

Shanghai

2

Vera's father had many friends among the Chinese opposed to the political party in power. Some were communists who were secretly working to undermine the present government. He came to know them by his work, and they had been moved by the compassion he had expressed for the downtrodden and oppressed of their race. It had, as he put it, given him the spirit of Tolstoy, since living among the poor, and had awakened in him dreams and ideas that had made him forget his own predicament in the ecstasy of his new world of thought. In their little apartment, Vera and her father entertained their Chinese intellectual friends. Their evenings were spent in enjoying a little music

Shanghai

3

either Chinese or European, the latter rendered by Vera on an accordion. Then, inevitably the conversation would verge to politics.

They talked of the corrupt local politics, the central force from which emanated all the terror of the underworld that used communism as an excuse to plunder, ransack and persecute anybody that stood up for their rights, any union that struck for better conditions, any person that criticized the local authorities, did or said anything against the powers that be.

Shanghai

4

One of the Chinese is a character like Ling who has but one idea and that is for the day of the great Chinese uprising.

The character of Philip Sassoon, the opium king who falls in love with Vera.

Because of his Tolstoyian ideals, Vera's father is estranged from the white Russian community. But this does not estrange his daughter from them and she frequently attends their impoverished receptions held at the dilapidated embassy in the old Russian quarter.

Shanghai

5

Here she meets Philip Sassoon, whom she had met at the night club and who had been skeptical about her aristocratic background. Seeing her at the embassy, he realized that she is of good family. But Vera has an instinctive dislike for him when he tries to make up to her.

Vera's father is going blind and this worries his Chinese friends who tell him that he strains his eyes too much and must rest them. The Chinese comes when the firm, which he has been working for, informs him that his work is no longer acceptable

Shanghai

6

Sonya? is brought to Vera's house and is received with gentle courtesy and kindness. She is moved by Vera's friendship and they have a deep emotional scene together, in which Sonya tells Vera of her past life. She also tells her that for her kindness and friendship, she will repay her, if necessary, with her life.

Vera sits at the table, a new girl at The Bird Cage.

Many of the other girls are jealous and make it difficult for her.

Vera hasn't caught on to the tricks of the trade yet. She is too direct with the customers

Shanghai

7

demanding to see their ticket first before she dances with them.

She even informs the customers before she sits at their table that they will have to buy wine at least every hour.

This conduct calls for ridicule from some of the drunks that she has to tolerate.

After a while, Sonya makes friends with Vera. She puts her up to some of the tricks of the trade.