

My Dreamy Old Husband

Chapter 96

After Sophia had her hands on Michael's iPad, she couldn't keep her hands off it, and had been enjoying his movies all day long.

How was it even possible that such a good-looking man existed?

In all his movies, Taylor could act in any type of role naturally, without any flaws. It was as if he was born to be an actor.

And now, Sophia realized that she knew too little about her husband, whom she flash married. She knew almost nothing about him, let alone his background. It was only recently that she found out about his job.

After the meeting with the crew of 'Doctor Invincible', it was all everyone in camp could talk about for the next few days. As such, Sophia took the opportunity to listen in to some gossip.

No one knew about Michael's background, for his personal information had been protected from the public with extra precautions, including his real name, not to mention his father's identity.

But rumor had it that his mother was a famous celebrity around 30 to 40 years ago, who went by the name of Elizabeth Murray. She used to perform operas, but had later switched to singing and acting. It was when the television was first invented, and Elizabeth who had both beauty and talent, became well known to the public.

She wasn't only the queen of TV drama ratings, but was also the box office champion. She dabbled in operas, films, dramas, and even the music industry, all of which were so remarkable that they even became famous overseas.

Once a beloved national treasure, she influenced the entire world and became the top Asian celebrity. If it were today, she would've been a global star, receiving awards from Oscars non-stop.

Despite that, Elizabeth had a dark past. It was believed that she used to act in adult films during her early years, and was later discovered after she rose to fame. As a result, she suffered from severe depression and tried to take her own life several times.

Later, Elizabeth left the entertainment industry without a trace. Since then, there had been no news of her.

No one knew where she had gone. Some said that she was married and retired while others said that she was banned from the industry because her involvement in adult films had a negative impact. There were also some who believed that she had committed suicide.

No one knew exactly where Elizabeth was, and her fans had missed her so much. Even after decades of pop stars dominating the industry, people hadn't forgotten about her.

After all, the woman represented an era!

After almost 30 years of her disappearance, Taylor Murray turned up. Elizabeth's fans saw shadows of Elizabeth in him—his facial features, temperament, and even his singing and figure. Although Taylor had never talked about his personal life, people had regarded him as Elizabeth's descendant.

For that reason, there were a lot of middle-aged and elderly among Taylor's fans. He had an extremely strong fan base among the general public, from little kids to teenage girls, and even square-dancing older men—the age range was huge.

This humongous fan base had allowed him to sit firmly on the throne as the number 1 movie star in the country. He sometimes starred in dramas from big production companies, and all of his movies were box-office hits, alongside his dramas.

There were many who were rich among the freshmen, and they usually had more insider information than others. It wasn't long before Sophia found out some juicy information that wasn't a well-known fact—years ago, Taylor had attempted to marry into wealth, but ultimately failed in doing so.

There was even such a thing?

As everyone was busy discussing, Sophia listened in secretly, her ears like an antenna catching signals. She was extremely interested in gossip about her husband.

Michael had been the topic of conversation at most of the recent slumber talks in the camp. Everyone would talk about his movies, outfits and even his face for the whole night. Sophia thought that these girls were unbelievable, and was trying to figure out why they wouldn't just sleep when they had the time.

Yet, what was even scarier was that she had been enjoying listening to all the talk!

"I'll tell you guys, but you can't tell anyone about it!" warned the girl who told the story, acting all mysterious and enigmatic. Upon hearing that, everyone nodded and listened carefully.

The girl started to narrate, "This is what Faye told me. You guys know that she's one of the Edwards, right? She said that Miss Taylor has gotten engaged twice!"

The girls were all surprised. So the man wasn't heartless! He was engaged and might've even been married for years!

Many hearts were broken at that moment.

Sophia was a little dumbfounded as she didn't know that Michael had this marriage history.

But hey, the guy was an outstanding man. His admirers, both women and men, could probably line up all the way from Bayside University's main gate right up to the camp's gate. Aren't I one of them?

She continued to listen in, wanting to know more about her husband's exes.

The girl who was spilling the tea had a mysterious look on her face. "Miss Taylor's first fiancée was very influential in the society. From what I heard, she's a literary soldier from the Central Military Commission Political Department Song and Dance Troupe. She was also in the literary and artistic circle, and her rank isn't a low one!"

Wow, that's so cool!

Sophia was shocked. Working in the literary and artistic circle was a whole other level from the entertainment industry, and could be considered as a real artist. And if she had a high ranking as well, that would make her amazing!

Michael had to be equally incredible to be engaged to such a stunning woman! Only someone with a similar family background could do that!

Come to think of it, he was one of the Fletchers. This in and on itself was already magnificent.

Just then, the girl continued, "It's a pity no one could find out anything about the woman, but she was very famous. Rumor has it that the woman met with an accident and fell seriously ill, which caused the marriage to eventually fall through."

Everyone let out a deep sigh. But at the same time, they were happy that their idol was still single.

As the girl told the story, those from the upper and lower bunk had popped their heads out, eagerly wanting to know more about Taylor's story. Even Nathan listened attentively, wanting to know what everyone thought about his uncle.

"Miss Taylor's second fiancée is even more unbelievable!" The girl held her chin up proudly as if she was the one being mentioned. "The second fiancée was one of the Edwards, and was a direct descendant of the family.

Apparently, they were engaged, but on the day before the wedding, the fiancée almost died in an accident. That was why Miss Taylor's marriage plan fell through again."

Everyone felt sorry, but rejoiced at the same time. They couldn't help but be reminded about Taylor's curse of being a wife-jinxer.

Thinking about the sudden accidents of his fiancées that blew off the marriage plan, they doubted all of these were just a coincidence.

As Sophia had recalled the gossip she heard in the camp from the past few days, she noticed that everything that had happened to Michael was odd.

They said that when he debuted in his first movie, he had an intimate scene with his co-star. When the movie was released, it became a box office hit, and they had went on to receive lots of awards. But not long after that, the actress took her own life due to depression. Till today, it was unconfirmed whether she had committed suicide or it was a homicide.

Taylor had been in the industry for more than 10 years and didn't have a lot of scandals, but there were a few with some female celebrities. One of them was when a reporter got him on camera going to a hotel with a female celebrity, discussing their script in the middle of the night. Not long after, the female celebrity broke her leg in a car accident.

There were others who had been embroiled in a scandal with him, but oddly, most of them were either involved in some kind of blood-shedding disaster, or they lost their fame, or were even banned and vanished from the public eyes.

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Word was that there was a wealthy girl who had set her sights on him. She even bought out the whole cinema for his movie, and had purposely gone to all the places that he had been to. Unfortunately, before she could even succeed, her family went bankrupt, both of her parents committed suicide and she disappeared.

There were many similar examples, but one thing was clear—all the women who came close to Taylor would not have a good ending!

As everyone recalled this curse, they were frustrated yet happy at the same time—if I can't have him, no one else can!

Sophia remembered when Joe sold her off to Michael, the middleman Daniel Levine said something along the lines that Michael was born to jinx his wife. If those who were weak went close to him, there would be no return. Even a female dog could go bald!

It was said that in the past, when Joe's business almost went bankrupt, he brought his children's horoscopes—including Sophia's—along with the Energy Map of his house, and went looking for metaphysics masters. Unfortunately, none of them could tell him the reason. But when Daniel took a look at Sophia's horoscope, he was sure that it was her horoscope that went wrong.

After selling Sophia off, Joe's company really took a turn for the better! This made him even more convinced that Sophia was his curse. These days, he didn't even ask about Sophia's wellbeing. He had completely forgotten about her existence, and even wished for her to vanish from the world.

The slumber talk ended late at night. Sophia tossed and turned, not able to fall asleep. She couldn't for the life of her understand why she married Michael.

Was it really because of my horoscope? Do people still believe in stuff like this?

I really don't care if Daniel lied to others, but why would he lie to one of his own?

She couldn't come up with a valid reason, and so she had to make one up. She told herself that Michael Fletcher was a sicko, a one-in-a-thousand kind of psycho! The things that were going through his head was surely not something an ordinary person would come up with!

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The training went on as usual the following day. With the final assessment approaching, everyone was working hard on the formation practice, wanting to get good results during the military parade.

This time, Sophia didn't try to get out of it with an illness. She practiced with the team earnestly, and had even volunteered to help out other students who still couldn't do well.

It was during their lunch break that Sophia asked Nathan out of the blue, "Tell me, why did your daddy choose me to be your mommy?" Before Nathan could say anything, she whispered to herself, "It must be because I'm pretty!"

She'd always thought that she looked pretty good, not to mention the plus point of having a lucky face. Back in the day, Richard's grades weren't the best.

Sophia, who was only in her junior year, had to tutor him, a senior. She even made him a record of his past mistakes. Before his exams, she was more nervous than him, supervising him throughout the night to make sure he memorized all of the questions.

Without her, Richard certainly wouldn't have been able to score such high marks.

When Nathan heard her muttering to herself, he rolled his eyes. He would never tell that he was the one who'd picked Sophia!

Michael had never thought about getting married, but he couldn't stand Daniel's nagging, so he pacified him by choosing a mother for Nathan.

Daniel had found him 20 to 30 single girls, all with compatible horoscopes, and most of them from an ordinary family. He even sent people to investigate their backgrounds to ensure that they had no problems before choosing the ten most suitable candidates for Michael.

Daniel wanted someone with a good horoscope, a nice personality and a good appearance. It would be great for her to have a not-too-low IQ as well.

When he showed Michael the girls' photos, Michael didn't even glance at them. He simply showed them to Nathan, asking him to choose himself a mother.

Nathan had chosen the frumpiest-looking one of the lot.

He would never forget the moment he saw Sophia's photo. Her face was bare, and her hair was tied up in a ponytail, her forehead full of baby hair. The circles underneath her eyes were dark, something she accumulated after long nights of studying.

Daniel had even specifically listed down the characteristics of each girl. It was written that Sophia was a star pupil with good grades, and was one of the best students in Bayside University.

Little did they know that when Nathan was making his decision, he simply thought that it would be great to have someone who could help him with his homework. Besides, a frumpy girl would disgust Michael, who had been trying to be his dad the whole time!

For the bidding, Michael had given him a total of 10 million. Daniel had made up excuses like him being strong enough to survive all hardships, to ensure that he

could keep the price down. This had earned him a good deal, and he only spent 80 thousand to buy Sophia, and kept all the change for himself.

All this while, Sophia had her head up in the clouds. She stopped abruptly when she noticed that Nathan didn't even care to entertain her, and so she continued with her lunch.

After lunch, Sophia asked again, "Is it true that your dad jinxed his wife?"

Nathan rolled his eyes again. "Do you really believe it?"

Sophia frowned but said nothing.

Does this mean that Michael Fletcher didn't jinx his wife?

Scratching her head, Sophia became more determined that her appearance was the reason why Michael had chosen her to be his wife.

Nathan was mature and smart for his age, and he knew certain things.

He was sure that Michael didn't jinx his wife.

That 40-ish depressed co-star who had taken her own life was trying to take advantage of the young Michael when they filmed the movie together. She had even told Michael directly about wanting to be his sugar mummy, threatening to end his career and ban him from the industry if he refused her offer.

But strangely, it was the actress who was banned, and all of her endorsement contracts were terminated. She knew she had offended some big shot, but she didn't know who it was. In the end, she was so terrified that she went into depression, and had killed herself by jumping off a building.

The other women who had been in a scandal with Michael were also after his fame. They had contacted reporters on purpose to take misleading photos, trying

to spread and hype up the situation. They clung onto Michael's popularity, but turned around and accused him. All of them deserved to be banned after all those things they did to Michael!

As for the wealthy girl who went bankrupt, Michael was extremely annoyed by her actions, so he did a background check on her family business. He later found out that the company had been manipulating their accounts to avoid paying taxes, so he had reported it.

Furthermore, what happened to that actress was all Harry's doing. He was trying to frame Michael into the wife-jinxer character as a joke.

Regarding Michael's two fiancées, Nathan had no idea about them since that was a long time ago. Michael had never mentioned them, not even for the sake of showing off to Daniel and Harry.

But overall, Nathan thought that he had done a good job in picking out his mom because she could play games with him.

While Nathan was looking satisfied, Sophia was in deep thought.

No matter what Michael's motive was, it wouldn't change the fact that he was a sicko and her life would still be tough in the future.

The training in the afternoon was brutal as usual, but everyone seemed to have gotten used to the intense training mode. They were even enjoying themselves, and had been anticipating the final military parade, hoping to get a high score and have a meal with Joel.

Throughout their afternoon break, the Siamese twins Xyla and Richard had been appearing in front of Sophia on purpose. Xyla bragged about her signed cap and her charming boyfriend, but Sophia continued to watch movies the whole time, murmuring a response at whatever Xyla said.

There had been a rumor spreading around the camp that Sophia and Richard had made up, but Xyla didn't confront Richard. She knew that if she asked, she would lose the first strike and would be no different from Sophia.

Although Richard had explained it to her personally, the fact remained that on that night, Sophia was indeed carried by a man into the infirmary, her body covered in hickeys. Besides Richard, who else would Sophia allow to give her love bites?

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Xyla knew that they had gotten back together secretly, but she wouldn't expose Richard's lies, much less quarrel with him like a crazy b*tch. She had to act better than before, so that Sophia had no way to come between them. Richard could only belong to her.

It was night, and their training was over. After Sophia cleaned herself up, with her hair still soaking wet, she went out for a walk in her slippers, letting her hair dry naturally. Nathan followed behind her wordlessly, and Sophia started to speak. "Son, say Mom."

Nathan answered in response, "Foolish."

"Son, how could you say that to me? You're going to regret it when I don't play games with you anymore."

Nathan stopped talking. When Sophia was out for training during the afternoon, he had sneaked into the game, and found out that her account had already become the greatest Monster in the Swordsman Game. This was the first time in ten years that this had happened in the game. The whole server had been hunting Sirius233 for years. Feeling guilty, Nathan had been trying his best to behave for the past two days.

At this moment, Sophia found a pavilion and sat down in it. Turning on the iPad, she continued to watch Michael's movie. Nathan also leaned over and joined. After all, it was his uncle. Even though on the outside it seemed like Nathan hated him, he still loved him deep down.

Shortly after, Xyla made her way over, still in her uniform. Her eyes seemed to shine in the night and her delicate facial features were unusually fine. Like a mischievous kid, she ran over when she saw Sophia, looking quite happy.

“Sophia, whatcha doin’?”

However, Sophia didn’t look up. “Watching a movie.”

The conversation stopped there after her sentence. But Xyla seemed to be in a chatty mood, and she kept on talking to Sophia, telling the latter about the dream she had of Michael last night as well as her engagement with Richard and also them wanting to study abroad. Sophia, on the other hand, only responded to her cursorily.

All of a sudden, Xyla called out, “Sophia, look! There’s a mosquito on my face! I’m so scared! Get it off of me! Quick!”

Sophia looked up and saw a small black dot on Xyla’s cheeky little face. The lighting in the shed was really bad, and Sophia couldn’t see clearly. It looked like a mosquito, so she raised her hand and slapped it.

Slap! A slap landed right on Xyla’s face. Immediately, the atmosphere changed. As though she had been wronged, Xyla stood up all of a sudden, hands covering her face with an unbelievable expression. Her voice trembled as she spoke, “H-How dare you hit me? Sophia, you—”

Raising her head, Sophia looked at her in speechless amazement. Holding onto her face, Xyla cried in distress. In the blink of an eye, her cries attracted the students nearby and they’d surrounded the pavilion, pointing and gossiping about them.

“How could you slap me? Don’t you know that I’ve actually been trying to befriend you this whole time?!” Xyla covered half of her face, tears rolling down her cheeks.

There were a lot of students who were walking nearby. In fact, a while ago, they had seen Xyla going into the pavilion where Sophia was in, and because both of them were famous figures, everyone had been paying attention to what was happening. Although they couldn't hear them speak, some did see Sophia slapping Xyla; the sound was rather loud, after all. In the blink of an eye, everyone whispered excitedly.

"Oh my God, a live scene of the lover confronting the girlfriend! How thrilling!"

"Tsk, that smack was definitely on point!"

"I wonder why she hates her so much. Xyla's face is all red!"

Mixed with all the voices, Xyla's cries attracted more and more spectators, who surrounded and judged them. Sophia's expression turned cold, and she knew that no one would believe her if she said that she was only helping Xyla to kill the mosquito.

Nathan was wearing the same expression; he didn't know what to say. He merely squeezed the little frog in his pocket, trying to express his loss of words. "Ribbit."

Finally, Richard had made it to the scene. He cut through the crowd in a hurry and shouted anxiously, "Xyla!"

"Richard!" Covering her face, Xyla ran toward him. As soon as he appeared, he hugged Xyla and looked at her. Her eyes were puffy, and coupled with the red slap mark on her delicate face made her look even more pitiful.

Xyla sobbed and leaned into Richard's embrace. "Richard, she hit me!"

Looking at the slap mark, Richard frowned and looked at Sophia with accusing eyes. She's still as impulsive as ever! Richard recalled that one time where there had been a misunderstanding between them, Sophia kept on insisting that he was in a relationship with Xyla. Out of anger, she had slapped Xyla in the face, and Xyla cried innocently too. That was the first time he had thought that Sophia

was unreasonable, and it was also the very first time he felt a strong desire to protect Xyla. A year later, he did not expect Sophia to still be so unreasonable. But right now, his responsibility was to protect Xyla.

Without hesitating, Richard shoved Xyla behind him and scolded, “Sophia Edwards, what are you doing? Why are you always messing with Xyla? If you’ve got a problem, come to me! Just leave her be!”

In addition to that, Xyla sniffled. “Richard,” she pleaded.

Seeing that, Sophia rolled her eyes. Go on, continue with the acting. All of a sudden, it occurred to her that Xyla was an acting major, and this was literally her profession!

Suddenly, out of nowhere, Faye had appeared, just in time for the drama. Standing close, she mocked, “Wow, that slap was hard! Don’t you feel ashamed? How dare you, a measly lover, hit others?”

Everyone was looking at Sophia with contempt and disappointment. She’s just a lover. Wasn’t she trying to get herself into trouble messing with the girlfriend? After all, Xyla had Huffs Technology backing her, but Sophia had nothing. She was just an ordinary girl without a penny to her name. Even Richard knew who he should choose. Looking at the situation, it seemed like Richard had to make his choice by today. Choosing one would mean that he would have to give up on the other one completely. Looking at the circumstance, Richard would obviously choose the pitiful-looking Xyla.

With just one of Xyla’s acts, Richard and Sophia were immediately standing on opposite sides. Xyla had kicked the lover out from her relationship with Richard effortlessly! What a bad*ss! This could be written into the guidebook of how to treat lovers!

Everyone was so excited that they even wanted to broadcast the event live on their phone, but unfortunately for them, all of their phones were confiscated.

Her expression not changing, Sophia said calmly, "I didn't hit her."

Richard was originally out on a walk with Xyla, but he had been caught up when he went to get them some drinks. He had seen Xyla walk in Sophia's direction, and saw Sophia slapping Xyla with his own eyes. Vision going red, he reproached, "Why are you still trying to deny it? I saw you hitting her with my own eyes! How could you be so evil?"

Still giving the same answer, Sophia repeated, "I didn't hit her."

Xyla tugged at Richard and suggested, "We should go now, Richard. It won't look good on her if we continue with this. Let's go."

Richard was impressed by Xyla's kindness; his girlfriend was always so caring. Even now, she was still trying to help Sophia! And because of that, Richard refused to leave. "If you don't apologize to Xyla, don't you even think about leaving here today!"

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Sophia stood there with an unreadable expression, her arms crossed. She then laughed lightly, "You're saying that I slapped Xyla? How? Where's the mark? What proof do you have?"

Still sobbing, Xyla stepped out from behind Richard. Pointing at the slap mark on her face, she cried, "Just admit that you slapped me!"

That was merely a gentle slap. Sophia could easily do the same thing on her thigh and it would also take a while for it to fade.

With her tears running down her cheeks, Xyla rushed and grabbed at Sophia. "I deserve this. I was the one who came between the both of you. There's nothing wrong with you hating me. If hitting me makes you feel better, do it! Just please stop going after the Harpers and Richard!"

The situation seemed familiar. Sophia remembered that when their affair was exposed, Xyla was also playing the victim card. Back then, Sophia was so mad that she couldn't help herself from slapping Xyla. However, times had changed, and she was no longer the same old Sophia. Nothing was stopping her from hitting Xyla when she had asked her to do so willingly.

Raising her palm, Sophia struck her. This time, she wasn't using the same force she'd used to kill the mosquito. Instead, it was an extremely hard and open-palmed blow. Sophia used everything she'd learned from Gwen, making sure to smack Xyla until she bled.

Whoosh! A loud, piercing noise came along with that one slap. Everyone stood still, shocked for a whole second. In that second itself, Sophia slapped Xyla again with the other palm. Only now were the slap marks well balanced.

Xyla was feeling dizzy after the two slaps, and she tasted blood in her mouth and nose. Covering both of her cheeks, she looked at Sophia unbelievably. Bewildered, she staggered backward, falling into Richard's arms. This time, she wasn't pretending. She genuinely felt weak, as if the slap had given her a concussion.

After a brief silence, Richard broke into a shout, "Sophia Edwards!"

Xyla's expression was blank. She didn't react, not until she tasted the blood flowing from her mouth and bleeding through her nose. Then, she wailed, burying her face into Richard's chest.

Richard's eyes glowed with twin blazes as he held Xyla, and he looked like he wanted to skin Sophia alive. Gritting his teeth in anger, he pointed at Sophia. "Sophia Edwards, I never knew that you were this sort of person!"

Much to his bewilderment, Sophia answered confidently, "What's wrong? Doesn't she deserve the slap? How about you tell me. When did we break up? And when did you and Xyla get together? If you're bold enough to cheat on me, shouldn't you let your ex-girlfriend get some revenge from your lover here?"

Feeling guilty, Richard looked at her, not knowing how to reply. Before breaking up with Sophia, he'd been flirting with Xyla. After the pregnancy scare, Xyla had been staying by his side and supporting him. Naturally, they got together, way before he and Sophia went their separate ways.

Richard clenched his fists, looking enraged. "It was all my fault. If you're still blaming me, just let it all out on me! This is on me!"

Sophia shook her head. "I wanted to hit you too, but I knew you would retaliate."

This hit a chord, and Richard said, “Come on then. Hit me! Punch me! I’m the one who wronged you! Even if you beat me to death, I won’t fight back!”

“You asked for it!” Sophia snapped. With that, she marched forward, pulling Xyla out of his arms. Everyone thought that Sophia was going to throw herself into Richard’s arms and French kiss him, but they were all caught off guard when she suddenly kicked him in the stomach!

The atmosphere changed in a flash—a school drama had suddenly turned into an action movie! Everyone stood looking at them in shock. Sophia struck out with her foot, kicking Richard down, and he rolled twice before coming to a stop. Before he could respond, he was met with Sophia’s simultaneous punches and kicks.

Under her leadership, Company 49 had managed to feast on high-end buffets everyday. Her physical strength was shocking; even though she was only wearing a pair of slippers, her force was no joke. Richard was screaming the whole while; the most brilliant student in the university was losing his pride in front of everyone.

But of course, he couldn’t just stay down and do nothing. He curled up his fist, ready to fight back. Immediately, Sophia widened her eyes and warned, “What happened to saying that this is what you owe me, and wanting me to hit you as I wished? Are you trying to go against your own words in front of everyone?”

Richard grunted, but didn’t say anything in the end. If he fought back, he would be going back on his words. While he was still in a state of confusion, Sophia removed her slippers and slammed his bruised face with it.

The sound resonated in the air, and those surrounding them wanted to help, but were frightened away by Sophia’s threatening expression.

“Are you guys trying to poke your nose into our business?”

The bystanders held back, and could only watch as Sophia punched Richard vigorously. True to his word, he did not fight back. Xyla, on the other hand, was dumbfounded. She crawled over, wanting to help him, but Sophia turned around immediately and slapped her. "Stay out of this!"

The students almost cheered at that. They had just realized that Sophia was the one who was being cheated. As it turned out, it was Xyla who was the lover! Sophia is really something; she even dared to punch a man!

The slapping sound from skin on skin and slippers were coming non-stop. Accompanied by Xyla's high-pitched scream and Richard's muffled grunts, the camp was unusually energetic tonight.

The hitting continued until the drill instructors had to come over and stop Sophia. At that point, Richard was bruised all over, and Xyla's face was covered with slap marks. The couple's faces were so swollen that they were beyond recognition. As a result, all of them were brought to the general's office, and Joel would be questioning them personally. Even the commanders and company commanders were demanded to be present.

Meanwhile in the general's office, the lot of them stood neatly in two rows. The first row consisted of both of the parties involved and their respective commanders and drill instructors, while the second row was made up of the innocent bystanders led by Faye.

Sophia, who was standing in the first row, stood upright in standard military posture and looked straight ahead. She was confident, and did not feel an ounce of guilt even after beating someone up. Standing right beside her were Xyla and Richard. Earlier on, Xyla had been sent to the infirmary for examination. Other than having one of her teeth loosened from the fight, she was fine. But her cheeks were still swollen like a balloon, even after being treated by medication. Meanwhile, Richard had a bruised face, and it was covered with marks from Sophia's slippers, looking even more pitiful.

The atmosphere was so oppressing that one could even hear a pin drop. While everyone was on edge waiting for Joel's punishment, Nathan was the only one sitting to one side, his legs swinging in excitement.

As usual, Joel was looking flawless in his neatly pressed uniform, reviewing some documents with his head held low, as if no one was in the room. It seemed like this whole group of people were being punished to stand at attention.

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They stood like that for half an hour. The whole time, the office was deathly quiet. Even a crying Xyla dared not make a sound. There was a storm brewing in the office, and right in the center of the storm was Joel Fletcher.

It was calm before the storm, and the atmosphere made everyone breathless. The air conditioning had not been turned on, and everyone was sweating. However, no one dared to breathe too hard, much less wipe their sweat.

Seeing that it was already ten thirty, Joel finally flung the file in his hand, and it landed on the table with a smack. Everyone jerked to attention, their body strung tight with tension.

Joel stood up with a predatory gaze, and something shifted in the air. It was as if there was an invisible energy wave, and it made everyone stand up straighter subconsciously.

Joel marched up to the group, boots thudding on the floor with force. Everyone felt the vibrations down to their bones, and some were even shaking in fear.

“What the h*ll happened?” Joel looked distant and untouchable, and his voice was unbearably cold. “The one who got beaten up speaks first,” he said in a cold voice, pointing at Richard.

Richard stepped forward and pointed at Sophia. “She started it; she hit my girlfriend first, and when I went to stop her, she beat me up!” Richard had had enough of Sophia being unreasonable. She had done so many repugnant things in order to get everyone’s attention, and he wanted her to be expelled immediately from the barracks.

Joel did not respond, but looked at Xyla and asked, "What about you?"

Tears running down her face, Xyla said, "She hit me first, and when Richard tried to save me, she even hit Richard."

Joel remained quiet, pacing in front of three for two whole laps. The brim of his military cap cast a shadow which covered his whole face, but they could still see a pair of piercing eyes staring at them.

Looking at Sophia, Joel finally asked, "Did you hit them?"

"Yes, sir. It was me who hit them." In a strong voice, Sophia replied in accordance with the rules of the barracks.

Joel's face was expressionless, but his voice carried a hint of anger. "Reason?"

Sophia looked at him straight in the eye and said, "This is our private matter. These two were feeling guilty, and begged me to hit them."

Everything went still for a few seconds. It was Quinton Clark who broke the silence by laughing out loud. The rest couldn't bring themselves to laugh, as the general was staring at them like a tiger would its prey.

Richard was the first to protest. "General, this is not what happened. How can someone be so stupid as to let others beat them up? It was Sophia who started it! If you don't believe me, you can ask everyone present. They saw clearly what Sophia had done!"

The others nodded in agreement. Between a commoner and a rich student, they were naturally biased in favor of the latter. They just wanted the interrogation to end and see the guilty party punished, so that they could quickly head back for a rest.

That being said, they despised Richard for pushing the blame upon someone else, when it was indeed him who offered to let Sophia hit him.

Faye added in her two cents and said, “Yes, General, it was Sophia that started it by hitting Xyla and Richard! The beatings were so violent and scary that our hearts are still pumping up till now.”

Faye thought that Joel would take the opportunity to check her out, but he only spared her a brief glance. Then, his eyes surveyed those in front of him, only to return to stare at the three involved. He looked at the bruised Richard and composed Sophia before asking coldly, “You, a man, were hit by a girl?”

Richard choked and did not know how to answer. He was 180 cm, while Sophia was only 160 cm. In comparison, he looked tall and big, while Sophia was petite and small. It seemed unbelievable that she could beat him up.

Toward the end of the beating, he started to panic and wanted to fight back, but found that he simply couldn't go against Sophia's brute force! Back in high school, she was a part-time courier in the girls dormitory, carrying two buckets of water up seven or eight floors, and was still able to walk fast!

A brawl in the barracks was a serious offense, and it could result in being expelled from the military training course. At that moment, Xyla couldn't stop herself from adding, “Richard and Sophia have a past, and he wanted to go soft on her, but she ruthlessly hit him!”

Joel looked at the three of them and asked, “What past?”

Richard opened his mouth to speak, but was stopped by Joel's glare. “Shut up. Let her speak.” He was referring to Sophia.

Richard closed his mouth, but if Sophia dared to talk nonsense, he would certainly refute.

“Yes general. Richard used to be my boyfriend, but he cheated on me and hooked up with Xyla Huff. These two felt guilty, so they voluntarily let me beat them up, to let their conscience feel a little better,” Sophia answered with a straight face.

“Pfft!” Quinton sputtered and started laughing again.

Richard immediately retorted, “We do have a past, but Xyla and I have never asked her to hit us!”

Xyla also vowed, “How could we be stupid enough to voluntarily let others hit us? Sophia has always held a grudge against us, trying to cause us trouble all the time. This time, she even beat us up! People like her staying in the barracks will surely cause lots of trouble!”

There was no mobile phone in the barracks, so there was no video or audio evidence. The students present already knew deep down which side they were going to stand on. Sophia will not get away with beating people up!

Joel looked at Richard and Xyla doubtfully. “Is this true?”

Richard nodded and answered, “I swear by my personality; what I said is true!”

Xyla also nodded in agreement. “I vouch for it personally; it was really Sophia who started it!” We did not fight back because we wanted to discuss it calmly, but she started to hit us even harder!”

All of a sudden, a voice boomed from a corner. “It was all my fault. If you’re still blaming me, just let it all out on me! This is on me!”

“Come on then. Hit me! Punch me! I’m the one who wronged you! Even if you beat me to death, I won’t fight back!”

Isn’t that Richard’s voice? Everyone looked at that corner and saw Nathan holding an iPad, playing a video with the audio turned up loud enough for everyone to hear. He swiped to another video, and this time it was Xyla’s voice which rang out.

“I deserve this. I was the one who came between the both of you. There’s nothing wrong with you hating me. If hitting me makes you feel better, do it! Just please stop going after the Harpers and Richard!”