

EXPECTATIONS

by Jeffrey Strausser

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A Dramatic Duet

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SYNOPSIS: Matt Cooper, star high school quarterback, and Sophia Alvarado, valedictorian and perfect SAT score holder, are about to be interviewed. After all, everyone wants to know about these senior standouts and their plans for the future. The problem is, they each have a secret they need to get into the open. To be themselves, they must defy the expectations of everyone, especially those who care about them most. Their story is a cautionary tale for all of us to examine the way we live our lives.

TIME: Present Day.

SETTING: In the principal's office.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 1 male)

MATT COOPER (m)..... High School senior. *(67 lines)*

SOPHIA ALVARADO (f)..... High School senior. *(69 lines)*

SET: A bare set with two chairs and a small table.

PROPS

- a nice pen
- two chairs and a small table
- a folder with a letter-size piece of paper inside

COSTUMING: Normal Attire.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: The actors stand and/or walk around the set to provide some movement. They should be seated when Matt shows Sophia his sketch to provide focus. Matt can pretend to pass a football where the dialogue refers to him doing so.

AT START: *Lights up. MATT and SOPHIA are sitting in the principal's office waiting for a reporter to arrive and interview them.*

SOPHIA: *(Walking around the office.)* I've never been in Mrs. Crane's office before. It's kinda... plain.

MATT: Like her.

SOPHIA: Stop. She's a nice person.

MATT: Yeah. Whatever.

SOPHIA: Have you ever been in here?

MATT: Coupla times. *(Sarcastically.)* Lotsa fun. *(Picks up one of the principal's pens.)* Hey, plain Crane has got some fancy pens. *(In an officious voice.)* I hereby sign into principal's law that Matt Cooper will get nothin' but A's.

SOPHIA: Put that back! What if she comes in?

MATT: When's this lady reporter gettin' here?

SOPHIA: She's a reporter. You don't need to say *lady* reporter. That's sexist.

MATT: Alright, when's the *reporter* gettin' here?

SOPHIA: Mrs. Crane said ten minutes. I guess she didn't want us to be late.

MATT: Why does she wanna interview... *us*?

SOPHIA: You mean, why does she want to interview *me*? She wants a story on senior standouts.

MATT: Senior stand-outs. I like that.

SOPHIA: You're the famous quarterback with a million college offers, and I'm... I don't know...

MATT: Sophia Alvarado, the super brain who is gonna be the valedictorian, and, oh yeah, got a perfect SAT score. And, most importantly *(Does a drum roll.)*, got me through Algebra 2. I owe you-big time. The school owes you big-time.

SOPHIA: I was just doing my National Honor Society tutoring duty. So, have you decided yet?

MATT: Decided what?

SOPHIA: Dope. On a college? It's all your fanboys talk about.

MATT: You're goin' to Stanford, right?

SOPHIA: My parents went there.

MATT: You don't sound pumped about it.

SOPHIA: (*Unenthusiastically.*) I am. (*Pumps her arms.*) Yay. So, where are you going?

MATT pulls out a sketch from a folder on his lap and hands it to SOPHIA.

SOPHIA: (*Holding up the sketch.*) Wow! It looks just like her. Did you draw this?

MATT: I can do other things besides throw a tight spiral.

SOPHIA: I was complimenting you. You don't need to be snarky.

MATT: Sorry.

SOPHIA: Has Angie seen your sketch? Girls love that sort of thing. Even more than a tight spiral, whatever that means.

MATT: She's not goin' to be speakin' to me. Not after what I'm gonna do.

SOPHIA: Omigosh. You're not breaking up with her? Not right before prom; that's cold. I mean, you two are like the school's perfect couple.

MATT: She thinks so. And *I'm* not breakin' up with her.

SOPHIA: So, what are you going to do that's so awful?

MATT: Disappoint everyone.

SOPHIA: (*Sarcastically.*) You're not going to sign autographs any more. Oh, how will we survive.

MATT: I hate football.

SOPHIA: Yeah, right. The god of football hates football. Just because your team didn't go to the whatever's?

MATT: Semis.

SOPHIA: You won state last year. Even (*Sarcastically.*) *Matt the Man* can't win all the time.

MATT: (*In a serious tone.*) I've hated football ever since the seventh grade.

SOPHIA: Please don't make fun of me. (*Beat.*) You're serious. How can you hate football?

MATT: It's just a game, but everybody treats it like it's so important. It's supposed to be fun, but it's not. They've turned a game into a job. It makes me mad, and I hate it.

SOPHIA: But you keep playing anyway?

MATT: 'Cause that's what everybody expects me to do. My dad—especially my dad—my grandpa, my coach, the guys on the team, this school, this town. Everybody. Like my dad says: (*Mimicking his dad.*) “We’re expectin’ great things from you, boy.”

SOPHIA: Have you told anyone else?

MATT: Nope. Well, my mom sort of suspects. But she hasn’t said anything to me.

SOPHIA: Maybe you should say something to *her*. There’s nothing wrong with hating football. I hate football. And I’m okay with that.

MATT: You don’t get it.

SOPHIA: I was trying to be funny, but I guess it wasn’t.

MATT: Can you keep a secret?

SOPHIA: I can, and who would I tell, anyway? In case you haven’t noticed, I’m not exactly Miss Popular.

MATT: I made us lose the game against Hastings. You know, the quarter final game.

SOPHIA: You can’t blame yourself.

MATT: I threw the game.

SOPHIA: Isn’t that what quarterbacks do? Throw?

MATT: You really are a nerd.

SOPHIA: And proud of it.

MATT: Did you go to the game?

SOPHIA: (*Sarcastically.*) Seriously?

MATT: We were down by four and on their twenty with less than a minute on the clock.

SOPHIA: You’re speaking a foreign language that I do not understand.

MATT: We needed to score a touchdown or else we’d lose the game.

SOPHIA: Okay.

MATT: The play was gonna be a pass into the corner of the endzone to Luke Waters.

SOPHIA: Luke Waters was in my algebra class freshman year. He’s an idiot.

MATT: He couldn’t make the catch.

SOPHIA: Okay, so he can’t solve linear equations, and he can’t catch a football. How is that your fault?

MATT: I knew he had trouble catchin’ passes to his left side, so I threw to his left side. He couldn’ bring it in. No surprise.

SOPHIA: Okay, maybe subconsciously—

MATT: (*Cutting her off.*) Nope, fully conscious.

SOPHIA: I guess nobody else knows this?

MATT: Nope.

SOPHIA: Why... why did you do it? I mean, you worked so hard, I guess. Everybody made a big deal about—

MATT: Back-to-back championships. Not been done in fifteen years.

SOPHIA: Okay...?

MATT: If we wouldda won and kept winnin', we wouldda had to play three more games. I couldn' take it. I just couldn'.

SOPHIA: Maybe you should have talked to somebody before, you know...

MATT: Look, I know you don't get it, but—

SOPHIA: (*Cutting him off.*) I do get it. I do. I feel the same way about AP classes and stressing over my GPA and joining clubs that I have no interest in because it looks good on my college app.

MATT: (*In mock surprise.*) Sophia Alvarado!

SOPHIA: My mom and dad are hardly ever home, and when they are, they're really not because they're super-stressed about what's going on at the hospital. I've had eighteen years of that already. I don't need another eighteen. My parents assume I want to be a doctor. They expect me to be a doctor.

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