

***STAR ACTING* at ESPA**
MONOLOGUES FOR WOMEN
by Charles Busch

SHANGHAI MOON, SYLVIA, page 56 Samuel French

1930's Shanghai. Lady Sylvia Allington, a former carnival dancer who has married into the highest echelons of British aristocracy, is on the witness stand. Her elderly husband has been indicted in the murder of Sylvia's secret lover, a warlord named General Gong Fei. Pushed to the limit, Sylvia reveals what really happened that fatal night.

SYLVIA

(breaking down)

I will speak the truth if you can take it. Can you take it? All of you sitting there squarely in your seats judging me, secure in your picture of me as a woman of ill repute, smug in your own morality. Could you face the truth about yourselves? It's taken me thirty years to get to this moment. Every day of my life paved the way to this witness box. No, Gong Fei did not commit suicide and no, Lord St. John Allington didn't shoot him either. Someone else in that room did. I know the person. I saw the face of the killer. And how you ask? Because I got a good look in the mirror. I killed Gong Fei. Yes, I killed him. I am his murderer. I had never known a man like him, cold, cruel, insatiable in his passions. I did my best to stop the inevitable. I wanted to be a good wife, to be deserving of such an illustrious name. Why wouldn't I want to put my purple past behind me? Who wouldn't want to forget the dark hole from where I crawled? I tried to fight the General but our desires proved too strong for me. He turned me into an opium fiend. I no longer had a will of my own. It was his will, his domination that transformed the proud wife of Lord St. John Allington into a thing, an object to be caressed yet spat upon. A slave to be subjected to his most perverse sexual cravings. My Lord, members of the jury and dear God above, I shot Gong Fei and this, this is my defense!

(She lifts up her skirt and shows the brand on her buttocks. We hear loud murmuring and women screaming in the courtroom.)