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Natascha is an attractive white Russian girl, living in Shanghai, whose parents died when she was twelve years old, leaving her to the care of an old Chinese woman, who's husband is an opium smoker. Natascha has a disarming personality, which enables her to work the men that frequent the night club where she works. She had the knack of making the customers spend their money and tip the girls in his party, in "working the customers" as the girls called it. She would at times antagonize a drunken spender who, at the insistent cajoling of Natascha had liked all the girls at the table, would take exception at her, coming to a realization that she was a gold digger. But Natascha didn't mind, on such occasions the other girls would chip in and

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make up her share of the spoils for her night's work. Sometimes one of the girls would be greedy and refuse to give her her share. Then the five months would fly, for Natascha had a good sense of justice and a mean temper when this sense had been outraged. The influence of Nana her Chinese god mother had protected her from the pitfalls of man's passion. Brought up in the atmosphere of the underworld she has seen other girls go the way of all flesh and she knew its results. Then to, she realized her virginity was a part of her attraction, and [xxx] her feminine instinct protected her.

She knew that chastity was all that she had to sell, and Nana had [xxx] into her that master sense of morality about such matters. Not that she was religious. On the contrary she was immoral in every other respect. Only the law kept her from breaking every other commandment and those she did with impunity when she thought it was safe. Natascha entered the night club at fourteen, owing to the dire straits of Nana, her husband out of employment, and the extreme poverty they were in. N. enters the night club at fourteen. Her extreme youth and vivaciousness won her immediate popularity. She was now twenty and through her initiative and enterprise she had taken a comfortable flat and had installed Nana

And her husband to do the cooking and housework.

Nana's husband was a good natured, self-indulgent, philosophic man. He had taken to opium because "What else has a Chinaman to do?" Life was too much of a tragedy to take seriously or to get riled up about it. It will always go on doing one injustice after another to everyone. Nobody escapes it.

He would laugh and become amused at all the petty problems of his wife and Natascha and would terminate their troubles by making them laugh at themselves with his apt philosophy, and comment on them.

Natascha loved him and looked upon him as her father.

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She would try to cure him of the opium habit and he would stay cured for a while until life became such that it was insufferable to endure it being conscious any longer. And those times were when China was going through the throne of political corruption, when she was being betrayed by grafters. Then he would disappear for a few days and they would find him in the opium den. Natascha would go and rummage him out of those places and give him a moral talking to.

She would tell him that life was too precious to waste by living it in a sinner's dream.

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And he would listen to her good naturedly and promise to mend his ways.

He loved Natascha as his own child and would die for her if necessary. Sometimes he would get little odd jobs painting vases, and with the money would buy her some little tidbit.

His wife loves him, although she was ?? reprimanding him for his waywardness. She felt that he was more of a child to look after, than Natascha.

She was a faithful woman and very passive with Natascha who [xxx] it. She was a simple woman whose grumbling could be turned to exultant laughter, either by her

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or Natascha's good natured retorts.

So when Natascha and Wang conspired to some secret enterprise, Nana would go around sulking all day, until the conspiracy was found out to be a little surprise present, that, against the wishes of Nana, they had bought for her.

Natascha's home life was very simple with these loving people. She would have a few girlfriends up to the flat for dinner, and occasionally a man friend that Natascha was mildly interested in for the moment. Nana's approval of the young man would manifest itself by her sulkiness or her gaiety

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Although Nana was always polite, but her over-politeness was a bad sign for Natascha.

Wang, on the other hand, was always the same. He showed neither pleasure nor displeasure, but was always his convivial self.

John Ford was a handsome buck, an Englishman of twenty-seven, he had gotten into several scrapes in England and had been sent to Canada with a sum of money to see if he could set himself in business. He was the young son of a wealthy family and the black sheep of the flock. Because of a scandal in which a young society girl was involved, John was hussled off to

Canada where he existed on a pension given to him by his family. He was known as a remittance man. One reason that he was sowing his wild oats was that he had really loved the girl in England, but both families had objected to the union. From Canada, he drifted to China on a tramp steamer, hoping to make a fresh start there. Arriving in Shanghai with a month's remittance, he fell in with friends of a questionable nature and they helped him to dissipate it quickly.

They went to the Bird Cage one night and fell in with Natascha, who immediately began to imitate the other girls at the table. She had

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One night he went to the Bird Cage café and met Natascha, who played up to him when she saw his bank roll, his monthly allowance from the family. That evening was a very gay one. Natascha had managed to engage all her friends at his table. One reason for this was that he [xxx] to a voluptuous dinner to his enemy's entertainment. John was very drunk and generous and had special entertainment brought to his table. He liked Natascha at first, until she became too obvious in her gold digging propensities. And, after having given several of the girls a tap, he refused to give any to Natascha. "[xxx]" he declared, "You are a

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gold digger!" Natascha only laughed and left him to the other girls. She knew that she would get her share from the others as she had instigated the party. But, something he had said that night when he was upbraiding her, impressed her. Then again, he was more than good looking. That night he left with one of the girls.

The next day, the girls came around to Natascha's flat and told her all that had happened and that John had talked of nothing but about her all the evening. "There is talk that the government is going to close up the gambling dens and the opium dens."

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And that for smoking opium will be the penalty of death.

Other matters were discussed and Wang imparted his philosophy.

Another night at the dance hall, after Natascha has handled a few customers, and the girls have talked of the possibility of getting out of the country, Natascha finds seated at a table alone John. He looked very worried and sober, and chose not to recognize her. She goes to try and make up to him.

But he will have nothing to do with her.

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One night after finishing work at the café, she returns home to find that Wang has gone to the opium den. She finds Nana crying. Natascha consoles her and goes out to bring him home. At the opium den, she finds John also. He is asleep on one of the couches. She is indifferent to him and takes Wang home, leaving John there.

Another day she is down at the deck and she finds John working there as a common laborer. She talks to him to find out what has happened. All he says is that he is penniless and must work for a living, that his family

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has cut him off and now he must shift for himself. She takes pity on him and offers him money, but he refuses.

One night after the lapse of a month, she finds that Wang has gone on the opium again and she goes to bring him out of the place. When there she also meets John who is smoking also. He is destitute and she takes him home and fixes him up to sleep at the flat. After several days he recovers and during that time, he has fallen in love with her. She also has fallen for him and

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decides to straighten him out. He tells her of his life and the reasons he has come down in the world. Later, there is good news. John has gotten a job as a clerk and he promises to pull himself together. John is now successful and decides to marry N., but he confesses that he is already married and that he will have to wait until he gets a divorce. He pleads with her that he loves her and that they should not let anything stand in the way of their love.

So they decide to go away

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up North and spend a [xxx] living [xxx]. For a while they have an ideal life and both are very happy. Then one day, John receives a letter and finds that he is to sole heir to his father's fortune. He decides that he must go back to London at once. N. through finding one of these letters, discovers that he intends to leave her. She doesn't tell him what she knows, but waits to see if he will tell her, but he never says a word and she becomes

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Suspicious that he is going to desert her.

John starts to make preparations for leaving, feigning that his activities are for another reason.

She says nothing, but just a day before he is going, she tells him what she knows. He admits that it is true and explains that the reason he did not tell her was that he was afraid that he would stay away forever. She calls him a liar and renounces him.

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One or two years have passed and N. is still at the night club. She is a changed woman. Bitterness has crept into her heart. In the meantime, John's life in London is lost in a swirl of amusement. He is getting drunk every night and going around with another woman, but she is handing him a hell of a life. She makes him jealous and one night he finds that she is flirting with another man. A quarrel ensues and he stabs her lover. He is sentenced to jail from where

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he escapes, taking a boat to China. On landing, he keeps away from the night clubs and lives quietly upstate. One day as he is strolling along the country road, he meets N. She has broken down in an automobile and she is with some friends. She immediately recognizes him and having read the paper about his escape, she says nothing and makes up her mind to find out more about him and where he is staying. She leaves the car on some

Excuse and follows him to where he lives. Then she knocks at the door and is admitted. After a lengthy interview, she decides to take him back again. She is drawn by this man who has betrayed her and she accepts her fate and lives with him again. This time he says he is prepared to marry her and she accepts him. After the wedding, they go and live quietly outside Shanghai, but the police have followed up his trail and are looking for him.

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If only they could clear out of China, they could live peacefully in South America and be happy ever more. But the difficulty is to get passports. With the help of Wang, who, through the Chinese government, she is able to obtain two passports by a name which will enable them to travel all over the world. When she gets there, they gives to her and they prepare to leave China together and they do so.

End.