

APPENDIX I

SUMMARY OF THE SERPENT'S TOOTH

Catherine Lim's *The Serpent's Tooth* tells a story about the Toh's family from Angela Toh's perspective, the daughter-in-law of the Old Mother, and the wife of the firstborn of the Toh family, Wee Boon. Angela Toh is married to Wee Boon, the wealthy Singaporean Doctor who aims to be the Member of Parliament. The story of this novel starts with her descriptions towards her family where she hates all of them for the ill-treatment to her and her family. Upon the death of her father-in-law, Angela is occupied with her work and contented life while her husband is on his political career, a pilgrimage to become the Member of Parliament. Angela has three children, Mark who excels in academics and top in his class, Michelle who excels at sports, and finally Michael, the difficult one who lack of ambition to be at least a decent student at the school.

When the father-in-law had passed away, the conflict started to rise within the family, which is who will take the responsibility to take care of the Old Mother. Wee Tiong the second sibling is very reluctant because he and his wife did not see any benefit by taking care of the Old Mother, until they are expecting the fifth baby. Wee Nam the third sibling has no stable income for his own family, let alone to take care the Old Mother, Wee Nam cannot even help funding the funeral of his father because he has no money at all. Wee Siong the fourth sibling have migrated to Australia studying law. But instead, he joined a Christian cult. So, he also unavailable to take the burden. Finally, the foster sibling, the idiot one with a mind of a seven years-old, Ah Bock who certainly has no capabilities taking care of the

Old Mother, while he still also needs daily help for himself. With all those reasons, Angela and Wee Boon are forced to take care of the Old Mother.

The arrival of the Old Mother in Angela's place immediately made Angela's modernity to put on halt because to the Old Mother's view, it is not the traditional ways. Angela and her family cannot enjoy a beef based meal because the Old Mother considered it as a taboo with her old Chinese culture. When Michael is sick, the Old Mother took the initiative by giving him the smelly herbal medicines that had no prescription, but it is from the temple medium, the Old Mother thought that the smelly herbal medicine must be the finest medicine. Of course Angela was furious with her action because Angela had given Michael the vitamin pills, but the Old Mother just throw it away and put trust in the temple medium that charges expensively.

Confronted with the temple medium's vision about the Old Mother's husband, added with the loud tones of the spirit of her late husband, she took Michael with her old traditional views that led him neglects his studies and giving him fairy tales and Chinese medicine. Angela is of course outraged with the Old Mother's doing to her fragile son.

Finally, the Old Mother is getting weaker on her deathbed. She called Ah Siong, her favorite son, to which in this scenario is Mark, who appeared to be taller and stalwart like a man. She finally at peace 'knowing' that the son had returned from Australia.

APPENDIX II

BIOGRAPHY OF CATHERINE LIM

A prolific writer, Catherine Lim has written more than 19 books across various genres – short stories, novels, reflective prose, poems and satirical pieces. Born in 1942 Malaya, Lim was a teacher, then project director with the Ministry of Education and a specialist lecturer with the Regional Language Centre (RELC) before dedicating herself fully to writing in 1992.

Lim has won several national and regional book prizes for her literary contributions, including the National Book Development Council (NBDCS) awards in 1982, 1988 and 1990; the Montblanc-NUS Centre For The Arts Literary Award in 1998; and the 1999 regional Southeast Literature by Murdoch University, Australia, in 2000 and a Knight of Information in 2003. Lim was also Ambassador for the Hans Christen Andersen Foundation, Copenhagen, in 2005.

Many of Lim's works are studied in local and foreign schools and universities, and have been published in various languages in several countries. She was the first Singaporean author to pen an electronic novella over the internet, which has since been adapted into a movie.

Besides writing, Lim guest lectures at local and international seminars, conferences, arts/writing festivals and cruise ships worldwide. She has also appeared on radio and television programs in Singapore, Europe and Australia.