

## Chapter 5 Variety Show Premiere

Upon returning to her apartment, Simone logged into her Facebook account and casually changed the password. Previously, Titus had been managing her account but didn't pay much attention to it, only posting once every one or two months.

Upon opening the comment section, Simone wasn't surprised to find mostly negative comments. Most of the people criticizing her were fans of Leon and Aaron.

There was an instance when she and Leon went out for a meal, and the paparazzi exposed them before revealing their childhood connection.

As a result, his fans began insulting her, accusing her of riding on his popularity and suggesting that she shouldn't have inappropriate thoughts about him because she was out of his league. This was all while their relationship was still kept private; otherwise, she would likely have faced even harsher criticism.

Titus also didn't arrange for any public relations assistance for her and turned down her request to do so. It was also at this point that she started considering leaving Gray Entertainment.

Regarding these fans and comments, Leon simply ignored them and didn't provide any explanations. In fact, he even suggested that she might not be suitable for the entertainment industry and should consider leaving, which led to a heated argument between them.

In hindsight, Simone found it quite amusing that this was the boyfriend she had known since childhood. He had stood by and watched her being insulted and attacked without offering any explanations or support. By not explaining, it almost seemed like he was confirming the accusations that she was using his popularity for her own gain.

As for Aaron, there was an incident where he asked her to accompany him to a dance practice, which was secretly recorded by the paparazzi. This resulted in his fans criticizing her, accusing her of shamelessly trying to seduce and attach herself to Aaron.

They insulted her by calling her a sl\*t who harbored a desire for Leon and tried to win over Aaron at the same time. She even trended on social media because of this incident. Although she asked Aaron to explain, he insisted that the truth would speak for itself and that providing explanations would only make things worse.

He believed that their relationship didn't need justification in the eyes of the world. Similarly, Titus also didn't arrange for the public relations team to clarify. With both brothers taking no action, she realized it wasn't worth trying to explain herself, understanding that responding to the situation would likely lead to more criticism and make things worse.

Not long after, Titus took Jodie to the mall for some shopping and carried her bags, paying for her expenses using his card. Then, someone took a photo of them and posted it on the Internet.

The Gray brothers and Jodie used their mother's maiden name, Johnston, instead of Gray, in the entertainment industry. Since there were quite a few celebrities, managers, and directors with the last name Johnston, not many people knew about their true identities.

Consequently, Jodie was subjected to criticism by Aaron's fans this time as well. However, unlike previous incidents, he decided not to use the 'let the truth speak for itself' approach. Instead, he posted a message on social media, where he confronted the people insulting Jodie and openly revealed their sibling relationship.

This time, though, Titus immediately arranged for their public relations team to address the situation. They not only clarified the relationship between Aaron and Jodie but also crafted a narrative that emphasized their deep sibling bond.

Simone felt increasingly distant and detached from Aaron and Titus when she recalled these events from her past life, and it was because of this that she decided to leave the family and Gray Entertainment. However, before she could realize this decision, she was kidnapped and killed.

Soon, the show's official announcement was posted on Facebook. Simone deleted all the Facebook posts that Titus had uploaded and reshared the official announcement of the variety show. As expected, the comments on Facebook were filled with curiosity and speculation about the two mysterious male guests and excitement about Aaron's transformation into a special guest. There were also a lot of negative comments directed at her.

'What? Simone is one of the female guests? Is the production team playing with us?'

'Among these guests, she has the lowest popularity and influence. I don't understand why the production team invited her.'

'Most likely, she got the spot through connections, like having a financial backer behind her.'

'Exactly, her specialty is playing relationships.'

'OMG! She's not here to chase after my Aero, is she?' Aaron's fans affectionately called him Aero.

'I bet she'll cling to Aero during the show and use his popularity for attention.'

'In that case, it's disgusting. Poor Aero specifically brought her little sister to participate in this variety show. I pray that she doesn't target Aero.'

'I have no issues with the other guests, but I don't like Simone at all.'

'She's quite attractive. A year ago, her performance as the second female lead impressed me. I just don't understand how she didn't become famous.'

'In the past year, she hasn't been active in the industry at all. It seems like she's focused on getting close to the top actors and film stars. How can she become famous that way?'

'Who knows if her face is natural or if it's due to heavy filters in her photos and videos? I haven't seen her without makeup.'

'Aero, hang in there. Don't let her affect you. Just take care of your elegant sister.'

In addition to the continued criticism of Simone, there were also praises for Jodie. The comments were calling her an angel, a goddess, and so on.

Immediately, Simone knew this was a marketing strategy set up by the marketing team for Jodie to create a specific image for her. When ordinary people saw these comments, they couldn't help but become curious about Jodie and how angelic or beautiful she was. Naturally, when the show started, they would pay more attention to her.

It was the same for Simone, but her image was negative.

She didn't pay attention to the negative comments and criticism. With her current popularity and status, responding would only make things worse and harm her public image. In other words, she would have to rely on her performance on the variety show to change the audience's perception and make them like her. One's status and influence depended on their popularity and talent.

After closing Facebook, Simone checked the detailed information of the other guests. In the following days, she focused on recuperating and preparing for the upcoming variety show. During this time, Leon tried to contact her through someone else's phone.

However, as soon as she heard his voice, she immediately hung up. Aaron, too, reached out to her, but she responded by blocking and cutting all contact.

One week later, the variety show 'Starting from Scratch' premiered. It was the first reality show set in the great outdoors, where the production team claimed they wouldn't use any beauty filters or scripts, aiming to create a genuine experience.

The guests arrived at the recording location from different cities. It was a remote mountain village, and it took over five hours to travel from the city to the county and then to the village.

Simone was the first to arrive at the location. As her car halted, the live broadcast officially began.

This variety show garnered significant attention due to its extensive pre-release promotion, renowned director, and intriguing premise of two mysterious guests and an extraordinary sibling duo. As soon as the live broadcast commenced, the viewer count rapidly soared, quickly surpassing one million.

Simone possessed delicate features, porcelain-like fair skin, and a slender, tall figure. On that day, she donned a cherry blossom pink sportswear outfit, with light makeup and her hair tied in a ponytail. She exuded a youthful, vibrant, and sunny aura.

As the camera zoomed in, the audience caught a glimpse of her flashing a smile at the lens.

"Oh no, not her! I don't want to see her."

"They probably arranged it based on popularity, and she has the lowest status. The impressive guests are the main attraction."

"I don't want to watch her. I want to see Aero and his sister."

"Somebody like her shouldn't even be participating."

"Ah! There are no beauty filters, and Simone's looks are truly stunning. She's so camera-ready."

"Simone has captured my heart with her beauty."

Most of Simone's fans were devoted to her, and after the official announcement of the show, they eagerly tuned in to watch the live stream. They were now enthusiastically commenting and swooning in front of their screens.

"I don't know much else, but her beauty is undeniable."

"I've become captivated by this young lady's looks. As long as she doesn't cause trouble on the show, I'll be a fan of hers from now on."

Apart from Jodie and Aaron's fans, supporters of the other guests and casual viewers were also mesmerized by Simone's beauty. Their initial impression was that this young lady was exceptionally beautiful.

Following Simone's arrival, the second, third, and fourth cars began to arrive. Popular singer Keira Pearson, B-list actress Leyla Morse, and respected actor Eric Moon stepped out one by one.

Keira was dressed in a casual sportswear brand outfit, while Leyla wore an elegant long dress. Eric exuded a clean and graceful aura, and after alighting from the car, he greeted the three female guests with a warm smile.

Simone reciprocated the greeting with a polite gesture, smiling and acknowledging the other two female guests. Keira responded with a smile and even engaged Simone in a brief conversation. Although Leyla greeted Simone with a smile, she carried an air of indifference and superiority.

Soon, another car arrived.