

## Destined To Be His wife by L.T. Marshall Chapter 16

TangShi sat through an awkward and very late, strained dinner at the Leng family table. After brief introductions to a few new faces for the meal and of course the sulking grandfather who ignored her presence, it seemed the family was already too focused on other things to notice her. Because of the surge of extra bodies, she had been seated at YuZhi's right hand and was quietly eating the same bland so-called nutritious food from aunt's rigid diet plan while everyone around her was indulging in some spicy noodles and beef. Even the array of side dishes was out of bounds for her, and she had been forewarned to eat only what was laid before her on Aunt's orders.

They smelled divine and with the several opulent dishes to make her mouth water, TangShi had no appetite for the clear broth in front of her and her simple side salad with no dressings. Everything was tasteless and lacked spice or flavorings. She was sure the cook was deliberately over boiling anything edible to make it unpalatable too.

"Why are you not eating?" A female voice demanded of her sharply and she lifted her eyes to see auntie was glaring her way, and the fact she was using her spoon to push the liquid around rather than eating it. It had been fifteen minutes at the table, and TangShi had swallowed only three mouthfuls in total.

"I'm sorry Auntie, I'm just not feeling hungry tonight. It's been a long day and I'm tired. I'll eat it." TangShi forced herself to swallow another down while counteracting her need to gag, her body stiffening as she pushed the soup into her belly but tried to remain expressionless.

She heard YuZhi snort his amusement under his breath as he dished himself another serving of beef and the smell made TangShi yearn for a little taste of the delicacy. She wouldn't ask him though, as she had told herself not to let him see how much any of this was getting to her. She could ask Xiaosu to fetch her food in the night when most had gone to bed, and she could eat something with taste. YuZhi was a sound sleeper she had learned, and never stirred once when had had passed out from the world so wouldn't be aware, she would get up to eat.

"Auntie is going to so much bother of personally overseeing your nutritional needs, the least you can do is appear to like it." He scolded her quietly, for her ears only, and TangShi blushed at the sudden direct instruction from him. His voice low and husky that gave it a sort of seductive and dangerous edge when he whispered it so carefully this way. She had to hold herself still to not glare at him for his unwanted input even if he had blatantly ignored her for the last day or so. She didn't welcome his sudden attention.

"I didn't say I wasn't enjoying it." TangShi gritted out in an equally hoarse tone for his ears only, not knowing what it was about this man that made her always want to talk back but she really didn't like his arrogance at every sparse interaction they had.

“You don’t seem to be.” YuZhi added not knowing why it was he insisted on talking to her when she was in his space. He had sworn on his drive home from the office that he would blank her presence and go to bed, yet here he was whispering like a secretive couple at his family table. Try as he might, whenever he had to put up with her, he wanted to behave like a juvenile and get some sort of reaction from her. It wasn’t who he was in life, yet she seemed to make him want to act this way. Normally his cool and aloof personality was what he was famous for and yet with her, it was tit for tat and immature mini squabbles with every word from his mouth. She affected his moods and even at work, anytime he thought of her, he acted like a sulking child.

He caught his grandfather watching them and leaned away from her to continue eating, aware how this may look. Aware that his grandfather had already scolded him for not being more gracious to the woman who was now part of his family. YuZhi cleared his throat and focused on his food, moving away to show he was putting distance between them, and she should stop talking.

TangShi lowered her chin and put all her effort on getting through the two bowls in front of her. Zoning out so she didn’t taste them as much and hoping she would be excused as soon as she was done. It had been an exhausting day again, with all the plans and appointments thrust on her after yesterday’s shopping trip, and tomorrow she had a full half day at a beauty salon to change her hair and take some make up lessons. She felt this frivolous waste of her time was beyond boring and would rather be painting alone in her suite.

Auntie had been persistent that she wasn’t to be seen outside these walls anywhere near YuZhi until she was considered presentable by aunt’s standards. Which meant magazine worthy given her position in the fashion industry, which explained her anal attitude towards it. And unluckily for TangShi, today had been minus the protective and somewhat calming presence of Rhea.

“You are looking very well today, TangShi.” Grandfather startled her by suddenly addressing her directly and she almost choked on her mouthful of unsalted broth, glancing his way and covering her mouth with a napkin to save herself from spitting up everywhere. Swallowing hard to clear her mouth, she nodded and lowered her head towards the old man and gave him a soft smile. Her heart racing because much like his grandson, he had pretended she didn’t exist for the last couple of days.

“Thank you. Under aunties great direction and care I spent the day taking note of my skin health and my fitness. I aim to be better.” TangShi replied in the way she knew was expected of her, secretly hating the fact she had underwent hours of waxing, preening and being smothered in various clays and creams and having her body rolled and massage until she was black and blue. Some called it a pamper day but to TangShi it was sheer torture with a high price tag. Even her nails were currently manicured and adorned with tiny, encrusted diamonds that made her hands look nothing like that of an artist who worked with paint and charcoal.

“En. Good... this family expects it.” He gave her a curt answer with a nod, but he didn’t seem as annoyed with her as when she first sat down to eat, and she wondered if this was his way of finally saying he forgave her for being late for breakfast yesterday. TangShi smiled at him as genuinely as she could, satisfied he wanted no more conversation beyond his little acknowledgment of her and turned back to her food, catching YuZhi glaring at her from the corner of her eye.

She could feel his icy coldness waving her way from his stiff posture and she could tell that it annoyed him that the old man had mellowed already. He seemed to want the old man to dislike her as much as he did and now, he would have to do something else to mischievously cause another misunderstanding. She was aware of it this time and wouldn’t be trapped like that again. This man was so immature.

YuZhi picked up his glass and drank some of his water, unsure why grandfathers two second conversation with this girl would irritate him so much but it did. In life he had more control over his moods, but the second he met this woman, something inside of him just picked up a red flag and stuck it in his face.

“If you’re done eating, go to bed. You have to take care of your body for my child’s sake and sleep is of great importance. You’re dismissed.” He commanded her loudly, drawing the attention to the eating diners who were not all that interested in her, making it clear he wanted her to leave already. Aunt seemed to smirk while the younger woman next to her, who looked a lot like YuZhi glanced at TangShi and yet seemed to frown a little.

“I’m done. I’ll do as you say. Thank you for the meal.” TangShi appeared to be obedient to her new husband, but the truth was she had been looking for any excuse to escape since they came in here. She hadn’t eaten much but it seemed YuZhi was more focused on making her go away than to care anymore. TangShi was relieved and exhaled with a soft sigh.

Xiaosu caught her eye from the edge of the room where she had been patiently awaiting her Miss and TangShi nodded for her to exit and lead her out. Her path to freedom and on the way, Xiaosu could bypass the kitchen and grab her some fruit or whatever was to hand.

“Wait.” A new voice that had never addressed her before called out to her, and TangShi turned quickly to not appear rude. Aware that despite introductions earlier, no one had made it clear what their standing in this family was, and this sounded young so could be either of the two young misses present.