

**CONSTABLE KHANG'S MYSTERIES  
OF OLD SHANGHAI**



**THE CAT  
WITH  
THE  
TELLTALE  
TATTOO!**

**NATHANIEL  
SCOBIE**



BOOK I

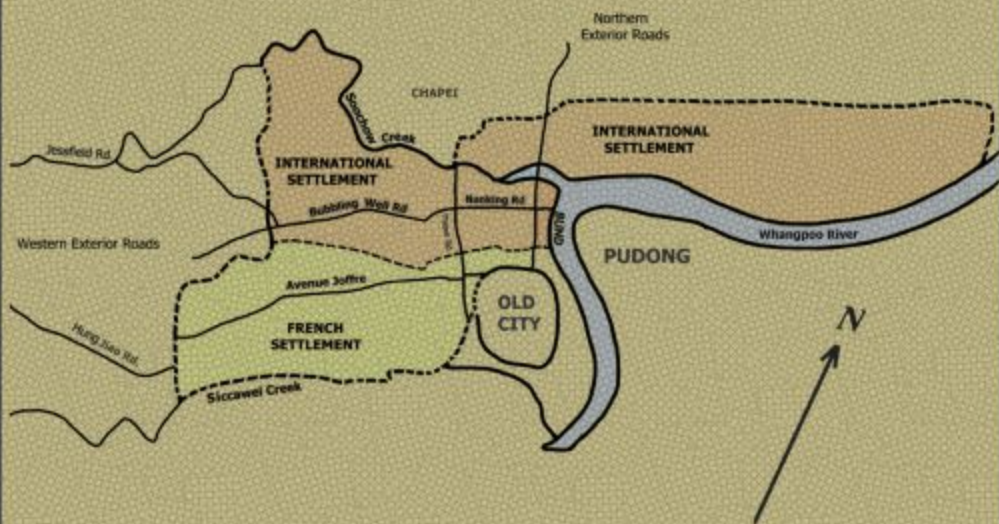
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# Constable Khang's

## Old Shanghai

(1929)



*Chinese City*



*International Settlement*



*French Settlement*

Constable Khang's story begins

# in Shanghai

in 1929



A "paradise for adventurers" born of opium wars and a rebellion led by a failed Chinese scholar convinced he was Jesus' younger brother, Shanghai grew rapidly from rough and tumble treaty port in the 1860s to one of the world's great cities in the late 1920s. Burgeoning, brooding and bustling under the protective gaze of the city's iconic Black Angel, the world had never seen anything quite like Shanghai.

Divided by the Treaty of Nanjing into British, American, French and Chinese enclaves Shanghai drew Chinese seeking their first pot of gold from across the rapidly modernizing country and foreigners seeking theirs from every corner of the globe. It was a place where the provincial collided with the cosmopolitan and the ancient slammed into the modern.

Overflowing with old world prejudices, international intrigue, gangsters, high finance's beasts of the bourse, and assorted secret and magical societies, by 1929, this check point partitioned city of over 3 million was not just a paradise for adventurers; it was also the most dangerous city in Asia.



A dangerous city requires a dangerous police force and Shanghai, true to its multinational nature, had three. One run by the British, one run by the French, and one run by the Chinese, each responsible for their own portions of the city. Jurisdictional conflicts between the rival police forces were common and cooperation was always a tense affair.



Our protagonist Constable Mee Mee Khang, was a member of the Shanghai government's Public Security Bureau (PSB), the policing organization responsible for the Chinese-controlled portion of the city.



So far in his unremarkable career Khang had managed to avoid being ensnared in any of these conflicts. Today, however, his luck would run out. But, more on that later...Right now he is making his way through the colorful throngs to the small portion of Shanghai for which he is responsible.

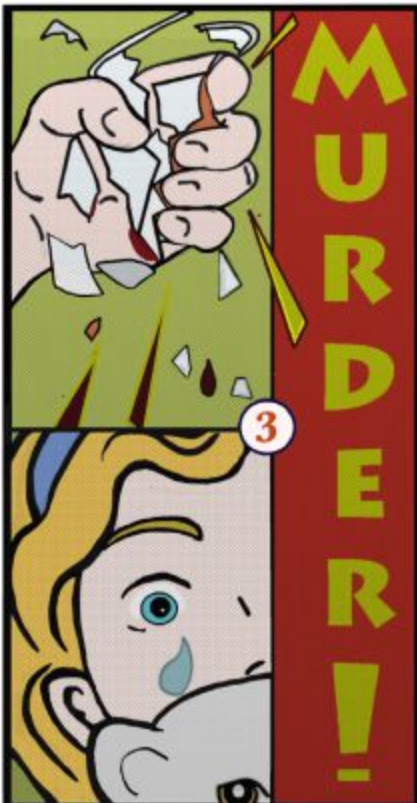


At that very moment, in a far wealthier part of Shanghai, young Avril Ahriman stepdaughter of Armand Ahriman, Shanghai financier and owner of the Shanghai Utilities Consortium, has just returned home from a trip to the market with her stepfather and mother. Excited by their purchase of a new pet, Avril rushes to the kitchen to introduce "BaoBo" to Auntie Ling.

**1** Instructed to "clean the beast" before it is let loose in their home Avril happily scrubs BaoBo's closely cropped fur while a disinterested Auntie Ling busies herself with that night's meal. Immersed in her task Avril murmurs, "' Filthy cat from a fourth rate fortune teller! Hmmp! So say you Stepdad!" Then as the dark dirt accumulated in the dusty lanes and sooty streets slowly flows down the drain -- a surprise!



**2** Unexpectedly confronted with the odd markings thrust before her aging superstitious ayi eyes Auntie Ling lets out with a scream that runs all the way down the wood panelled hallways of Ahriman manor into a drawing room wherein Mr. Ahriman is in mid toast . . .



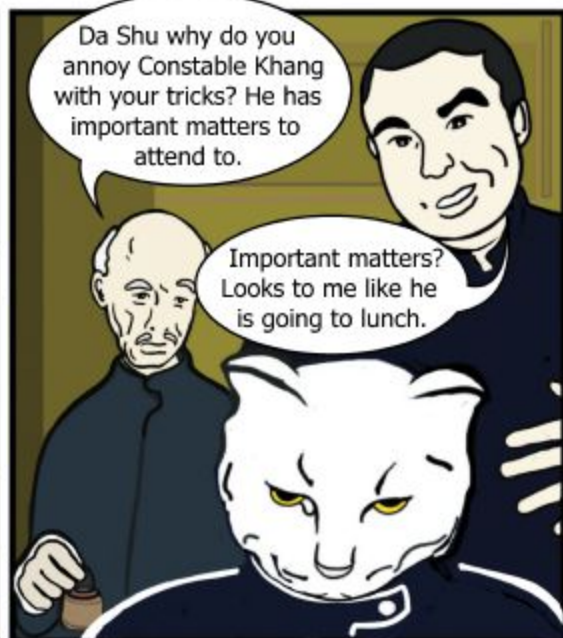
Unaware of the international intrigue about to engulf him, Constable Khang arrives for his daily patrol of the Shanghai Flower and Bird Market.

A mass of tiny stalls tumbled one upon the other it was as exotic a collection of flora and fauna as you could find on the planet.

At any given time the sprawling bazaar which stretched for over a city block and spilled into the refuse strewn side streets had everything from fortune tellers and fighting crickets to an old elephant that could tell time with its trunk. And the market, much like Shanghai, had a habit of attracting the wrong sort of people.



**CHHIRRP CHIRP!**



chī yú

吃鱼

chén sī

沉思

mìng yùn

命运

East Fish, Contemplate, Fate

And, indeed, heading for lunch he was.



Then in the midst of this glum repast out of nowhere Inspector Li appears requesting Khang's immediate presence at a meeting with the legendary Deputy Commissioner Wan!



jī huì

机会

fēng xiǎn

风险

róng yào

荣耀

Opportunity, Risk, Glory





"As you have been informed, a kitten purchased by one of Shanghai's most prominent foreigners, apparently, from some old 'fortune teller' in your market was later discovered, in most awkward circumstances, to have the Chinese characters for murder marked on its body. The incident was orchestrated to incite further hostility towards the foreign presence in our city and draw further attention to Mr. Ahriman's questionable business practices. Rumors as to who Ahriman murdered, and why, are now rife. Shanghai's Chinese language newspapers have already eagerly picked up on the rumors which will be prominently featured in some evening editions."

上得山多

終遇虎\*



This sort of activity injures China's modernization drive. The perpetrators must be punished.

"Shàng de shān duō zhōng yù hū". Climb the mountain too often and you will meet the tiger.

"Ahriman has provided a partial description of the perpetrator. He was an older bearded man operating a small stall in the East side of the Flower and Bird Market. He spoke Pidgin English and was offering fortunes, face reading, and 'rare Liaoning Lucky Cats born with auspicious markings'. Ahriman's wife and daughter were drawn to the stall followed by Ahriman."



Mr. Foreigner  
this cat for you.  
Help bring you all  
you deserve.

Oh Armand  
buy it! It's so  
darling!

Alright, alright,  
have the driver pay the  
old fraud and have the ayi  
wash that thing when  
we get home.

Oh thank you  
stepfather. He's  
purrfect!

Zhikong  
Accusation

"Apparently, after the sale the old fortune teller packed up his wares and closed the stall. And that Constable Khang was the last anyone saw of the old fortune teller. Now you go find him!"

Inspector Li escorts Constable Khang out of the office onto the bustling streets in front of the station where they wait for Deputy Commissioner Wan's car and driver to take them to their meeting in the International Settlement.

餓鬼

è guǐ  
Hungry Ghosts

I sense this "fortune teller" who sold the kitten is not a regular presence in the Flower and Bird Market. This may be the work of the old anti-foreigner patriotic societies. Perhaps, even the Hungry Ghosts.

The Hungry Ghosts!

"Yes, they have not gone away. We all wish to end these foreign 'concessions' in our cities as quickly as possible. We understand the anger some Chinese feel towards them, but this sort of nonsense with the kitten only serves to complicate matters with the foreigners at a delicate time. This is why the modernization and success of our police force is so crucial. We need to demonstrate to the leaders of the foreign run enclaves within Shanghai, like the International Settlement, that having their own separate police and system of governance is unnecessary. Of course, when we meet with Inspector Tsang of the foreigner's Shanghai Municipal Police we will spare him our views of the 'special districts'."

Have you spent much time in the International Settlement Constable Khang?

"Some time, I remember during my cadet training visiting Avenue Edward VII with my class as part of an exercise our PSB instructors organized to familiarize ourselves with the city. At that time we needed special permission and papers from the foreigners to enter their part of Shanghai."





zhèng míng

证明

wén jiàn

文件

Official Documents



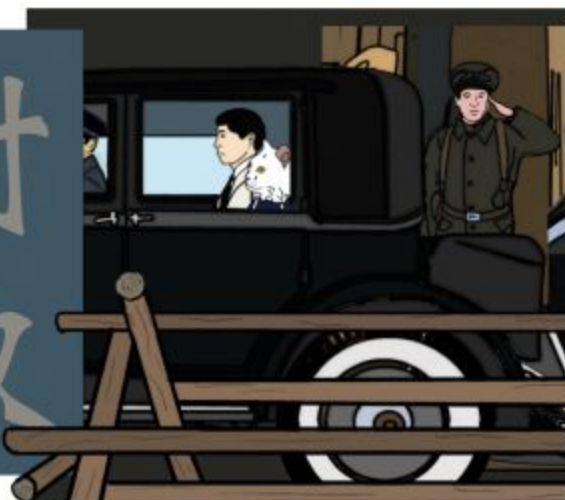
lín shí

临时

tè quán

特权

Temporary privileges





*Bund, an Anglo English term for a raised embankment along a river constructed to hold back floodwaters. This was the name given to the commercial heart of Shanghai's International Settlement. It had, in less than 60 years, grown from a muddy backwater on the outskirts of the original Chinese city of Shanghai into a cluster of imposing buildings built along the Huang Pu River housing financial institutions and foreign trading houses grown fat on the international opium trade now eager to distance themselves through the innate respectability of marble and masonry from their pirate pasts and, the now, illegal industry that built them.*

# 外滩

Waitan

The Bund

