



A WELL KEPT SECRET

By Wendy K.Y. Chung

We'd met at the diner across the street from my house. I'd been waitressing there, and he was a customer--not exactly what you'd call a storybook romance. Our stormy relationship survived through early personality conflicts, and later, some major problems. Now, as I watch him get out of his car and smile as he walks over to the bench where I'm sitting, I can't imagine life without him. It's been nearly two years since we first met at the diner, and it's hard to believe how far we've come. He flops down on the bench beside me, and plants a warm, soft kiss on my cheek. "What did you tell them?" he asks. "Just that I was meeting a friend at

the park," I reply. I used to steer as far away as possible from the truth when telling my parents where I was going when I went to see Michael. Through experience, I'd learned that including everything except who I was seeing was easier than fabricating a complete lie. I have two sisters, but only one is recognized by my parents. My older sister was disowned for marrying someone my old-fashioned, Chinese parents disapprove of. Defining what it is exactly my parents don't approve of is a difficult task. They've never actually articulated their values directly to us children, but somehow the message comes across loud and clear. In selecting a suitable husband, we girls must first and foremost choose a man who is completely Chinese. He must not only have pure

Chinese blood running through his veins, but also, he must look Chinese, speak Chinese, and respect Chinese customs and traditions.

Secondly, he must be well-educated and wealthy. I think that most parents would want their children to marry intelligent, blue-blooded spouses, but my parents have made that a necessity. Not only must the man himself be respectable, but also his family. In Chinese custom, when two people marry, it not only is the bonding of two lives, but also, it is a union of families.

The prospective son-in-law must be ambitious, and able to support a wife and family comfortably. While this is important to the well-being of their daughters, I think more significant, in the eyes of my parents, is the image it would portray to other Chinese families in the community. It would please my parents greatly to be able to tell other people that their daughters were well cared for. That,

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anyone else. we'd go back to our respective homes and smolder or just get depressed. If the day is really bad, you'd just as soon disappear forever. In all reality, though, the problem you're having is probably not that bad....

That's where the other person comes in. That person is one who you can rely on to just listen to your problems. He or she is always there, if not physically, then just a phone call away. How good do you feel after you dump your problems out? GREAT! Then comes the bonus! The one you love is genuinely interested in what your problems are. That individual can suggest solutions to your troubles, and give you reassurance that everything's okay, life's not that bad. Having that person that

you trust enough to tell your thoughts and problems to is special. Think about it. In revealing your innermost thoughts to this person, you're putting yourself in the most helpless position imaginable. This trust in someone forms the backbone of love.

Being able to lean on someone special is like having a soft, cushy feather pillow to rest your head on.

In this way, love is like a pillow.

Love is spelled L-O-V-E.

Let the "O" stand for one-sided. Love is one-sided? Yes, in a two-sided way. While it's nice to have someone to lean on when you're having problems, there are always two sides to everything. Sometimes the other person needs you. Then you have to give some of yourself, without regard

to what you get in return.

It's the opposite of the pillow theory. A person in love does not hesitate to give himself or herself for the other person. If that person needs to talk, or needs something done, then the second party should feel that it's his or her responsibility to fulfill this need.

Even when the other person doesn't need anything at all, you should try your utmost to make him or her feel good. In this aspect, love is one-sided in a two-sided way. Always giving without thinking of receiving is like being a bottle. The bottle gives its entire contents (of whatever) until it's empty, like the giving individual in love.

In this way, love is like a bottle.

Love is spelled L-O-V-E.

Let the "V" stand for the notion that being in love is like being committed to a vow, a promise.

Do you know people who are seeing more than one person. Cheating on their boyfriend or girlfriend, their husband or wife? This is the most horrible thing that could be done to someone else. You may as well stick a gun to their head and pulling the trigger. Imagine your feelings if the person you've spent two or three years of your life with suddenly revealed that he or she was seeing someone else. You would feel used, that your time with that person was wasted, that you couldn't trust that person anymore. In feeling this way, we would lose the first two letters of the word love. In other words, love is lost.

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