

# Weird Tales

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# LOO TUN SIN

By EVERETT BOSTON

**L**OO TUN SIN, wizard of the East, man of the West; Loo Tun Sin, whose face has never been seen, even by his seven wives; of him, of Loo Tun Sin, I would tell a tale. Let the babbling of voices and the rattle of laughter cease while I tell of Loo Tun Sin.

Now a house of Loo Tun Sin had been entered in his absence, and a woman of Loo Tun Sin had been betrayed by force. And the word ran through the silent street of the warehouses, out into the yellow lights of the chop suey district, up well-lighted stairs of marble, into gay restaurants, down dark, odorous wooden stairs, and into alleys. Presently it came to the door of the Forbidden Room.

Because he was the master, none dared disturb him, but they waited in the hall by the door of the Forbidden Room until he came out.

"O, Loo Tun Sin!" they cried; "your house has been defiled, and a woman has known shame!"

Loo Tun Sin drew himself erect, and replied: "Who has entered my house, and which house is it?"

"The house in the street before the wharves," they answered.

"It is well!" he said, as if to children. "But who?"

"Oh, Loo Tun Sin, it was a man with a terrible face, who is not of our people. He is known as the Shark among his people, who are gunmen."

"It is well!" he said again. "Send the youngest of the hatchetmen of the Soo tong to me at the House of Painted Colors."

"It shall be done, O Loo Tun Sin!"

The front of the house was a store that held tea and carvings and an old Chinaman. Behind the store was the

abode that was known as the House of Painted Colors. Here sat Loo Tun Sin with his head bowed in a great shame. His house had been defiled, and his vengeance must be unique, as it would be swift.

Then a woman was brought before him, wailing and praying for death, since she had been robbed of her virtue in the sight of her husband. To her Loo Tun Sin showed a picture and asked a question, and she answered, "Yes! It was that man!"

"Death is a flower blooming in the night wind," said Loo Tun Sin. "Virtue departed may not return. Here is a rosebud, pleasant to the smell. When life wearies you, inhale the odor of the rosebud, and your death will be as a sweet sleep."

Then the woman left him, wailing softly that she must die, but Loo Tun Sin only stared at the picture of the Shark.

The face of the Shark was horrible to contemplate. The nose was huge, and the forehead and chin retreating. Protruding teeth gave the face all it needed to resemble the head of a shark. It was said that this ugliness gave him an advantage in his battles with the police and other gunmen.

And he had been heard to say that a Chinaman was lower than a dog, and should be treated as such.

Loo Tun Sin smiled under his mask as he thought of this last. And he murmured, "Death brings oblivion. That shall not be my vengeance." Then he picked up a book, and read it with great interest.

**I**NTO the store before the House of Painted Colors came a young Chinaman who was dressed in tailor-

made clothing and who smoked expensive Egyptian cigarettes. Through the store and to the door of the House of Painted Colors he went, but before he could knock the door opened.

"It is well!" said Loo Tun Sin. "You are Billy Soo before the missionary. Mine is not a tong business, nor is it of murder. But it requires skill, therefore I shall pay whatever it may be worth."

"The sun warms again," said Billy Soo politely. "I should not like to kill just now. My payment shall be to serve the master, Loo Tun Sin."

"The moon was silver, as a maiden's heart, but the dawn destroyed the beauty of the moon. I would cloud the dawn with trouble. Bring him I speak of before me. The moon is no longer of value, but I would have the dawn. Be swift!"

Out of the store before the House of Painted Colors swaggered a young Chinaman whose step was unhurried and who paused to light a cigarette. People passed this way and that, and the young Chinaman mingled with them and was gone.

In the House of Painted Colors Loo Tun Sin turned again to his book, but presently rang a bell. A lean, humble Chinaman of the coolie class answered.

"Is she dead?" asked Loo Tun Sin.

"She is dead, O Loo Tun Sin!"

"You will remove all food from the cold box of the foreigners and place her there. It is a part of my vengeance."

"It shall be done!"

Again Loo Tun Sin turned to his book, and sometimes he pondered on a passage. It was an interesting book.

The sun that had risen on morning descended on night and a tall clock was brought to the store of Loo Tun Sin. Four chattering Chinamen carried it. Paddy the Cop stopped to watch for a moment, then moved on.

Presently a large trunk came from the store and was carried to the door of the Forbidden Room, which was over the chop suey restaurant of Henry Soo.

IN THE restaurant below the Forbidden Room sat seven gunmen, well-dressed, manicured, and cold-eyed. They spoke of one known as the Shark.

"—went fooling with a yaller belly's woman!"

"Had a yaller woman, onct!"

"Shut up!" said the leader. "She was a high class dame, see! And she belonged to"—he bent closer and lowered his voice—"to Loo Tun Sin!"

"Hell!"

So they sat very still and drank hot tea in cold silence, for the name of Loo Tun Sin was known to them.

"I hear they cut you up, bit by bit, unless you buy the woman first," whispered one, but the others did not answer, only staring stonily at the table cloth.

"The Shark was of the gang," said the leader, after a time. "*He's* got a room upstairs. The Shark's gone. *He's* got 'um!"

So they looked at one another without speaking, and finished their tea and went up the stairs to the Forbidden Room.

Beside the door of the Forbidden Room were ten Chinamen with impassive faces but wary eyes. Each wore a blouse with wide sleeves, and each kept his hands in his sleeves. There was no hostile move. There was no need of one.

Seven gunmen went slowly and carefully backward down the stairs. It is very foolish to try to argue with a hatchetman whose weapon is a Luger up each sleeve. Wide sleeves are very useful.

So seven men entered the chop suey rooms again and drank tea and were silent.

In the Forbidden Room Loo Tun Sin picked up a gleaming knife. The tight mask moved as if he smiled. There were two pictures before him in a frame. Then he gazed down at the two motionless bodies, and—the knife descended.

Below him seven gunmen paid their bills and left the building. They were escorted to the door by a smiling Chinaman who hoped they would come again, and recommended the tea as always hot. But he kept either hand hidden in wide flowing sleeves.

Away from the place, the seven lit cigarettes and the leader spoke, moodily.

"The Shark was there, but the Lord knows what they are doing to him."

"Let's go back and shoot it out with those chinks," suggested and insisted a young and rash member of the gang.

"Don't be a damn fool! Any of those chinks can carve his initials on your face with his bullets."

"He was of the gang!"

"He's in hell now! Peace to his black soul!"

But the hell of the Shark was not yet, and there was to be no peace to his black soul.

In the Forbidden Room Loo Tun Sin gravely surveyed his work on the two motionless figures. One was dead.

"I have clouded the dawn," he said. "Peace to the spirit of the moon!"

**L**ITTLE whispers and wondering glances ran through the underworld when they found the Shark. He was naked, and his body was that of a woman. But the face—there could be no doubt as to the face. It was the face of the Shark.

But—but—! But the body of a woman!

Paddy the Cop saw a Chinaman lying in the gutter.

"Get out o' here!" he ordered. "That will be the gutter yer in, ye yellow scum!"

"Go to Ireland, you damn Mick!" snarled the voice of a white man. But the face was bland and Oriental.

"Now, by Saint Patrick! Here's a Chineemun talks back at an officer! Move on, ye yellor belly!"

"I'm—I—" The eyes hesitated. "I am the Shark!" he said.

"Go on!" jeered Paddy. "They found the Shark—dead. And he turned out to be a woman. Man naked, he were, and no one could mistake. A woman!"

"But—I am the Shark!"

"Thin—thin—" a brilliant idea came to Paddy; "thin come to headquarters and we'll look over yer finger-prints!"

It was clever. It would settle Paddy's own doubts on that point, and give him ample opportunity to capture the man if he was a lunatic.

But the man snarled a curse, and held up his hands.

They were bat-shaped pads without fingers!

"It's one o' these missionary Chineemun ye are!" decided Paddy. "Get on, or I'll run ye in for impersonating a white man!"

The Chinaman with the white man's voice cursed shockingly, and stumbled away.

**L**OO TUN SIN sat in the Room of Flowers in the House of Beauty and smiled thoughtfully behind his mask. He gazed on a book in his hands as he murmured aloud, "The theory of the grafting of features is correct. The practise proves it!"

He laid down the book on facial surgery and picked up a rose and inhaled, delicately.

"I have blotted out the features of the dawn," he said. "The dead body of the moon with the face of the dawn! There are many that wonder. It is well."