

JAVA HEAD

riedly approaching the countinghouse of Ammidon, Ammidon and Saltonstone, the first and nearest of the places to which he must go. He could remember no mark of what had overcome Taou Yuen. How was Dunsack, who was now clearly demented, implicated? What racking thing had Nettie Vollar seen?

In the subsequent exclamatory rush, even on the following morning when Roger Brevard learned that — poisoned by opium undoubtedly taken by herself — Gertrit Ammidon's wife had died without regaining consciousness, the greater part of the tragedy became little clearer. No statement could be had from Edward Dunsack other than a meaningless array of precautionary phrases; and returning in a sliding gait toward Hardy Street he was put under a temporary restraint.

Nettie Vollar, Brevard heard, had relapsed from her injury into a second critical collapse. Yet, he told himself, entering the room that was his home in Mrs. Cane's large square house on Chestnut Street, that the Manchus still absorbed his speculations.

It was a pleasant room and a pleasant house with a dignified portico; and his tall windows, back on the right of the second floor, opened on the length of the Napiers' garden. Brevard sat looking out over a dim leafiness of evening and tried to discipline his thoughts into order and coherence. Any dignity of death had been soiled by the ugly mystery of the aspects surrounding the end of Taou Yuen.

He had liked her extremely well, agreeing with Rhoda Ammidon that, probably, they had never been permitted to know a more aristocratic breeding or greater degrees of