



# Opium

*Colin Falconer*

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## **Opium** Colin Falconer

Vientiane, 1960. Laos is a sleepy post-colonial backwater, run by generals and at war with the communist Pathet Lao in the north. Corsican gangsters, left behind after the French departure five years before, run the opium trade, flying raw opium out of the mountains to Bangkok and Saigon. The most celebrated of the milieu is Rocco Bonaventure, cursed with a daughter who turns heads everywhere she goes. Baptiste Croce is kind of man her father has always warned her about - a handsome and womanising pilot with his eye on the main chance. But Noelle is a woman to be reckoned with, as both Rocco and Baptiste discover for themselves. Their affair, conducted against the looming mountains of Indochina and its blazing poppy fields, change all their lives forever. Baptiste risks his life for her again and again in the air; or is it for control of his father's opium business? Meanwhile in the teeming slums of Hong Kong's Walled City, a Chinese refugee uses his cunning and his fists to rise to become Red Pole of the Fei Leung triad. He sees beyond the filthy opium dens to a day when the drug will help him rule the world. From the jungles of the Golden Triangle to the tenements of sixties Hong Kong, from colonial Saigon to the skies of northern Laos, romance and horror collide in a stunning novel of passion and greed and breath-taking action. The Opium series charts the story of the drug trade in Indochina, from sacks thrown in the back of tiny planes in the nineteen sixties to the multimillion dollar international industry that soon became the plague of the western world.

## **Opium Details**

Date : Published June 17th 2013 by Cool Gus Publishing (first published October 20th 1994)

ISBN : 9781621250777

Author : Colin Falconer

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# From Reader Review Opium for online ebook

## Michael Nolan says

I first read this book about 20 years ago on this old fashioned substance they called paper & I remember loving it. When I noticed it was on Kindle Unlimited for free I immediately downloaded it to read again. I still REALLY enjoyed it, don't get me wrong but there's a niggling doubt in my head that this edition has been very heavily edited compared to the version I read 2 decades or so ago. I remember that version being a bit more epic. A bit more 'Godfatherly' ?

I might be wrong. It might be my memory playing tricks on me. Or maybe it's just the Opium? ? Anyway apart from nostalgia or real page cuts brining my rating down a star I still heavily recommend this book.??

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## Divaesque Princess says

Well, I have mixed thoughts. There were parts I loved, but it seemed to end abruptly and the characters' stories felt unfinished. I am unsure why the stories of the triads were linked to the main characters (unless it was just "background" info?). Anyhow, I would give it 3.5 stars :)

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## Elizabeth Saunders says

Not really my genre - I liked the historical details. The story clips along and I kept reading through to the end. I don't know if I'll read the sequel, though. All of the characters are flawed. You want to know what happens next, but I'm not sure if there are any "good" guys in this story. I received a review copy of this book.

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## Lindsey L. Fay says

First book in the series. Loved everyone. I travel quite a bit in this part of the world. So very interesting. You will not put this series down.

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## Judie says

I enjoyed this book and would have given it another star if it had been properly edited and a Francophone had reviewed the French. Mr. Falconer is responsible for the French and for allowing a poorly edited book to be sold. So only 3 stars.

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### **Jim Galford says**

I have rated this book this high only because of the historical setting and events described. The story itself is mundane and dripping of unrealistic romance.

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### **Frangipani says**

This book was an unputdownable book, but I couldn't say that I liked the story?! It was the first time that I ever skipped paragraphs because I found the violence a little too stomach churning (and irrelevant to my understanding of the story). But the twists and turns of the plot were outstanding and devious. Wow, what a story.

Synopsis available at:

[<http://www.fantasticfiction.co.uk/f/c...>]

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### **Richard Sutton says**

Like every Colin Falconer book I've read, *Opium* is a real page-turner, but what surprised me is the depth of the family story it reveals and the impact of many of the scenes. It is also a much-needed education. The author reveals a very ugly side of the American Involvement in Southeast Asia in an immersive and relentless way. I felt as if I had been plunged into the back alleys of Vientienne, Saigon and Hong Kong, complete with smells and all the shock of the exotic and the dangerous. The multinational organization at the heart of the title trafficking, surpasses even *La Cosa Nostra* in the extent of its reach and those it ensnares. More than once, I was reminded of Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* in how the business irreversibly corrupts everyone whom it touches. Some, touched much worse than others. No one gets a free ride here, or a bail-out. But the power of women stuck into impossible situations, is investigated here very thoroughly and retribution, if not salvation, is possible. The time arc covers decades very convincingly. The characters are real and powerful as is the emotional range they express. I believe this may be Mr. Falconer's best work so far and I look forward to the series opening up from this read. For anyone with an interest in a full view of our Southeast Asian sojourn, this will increase your understanding in many ways that would have been impossible back in the day.

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### **Linda says**

Mr. Falconer writes like George Strait sings--straight, no frills, no fluff. His descriptive talent is excellent. Through this book I felt the pain of childbirth, the dirtiest of dirt on my body and clothes, the disregard for other human life, and the despondency that sent people to the Opium dens.

Thank you, Mr. Falconer, for a good read.

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## **Irene Adam says**

I received a free advance e-copy of this book and have chosen to write an honest and unbiased review. I have no personal affiliation with the author. Another great piece of historical fiction by Colin Falconer. This time he writes about smuggling opium in Asia, the triads and American involvement. This is an extremely well written book with a great plot and excellent development of some very interesting characters one of which is Ruby Wen. Colin tells it like it is. He doesn't go off half-cocked. He is an author who does his research in order to portray the era and the lay of the land as accurately as possible. He is a true storyteller. 'Opium' is well worth the read and I look forward to reading more in this series from Colin in the future.

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## **Danny Pilling says**

I originally picked up this book in WH Smiths in the UK when it came out on paperback via Coronet Books in 1994. I had just come back from my first trip around South East Asia and was really suffering from the holiday blues when Larry Rostant's front cover really caught my eye. The full complete book is quite a big read at just under 700 pages and what a read it is! It is quite the epic saga. Following the paths of a number of very interesting characters over 20 years and how their stories are connected is a fascinating read (almost like the movie pulp fiction). This is a true book of escapism and the descriptions are so so vivid especially if you have been to this part of the world. I always wondered over the years why this book was never made into a film? Think The Killing Fields, Air America, Pulp Fiction, The Godfather and Blood Sport all rolled into one. That is the best way to describe this book. Now there's a film I'd like to see!

Opium can easily compete against the likes of The Beach by Alex Garland or the DaVinci Code by Dan Brown. These two books I enjoyed and were made into movies but I think if the same was done to Opium it could lay waste to them both. I have read this book several times over the years and worn out a few paperbacks. Nice to see it digital but I wish it was complete and not in a series.

I don't see Triad listed here which follows Opium's timeline and has a few surprises thrown in. If you have read the full Opium series, you'll love Triad!

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## **Don O'goodreader says**

I won a copy of this book in a Goodreads First Reads giveaway on July 25, 2013. I have not received a copy of the book, thus I have not read it. The rating is just the average reported on Good Reads.

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## **T.W. Dittmer says**

This tale of the opium business in Laos starts in the late 1950s, just after the French were ousted from Vietnam.

It is extremely well written, thoroughly researched, and has a great cast of characters. There are a few

typographical errors, but the story line is so strong that it's easy to ignore them.

I thoroughly enjoyed it, and would highly recommend it. I'm looking forward to continuing the series.

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### **Jelena Vojvodic says**

An interesting and exciting book. It reveals a world unfamiliar to me: Indochina, triads, opium smugglers... Some descriptions are so vivid that you could almost sense a sweet smell of opium.

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### **Timo Schmidt says**

Exciting book that takes you through one of the most turbulent times in Southeast Asian history

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