

The Venerable Bead



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As the story begins...It is the early 1970s, when every American man, woman, and child is fighting the threat of Communist invasion. Leila Aluja, an Iraqi-American lawyer, becomes a film star as part of her job with the government's top counter-espionage unit, in an effort to track down a ring of Sino-Albanian spies operating out of Hollywood's most powerful talent agency. Leila accomplishes her mission, but not before she falls in love with Albanian spymaster Josef Shqitonja, and compromises her organization by allowing him to escape, bringing an end to her budding undercover career. Leila bounces back to become a partner of Washington's largest lobbying firm, representing the National Gun Carriers Association, C.A.N.C.E.R. (Center for American National Cigarette Education and Research), and Barkers Hill Enterprises, investment arm of organized crime. From her law practice, Leila moves onto public relations, and then to the head of the world's largest fast-food conglomerate, all the while separated from her true love, Shqitonja, as he scours Albania for a secret, life-prolonging yogurt formula. Despite the occasional, not to say habitual, affairs, dalliances, and marriages, Leila and Shqitonja cling to their love for each other - until the secret of the yogurt finally reunites them. More than just a love story, The Venerable Bead is a saga of love for self, money, unassailable corruption, and power. All just kidding, of course.

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