

## SHANGHAI MOON

Sylvia, Pug (1 man, 1 woman)

1930's Shanghai. Sylvia, the beautiful young American born wife of an elderly British nobleman, Lord St. John Allington, is visiting Shanghai with her husband. She has fallen in love with their host, the mysterious warlord, General Gong Fei and is having a clandestine affair. A burly cockney sea salt, Pug Talbot, has arrived to do business with Gong Fei. Gong Fei leaves the room to collect some papers for Talbot, leaving Sylvia alone with Pug Talbot.

PUG

Well, well, well. Awfully small world, isn't it, Lady Allington? Must I call you Lady Allington? Seems rather formal, don't you think? Considering you and me go so far back.

SYLVIA

I really don't have the foggiest idea of what you're talking about.

PUG

Sylvia, there's no use putting on an act, I've got you and there ain't no way to get around it. I know your real name, old girl, and that name is Mrs. Pug Talbot.

SYLVIA

I was fourteen years old. That piece of paper wasn't legal and you know it.

PUG

Yeah, that's the fighting spirit I remember and we did get into some fierce rows back in Texas. You've come a long way from that tent show.

SYLVIA

Evidently not far enough. Biggest mistake I ever made was getting hooked up with a stinko carny roustabout.

PUG

Look here. I ain't gonna take that.

SYLVIA

You can take it and bury it. Maybe it'll grow lilies.

PUG

Eh. If anyone should be mad, it oughta be me. You wouldn't have gotten away so easy if you hadn't put something foul in that chicken hash. It had me puking so bad, I let you run out the door without a good beating. I bet you ain't doing much cooking for Lord Old-fart-What's-his-name.

SYLVIA

I'd rather you didn't speak of my husband in that vulgar tone.

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PUG

Many would say that he isn't your husband. A gal can't be married to two men at the same time. At least not to my knowledge.

SYLVIA

You a man. That's a ha ha.

PUG

Look here, I ain't one to antagonize.

SYLVIA

"Antagonize." You can take your fifty-cent words and stuff a turkey with 'em. And then you know what you can do with the turkey. You've got some crooked little scheme hatching in that pea brain of yours. Now spill it.

PUG

Times is hard. I've got expenses, big expenses, a boat to upkeep, a crew. You're directly responsible for my financial situation. Believe me, I don't want to cause you any trouble. I've got fond feelings for you, Sylvia. Always have. Despite you running out on me like you did.

SYLVIA

And if I don't capitulate to blackmail?

PUG

Well, I'd be forced to take certain measures. I can't imagine Lord Allington would appreciate a bigamy scandal.

SYLVIA

You lousy – Here I went through that burlesque of a wedding out of the goodness of my heart, and you turn up again just when things are going swell for me. Maybe I can give you a little something to tide you over but don't get any notions that you're on my payroll. I nearly did you in back in El paso. You know better than to get me sore.

PUG

I appreciate any little crumb you can pass my way.

*(Sylvia takes off her ring and hands it to him.)*

SYLVIA

Well, take this ring. It ought to shut you up till I leave town.

PUG

Cut glass?

SYLVIA

It's called a star sapphire, you dope. Now pocket it before the General gets back.

SHANGHAI MOON

PUG

This little negotiation will be just between us. The General don't need to know that we're old acquaintances or that you ain't born noble.

SYLVIA

Gong Fei knows I come from humble origins.

PUG

How much you gonna soak this one for?

SYLVIA

I ain't soaking him for nothing. I don't need the dough. Lord Allington's got enough to keep me in Paris gowns for a dozen lifetimes.

PUG

Then I don't get it.

SYLVIA

You wouldn't. I'm stuck on the guy. For the first time in my life. I don't quite get it myself.

PUG

Don't tell me you've gone soft?

SYLVIA

I'm obsessed with him. It's out of my control. It's an animal thing, like two giraffes or gorillas or a pair of hot to trot mongoose. There's something about his glossy dark hair and that cool, smooth skin that makes me breathless. All I know is I can't give him up. Not yet anyways.

PUG

But Sylvia, how can you let him make love to you? He's a different race from us! It's wrong. It's against nature.

SYLVIA

I want to hear none of that talk. He's a prince from another world and he's better than I deserve.

PUG

I guess I don't know you so well, after all, Sylvia

SYLVIA

Clam up. Here he comes.