

APPENDICES

SYNOPSIS OF THE SONG OF SILVER FROND

Silver Frond, a young village egg-seller, who lives with her poor family in Sim Bak village in Singapore, usually goes to the Great House to sell her eggs. One morning, on the way to the Great House to sell eggs, Silver Frond comes to a cemetery where she meets and has a conversation for the first time with The Venerable One – a wealthy and respected Chinese patriarch, the head of the Great House, who has three wives and many children and grandchildren. The Venerable One is surprised when he watches Silver Frond's puppet show and listens to her song which is based on popular gossip about him, and this meeting changes their lives.

After the meeting with The Venerable One in the cemetery, Silver Frond never comes anymore to sell her eggs at the Great House, and her absence makes The Venerable One unable to stop thinking about her. Then, The Venerable One orders his adopted son to go to Silver Frond's house and to give a beautiful doll to her. But several days later, she comes to the Great House to sell the doll back to him so that she can buy better medicine for her mother. Her condition makes The Venerable One want to help her by giving her a lot of money and gifts, and also by providing her with good education. Later on, Silver Frond's beauty, kindness,

manners, and cleverness make The Venerable One fall in love with her. This makes him take her as Fourth Wife.

The Venerable One deeply loves Silver Frond, and Silver Frond herself makes the other wives become full of hatred and jealousy, especially Third Wife. She makes a cruel plot against Silver Frond and it makes The Venerable One send Silver Frond back to her family. But this event makes Silver Frond realize many things about herself: her freedom, her existence, her dreams, and her ambition. Then, she tries to get a new life and she fulfils her ambition to be a teacher for the people of her village. She also shows her independence and her revenge on The Venerable One by refusing his gifts, his money, and his order to come back and live with him in the Great House again. But, in the end, after successfully fulfilling her ambition and her dreams as a woman, Silver Frond leaves her ambition and her dreams behind and comes back to her husband as Fourth Wife again because of her love for him.

BIOGRAPHY OF CATHERINE LIM

Catherine Lim is a Singaporean writer who was born in Malaysia on 23 March 1942. She grew up in Malaysia but now resides and works in Singapore. Among her published works are eleven collections of short stories (two of her collections of short stories, Little Ironies: Short Stories of Singapore and Or Else, The Lightning God and Other Stories have been used as literature texts in the GCEO Level Examination conducted by Cambridge University, England), four novels (The Bondmaid, The Teardrop Story Woman, Following the Wrong God Home, The Song of Silver Frond), a book of poems, and countless articles.

Her novel, The Bondmaid, which was published in the United Kingdom in 1997, received critical acclaim, and her novel, The Serpent's Tooth, is also used as a literature text in the University of Southern Queensland, Australia.

Catherine Lim has a PhD in Applied Linguistics. Since 1992 she has been a regular speaker on cruise ships world-wide, in particular for Canard and Silver Sea Cruise Lines. She has appeared on radio in the United Kingdom, and has talked at international seminars giving political commentaries for local and foreign newspapers and magazines. She was recently awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Literature by Murdoch University, Australia, and received The South East Asian Writer Award in 1999.

Before she became a full-time writer, she was a lecturer in the Regional Language Centre (RELC) in Singapore, training teachers from Southeast Asian countries in the subjects of sociolinguistics and literature teaching.