

## **5. Jakarta History Museum, Sara Specx 1629**

**Dirk Teeuwen MSc**

<< Dirk Teeuwen  
Inviting eyes, smiling girl by  
Gerrit van Honthorst circa  
1630 >>  
See picture 5,  
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### **Introduction**

**I hope you have recovered from your spooky Sara Specx nightmare. Enjoy your coffee and cake in the Stadhuis Café (Town Hall Café) first and then you could learn more about Sara. Read my non-fiction story about Miss Sara Specx below and have a look at the pictures. Listen and make yourself understand the following good and proper: love is blind, one can not love and be wise, maybe passion is always a mistake, sometimes love hurts!**

### **Sara Specx**

**Sara Specx lived from 1617 until 1639. She was the daughter of a VOC-official, the Dutch widower Jacques Specx, and his Japanese concubine. A relation between a Dutchman and a Japanese woman in the Far East was nothing special in those days. After all, the Dutch East-India Company, VOC, had trade relations with Japan from about 1600. And, what's more, a lot of Japanese, mostly soldiers and their families, were residents of Batavia in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.**

**So, Jacques Specx lived temporarily in Japan, in the town of Hirado. In 1622 he left his concubine behind and sailed to Batavia. He took their daughter Sara, a girl of mixed blood of course, with him. In 1629 Jacques Specx sailed away to Holland and left his daughter in Batavia as a "Daughter of the State". "Daughter of the state" meant "living under the protection of the Governor-General", because the girls' parents lived elsewhere for some time by order of the government. The Governor-General, and specially his wife, took care of such young girls. Coen and his wife were foster parents. These minors knew that love affairs were not accepted, because these girls were alone and fragile. Batavia was a very dangerous town to live in. This town was a community with sailors and soldiers, and was infested with whores, Chinese pimps,**

slaves, pup-crawlers and lunatics. The Dutch East-India Company had its hands full with drunks and with people going out of their minds and because of that, punishments imposed by the Company were quite something. Coen condemned lewd behaviour regularly and publicly.

In 1629, the Governor-General Jan Pietersz. Coen and his wife Eva took care of Sara Specx as well. But, oh dear, Sara (too early an adult probably) fell deeply in love with a handsome guy of mixed blood - named Pieter Cortenhoeff, a standard-bearer and an officer candidate in the army of the Dutch East-India Company. Love is blind: so one day, in June 1629, this stupid young couple enjoyed intercourse together, openly under the eyes of other "Daughters of the State", slaves and many others (see \*\*\*, last page). One can not love and be wise: so Sara, this foolish and lovesick girl, invited Pieter the next day once more, after she personally - burning with passion - had laid a special mattress ready for him in the common bedroom quite openly (source, see \* last page). The couple went ahead and did it all over. Now they were surprised in the act by Eva, the Governor-General's wife. Eva walked into the State Daughters' common bedroom and rubbed her eyes with astonishment. Please realize, this was a room in the residence of Sara's foster father, Governor-General Jan Pietersz. Coen. Maybe passion is always a mistake: so the Governor-General heard about the clearly visible love making, about the overt sex scenes, and burst out in anger. In his opinion his authority was ridiculed. Please, try to understand him! Governor-General Jan Pietersz. Coen was responsible of "the Daughters of the State" in the first place and he was a very orthodox Protestant Christian with strict views. His will was law and now he was losing his face. He - a thoroughgoing person and short tempered as he was - he was livid with anger. "A contemporary writer attested 'His face turned white, his chair and the table trembled.'" (Source, see \*\* last page.) There was no escape from it. So, the following day June 10<sup>th</sup> 1629, more or less directly after the second romp, the Governor-General had young Pieter Jacobsz. Cortenhoeff beheaded, because of Pieter's fondness for the ladies and for Miss Sara in particular. The beheading took place right before the main entrance of the Town Hall and Sara was forced to look. Sometimes love hurts: so, after the beheading Miss Sara was severely flogged in public, while she was tied up in the main entrance of the Town Hall.

Nevertheless, some years later, Sara, with a rich dowry from her father, married a Protestant Reverend and died of maternity fever in 1639 in a Dutch trading base on Formosa (now Taiwan). The father, Jacques Specx, was Governor-General from 1629 until 1632, after the sudden death of Jan Pietersz. Coen. Specx fired the complete judiciary.

## Pictures



**1, 2 Batavia young women, from a rich family; she is half Dutch, half Japanese, 17<sup>th</sup> century**

**Detail, from a painting of Jacob Coeman 1665**

**[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pieter\\_Cnoll#/media/File:Jacob\\_Coeman\\_Portrait\\_of\\_Pieter\\_Cnoll\\_and\\_his\\_familie\\_1665.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pieter_Cnoll#/media/File:Jacob_Coeman_Portrait_of_Pieter_Cnoll_and_his_familie_1665.jpg) (in the public domain)**



**3. See 1**



**4. See 1**

Wikipedia  
Gerrit van Honthorst 1625  
Temptation



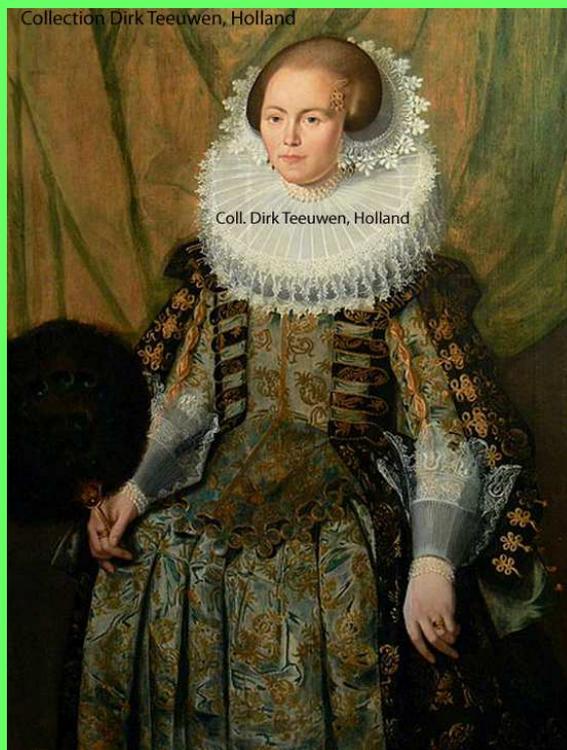
**5. Temptation, smiling Dutch girl holding an obscene image, painting by Gerrit van Honthorst, circa 1630**

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Smiling\\_Girl,\\_a\\_Courtesan,\\_Holding\\_an\\_Obscene\\_Image.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Smiling_Girl,_a_Courtesan,_Holding_an_Obscene_Image.jpg) (in the public domain)



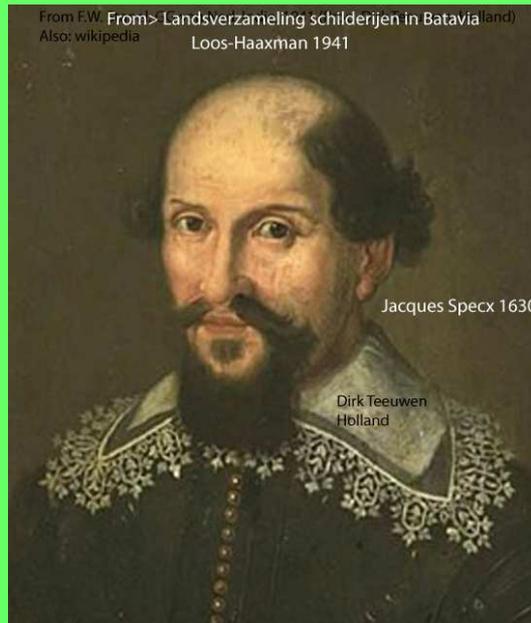
**6. Jan Pietersz. Coen, Governor-General of the Dutch East-India Company 1619-1623 and 1627-1629; artist J. Wab**

From> Stapel, dr. F.W.: *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indië* (History of Dutch EastIndia), volume III; Amsterdam 1939, page 118, library Dirk Teeuwen Holland



**7. Jan Coen's wife, Eva Ment, in 1629; artist J. Wab**

From> Stapel, dr. F.W.: *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indië* (History of Dutch EastIndia), volume III; Amsterdam 1939, page 122, library Dirk Teeuwen Holland



**8. Jacques Specx, Governor-General of the Dutch East-India Company 1629-1632**

From> Loos-Haaxman, J. de: De landsverzameling schilderijen in Batavia; Leiden Holland 1941, page 10. Also: [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques\\_Specx#/media/File:Jacques\\_Specx.jpg](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques_Specx#/media/File:Jacques_Specx.jpg) (public domain)



**9. Potrait of Pieter Cnoll and his family in 1665, painted by Jacob Coeman**  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pieter\\_Cnoll#/media/File:Jacob\\_Coeman\\_Portrait\\_of\\_Pieter\\_Cnoll\\_and\\_his\\_familie\\_1665.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pieter_Cnoll#/media/File:Jacob_Coeman_Portrait_of_Pieter_Cnoll_and_his_familie_1665.jpg) (in the public domain)

\*<http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/Specx>

\*\*[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saartje\\_Specx](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saartje_Specx)

\*\*\*Pieter Jacobsz. Cortenhoef bribed house slaves to realize the opportunity to enter Coen's house.  
Ending