

Screen Adaptation Pitch

The Straits Quartet



SERIES DETAILS

Red Thread (Vol.1), Shallow Seas (Vol.2), Hills of Singapore (Vol.3), English Concubine (Vol.4)

AUTHOR	Dawn Farnham
ISBN	various
PUBLISHER	Monsoon Books
PUB DATE	2007-2014
GENRE	Fiction Historical Romance Singapore
AGE RANGE	general adult
URL	Click for webpage
RIGHTS	World print World screen

Author Information

Dawn Farnham is the author of six historical novels, as well as numerous short stories, plays and children's books. A former long-term resident of Singapore, Dawn now calls Perth, Australia, home

Praise

'Immaculately researched' *The Daily Telegraph*, UK

'Take a walk through Chinatown and meet the colourful characters who built Singapore. Thoroughly enjoyable historical romance' *Lifestyle*, Singapore

'Multiple protagonists, both Eastern and Western, transport the reader to a fascinating time and place brimming with mystical and poetic flourishes' *Booklist*, USA

TAGLINE	Singapore's most passionate series of historical fiction
LOGLINE	A British girl and her Chinese coolie lover struggle to gain acceptance in 19th-century colonial Singapore.
GENRE	Romantic drama / epic romance
SUBJECT	Love and loss in 1830s–1860s colonial Singapore
THEMES	Forbidden inter-ethnic love, family drama, society (quest for power, social mobility, tolerance in a diverse society, racism)
TO NE	Despite the couple facing many obstacles (eg race and culture), marrying other people, living in different lands, the overarching tone of the series, spanning 30 years, is one of romantic love and passion in a period setting with a turbulent backdrop of a vice-ridden colonial outpost as the fortunes of the British (Charlotte) wane and those of the Chinese kongsis (Zhen) ascend.
SYNOPSIS (Vol.I)	In 1830s Singapore, 18-year-old Charlotte meets and falls for Zhen, a recently arrived coolie from China who is betrothed to a Peranakan Chinese girl and who wants to climb the social ladder.
(Vol.II)	Charlotte is 19, pregnant and alone and flees the scandalous liaison with Zhen by accepting a marriage proposal from the richest Armenian merchant in Batavia (Dutch East Indies), leaving Zhen, the man she loves, waiting for her in Singapore.
(Vol.III)	Widowed and wealthy, Charlotte returns to 1850s Singapore determined not to continue her affair with the married Zhen, who has risen to be a successful merchant and triad member.
(Vol.IV)	Singapore in 1960 is a vice-ridden town filled with the dregs of humanity from two continents. The colonial government is impoverished, and Charlotte is the concubine of Zhen, now the Chinese godfather and lord of the kongsi – it is an open scandal to both the British and Chinese communities.
CHARACTERS	<p>Charlotte young, innocent, British (with mixed race ancestry thus putting her slightly on the fringe of colonial society). Coming of age and believes in true love. Charlotte must break societal boundaries for her love and what she believes is her true path in life.</p> <p>Zhen ruthless and determined, works his way up from coolie to merchant to head of a Chinese secret society kongsi, he is passionate and handsome and although runs the opium and vice rings, he is loyal and true and proves that despite the obstacles, true love triumphs in the end.</p> <p>Others The story draws on real-life historical personalities of the time, mixing fact and fiction to paint a rich portrait of mid 19th-century Singapore at a time when triads, piracy and crime are rife and life in colonial Southeast Asia is anything but safe.</p>
ENDING	Just as Charlotte, pregnant again, prepares to leave for good to India, Zhen proposes marriage and they commit to each other despite the uncertainty of their position in colonial Singapore.