaps a mystery woman in charge.

Fu-Manchu is in a bit of trouble with them himself, it seems.

Tetaian

I will not address here the patent racism inherent to the plot and characters in the Fu-Manchu stories. For this discussion, see the reviews of the first volume, *The Insidious Dr Fu-Manchu*. I speak only to the quality of this 2001 New Millennium Library edition of the third volume, *The Hand of Fu-Manchu*.

The publisher has obviously relied upon computer spell-checking, not human proof-reading. I cannot count the number of instances where the letter R is replaced by the letter N, producing legitimate but inappropriate words. For example: "he looked left and Night", "we raced down the marble staiNs", "she lifted the veil from heN face", "he produced a paiN of handcuffs".

Also, the two cryptograms featured in the plot are not accurately reproduced, as compared with the 1962 Pyramid edition. Specifically, all of the letters are in normal script, when several should be in italics.

Admittedly, these points are merely annoyances. If you enjoyed the melodramatic first two volumes, this third is an excellent sequel.

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