



The King of Shanghai

Ian Hamilton

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The seventh novel in the Ava Lee series finds Ava getting caught up in the election for the chairmanship of the Triad Societies.

Ava steps into her new business with May Ling Wong and her sister-in-law, Amanda. On a trip to Shanghai, Ava meets with Xu, a young man Uncle had been mentoring and who is also the head of the Triad in Shanghai. Xu makes an audacious business proposal that she and May are compelled to consider. Meanwhile, separately and privately, he confides to Ava that he intends to run for the chairmanship of the Triad Societies and attempts to recruit her as his adviser and confidante.

Against her will, Ava becomes enmeshed in Triad warfare and her future is threatened . . .

The King of Shanghai Details

Date : Published January 17th 2015 by Spiderline (first published December 25th 2014)

ISBN : 9781770892460

Author : Ian Hamilton

Format : Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Fiction, Mystery, Thriller, Crime, Cultural, Canada

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Lindasp says

Whenever I'm looking for a fast and exciting read, I check out the next Ava Lee book. This one started a bit differently than the others because Ava is now working with her friends in the Three Sisters venture capital company making deals but of course, she was soon involved in dealing with feuding Triads in Hong Kong. Things quickly start heading in the usual direction for Ava but she manages to hold her own. An enjoyable exciting read! (I'm glad to see that Ava finally doesn't always need to drink Starbucks' Via instant coffee but there is still a lot of brand name dropping with her wardrobe! LOL)

Kevin says

This is the first book I have read in the series. Enjoyed the characters and the story line. Was enough of a back story that I could get a glimpse of some of what has happened previously. Need to start from the beginning and catch up.

Martina says

Found the 7th book in the Ava Lee series in a 'bundle' ebook including the 7-8-9 books in this series. Was a bit confused at first looking at the book and thinking I may have actually read it, but then realized that the saga of the House of PO carries through about three books.

This book covers the beginning of a new arc in Ava's career and life. It's a set up for much of the coming work with Three Sisters company, and includes some transition from her work with Uncle for so many years. As with the other books, there is a lot of tension, fear, action, and Sonny. I do really enjoy his character. Lots of moving around through China and other nearby areas. Can't say how many times I thought "NOOOOO! Don't go in there!" hahaha Feels good to be almost entirely caught up with the series. There may be some novella(s) I haven't read, maybe one other book.... Something to look forward to.

Dawn says

With the first books in this series the Triad connections were very subtle, they were mostly inferred and Ava had nothing to do with any of it. This book changes that drastically, not only are the connections highly visible but Ava is right in the middle of the action, as per usual.

I definitely miss Uncle in this story. There have been several additions to the cast of characters but none of them replaces Uncle, they're good characters but, at the moment at least, it rather feels like Ava could use someone to talk to and there is no one in that position.

eyes.2c says

Triads and trying times!

Ava is entering a new stage of her life without Uncle. I miss him, as does Ava, and certainly as does Sonny. Sonny is not quite as well kempt and a tad overweight as Ava discovers when she flies to Shanghai to meet with her business partners May Ling Wong and Amanda, Ava's sister-in-law .

Ava's relationship with her new business partners continues to allow story expansion, as does her developing relationship with the triad leader most like Uncle, Xu.

Xu is looking to becoming the new Triad chairman and he wants Ava's help.

Once more a brilliant addition to the series.

I am looking forward to Ava's future.

A NetGalley ARC

(1st reading 2015 Sept 10)

Chris says

Ava is in a funk after the death of her mentor and boss, a shadowy figure of the Hong Kong underworld. She is excited by the prospect of a new business venture with two women who were former clients. She flies to Shanghai to look at some business investment prospects when she is once again confronted by affairs from her former employer. The next thing she knows she is in Hong Kong and mediating a dispute among the Triads. Ava continues to show her poise and superior judgment when faced with one challenge after another as well as attempts on her life. Lots of traveling and intrigue in this one.

Lilisa says

The seventh in the Ava Lee series, this was the least riveting and least enjoyable of all the books I've read - and I've read all but one in the series. Ava Lee, forensic accountant who retrieves "lost" investments for her clients has reached a milestone in her personal and professional life. It's the beginning of a new chapter in her life while still being attached to the past. Approached by her "Uncle's" protegee Xu, who is based in Shanghai, she and her business partners are put in the position of evaluating a business offer from Xu - an offer that will put them in the firing line of being supporters of Xu, head of the Shanghai Triad who intends to run for the chairmanship of the Triad across the Far East. Slower paced and not as intriguing as all the other books, this was the least compelling and interesting of all the Ava Lee books I've read, all save this one, which I've enjoyed immensely. Well, I guess Ian Hamilton is allowed one bust for me. Don't let this review turn you away from this series -- Ava Lee is a kick and I highly encourage readers to go for it. They are well worth the read.

Marci - Serendipitous Readings says

omg!! read in one sitting. I want to read the rest of them all now. Ian, I know that you are writing as fast as

you possibly can. But, a bit more faster PLEASE!! Sincerely, Ava Lee's No. 1 fan.

Mike Harper says

Ava Lee is just about the most unlikely character in modern fiction. In fact, her congeries of abilities are entirely beyond belief: a beautiful Chinese doll who earned her chops as a forensic accountant prepared to kill or disable thugs twice her size, using a deadly form of karate, she also has an unerring business sense and the respect of practically all the shady characters in Asia. And on and on.

This is the worst of the Ava Lee novels, in my view, because it takes far too long - about a third of the book - to get to a plot that's as ridiculous as Ava herself and her supporting cast.

But hey: there's nothing wrong with pure escapist fiction, as long as the reader knows it for what it is.

Trish says

Hamilton continues to thrill us with his unique angle on business dealings in Asia, this time in China. While there is always something to learn in Hamilton's take on international business, this time we are treated to *very* well-financed business women negotiating new ventures in and around Shanghai. Ava Lee finds herself involved with Uncle's old contacts in the Triads and takes some time away from her own concerns to straighten out the tangle of Triad relations in the region leading up to the vote for a new Chairman of Triads across Asia.

Particularly realistic is the description of the Shanghai Triad's business plan: making, distributing, and selling around China knock-offs of Western products. The PRC government like the Taiwanese government before them currently turn a blind eye to copyright infringements, looking after their own self-interest in keeping employment and disposable incomes high. Ava undergoes a complicated calculus deciding whether or not to cooperate with Xu, leader of Shanghai's Triad, given the illegal nature of his business. After an early morning visitation from the ghost of Uncle, she decides to ride that beast. Very quickly she becomes embroiled in their internecine warfare.

What I loved about this particular addition to the series is how Hamilton manages to once again to keep the series fresh by remaking the wheel on which Ava Lee, financier and businesswoman, is forged. Her close colleague, Uncle, is dead and when Ava has finished grieving (one month in Toronto essentially alone and unbothered by anyone else's demands), she gets on a flight to Shanghai eager to turn the page from the financial fraud investigations she'd done previously. She's now keen to invest in businesses of her own choice and although she flies to Shanghai with clear boundaries and standards defined, she quickly jettisons those safeguards in favor of more risk once on the ground.

Hamilton always surprises me with the direction of his narrative and the development of character. He gives some thought to how this careful, clever woman might experience the ordinary humiliations of daily life in Hong Kong and places her, dripping with sweat after a run in Victoria Park, crushed among fellow passengers in a crowded rush-hour bus for three agonizing stops, during which time she suffers the imprecations and haughty looks of her fellow passengers. This completely believable and ordinary scenario brings the controlled Ava back to earth and sisterhood.

An interesting feather of a sideline with which Hamilton teases us is the introduction of Richard Bowlby of

the law firm Burgess and Bowlby in Hong Kong. Bowlby, a *gweilo* knowledgeable about Asia, sounds self-deprecating and funny on the telephone when speaking with Ava, making her laugh! Hamilton has her canceling several appointments with him, seeming to provoke Bowlby's ire. This standard thread in romance novels feels like a come-on by Hamilton and he manages it skillfully. Perhaps we'll see another side to Ava in the future.

As the day-to-day work involved in managing a large investment fund begins to dawn on Ava, she clearly is dreaming of ways "to get her life back." Near the end of this novel we see her doodling her way to a new reporting structure, hoping to find ways to jettison some of the hands-on responsibility of management. Ah, yes, how to keep the income and lose the responsibility is something top managers have been struggling with since time immemorial. I look forward to seeing how she manages it.

Hamilton clearly seems to enjoy writing this series and I admit to continued admiration for what he has been able to do. I love reading these novels because of the realistic descriptions of business scenarios, locations, and for the element of surprise in character development. Hamilton doesn't detail Ava's backstory in this seventh in the series, but moves directly into her new life as a venture capitalist. While there is less discussion of what Ava eats for dinner, something I admit to a healthy interest in, we learn that she quite likes white burgundy and pinot grigio to unwind. Unwind? Perhaps even Ava finds her constant effort to stay poised a strain.

Now that I know this book series is being planned as a TV miniseries, I can't help but imagine ways this dialogue-heavy addition to the series could play out on film. Can it be shot on location in Asia or will green screens have to do? It makes for fascinating mental exercise. I can't wait to see what's next. Now that Hamilton has created insatiable demand, he has to manage supply, something he and the Triads have in common. So far he's managed wonderfully.

Anita H says

Sadly, not as good as the other books. I fear that Ava entering this new stage in life could be boring. A LOT of dialogue, which I normally like but this time it was just retelling what had already happened in the book. The story line really wasn't that interesting. Too bad. Fingers crossed that the next one is better.

Skip says

Ava is finally able to recover from the death of Uncle, her mentor and business partner, who earlier in life was head of the Triads and Hong Kong underworld. With her two Chinese partners in Three Sisters, they are considering two major new business investments, when Uncle's other protégée wants to become a silent partner. The, Ava becomes involved in a leadership dispute among the Triads, as tensions and violence escalate. Ava's ability to remain cool and detached, her unconventional lifestyle, her one-of-a-kind family, and the Chinese culture make this series special.

Ian Hamilton deserves a U.S. publisher.

Cal says

The new plot line is not as compelling as the pure debt chaser stories of previous books. In my view the story line has too many side trails. The character is still true to form. I will try another Triad book.

Stacey says

3.5 stars

Lynn says

In *The King of Shanghai*, Ava Lee seems to be turning over a new leaf after the death of Uncle. She has started a venture capital firm with her partners. The group is in Shanghai exploring the option of backing a new Chinese designer when Ava gets pulled into Triad politics. This novel is light on action and heavy on dialogue in comparison to previous books in this series. The charm of Ava's character is the dichotomy of a kick-ass action hero housed in the body of a forensic accountant. Ava's flat affect in conversations can be tiresome which makes this entry is not as appealing.

One of the things I love about this series is Ian Hamilton's description of the different Asian locations featured in each of the books. He takes his readers to places tourists wouldn't see with emphasis on local cuisine and customs. Hamilton's love for Asia rings true and should I ever be travelling to Asia, I will revisit these books to plan my itinerary. *The King of Shanghai* appears to be a transitional book in a series that is well worth a read.

Kristi says

Yeah...I may have read this in between Christmas dinner courses.

I think this might be my favorite installment of the series so far. Ava Lee is the modern feminist I've been wanting to read. She's competent, intelligent, and makes no concessions playing in the world of international business. Ava is a Chinese Canadian forensic accountant who specializes in chasing down bad debts accrued in white collar business schemes, often involving a south east Asian component.

In this seventh installment, we see the series taking a shift in directions, before it can fall into the pit fall most series succumb to: repetition. Ian Hamilton deftly shifts Ava's focus away from debt towards the less adventurous (and less dangerous) business ventures of the company she now shares with two friends.

However, Ava has a hard time keeping her life mundane and is quickly pulled into a far more dangerous series of business arrangements.

Rather than starting to go stale or taking Ava in a direction that fans might not like, *The King of Shanghai* breathes even more life into the series and makes me very excited to see what one of my all time favorite heroines does next.

Highly recommend this series and book for fans of thinking heroines!

Kathleen Townsend says

This book was just okay for me. Overall it was pretty fast paced, and went by pretty quickly. However, it wasn't that memorable. (Full disclosure. I realized I never posted the review for this book and can't find it in the folder where I normally save reviews on my computer. Oops.) So what do I remember? It was a good mystery story and pretty fast paced as books in this genre normally are. I hadn't read the previous books in the series, though. Normally this doesn't inhibit my understanding or enjoyment of a book. Perhaps if I had read earlier titles in the series I would have felt more attached to the characters.

But the biggest kicker is that the story wasn't very memorable. This isn't just an issue with reviewing a year after finishing the book either. I felt the same way about the book at the time of reading. I actually restarted the book after getting a few chapters in and putting it down. Although, I do have to say that my grandmother was extremely ill at the time I started this book, so the unmemorable factor and the constant stopping and restarting may say more about my own mental state at the time than anything to do with this novel.

I think I need to reread this book. As it stands, *The King of Shanghai* isn't a bad book by any means. It simply didn't hold my attention as I thought it would, or was as memorable as I wished it was. As my local library tends to carry just about every mystery series ever created, I will probably start at book one in the series and see how I feel about *The King of Shanghai* at that point.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

DeB MaRtEnS says

The best yet in the Ava Lee series! This is the first novel of a new life direction for Ava Lee, after the death of her dear elderly mentor Uncle, where her career as a venture capitalist is about to take off. She is looking forward to less stressful circumstances, (Good luck, Ava!) bolstered by an up front business partnership in *Three Sisters* with May Ling and Amanda Lee, relationships carried forward from the previous books in the series.

One skill which Ian Hamilton has really not mastered well is how to introduce Ava Lee, from book to book, as the series expands. He continues to insist on listing her peculiarities- her favourite clothing, the Bak Mei marshal arts, the moleskin notebooks etc.- and giving more back story than required in the beginning chapters. He eventually works the same facts into the novel later throughout the story, more incidentally, but it is like he can't stop himself from his clumsy beginnings. It is the one part of the series which I have to grit my teeth over- the awkward repetition similar to my *Bobbsey Twin* days- but I know that I can skim past quickly and get into the pearl of the oyster really quickly, if I simply bear with Hamilton's now signature flaw.

Once through that rigamarole, the novel picks up nicely and begins to set up the scene for what will branch into Ava's very interesting adventure with Xu, Uncle's young Triad protégé from Shanghai. At the half way point, the novel hits full speed and Triad bosses, gang rules, subterfuge, strategy, soldiers and Ava Lee zoom into action. Ava has a chance to demonstrate her talents in a way that until now have been only piecemeal smatterings in previous books, and it is kind of thrilling to watch her take command.

It is definitely a 5 star Ava Lee spree, and I'm racing for the next one.

John Seetoo says

Excellent addition to the Ava Lee series. A true original.

Sev says

I really enjoyed Ava's story since the beginning, the books where always full of action, inquiries...

But in this books... litteraly nothing happens.

As I was really into the bad debt recovery job (I never read something like that) but I can't same the same about 3 sisters.

Sadly I'm not eager to read the next one
