

## SYNOPSIS

**Title** : Faded Portraits  
**Editor** : Periplus editions (HK) Ltd.  
**Publisher** : Eric oey  
**Year of publishing** : 1999

The story begun when Edu(I) have to come to Aunt Sophie's funeral. She passed away in 1940 in Batavia. She was still very agile in her old age when she was still alive. There were lots of interesting and unique things on her when she was still alive. Her unforgettable character makes her became different from the others. Aunt Sophie was buried in "Tanah Abang" Cemetery and in this moment Edu met all of his nuclear and extended family. It makes his memory about his childhood and other past events come through his mind and the story was told flashback.

The novel Faded Portraits tells a story about a mixed-blood family, consists of Dutch-Indies. The condition arouses internal conflicts between the family member. The conflicts mostly caused by the sense of *white* superiority that emerge on the side of Dutch family member. The feeling is sharpen by the fact that some of this family member has light blond hair with blue eyes, while the others has relatively darker hair with black eyes.

The marriage between Aunt Sophie and Uncle Tjen formed the link between Aunt Sophie family and his. Aunt Sophie was married to Uncle Tjen, who is the brother of Edu's mother. Therefore he could interact once again with Aunt Sophie. Without uncle Tjen, Edu would never have been able to know Aunt

Sophie. Edu could not have understood about Sophie without his mother. He can describe Sophie does not derive from his personal experience only, but also from the numerous details he gathered from his mother. Uncle Tjen's parents adopted his mother. They grew together, also with Charles, Tjen's brother. Charles and Tjen's health condition contradicts each other. Tjen was very weak, while Charles was strong, manly and really health. Their health condition were the results of their father who wanted them to be strong, energetic and always able in doing the man's works, like hunting, swimming, shooting and etc. Uncle Tjen's father was very strict. He always told his sons to do adventure. Charles, who enjoyed this adventure, while Tjen, could not summon up the courage to do the adventure. Only Charles would be happy and exuberant, who is different from Tjen who always felt a vague fear. Shortly, Tjen was weak since he was a child and always in an unstable health. Edu's mother simply wanted to leave the nest and needed a different environment and a more independent existence, left and headed towards new life in Semarang and then met Edu's father. He was a real *totok*, with blond hair and blue eyes, while Edu's mother was an Indies woman. Tjen got married with Sophie without love feeling inside his heart, because his true love has ceased away since Winny's death. Winny was the first and dearest girl in Tjen's life before. She died because of her illness. Sophie came in his life with all of her attentiveness, care and love and Tjen could not refused that. He could only justify as the result of feeling affectionate, without any reference to love. Sophie did not realize that her marriage only hurts her heart.

Aunt Sophie involves in almost all the family events, love and divorce, inheritances and quarrels, jealousy and devotion. She is the main character. Sophie is proud of herself and always claims that she has a European upbringing and lifestyle. But, the fact is that she often does native tradition and habits is undeniable. Beside the ambiguity of her character, Sophie always discriminate the born of De Pauly's children who are dark. But she would very happy if her family born blond and blue eyes baby, like Kitty, her sister's daughter. It is one of the reasons why she treats Kitty better than the three daughters of Alex.

Salemba Avenue itself is identified as "rumah sial", which could never be happy there. Frustration, moodiness, illness, death and always the tensions, quarrels, confrontations are always coloring this family life. There are lots of unlucky fates in this family. It started since the moment when Aunt Dorina and Uncle Leon were married in such a short period. Aunt Eugenie, although she was beautiful, felt unhappy. She could not have any children and she suffered terribly later on. Sophie's life was also unhappy. When she was married to Tjen who does not really love her. During her marriage, she always spent her time taking care of her husband's health until he died. It hurt Sophie. She felt lonely. In addition she was alone since Edu and his parents were in Holland at that time. And she so decides to live with Edu's family in Holland. At first, Sophie suffered from mental illness. She still could not accept the fact that Tjen had passed away. Through a "dukun", she tried to communicate with her husband spirit. Finally, after a couple of times she decided to call it quit. Considering these sad moments, Sophie thought that these were caused by the influences of her house. She felt that

**Salemba house was haunted and brings unlucky things for her. There are some solutions appears, but the best solution is Edu's mother's suggestion for Sophie to move from Salemba house. By moving from Salemba house, she expects after she lives in Lembang with Edu's parents, she can find a better life.**