

## Destined To Be His wife by L.T. Marshall Chapter 61

TangShi stretched out and rotated her shoulders to ease their stiffness as she put down her mixing bowl and spatula, pleased with the natural paint they had been learning to make all day. She now had several soft colors and some ground dried plants and herbs laid out before her to use in tomorrow's class. This was the most enjoyable and unexpected lesson she had ever had and bode well for her days here after this. A first success, and she was thrilled to be here under the watchful but also gentle care of Master. Cai.

He was exactly how Linlin had imagined him. An old man with soft grey hair that was kept neat and trim around his head, but his beard was long and tapered into a point midway down his chest. He was on the older side in age, but utterly adorable. He was wrinkled and tanned but a smiley fellow who loved to spend his days wearing the traditional Manchu style of clothing that compromised of a long-fitted cotton coat that buttoned high to the neck, over loose pants. His were navy in color and lacked any kind of artwork or embroidery in case he got paint on them. She assumed this was his uniform of choice when teaching his students and he was exactly how she imagined a professor of fine arts with a lifetime of experience should look. He fitted the tranquility of this place well. He was approachable and friendly and seemed like the most patient man she had ever met.

TangShi picked up her phone and checked her call list for the hundredth time today. All day her mind had been on her work mostly, but the pull of distraction had her hoping to see a message or call from YuZhi even once today. Her heart sinking when she saw there were no missed calls or unread texts.

He knew it was her first day, but he flew to Hong Kong a few days ago for work. The morning after he kissed her and stayed out all night and hadn't been in touch much. An occasional text to give her the keypad entry code for his apartment and some instructions on moving their before her term started. He was still pushing her to move closer to his office, despite his weird distance, and arranged for ZhengLi to sort her out with keys and other things she would need to transition there.

TangShi and Linlin had done just that and moved her out of the house with the help of Xiaosu and gotten her settled in YuZhi's own apartment on Puming road in Pudong quickly. All packed and moved in one afternoon. It was a penthouse apartment with three bedrooms, and she had been shocked to find the building had many perks. A gym, pool, clubhouse, among the amenities, a maid service and even an onsite restaurant to list a few. It was a spacious and modern bachelor pad with every luxury you could imagine. It felt like she wasn't worthy to live in such high-class surroundings, but it was also strange to spend the first days alone there after weeks of sharing a bed with YuZhi. It was huge and empty after coexisting in a family home.

YuZhi was avoiding her, and she knew it. That night he dropped her home in silence and never returned until next morning to pack a case and left without saying much to

her. It was awkward and hurt her and she had cried for an hour after he left, feeling like she had done something wrong. Unlike the days of his being cold and mean when he saw her, this time it felt like he was blanking her as though she didn't exist. She couldn't understand how one simple kiss could have made him U turn and cast her off like an unwanted coat. Her heart was aching, and she was depressed that despite being close, he had pushed her away. She felt like she had lost her closest friend.

"Looks like you have the hang of it. Well done." A male voice came at her from behind and caught her off guard, so she jumped in fright, giggling at the silly reaction. Turning she saw Rong Cai standing close behind her as he peered over her shoulder to admire her handywork and he smiled softly, eyes full of warmth when she glanced up. It was the first she had seen him since their tour here a few weeks ago.

"Thank you. It's fun and I never imagined we would learn how to make supplies this way." She blushed with his praise but slid out to stand up and face him as his close proximity was making her uneasy in a seated position. She was never good at talking to men even though they had met before, but that had been at least two weeks and her shyness had returned.

"You look perfect for this place. Your dress is pretty and suits the beauty of the view." He nodded at her simple white cotton dress, which was long and flowy, paired with a pale pink cardigan that fitted her upper body neatly. She had gone for comfortable and simple today and was glowing with a romantic vibe and a long, curled ponytail to keep her hair out of her face..

"Thank you. I felt overdressed when I saw the other students wearing overalls." She laughed softly and nodded to other people in the background who were still working hard.

"Would you like to take a walk with me before you pack up for the day? I have somewhere in the garden to show you that you will love." He beamed at her, aware of the fact he still felt giddy and fluttery in her presence. The initial attraction of the first day he met her had not faded and he was mesmerized by her natural charm. His heart beating faster as her smile drew him in. He had been counting down the days to her starting here to meet again and annoyed when her first day he had to travel out of town for a meeting. He had rushed back to catch her last half hour.

"Sure. I could use one to loosen my muscles. I have been leaning over for too long." She stepped out to let him lead the way. Nodding gracefully and politely.

"You know, we are so happy you decided to study here. I feel you may be our student with the most promise this semester. I have high hopes for you, Miss. Lei. I wish I could have been here to welcome you."

"Please, call me TangShi. I feel like in time we might be friends and I'm not one for formalities." She walked with her hands clasped in front of her, hanging low, and kept

her eyes down on her steps. They made their way through the class to the wide glass doors opening to the ornate garden, which felt like a paradise to her. Her tone polite and friendly as she tried to relax in his presence again. This was a magical place nestled in the center of Shanghai's financial district in a tiny secret nook. It was almost as though it defied logic and brought her a sense of peace and tranquility.

"I like that. Maybe as friends we could go out to eat sometimes, on lunch, or whenever you need a break. I'm usually around and free." He knew he shouldn't be encouraging a student away from the school mid-day but for her he would make an exception. Trying to keep his enthusiasm under wraps and make the invite sound innocent and normal.

TangShi smiled, her cheeks heating as she blushed at the offer and her mind ran instantly to YuZhi and the lack of eating with him these days. She couldn't shake the melancholy of him leaving her out in the cold after sharing such a magical night together and somehow it made an invite like this seem lacking. She missed him and didn't want to fill the void with some other male dinner partner.

"Your classes are done for the day, right? Maybe you would allow me to take you for dinner before you go home. If you're not busy?" He knew he was pushing his luck and his nerves piqued as his heart rate spiked. Hands clammy at asking her out but he couldn't bypass it in hopes she might be interested in dating him.

TangShi didn't see the invitation was a loaded one with an underlying intent and innocently assumed he was being polite and welcoming.

"I promised Linlin to have dinner with her to celebrate tonight. She is the one who helped me enroll here, so I can't let her down." She declined, glad to have a legitimate excuse.

"I see. Maybe another day. I would love to introduce you to some of my favorite hidden gems in Shanghai. We have so many good food places that most people don't know about. I think you seem like the kind of girl who loves to eat good food in cozy places that have a great atmosphere."

"Miss. Lei, we are all cleaning up now." A voice echoed their way, breaking up their conversation and she glanced back to acknowledge the young girl calling her. Somewhat relieved that she was being pulled back and avoiding this conversation continuing. It's not that Rong wasn't nice, she just didn't want to complicate things and start making plans with him. She felt like he was being too forward about hanging out so soon.

"I'm coming." She nodded and smiled graciously back at Rong Cai. "I must go and pack up. Thank you, anyway. I can see whatever it was later, Linlin promised to pick me up." She brushed him off knowing she couldn't linger today. Linlin would pull up outside the main doors as soon as her scheduled end of class came around and she didn't want to idly hang around.

“I’ll hold you to that.” Rong Cai called after her, disappointed with the refusal and the instant end to showing her the koi ponds, but he couldn’t help but smile after her as she walked away. She was beautiful and warm, and he knew in the next weeks he would enjoy growing closer to her. He had set his sights on her and wasn’t the type to give up a pursuit.

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TangShi set about putting away all the ingredients and equipment and storing the paints and tools in her own locker by the side of the door. She cleaned up the spills and drops and put her desk space back to rights before packing up her own belongings and pulling her bag onto her shoulder. Motioning a wave to her classmates as they began to leave, and she gave a gracious goodbye to Master. Cai before she too filed out from the airy open-air room. Making her way down the central pathway and catching sight of Rong Cai coming her way as she got to the main doors, walking out from the shade into the bright evening sunshine.

“TangShi, hold up. Just a minute.” Rong Cai followed her at speed, smiling her way and caught up to walk her the last few paces to the car park outside while he held the gate open. “I wanted to give you this.” He held out a long cream envelope that he slid from his inner jacket pocket, with a pretty scroll of cursive on the front which was her name in English. Blinking at it and then him and looking confused, TangShi accepted it carefully.

“What is it?”

“An invitation to a gallery show next week. A friend of mine has his first show and I thought you would like to go with me. It’s a small gallery and there will be hours d’oeuvres, champagne and a nice atmosphere. It’s a style I think you would appreciate.” He gazed at her fondly as she opened the envelope and pulled it out to read the gold embossed card that held all the details. Her face stiffening and blood running cold as she was unsure how to reject something like this. It felt weird that he wasn’t handing every student one as they left.

YuZhi sat in his black four by four and watched TangShi talking to the young man who walked her out a few seconds ago, trying to decipher who he was and what he handed to her. He shifted in the driving seat to edge forward and leaned his wrist on the steering wheel while he glared and squinted their way, in two minds about getting out. His mood nosediving with the appearance of this good looking and obviously interested dude who was all smiles at TangShi. His body language couldn’t be mistaken.

He got home early today and planned on going to the office, but his gut had told him he should pick her up and be there for her first day. He maybe had been trying to cool things between them, but he knew she viewed this as a special day and guilt gnawed at him for not being there this morning to drop her off as he said he would. It bothered him to let it pass by without showing face.

He had been dodging her while he tried to sort his head out these past few days and get his feelings under control, but he couldn't ignore the fact that he missed her. Hong Kong had felt a million miles away and at night in a bed alone he couldn't sleep for wondering what she was doing. He felt worse anytime he text her to pass on info about the apartment, keeping it brief, and he had driven here almost instinctively as soon as he picked up his car. Telling himself he needed to see she was okay and that she might need a ride home. In full denial about anything else.

He watched her laugh prettily at this guy, her cheeks turning rosy at something he said and then caught the unconcealed gaze of attraction from whoever he was as she looked down. A stirring ember of anger spilled through YuZhi's stomach and raised his irritation and he found himself jumping out of the car impulsively, to fetch her instead of continuing to wait. His blood raising to boiling temperatures at how comfortable and informal this asshole seemed in addressing her.

"I'll think about it. I will check and see if I have anything to do that day." TangShi deflected the invitation, sure it coincided with the first clinic appointment YuZhi had arranged and aware she wouldn't feel like doing anything after that if it was. They still made her feel dirty and fragile for the entire day after having it done.

She didn't know Rong Cai yet, not well enough to feel comfortable with him, and she didn't want to spend an evening with him when they were only just getting to know one another. It felt inappropriate.

"I hope you can come. I would love to show you their work. I would love to see what you think and your reaction to it." He pressured her slightly with a tone that was borderline pushy and YuZhi's temper snapped.

"I'll check our diary and see if we're free." YuZhi cut in catching the tail end of their conversation and intruding as he walked up behind them. A crazy orb of anger building in him the closer he got, and he didn't know why. He didn't like how close this guy was to TangShi or the way he was leaning all over her and smiling like a cheesy asshole.

"YuZhi?" TangShi was stunned by his appearance and turned in shock, her eyes widening before her face flamed hotter and her blush spread all the way to her ears. Her stomach flipped over at his sudden appearance but yet there was a warm glow in her heart at seeing him here. "What are you... when did you get home?" TangShi was aware she should watch what she said in public and scolded herself for seeming shocked. She smiled as best she could and tried to look happy at his arrival.

"My flight got in an hour ago. I wanted to surprise you, honey." YuZhi wasted no time in walking to her side and slinging his arm around her waist in a show of possessiveness that he hoped told Mr. Smooth to back off. Pulling her in against his hip and leaning into her to make it clear she was out of bounds.

“Ummm, I’m Rong Cai, pleased to meet you, Mr...” Rong held out his hand somewhat awkwardly, his eyes flitting from TangShi to this invading guy while trying to conceal his dislike. His mood diving at how touchy feely the stranger seemed, and he inhaled to calm his impulse to say something rude to the way he pushed in. Hating him on sight and wanting to rip his arm off TangShi.

“Leng. YuZhi Leng, Tang’s future husband. Isn’t that right, honey?” YuZhi turned to TangShi, a smile spreading over his face and a sense of smug at how annoyed this Mr. Cai seemed to be at his sudden appearance. He turned back to shake his hand firmly and briefly, before dropping it like a lead weight, making it obvious this was fake friendly, and never removing his hold on TangShi. He weighed him up and decided he didn’t like him one bit or how he was trying to get cozy with his wife.

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“Leng? Of the Leng group? I am in awe Mr. Leng. I must say I have heard of your family and yourself, in terms of big business in our city. It’s my honor to meet you,” Rong’s voice was lowered, and he pulled his arm back to his side, becoming visibly stiffer as he tried to appraise this idiot with his hands all over TangShi. Despising him more now he knew he belonged in the silver spoon variety of spoiled rich kids of the elite. He hated these types of men, who grew up getting anything they wanted with the click of a finger and yet never valued anything, especially not women. Uncomfortable rage sparked and annoyance to see him cozying up to the girl he liked.

“yes. He is.” TangShi cut in shyly, sensing the tension between them and tried to play along as adoring girlfriend while inwardly she was trying to figure out how to react. Still shook that YuZhi was here and being this way. From no contact and cool behavior to sudden jealousy acts and holding onto her in a grip that made it impossible to move. It made her head swim. “Thank you for the invite, we’ll think about it, but we really should be going. We have plans and I need to go home and freshen up.” TangShi glanced around wondering where Linlin was and then realized ZhengLi would have informed her of YuZhi’s return and intention to collect her. She probably had texts by now from her friend, but her cell was stuffed inside her bag.

It made her happy that he came but this atmosphere was killing her. She could only stand and paste a smile on her face while looking to get them out of here fast.

“I guess I will see you tomorrow then.” Rong seemed a little more stilted in his manner and since YuZhi showed up his friendliness had seemed to have evaporated.

“I’ll drop her off in the morning from here on in. Have a good evening, Mr. Cai.” YuZhi was heavy with his fake niceties and tugged TangShi with him as he turned them away and led her to the car. Gripping on and taking her bag from her shoulder with his free hand as they crossed the carpark.

Rong watched them walk off and felt nothing but bitterness and dislike towards this rich snooty asshole. Swooping in like lord of the manor and making it clear he was marking his territory. He didn't like it at all, and he didn't think someone rude like that deserved to be by TangShi's side. Possessive like she was an object and not a kind human who deserved gentleness.

He wasn't going to give up on getting close to her because he didn't think YuZhi was going to be a future problem. TangShi would never stay with a guy like that, she was too sweet, and he was going to make sure of it.

"Why are you here for me, where's Linlin?" TangShi's voice was hushed, and she whispered it to him as he guided her to the passenger side and opened the door to let her in. Aware Rong might hear her if she spoke normally. Wanting so badly to ask him why he had been such a jerk these past few days and all but ignored her completely, but let it die on her lips. Afraid of the answers he might give.

"Can't I collect my girlfriend from school? Linlin knows I'm here, so she said she'll see you later at the restaurant." YuZhi helped her up into the higher seat of this particular vehicle with a hand on her waist and handed in her bag before closing the door. His tone tight and unreadable.

His mood was still simmering, and he had an urge to call ZhengLi to go have a few rounds in the gym after this. He hadn't been to his boxing class in a couple of weeks and now really wanted to punch someone.

"You seemed close?" He snapped as he jumped into his side of the jeep and yanked his belt on, hating how angry he sounded but he couldn't curb it. He came home feeling like an ass for blanking her for days, hated the fact he was missing her like crazy and yet his first five minutes in her company he was acting like this. He internally scolded himself for being an idiot and turning into the Spanish inquisition because of some sleezy jerk who asked her out.

"I don't know him that well. This is only the second time we met." TangShi faltered, unsure how to reply when his mood seemed weird and hostile, and she bit her lip and pulled on her seatbelt to focus on anything but him. Unsure how to handle him like this.

"And he's already asking you on a date?" YuZhi snorted under his breath, mentally taking note of Rong Cai's name and putting him on the watchlist. He didn't trust him where TangShi was concerned.

"He's the teachers son and the one who runs the school." TangShi added defensively missing what he muttered and trying to explain, not knowing why he was being like this with her and lowered her lashes before sighing and looking out of the window instead. She didn't know if this was residual bad mood from what happened between them a few days ago, or if this was a genuine dislike for Rong Cai.

“Just stay away from him. He seems like he doesn’t understand boundaries. I don’t like him.” YuZhi verbalized his impulsive thought, like a stroppy teen and then cringed at his own statement, knowing he was overreacting and sounding like a petty controlling boyfriend with insecurity issues.

Nothing had happened except a conversation and an invite and here he was ready to go five rounds with him. This was a new emotion for him and one he had never experienced before, so he wasn’t sure if it was jetlag, exhaustion, or just because he was hungry and frustrated about this entire situation lately. He had never had an outright Jealous tantrum over Rhea, and she had many guy friends. It was making him antsy and wired and he needed an outlet for this bubbling anger.

“I... I can’t avoid him. He’s the teacher’s son.... he runs the school.” She repeated it again only this time emphasizing her words in a bid to make him understand he was being unreasonable. Wondering if this was a return of the mean and moody YuZhi who tormented her in the first weeks living together. She couldn’t understand the reversal.

“Forget it. I’m tired and I have a headache, let’s go home.” YuZhi deflected, throwing her a tight smile as if to say sorry in a way and then frowned at the fact he knew he owed her an explanation about the last few days but couldn’t formulate one. He exhaled, screwed up his face and then shook it off and put his focus on driving.

He started the car, shifted into gear and pulled out to get on their way. Catching the sight of the man in the rear view still standing in the open gate watching them leave. One shoulder propped by the post as he followed their route with his eyes, and YuZhi scowled, anger returning instantly.

“I’ll drop and pick you up every day from now on. Don’t make plans without checking with me first. We have a busy few months with the company and I need you on my arm at all events and dinners.” It wasn’t a lie; they did have a hectic schedule for the next few weeks, but YuZhi also knew it was a sure-fire way to stop Rong Cai being able to get his clutches into her any time soon with non-innocent gallery show invites.

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TangShi walked out of her bedroom and into the open plan living room to finish getting ready before leaving for school. The apartment was eerily quiet and felt empty although she hadn’t heard YuZhi depart for work yet. It was early though, maybe too early for him. The sun was barely up but today she planned on going to breakfast with Linlin before class started.

Dinner last night hadn’t helped her sort out her confusion over YuZhi’s behavior and as he took off after getting home and didn’t return till late, she didn’t see him again. She was feeling all kinds of listless and uptight and unable to relax over this and Linlin was a good mood leveler any day of the week.



TangShi padded into the kitchen in her house slippers and outfit of the day to get a bottle of water and froze when the click of his bedroom door echoed, alerting her to the fact he was most definitely still here. Hurrying to get to the refrigerator and turning her back on him so he wouldn't see how flustered she was.

YuZhi wandered out of his room rubbing his face, still tired as he had only just got up. In long cotton pajama bottoms and a t-shirt, he strolled out in a casual meander and spotted TangShi in the kitchen already. Internally tensing up because he didn't expect her at this time of the day and had hoped a coffee would get his head sorted before approaching her. Yesterday he knew he wasn't in the right frame of mind after meeting Rong Sleazy Cai, so had avoided her to get his shit together. Even with school starting this was an early hour for her and he had hoped to delay any interaction until he was more awake.

"Morning." He faltered, aware how nervous he felt at seeing her. His insides doing a loop de loop. He knew he had to talk things out with her on the drive to school without fail and was not looking forward to having to share his head mess with her. He needed to apologize to her. That was a given.

"Morning." She returned his greeting with a soft distant tone and didn't look his way, instead sticking her head into the refrigerator to find some snacks for her bag. Immersed in packing her premade lunch and ignoring him.

"You look pretty. Why are you getting ready so early? Don't you start class at eighty thirty?" YuZhi walked to the nearest counter and leaned his elbows down on it to give her space in the kitchen, watching her intently, sensing she was closed off and not her usual sunny self. His mood sank lower knowing this was going to be difficult.

"I'm meeting Linlin for an hour before I need to be there. I'll get out of your hair. Have a good day." She responded in a polite and tight tone and closed the door before swinging her bag up and moving on.

"Tang, wait." He stood up as she slid out of the kitchen and headed to the main door without glancing at him once. "I'll drive you, give me a minute to change." He pleaded, panicking that he was losing out on the chance to fix things between them, and it would follow him all day until he collected her later. He couldn't handle another full day of knowing she was mad at him.

"It's fine. It's a ten-minute walk, longer by car." She shrugged and moved to the outer hall to put her shoes on, brushing him off. She was internally all over the place and looking to escape his presence. Nervous, uptight around him, and her face was slowly turning pink.

"Please. I have something to say to you." He stood firm, lifting his hands, palms out, in a 'wait for me' gesture and then turned and hightailed it to his room to get ready.

TangShi sighed heavily and slumped back against the hall wall, looking up to the ceiling in a 'help me, god' hopeless gesture. Aware she was not ready for any kind of heart to heart and afraid of what he might say. She had been nervously pensive for days, expecting him to return to the cold and aloof mean guy of their early days. Her gut was telling her that's what this was.

YuZhi got ready in record time, hauling on a fresh tee over jeans and racing back into the kitchen area with trainers in hand. His heart racing from the exertion and yet aware his palms were clammy because he knew this wasn't going to be an easy conversation. He wasn't one to lay things out in the open or ever say sorry in this way, so this was a first.

TangShi stood up quickly, pulled her bag onto her shoulder and walked out before him, making sure to show him no hint of her emotional turmoil. To him, she was a picture of calm and disinterested.

They made their way to the elevator and quietly stood as it came to their floor as if neither knew how to start this conversation. A heavy quiet stretching between them that highlight their awkwardness. Once inside YuZhi exhaled heavily and glanced her way, realizing her bag looked heavy and took it from her automatically.

"Let me. Look... Tang, I ..... I know I have been a total jackass these past few days." He cleared his throat with a subtle cough, pulling her bag onto his shoulder and hating how she stood staring ahead with an unreadable blank expression. It gave him a hint on how it must feel to be on the other side of it and he didn't like it at all.

"Hmmm." She responded with a non-response as they reached their floor. She didn't give him a chance to carry on and walked out at speed, looking for the usual black four by four, or his sports car.

"Over there." YuZhi caught her by the elbow and guided her, not letting go, aware of how much he had missed touching her these past days. Her warmth and closeness making his stomach tighten and his heart ache as her familiar perfume and scent invaded his senses and it felt like coming home. TangShi had a unique smell, and it was up there with fresh baked cookies and hot apple pie.

They made their way to the car in silence once more before he opened her door and settled her in, walking around to get in the driver side. Starting the car and moving in a bid to get going fast and be able to feel more at ease at talking to her. He hoped with the road as a focus the words might slide out with less stress.

"I'm sorry, Tang. For the last few days and disappearing on you, being distant. Not communicating." He blurted it out in a fit of nerves, hoping doing it fast would be like pulling a band aid off and glanced her way for a sign of a facial reaction. He got nothing but her calm and blank gaze out the windscreen. Making his guts tumble around in antsy nerves.

"It's fine." She uttered in response. Her tone empty. Not sure what else she should say.

"It's not fine. You didn't deserve me treating you that way and you did nothing wrong that warranted me blanking you. Believe me, I'm sorry, and it won't happen again. I needed headspace to figure some things out." He rambled on, filling the space and silence with words and hoping it sounded sincere.

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"I get it. You don't have to explain." TangShi deflected again closing him out and not willing to get involved in a topic that might make her cry.

"Don't be like this." YuZhi reached out impulsively and stroked her cheek with his thumb, wounded at her not interacting and relating all the more how shitty it must have been for her that he did this exact thing. It brought it home and sobered his mood. "I want to explain. Can I at least do that?"

"Whatever." TangShi flinched at his unexpected touch, and it rattled her that he was back to being affectionate. It had been missing and it made her chest ache with oncoming tears. TangShi had been listening to Linlin a lot these past days, on how not to cave and go running back to forgiveness and being a pushover, especially where YuZhi was concerned and was trying so hard to conceal her emotions. Linlin was furious at him.

YuZhi sighed and gripped the wheel, slowing at a red light in traffic and tapping his thumb on it in agitation. His thoughts scrambling in what to say to her to make this right.

"I freaked out. I was confused about how I could cross that line with you, guilty over forgetting Rhea in that moment, being able to do that and not knowing how to cool things between us and take it back. I over reacted." He again glanced her way and saw the tiny waiver in the corner of her mouth as she turned away to stare out her own side window and avoid him. TangShi's heartbeat had elevated, and her stomach was tensing from the rawness of her own emotion. Feeling herself caving because he was being the YuZhi she loved and not the distant jerk.

"I thought if I went to Hong Kong on a business trip and gave us a few days apart, we could forget and carry on as before. I realize now that I ran away..... and I hurt you. Tang, I'm sorry. I was a coward, but you have to understand that since my parents died I have avoided any kind of emotional conflict in my life this way and never had the courage to deal with it head on. I don't do feelings and complications very well."

"Then how do you manage to run a business like Leng group if you just run away from problems?" She snapped at him, finally angered into a reaction by the way his words were cutting her soul. Feeling like he was making lame excuses for wounding her.

"I'm not like this when it comes to work. I'm a problem solver and fearless because it's something I know how to deal with. You....me..... I don't even know how to define us." He moved off again following the ongoing traffic as the lights finally changed and spotted Linlin's car parked over by a trendy café, so he pulled into the nearest spot and parked up without turning the engine off. TangShi noticed the bright orange VW too and pulled her seatbelt off, ready to escape, but YuZhi caught her wrist and pulled her to him.

"Tang, come on. Please don't leave until we figure this out and you believe how sorry I am." He pleaded, holding her wrist and adding a second hand to it to cradle her, in a sign he wasn't letting her go yet. He felt desperate and this was from resolved.

"I believe you. You're sorry, won't happen again, neither will a kiss. I get it. There's nothing left to say." She shrugged it off, shaking her hand to be free and then giving up when he refused to budge. In a way YuZhi was kind of proud of her for standing up to him and not being too easy to win round. This is the side of her he encouraged but it sucked to be on the receiving end.

"I'll make it up to you. Dinner, movies, flowers, jewelry, whatever you want. Please can we just go back to how we were. I miss you." It was the most honest he had ever been concerning his feelings with any woman, aware he had never uttered anything like that to Rhea in all these years, nor tried to bribe her with dates or gifts to win back her favor. When he fought with Rhea she was always the one who had to come groveling to him no matter the issue. He always knew he was cold and fights never affected him, or so he thought, until now.

TangShi paused; took a moment to exhale, to calm her anxiety, slowing her thoughts and inner chaos and she turned to him finally with a stubborn set to her jaw.

"What about Rhea? Are you going to tell her or should I?"

She knew this was a burning question with drama attached but she was willing to take the fallout. After all in her head, she did something wrong even if it wasn't at the time Rhea thought it was.

"No. For now, we're not. It will only make things worse, and she doesn't need to know. I am trying to keep her, and I separate for the next two years and then I'll deal with all the fallout when our contract is up. It was a moment... caught up in a romantic date, memories. It was nothing." YuZhi had told himself this repeatedly over the last few days and he almost believed it now. TangShi narrowed her eyes at him and then relented.

"I don't want to be mad at you anymore. I don't want to fight." She softened and his familiar TangShi's sweet girl expression returned, her eyebrows dipping slightly as she frowned, and he slid his hand from her wrist to her fingers and held them gently. The urge to smooth out her brows made him smile.

“Friends again?” he tugged it into his lap and held it there, so she had to look him in the eye. Nestling her finger in his palm, aware how much he missed the feel of her small hand in his and the soft warmth of her skin.

“I guess. Are you coming in to eat with me? It’s early and you have time.” She nodded towards the café across the street, knowing Linlin could probably see them from here as she was at a window seat. It felt like her version of extending an olive branch and YuZhi understood it. He was crazy glad.

“Uh uh, not if I want to live. I know Linlin is gunning for me, Zheng already prewarned me. Buy her a lot of good things on your card, bribe her for me. Tell her I’ll take us all out to dinner this week, somewhere expensive, if she doesn’t maim me.” He jested, impulsively leaning in with his free hand to stroke a stray hair back off her temple, behind her ear to join her ponytail. Warmed by how good it felt to be like this with her again. All felt right in his world once more.

“Okay. I guess I’ll see you after school.” She blushed, her mood improving by the second and forgiveness leaching out. She could never stay mad at any one and somehow the sun was shining brighter in her little world now YuZhi had spoken to her and wiped it all clean. She knew she was too easy and Linlin would berate her for giving in too soon, but this felt better than the last depressive days.

“I’ll come back for you in an hour and take you to school. I told you I would.” He added, mentally visualizing that asshole Rong Cai and not willing to back down where he was concerned. He would show up morning and evening for Tang to show that guy he was a permanent fixture and not willing to share. He didn’t trust him at all.

“Okay.” She smiled brightly, a true and genuine one and he grinned back, aware how much lighter he felt at seeing it. Satisfied she wasn’t upset anymore.

As she went to turn and get out YuZhi gave her one last tug by the hand and yanked her into his arms for an impulsive hug. Needing it more than ever after the agony of Hong King and half torturing his mind to hell and back. He squeezed her around the upper arms and nestled his cheek against hers for a few seconds, letting her relax before finally releasing her with a rub on top of her head. Back to being his normally affectionate self with her.

“An hour. Don’t tell Linlin because she may lay in wait or mow me down with her car.” He jested, letting her go as he watched her pick up her bag and slide out. A smile fixed on her pretty face as she waved his way and walked around the front to cross the quiet street. YuZhi watched her until she safely made it to the other side and then disappeared in the door before putting his hands on the wheel again. Happy, lighter, and yet he still had a lingering headache.

One problem was resolved, the important one, and yet the next was to return Rhea's call, and answer her about the three of them having dinner to clear the air. Rhea was looking to grovel, and his guilt was gnawing at him over it.

He would ask TangShi in an hour, knowing this hadn't been the right timing. Rhea wanted the air cleared and TangShi back as her sweet public friend, and YuZhi wanted everyone to find some kind of peaceful middle ground, even if technically they had done exactly what Rhea was pissed over in the first place.

## **Destined To Be His wife by L.T. Marshall Chapter 66**

Rhea flicked her hair back off her face, trying to control her inner temper and hit redial on her cell for the fifth time. Pacing the empty corridor of the runway hall for the event tonight and aggravated more as seconds ticked by and he still didn't pick up.

She had been trying to call YuZhi for the last two days, after he agreed they would sit down, the three of them, and talk things out. Since she slapped TangShi in the face she had avoided her, raged about the whole situation, cried, hated, and then relented and contacted YuZhi. She knew she had been wrong and even ZhengLi confirmed the whole incident had been innocent and drunken antics and mixed-up phones.

She had no idea why now after agreeing, he had gone off the radar again and was blanking her once more. YuZhi was getting too good at doing it. Since this whole stupid arrangement, he had been trying to distance them, keep them apart, and was continuously reminding her the breakup had to be real. She never got to see him anymore.

He said he was doing it for their future. To avoid conflict and emotional damage that could ruin everything in time by building resentment or making them fight. That he felt while things needed to be a certain way they should get on with their lives and put these two years down to time to grow as people and follow different paths. As long as they both had a goal in mind to start dating again when it was over, it was like he didn't understand how difficult this was for her. He didn't seem to be struggling in the same way she was.

YuZhi had never been the overly emotional and clingy boyfriend, like Rhea was as a girlfriend. He had always been able to regulate his feelings, keep his pain and frustration hidden and got on with life no matter how much his was falling apart. It's what had drawn her to him in his darkest days. His strength and ability to get up and keep moving forwards.

He had never been the jealous type who would question her about his male friends or scold her for going out and partying and not letting him know she would be late home. He didn't keep tabs on her or call or text her constantly the way she did him. He had been an easy and laid-back boyfriend who didn't try and control any aspect of her life, or interfere in her choices in anyway, and now she evaluated it, she started to doubt if he

ever loved her the way she loved him. Maybe his easy going nature of the past three years hadn't all been relationship security and his personality.

"Answer the god damn phone!" She snapped into her mouthpiece and slammed her mobile on the window sill beside her, anger bubbling up like a volcano and then scooped it up to text him instead. Gripped by the rising hysteria that seemed to hit so much easier nowadays.

I'm in a meeting. I can't answer. I'll call you in an hour.

The text came before she could type an angry rant, and she simmered at seeing his name on screen. Instantly quelled as she blinked at the words that felt like a ray of hope in her darkness. Her temper dying down and she sighed with defeat that he could so easily change her entire mood with one response.

"Why do I feel like you're lying to me." She whispered to herself and slid her phone against her aching chest to stand and stare at the scenery outside. She caught her breath and cooled down by regulating her breathing and staring at the prettiness of the day. She didn't want anyone to see how much of a mess he made her. This wasn't the persona she presented to the world.

There was a time, YuZhi relied on her for everything and she felt she was the center of his universe. After his parents died, and he was a zombie of a boy who seemed hopeless in life who cut off his emotions and avoided any trauma. She was his friend, his rock. She did everything in her power to help him rebuild his life and become someone worthy of standing in Leng in his father's place. She made him famous, styled him, taught him how to curb his wild streak and present a cool and calm façade instead.

He had been the kind of boy that gave his father headaches. Party obsessed, wild, with strings of adoring girls following him and naughty behavior that only worsened when ZhengLi and him hit their puberty years. Two strong willed spoiled teens who thought only of being young, rich, and fun loving. The military was good for him in terms of bringing him to heel, but his parent's dying curbed all ounces of that fiery rebellion that had kept them at loggerheads for years and created a filial and calm man. She clung on in hopes that one day he would return her feelings for him that she had shone his way since their childhood, so stuck by him through it all. No matter how much it hurt to watch.

Despite years of having to only be his friend, he finally accepted her love for him. It was no grand coming together and confessions or anything romantic. In truth, she always suspected it was like he felt obligated to give her more because it's what she was pushing for and he knew he owed her. She had been trying to ignore and deny that fact for years. Telling herself that real love grew, and he wanted to marry her. She wasn't even sure if YuZhi really knew what he felt for her and it was all tied up with his guilt, confusion and grieving of the past.

Rhea brushed herself down and went to move, but a thought crossed her mind and she hesitated, trembling as her heart flipped over, lifting her phone to stare at the screen as a flicker of suspicion crossed her mind. With where her thoughts had been, it suddenly seemed important.

Determination pushing her to start typing a response as she bit down on her lip, fear gripping her soul but unable to stop herself hoping she was wrong.

If you don't call me now, I am going to see TangShi and take her out to lunch to talk without you. I want this resolved. I don't need you there.

She knew that YuZhi had become weirdly protective of TangShi these past weeks, and she hated it so much it made her throat ache and her chest tighten. A jealous haze moving in to remove traces of her senses as her breathing became labored.

YuZhi picked up his phone to glance at the text in absentmindedness, ready to dismiss it until he saw TangShi's name in the message and swiped it to read properly. He was almost done with his briefing as his colleagues carried on reporting to the men at the table, talking and pointing at the projector screen on the wall facing him. He zoned out and gritted his teeth when he read what Rhea threatened, exhaling heavily, igniting irritation and got up to go out and call her back.

"Excuse me. I have an urgent call." He bowed to the other board members seated, catching ZhengLi's eye as he frowned a 'I can't be doing with this' at him and walked outside.

There was no way in hell he was letting Rhea near TangShi to talk one on one about this. TangShi couldn't lie and he knew she might blurt out the truth or an apology without him there and end up with another violent rage from Rhea. It didn't bear thinking about. It brought him out in a cold sweat.

Rhea saw his name flash on screen as the call came in and her heart erupted in splicing pain, biting on her lip as she stifled a sob in her throat and shook her head. Her worst fears confirmed. That when it was to do with TangShi, he called back without hesitation, and it spoke volumes to her.

"Your meeting is suddenly over?" She snapped upon answering, her tone bitter because she couldn't conceal her anger and disappointment in him.

"No, it's not. I had to slip out. What are you doing? Leave TangShi alone. She's at school and you'll only cause a scene. I told you I would think it over and tell you if we would meet." YuZhi tried to keep his voice low aware of by passers in the hall. Knowing that anyone could hear something out of context and cause issues.

"No, you agreed on a dinner with the three of us. Now you're backtracking. Why?"



YuZhi blew out his breath and leaned back against the nearest wall, tired suddenly. His temples already throbbing.

“I don’t think it’s what we should do. I think where we are at with the PR and progress of the cover story, we should all leave it alone. There’s no reason anymore for you and Tang to be out together a lot. They believe you are friends, and that she’s my fiancée now, no public outcry. I still stand firm on our decision to separate our lives and go our way for now. The public will see that we are really moving on and happy to be apart. You also know my reasons for it.” YuZhi was tired of going over the mountain of reasons that the breakup had to be real, that for a future they couldn’t create misunderstandings and pain in the next two years from staying in each other’s lives this way.

## **Destined To Be His wife by L.T. Marshall Chapter 67**

“I can ruin that all in one little interview.... I can destroy your companies cover story.” Rhea lashed out, bitterness oozing and YuZhi held his tongue. He knew she would react like this. This is what she did, and he expected it. When she didn’t get her own way, she tantrumed, threw out things she didn’t mean and tried to control him. It was exhausting when they were together and lately being apart he found it even more loathsome. He endured in the past, because all it took was his submittance to what she wanted and she was all smiles again, forgetting the fight. It was different now and he couldn’t give in to her requests.

“We both know you won’t. If you do, my grandfather will never let you near me or my family ever again. You know his stance on this, and you would only be proving him right that your family isn’t worthy of Leng.” It was harsh, and delivered with an icy tone but he had zero tolerance for this today

Company matters over a recent takeover had him hectic and overworked, he barely had time to spend with TangShi in the evening and he had missed two family dinners already this month. Rhea was low on his list of priorities right now. He only had the mental space for so much at a time.

“How can you push me away so easily? I thought you loved me?” She began to cry, her voice breaking in despair and YuZhi gripped his cell a little tighter. His emotions torn in two, between frustration that she was doing this now and genuine sorrow for hurting her.

“Keeping going over and over the same shit, Rhea. It changes and helps nothing. We’ve done this so many times. You agree with me to cool things off and then five minutes later you start spam calling me again, trying to see me all the time and causing me headaches. You weren’t like this before and it’s suffocating. I don’t know how to deal with you.” YuZhi vented the truth behind his avoidance of her these months, knowing she would breakdown and apologize and promise to stop, before starting it all again

tomorrow. He was tired of this whole scenario. This separation had brought out an ugly side to her that he had only ever seen sparingly before.

“I feel like you’re slipping away and I’m losing you. I don’t want to let go. I can’t do this.” The tears trickled down her face, her heart in true agony and more than aware that once again YuZhi never uttered those three little words. In all the years together as much as she tried to ignore it, YuZhi had never verbalized his love for her in that way.

“It’s done. I’m married. I agreed to what my grandfather wants, Rhea. TangShi gave up her life, her school, her freedom..... I won’t turn around and put the three of us through drama and public criticism. It would affect Leng Group, affect her life, and ours. Maybe you should go abroad for a while, like you wanted while things cool down and some time passes.”

“Now you’re trying to get rid of me?” Rhea snapped, her tears stopping instantly and instead replaced with fury and hatred for what he just said. That inner indignation born of being a spoiled and pampered girl her whole life, who always got her own way.

“Don’t be stupid. I just mean things might be easier if you’re not here. Take time out, go do things you always wanted and have a break. Stay in Paris a while. It’ll be good for you; it’ll pass faster if you’re not here to watch my every move.” YuZhi hoped she would take the offer from a Paris fashion magazine to collaborate with them for a season, it would give them both head space.

“Come with me.” The anger dampened and the tears returned. From furious and seething, to breaking down and getting exhausted too. This whole thing had taken a massive toll on her mental state. She knew she was clinging onto a crumbling wall, over a fall that she would never survive.

“You know I can’t. Please, Rhea, for both our sakes. Take time out and go on a vacation. Stop following the news and keeping tabs on me. Stop questioning my every move. If you’re like this now, how are you going to feel when TangShi falls pregnant, and the news erupts? What about the wedding?” He knew they still had all of that to come and he could no longer Rely on Rhea to keep up appearances.

“I’ll deal with it. I don’t want to go away and not see you. I’ll behave if you keep seeing me.” She was holding on once more, losing her fight and reverting to pleading. YuZhi sighed because this was the same cycle, the same conversation all over again.

“We can’t see each other for now. Or the near future. Only in public. You know what my grandfather stipulated, and I don’t want to make you misunderstand by seeing me alone.”

“You don’t want TangShi to misunderstand you mean?” She snarled it down the phone, mostly under her breath but he heard her and curbed his urge to respond. Silence growing heavy between them.

“Look my meeting isn’t done. I have to go. Book a flight, go away for a few days and then I promise, I swear, Rhea, I’ll come see you and talk. Leave TangShi alone for now.”

He knew it would be the same as this but if he gave her that hope, of seeing him, of talking it out, he knew there was more chance of her going away for a few days and he definitely didn’t want her near Tang when she was like this.

YuZhi scrubbed his hand down his face as he waited for her reply, hearing only a soft “okay” after what felt like a long ten minutes. The reality was it was only half a minute of her thinking.

“I need to go. Stop calling me, okay. Give me a few days. Work is crazy and I barely have time to sleep and eat right now. Let alone take personal calls.” It wasn’t a lie, and he hoped it made her think it was not avoidance but genuine crazy scheduling and that TangShi wasn’t seeing him either. If she thought this was just his current life, her jealousy would calm down.

“You better call me....if you don’t...” She started but he cut her off, a new wave of irritation growling in his stomach at yet another threat.

“I know. I will, I gotta go. Bye.” YuZhi hung up before she could finish, knowing she had inadvertently figured out a sure-fire way to get a response out of him that he never expected, and he regretted taking the bait. Rhea wasn’t stupid and now she knew how to make him answer, she would use it. TangShi was her leverage and if he didn’t call her when he said, she would go see her alone and that would be the worst possible outcome.

## **Destined To Be His wife by L.T. Marshall Chapter 68**

“I’m so full. We ate too much.” TangShi flopped back on the couch, nursing her food baby belly and groaning as Linlin picked up the takeout containers from the coffee table and dumped them in the kitchen.

“You could use a little extra fat; you’re so thin lately.” Linlin appraised her with a critical eye. Glad that since moving here to YuZhi’s apartment she seemed less stressed out and unhappy in life and was back to being her fun and sunny friend. The diet that nasty Aunt had forced on her had made her lose weight and it was her job to fatten TangShi back up again. Feeding her anyway she could.

The girls had met up after TangShi was finished with school and had gone shopping, before heading here for takeout and relaxing with a movie. YuZhi and ZhengLi had been MIA these past few days, something to do with an entertainment center being built in Shanghai and it was causing them endless issues with funding.

“What shall we watch?” Linlin wandered back and pushed her deadweight of a friend over so she could climb on the long space beside her to get comfy. Shoving her with a cushion to make her move.

“Hmmm anything. I am so sleepy I may fall asleep. I don’t have your energy and I was at school all day before you dragged me to walk miles.” TangShi protested, sitting up to turn and curl up against Linlin instead. The girls intertwined arms and legs, snuggling up as she browsed menus on the huge TV on the fireplace wall. YuZhi liked his gadgets, and his house had all the best technology.

“Nothing romantic, I am not in the mood.” Linlin huffed and then pouted as ZhengLi crossed her mind. Lately his absence was getting on her nerves even though he had a valid excuse. It had been over a week since their last date, in which he abandoned her and four days since he last called or text her. They had no definite plans for anytime soon either and it felt like she was being ghosted. She refused to be the one to reach out and chase him.

“Still mad at him for having a job?” TangShi poked her in the cheek, grinning and adoring her stropy best friend. Still amused with this denial that ZhengLi was more than a passing fad, and that her feelings for him were growing.

“Hmmm.” Linlin snorted, waving towards the window, that TangShi should close the blinds as a way to avoid the question, and she did so obediently. Picking up the remote to plunge the room into darkness.

The door entry pad tones going off made them both sit up slightly to look in that direction and TangShi impulsively checked her watch.

“It must be YuZhi. He’s early for once, it’s only eight.” She knew that wasn’t early by normal standards but sometimes he didn’t come home until after ten or later. Lately he had been after midnight more frequently and as she was asleep she didn’t see him until breakfast. Linlin had been her chauffer most days as her own part time college was near where TangShi went to school.

TangShi and he had reached that companiable easiness again where they had left the bad feeling in the past and had settled into cohabiting in peace. Having their own rooms meant they saw one another less than before with his schedule and she was missing him. Getting used to his habits in their own spaces and also spending time alone, more than she ever did when home.

The two men wandered into the apartment carrying heavy box files and YuZhi blinked around in surprise at the lack of light. Balancing his load on his leg, reaching up to feel out the switch despite this place having an automatic system and then almost blinded the two women as he illuminated the apartment on high.

“Hey!!” Linlin squeaked and covered her eyes at the assault. They had been in low light before the blinds were shut so this was a shock to their retinas.

“Well, well. This is a welcome surprise.” ZhengLi’s smooth tone came over like warm honey as he put his boxes on the floor and casually wandered over to them to haul Linlin over on the couch. “I missed my she devil and yet here she is. Looking irresistible, like a little prize.” He smirked, sitting down and sliding her towards him so he could put an arm around her shoulders, which she batted away.

“Do I know you?” She snorted and crossed her arms giving him the cold shoulder. Sulking about the lack of him in her life but it only amused him.

“Linnybooo, you know I’ve been busy. Show me some love.” ZhengLi leaned in and kissed her on the cheek, earning a palm to his face as she shoved it away and remained stiff and unyielding. Refusing to look at him.

“Hey, Tang.” YuZhi ignored the two of them, used to this push pull behavior of that pair, and wandered straight to TangShi, perching his ass opposite her on the coffee table so they were only a couple of feet apart and reached out to hand her something. “Here. They were giving these out to the employees today and I knew you would want one.”

TangShi sat up promptly, spying the small cupcake box in his hand and leaned for it with excitement. Despite being stuffed she always had space for cupcakes and beamed at him. Happiness in the small things always lit up her entire face and made YuZhi relax.

“Cake! Thank you!!” TangShi blushed at his thoughtfulness, coiling her legs underneath her while she focused on opening it. Basking under his content gaze at watching her happy with her gift.

## **Destined To Be His wife by L.T. Marshall Chapter 69**

Linlin wasn’t the only one who felt TangShi had lost too much weight these past months and YuZhi made sure to bring her snacks and treats frequently and keep the refrigerator stocked so she ate. All the medicines aunt sent for her were resigned to a cupboard by him where she couldn’t see them as he didn’t really agree with forcing her to take anything until she was pregnant.

“We have a lot of work, so we decided to come home and do it here. We won’t disturb you guys. I guess it’s movie and junk food, huh?” YuZhi nodded at the array of unopened sweets and crisps on the table beside him and had spotted all the takeout containers in the kitchen when he walked in.

“Hmmm. Undecided on what to watch as someone is against love and fluff today.” She side eyed Linlin who was being coaxed and whispered to by a smiling ZhengLi and the

pair were battling with hushed words and juvenile hand slapping. TangShi sighed at them.

“They’re entertaining for sure. Love’s young dream.” YuZhi mocked in sarcasm and got up patting TangShi on the head gently before wandering back to his boxes of files. Deflated by the thought of the long night ahead.

“Have you eaten?” TangShi got up and paced after him, giving those two space as it seemed like they were getting a little too touchy feely to be around.

“Not yet. We worked through dinner and packed up for home soon as we got most of it done.” YuZhi piled two boxes on the counter and put one between his feet as he figured out which he needed first.

“I can make something. Beef noodle soup, or seafood porridge?” TangShi offered, coming up beside him.

“No, go enjoy your downtime with your friend. I can order in and take it to my study with Zheng. You look tired. Don’t cook for me.” YuZhi impulsively reached out to brush her hair from her face, his thumb trailing over her cheek softly in that way he had developed of stroking her. TangShi’s cheeks warmed, and her inner happiness bubbled up.

“You work too hard. Don’t skip meals.” TangShi scolded him.

“I know. I swear, we’ll eat. Go do your thing.” YuZhi turned her by the shoulders and gave her a gentle push back towards the couch, but TangShi caught sight of ZhengLi and Linlin kissing and turned back abruptly, her face flaming and eyes wide.

“Ummm.” She mumbled, flustered, and YuZhi looked up over her head to see why. Shaking his head and chuckling at his best friends antics, before catching TangShi’s hand and tugging her with him.

“Come on, let’s go down and buy some food. Leave those two to get it out of their system. Anyone would think they were actually dating.” He smiled.

TangShi followed obediently as he swiped his wallet and car keys out of his jacket and stood at the door while she pulled her shoes on. Walking out together hand in hand and down to the car park.

They drove to the nearest take out and wandered in together while he placed an order for the usual food him and ZhengLi frequently ate, pulling TangShi beside him at the counter so he could rest his arm around her shoulder to lean on her. He was tired from the past few weeks and work and somehow he always felt better when she was around. It was his favorite part of the day seeing her in the apartment and feeling calm because she had that kind of aura around him.

“Mr. Leng, can we take your picture?” A young over excited voice pulled them from behind and he turned to see two teen girls standing side by side, clutching their cell phones and bouncing on the spot at having bumped into one of their idols. YuZhi got this frequently and didn’t hesitate in nodding and smiling like it was no big deal. Knowing one bad experience could start a trend on Weibo, while he felt TangShi curl away to hide.

“My girlfriend too, or just me?” He nodded at her, knowing she was too shy to assume she should be in it and tried to step away to let him enjoy his spotlight.

“Oh my god. Both, please. You two are hot topic in the fan groups.” One of the girls held up her phone, flashing it at him and he squinted seeing some sort of YuZhi Leng fan page, chuckling at his own face as a banner image and reaching out.

“May I?”

“Yesss... oh my, yes.” The girl seemed excited to share it with him and let him scroll the images and articles that were all about him and TangShi recently. So many candid shots that he wasn’t aware had even been taken in their normal daily life around Shanghai. This seemed to be a private fan group of two hundred thousand members, and all the recent posts were about how happy they were for the engagement announcements. It wasn’t a major shock as he had over a million followers on Weibo and hadn’t had any negative comments. The PR was working.

“I’m one of the admin who keep the page going and we don’t allow anyone to be negative or nasty. We really like Miss. Lei and love how her, and Miss. Cheng are close friends and the reason you met. So romantic.”

“It’s so dreamy.” The other girl mooned at them in equal enthusiasm, eyes soft and gooey as she clenched her hands to her chest. TangShi couldn’t help but giggle at them and obediently stepped in when YuZhi pulled her back into his arm. Curling up against him and making it look real.

“I’ll take one and then we can swap.” Girl one volunteered and they patiently posed first with one girl and then the other before they thanked them profusely and bid them farewell.

“That was weird.” TangShi admitted, having never had this herself yet, even though she had seen enough online pictures of YuZhi to know it happened a lot. To her it was a really unusual occurrence that she doubted she would ever understand.

“You’ll get used to it. Most of the time they either take pictures from afar or are extremely polite when asking. Be nice, smile, let them leave feeling good.”

“That’s easy for you to say. You look like a cover model for vogue in any outfit, no matter the time of day and your hair is always like this.” She reached up ruffling the front

of his expensive styled hairdo, that she had never seen weird even after being in bed. He was infuriatingly perfect at all times. Handsome in a striking way and his tall height and muscular body gave him a presence you couldn't ignore.

"You don't think you're beautiful?" YuZhi asked with interest, turning at the sound of the food server telling him their order was ready. Being serious in his question because to him, TangShi was stunning.

"No. I'm just average." TangShi blushed. Having been told her whole life by her so called family she was a plain jane and worthless as a beauty.

"Tang, you're beautiful. In any outfit, even with bed hair, at anytime of the day." He smirked, ruffled her hair like she did him and then hooked her hand in his as he picked up the carrier bag of food and nodded a thank you at the server.

"You have to say that in case someone hears you insulting your 'fiancée'!" She winked at him, not being serious and fell into an easy pace beside him as they strolled back out to the car. Aware the girls were huddled across the street with others who all stopped and looked their way as they made their getaway. Phones out to catch them leaving.

"I don't lie. You're a natural. You don't have to try to be pretty, you just are." He turned and bopped her on the nose with his forefinger, before opening the car door for her and ushering her in and handing her the bag. "Besides, don't believe me... believe what their fan site said. They were calling you a goddess and hoped our future children took after both of us." YuZhi smiled, warmed by the things he had scrolled quickly, about the public acceptance of TangShi and glad that it wasn't just the hot news topics, but among his fanbase they seemed to like her. He walked around the car, waving to the group as he left, eliciting squeals and more flashes from cellphones before hopping in and getting them on their way.

"We might be a trending topic tomorrow." He shook his head as they drove out, watching her relax back now they were no longer on display and eased his shoulders to disperse his own tension. He needed her to get used to this side of his life, because so much more was coming. They had their first public date to an event in a week and she would experience the red carpet for this first time. He didn't want it to scare or intimidate her and was just as nervous as she was about taking her to something like that where Rhea would be with her new fake boyfriend.

He wasn't sure if it was going to be a great night, or a night with Rhea drama given her recent behaviors.

## **Destined To Be His wife by L.T. Marshall Chapter 70**

"Thank you, Master Cai. Today's lesson was enjoyable, and I really learned a lot." TangShi bowed to her teacher, holding her bag as she was readying to leave and thanked him again for today. Time was passing so fast being in this school and her daily



schedule here was a highlight of her life. She had found her love of painting again and her days were passing in relative happiness, compared to before.

“You are a good student. Rong was right about your talent and dedication, and I am enjoying seeing your skills grow, Miss. Lei.”

“That means a lot, thank you. I am so happy here, that words cannot express it. I bid you a good evening and shall see you bright and early.” TangShi bowed once more, full of the joy of having her respected tutor praise her and carried the rolled-up watercolor with her from yesterday. It was a practice piece while studying light on water, but she was incredibly proud of it and wanted to show YuZhi the piece. He was supportive of her time here and had hung her last lesson piece in his study at home.

“TangShi. Wait up.” Rong Cai called to her as she made her way to the gate, allowing him to catch up with her without fully stopping. She knew YuZhi would be waiting today as he had text her that he was taking an early day so he could pick her up.

“What’s wrong, Mr. Cai?” TangShi turned briefly, pulling the gate as she did so as she was eager to leave. They had plans for dinner and she was excited to see YuZhi after another couple of days of his absence. His work was slowing down enough to afford him one early night.

“How many times, TangShi? Call me Rong. We’re almost the same age. And I feel like we’re friends now... friends don’t use titles.” He smiled, reaching over her head to open the gate fully so she ducked and quickly stepped aside so as not to end up in his armpit. Not overly comfortable with the way Rong always seemed to get very close to her in innocent ways. She couldn’t say he was not a nice guy, as he never openly did or said anything to make her doubt him. He was always pleasant and helpful and chatted to her respectfully. It was just her own sense of personal space always felt invaded when he was close, and she was sensitive to it. He always seemed to find at least one instance a day to talk to her alone and never other students, so it made her wary. She wondered if it was because of how YuZhi reacted the first time they met, and it was a subconscious thing because he had told her to stay away from him.

“The school is thinking of hosting a small gallery in a month’s time. It’s a regular annual thing we do. Taking our promising students and showcasing them in an amateur gallery for a few days. Then we repeat at end of term with the same artists. It always brings a lot of interest, especially when those who regularly come get to see the progress in our students. It always fuels new applicants every semester.”

“Sounds amazing.” TangShi replied with only half interest, glancing over her shoulder into the carpark but didn’t yet see YuZhi’s jeep. Aware she was increasingly eager to get moving.

“I want Alice Lin to be one of the named artists. Of course, I know you like to keep her anonymous, but we don’t need to expose you. Just display your art and you can come

as a guest to view the gallery showing. We can be go between for any interviews, so you don't reveal your true identity."

"That sounds awesome. I'm sorry though, can we talk about it tomorrow, as I really have to go. I hope that doesn't sound rude; it's just I have plans." TangShi tried to politely rebuff him as she caught sight of the familiar black car turning in and her heart thumpity thumped at his appearance. A cross between excitement and nerves, because Rong Cai was standing practically hemming her in against the gate with his tall muscular frame and she knew YuZhi wouldn't like it.

Rong Cai looked up and saw where her eyes flickered. Inwardly irritated at the appearance of the so-called boyfriend and pasted a smile on his face. He had searched them up after that first meeting, knowing a Leng would make headlines and was disgusted at the fact he had broken up with one girl mere months before TangShi dated him. His return of bad mood had lasted several days the first time he laid eyes on this asshole because he kept turning over the possibility he was using her as a rebound from his long-term model girlfriend dumping him. He felt TangShi was being used and would be discarded before long.

"Sure. Why don't you come to my office a half hour before class tomorrow, when the two of us can discuss it. I'll order some steamed buns for breakfast." Rong moved back just enough for her to slide by, knowing to do so her body would skim his intimately. Aware he didn't give her enough room and felt smug as the black jeep parked up with its bonnet facing this way. Full view of the two of them. He wanted that rich guy to feel threatened and know he wasn't giving up on pursuing her. If anything, a jealous fight between them might show TangShi he wasn't a good guy.

TangShi hesitated and tried to flatten herself against the metal gate as she moved by him, turning so only her shoulder skimmed his abdomen and helped push him back to give her room. It was awkward and she nodded and mumbled an apology for bumping him as she sped past.

"Tomorrow then, bye." She rushed out breathily and took off.

"Bye, TangShi. Tomorrow." He smiled after her, waving and making a point of looking at YuZhi with a smug expression.

YuZhi got out of the car, having seen the way that Cai jerk was caging TangShi in against the gate and wall as she tried to leave. He could tell by her body language she was not happy and looking to escape and that asshole didn't exactly give her any room. It riled that inner rage that this time was not just jealousy, but that fierce protectiveness he had for her. TangShi was firmly cemented in his heart as someone vulnerable and too sweet to be rude, and it made him crazy when people bullied her or took advantage of her nature.

Stalking towards them as she slid out, her face reddening at the body contact with him and YuZhi had to use all his will power to keep his expression blank and his mood controlled. This ass was smirking his way and making it obvious his intention was to rile YuZhi up. Only he didn't have any idea who his opponent was, and it was clear there was a better way to piss this guy off than verbal bitch matches. If Rong thought it would start a fight between him and TangShi he was wrong.

YuZhi focused his eyes on TangShi who was walking towards him at a fast pace, seemingly flustered. YuZhi smiled as he relaxed his face and his heart raced at how much he wanted to run over and punch Rong Cai in the throat. Rong's eyes on them, his attitude all over him like a black smog.

"Hi." TangShi came up to YuZhi coyly, her cheeks were a little blushed and he could tell she was nervous about how YuZhi was going to react. Seeing as he had made an idiot of himself the last time he saw this guy all over her and wasn't about to make the same mistake twice. Jealousy was never his thing and he had to be more controlled this time.