

## Destined To Be His wife by L.T. Marshall Chapter 11

TangShi was sitting in the black stretched-out Rolls Royce with its tinted out windows, beside Xiaosu's small and cheerful frame and staring ahead at the cold tailored women facing her. She had tried to be polite. Warm even. When sincerely greeting this assistant on entering but had been met with an icy stone-faced response of dislike.

Xiaosu had greeted her with an almost fearful expression. As if this was a woman she already did not like, making it clear this wouldn't be a pleasant ride. The atmosphere was tense, conversation nonexistent as they awaited Rhea outside her home, so it was clear the women in this car had been forced together.

Lang Je was Aunt RuiZi's personal assistant; a sour faced mature woman in her thirties, who wore perfectly fitted and severe business attire at all hours of the day. She was used to running errands all day long for the surprisingly productive Aunt, who ran a successful and famous fashion magazine that employed Rhea as a columnist. She had low tolerance to frivolous women and a severe lack of warmth and humor. She certainly had no desire to accompany these girls on a shopping trip of such a mundane nature either, and she was making it clear. She had been taken from her regular duties today to act as babysitter and it had put her in a foul mood.

Her boss had been insistent though, that she was to make sure TangShi was given enough clothes and accessories to represent the Leng family without causing embarrassment once she stepped out in the public eye. She had no choice but to be here. To pay the bills, direct them to appropriate boutiques and be the word of Leng in terms of what was purchased. She had been given a spending allowance to meet and she was not going to disappoint by not doing her duty. After all, Aunt had a reputation of being the Queen of high fashion and her new family member was already a disappointment. She had to remedy that today!

TangShi inwardly sighed for the tenth time, annoyed at all this hassle for something so shallow. She had never followed trends or been overly interested in the designer world, or famous brands. It meant nothing to her. She loved to paint, so most of her clothes would end up soiled in some way. She had very few items she called her 'best' although Aunt had destroyed them all.

It seemed these people were so obsessed with style and overall appearance that it had become a major thing they found fault over when it came to her. She hadn't thought her attire had been as bad as they made out, but after eating her breakfast, the aunt had given Xiaosu a list of things she expected to be done in the next three days. It had spun TangShi's head and made her ears pop. They were all about being showy. Being picture perfect ready and acted like TangShi would be out there on a runway just because she was now of the family Leng.

It seemed her hair was not the right color, groomed or fashionable enough, her nails were in a poor state, her teeth needed brightening, and her skin required spa treatment.

Aunt ordered that her scents, her lotions, her every pampering product was to be revamped by professionals and she was to have a beauty regime set in place to suit the family she now stood in front of. Waxing, tinting, eyebrow restructuring and even lip fillers were mentioned.

Even her footwear had a long list of requirements, and she was thrust a checklist of every kind of event imaginable she would need clothing for. She felt like they were trying to make her over into some sort of pretend celebrity, a living doll, and Xiaosu had to explain that YuZhi was indeed practically that. TangShi had to be up to a standard to be able to stand next to him before they announced she was the woman who would be stealing Rhea Cheng's place in his heart. YuZhi had celebrity status because of both his position in society and his naturally gorgeous looks which attracted women like flies.

After all part of the Leng name was that they were trend setters in style and class, and Rhea Cheng was a retired fashion model turned stylist. She had high standards to meet.

What TangShi hadn't really paid attention to when searching the internet for information about her new husband, was that he was certainly very famous in Shanghai outside of business endeavors. He had a huge youth following that outshone many pop idols, for just being a handsome and young wealthy heir who was about to step up as CEO for the cities most revered empire. He even had a fan club, overseen by a PR team, and his own group of assistants which solely paid attention to keeping him in the public eye and making sure his popularity stayed current. Just because he was charming, rich, and beautiful, and apparently that's all he needed to be. He rubbed shoulders with famous people, went to glitzy events and was photographed as though he was truly a movie star.

YuZhi Leng was Shanghai's heartthrob, despite his shrewd business brain and qualifications, and girls across the country wished to be able to call themselves his Rhea. After all they were the golden couple and loved by all and had been for three years of red-carpet life.

TangShi was depressed at the thought of what she knew was to come, her head aching with all this new information this morning. She hated the limelight and now she was going to have to face it head on, for a man who despised her. Smile in public while being forced to transform like Cinderella.

Xiaosu had tried to confide in her and ease her worries by relaying little snippets she had overheard between YuZhi and his family in the last days to ease her worry. It had only given her more to be upset about. Knowing so many details and plans of her own life had been taken care of, and her input was nil.

It seemed the talk of marrying TangShi had been ongoing while she was in California, and her father had only informed her in the last moments that this was even happening. The Leng family had known for almost two months. All this time, they had conspired,

planned, and made arrangements for her life. While she was oblivious and studying fine art. Living in a happy bubble that hadn't yet been popped and dreaming of a simple life away from home.

If she had known two months back that she was to be called back, she would never have gone in the first place. She just couldn't understand why her father agreed if he was already planning this for her, unless he wanted her out of the way in case the Leng family saw her as unfit for purpose. Kept her hidden until they had fully agreed, then thrust her upon them. She wouldn't put it past her scheming father.

"Good afternoon, sorry to have kept you waiting."

TangShi's thoughts were interrupted before she pondered any further on the details of her lost life, startled by the seductively sweet voice of a woman sliding into the car beside Lang Je. She raised her chin and instinctively smiled a welcome as she was faced with an angel who seemed to glow with warmth and welcoming.

TangShi knew at first sight that this was the woman they had been waiting for and was yet startled by how she looked, up close in real life. Her pictures had not really shown how naturally pretty she was in the flesh, with her elegant posture and slender figure in expensive clothing. TangShi was surprised and had expected to see a less glamorous girl than what the media portrayed, yet she was wrong. She was the same in person. A flawless woman of great beauty who had a softness about her that made you immediately like her.

Rhea Cheng had jet black hair, over a pale and slight set of delicate features. Eyes a little large for her elfin face but it somehow made for an innocent yet beautiful looking girl, that oozed a sense of vulnerability. Her eyes were darker brown than TangShi's, but with her neutral make up in peaches, and her stained rose lips, her eyes sparkled like black obsidian at the two women facing her. She truly was breathtaking and a little surreal, especially dressed in a cream floaty layered chiffon dress, and nude stilettos, that screamed of wealth.

She had poise, an atmosphere of elegance and when she locked eyes on TangShi and gave her a soft and heartwarming smile, it seemed to melt away the superior quality. TangShi was faced with someone who seemed extremely loving and honest. The maternal aura seeped out so fluidly, and try as she might, TangShi couldn't feel any dislike at all.

"Hello, Miss Cheng. It's nice to meet you." TangShi answered, matching her gentle tone and wide smile, and pushing away all her preconceived notions about this woman. First impressions were, that unlike YuZhi and his arrogant personality, Rhea seemed to be an enchanting and genuine lady. She gave off an approachable aura and looked you directly in the eye when she spoke. It made you feel special and heard, like she really acknowledged your presence. A sharp contrast to all the hatred TangShi had met these past days.

"I'm sorry that we had to meet under such strange circumstances, and I know this must feel so awkward and uncomfortable. Given you're now married to my fiancée... Sorry... I know, I know... My ex-fiancée. It's hard to remember that and get used to it." Rhea blushed, lowering her eyes as a pained expression crossed her face, genuine apology on show as she unsuccessfully tried to hide her obvious heartache. It was clear to TangShi that this girl loved YuZhi very much and she suddenly felt an overwhelming ache of guilt and discomfort on her behalf.

"For the time being. We all know the plans are for you two to marry once he has his heir." Lang je cut in with a biting tone and raised a catty brow at TangShi, before she had a chance to even reply. As though she somehow was the instigator in Rhea's unhappiness and solely to blame. TangShi swallowed down her hurt expression, smoothed on an understanding smile instead and tried to formulate a response that wouldn't anger the assistant further. It seemed she didn't need to do anything to feel their contempt since marrying YuZhi.

"Don't be so harsh, Je. I'm sure TangShi knows all this and it's not necessary to be so rude, or cruel. We should welcome our sister. We have to learn to live in peace and get along, so that this time moves fast and with little drama." Rhea covered Lang Je's hand with her own, giving her a slight squeeze as if to smooth her ruffled feathers and press the point that she wanted harmony, not war. She looked back to TangShi, no hint of malice in her misted gaze, only a gentleness that pulled you to trust her. "It's been hard to adjust, for everyone. Grandfather sort of pulled this out of thin air, after so many years of letting us think he would eventually give his blessing to us. Don't take it to heart. There are many loyal and unhappy people right now who believed it was only a matter of time until we wed. I've been family to them all along. I'm sure you're equally having a hard time processing this change in your life and walking into this situation."

TangShi was stunned, that this was the first person to not assume TangShi orchestrated and schemed for this, and she almost blanched that maybe Rhea really was someone she could like. Would it be weird if they became friends, even while she had to have relations with YuZhi to make a child? TangShi could not get her head around it at all.

TangShi returned a sweet nod and smile, trying to show she understood, but was also gobsmacked at just how much she actually wanted to get to know this pleasant girl. Rhea did not seem to be as she expected, or any kind of nasty or jealous at all and it wasn't hard to see why YuZhi loved her so much. Her fears about meeting this love rival, a clingy nasty schemer who would make life worse, died an instant death and she relaxed a little. Genuinely liking this goddess. She even felt deeply remorseful about the fact her presence had ruined Rhea's own happiness. She didn't want to be a person that caused anyone suffering, let alone a sweetheart.

"I admit, this wasn't how I expected to spend my next two years. I don't want to cause trouble or make anyone unnecessarily unhappy. I'll try my hardest to be the best I can be." TangShi meant every word. If she was shown kindness, she would be the person

she always tried to be in her life. Fair, and respectful. She only retorted when people pushed against her abrasively. She didn't want to fight or live her days angry. She wanted a peaceful life, and a goal to look forward to.

"Hmmm, okay as you wish. Now let's get going as we have a full day planned and a lot to accomplish." Lang Je butted in, glancing at Rhea with a curt smile, but then glared at TangShi once more, and TangShi's heart sank all over again. Despite Rhea offering a glimmer of hope that things might start to improve in this family, the assistant made it clear that the majority were against her no matter what. She had many battles to face to make them endure her position.

TangShi knew this was going to take time for them all to accept that TangShi was YuZhi's wife for now, no matter what they felt about it, or what they did, and two years suddenly felt like a lifetime to get through.