

## Versatile Superstar: Rise In Hollywood Chapter 2

As Aiden stepped onto the stage, countless thoughts flooded through his mind.

Would he be able to pass the preliminary round? Was he just making a mistake? What if he made a fool of himself? What if he got trending on youtube for the wrong reason?

But with a shake of his head, he settled his mind. There was no use thinking about all of that, and before he knew it, he was standing at the centre of the stage.

The judges were in front of him, analysing his face and body language while a camera was zooming in on him.

“So, tell us a little about yourself.”

A bald man who looked a little intimidating said. He was one of the three judges, Andrew Maxfield.

Although he is working as a judge now, he used to be a famous singer about two decades ago. However, his career had slowly dwindled (along with his hair), and he turned his persona as more of a coach and was also a few of the renowned reality TV show judges.

“I am Aiden Silvereye. I was born in the states but was brought up in India. I’ve been living in New York for more than a year now.”

He tried to speak calmly, but anyone would notice a trace of nervousness in his voice.

“Oh, is one of your parents from India? And you came here to become a singer?”

A white man with wrinkles on his forehead, sitting next to Andrew, asked. Aiden recalled the information he knew about him as he thought of a proper answer.

Steven McDonald – He was a record producer and one of the creators of X-Star. In fact, one of the prizes for winning the competition was a contract deal with Steven’s record label Cyco Media.

Undoubtedly for every contestant, he was the judge to impress.

“Yes, my mother is indian. And I came here looking for opportunities. Though, I’m just driving a taxi and working at a bar which obviously wasn’t what I was looking forward to.”

His words made the third judge, Alyssa Williams, chuckle.

She was a model and a songwriter who had worked with major record labels and singers, including boy bands and pop stars.

“New York is treating you pretty rough, I see.”

“It certainly isn’t cheap.”

Steven smiled hearing that response..

Aiden has a soft but charming voice that makes people pay attention to him. Moreover, his looks were certainly different from the usual contestants, but he was still handsome.

At the same time, his story of coming from a different country was marketable.

However, this only stood if he had more than just looks. If he didn’t have the necessary skills, he was pretty much useless.

“Okay, let’s start then.”

Every contestant had three minutes to sing a song. Most of them would sing a famous song or something that they could sing well.

Some people would even sing a song of one of the judges.

If they could get the judges interested in them, they could easily pass this round.

“What song are you going to sing?”

“It will be my original.”

Andrew smiled, hearing that the song was an original.

Throughout his career, he had composed some of his famous songs and was always interested in hearing raw originals from contestants.

Though, only some of these songs are any good. Most would just sound weird, or the lyrics wouldn’t make sense.

“What is the name of your song?” Alyssa asked with a tilt of her head.

“I can’t seem to forget.”

“That’s a nice name.”

As she nodded, Aiden put his guitar in his hands and strummed it lightly. A soft melody instantly attracted everyone’s attention.

He took a deep breath and prepared himself. As he thought about the song in his mind, he was nervous. It was inevitable, but he didn't have time to process the nervousness.

Before he knew it, the thousand people in the audience had their attention on him, waiting intently to see how his voice would be.

Steven had closed his eyes upon hearing that melody. It was calm, slow and easy on the ears.

Aiden suddenly felt that that instant seemed like a great way to start a song.

"Let's stop what we are doing and breathe."

"We need room to just live."

"All we were was just a big disguise."

"Filled with all sorts of compromise."

As the first verse entered the judge's ears, they couldn't help but think that Aiden's voice was really sweet.

His diction was clear, and he sang the lyrics in a way that left a sweet aftertaste.

Alyssa was already able to picture a couple with the guy writing this song for his girlfriend. Maybe a failed relationship?

"All the troubles that I put to bed."

"Rising up inside my head."

"You are not the one I was looking for, not the one who fits the shoes."

"Maybe, it was different a while ago or I was just scared to lose."

The pace picked up as the song went on. He started strumming on his guitar faster as he slowly raised the song's pitch.

It was still low to medium pitch, so it was easy for him to sing it, significantly lowering the chance of any mistake.

“I can’t seem to forget the... morning coffee with you.”

“I can’t seem to forget the evening sunshine passing through...”

He made his voice linger through the words in the chorus to make a lasting impression.

The guitar in his hands kept releasing the required melody, and with his words, Aiden was telling of the regrets of a failed relationship.

“When I see you now, I see the same shades I left in you.”

“But I stop myself cause you are now with someone new.”

He tried his best to bestow emotions on his words. Without them, the song was meaningless, and the regrets seemed empty.

It was here his special ability, ‘Empathy’ came into play.

Although no one but him could see it, a white light was coming out of his body, enveloping the area in front of him.

This white light was his ability to weave his emotions into the surroundings and attract people to his voice.

The judges were the most affected when they felt the emotions of regret from his song. They couldn’t help but think about the various regretful things they did in their relationships.

“I can’t seem to forget the... morning coffee with you.”

“I can’t seem to forget the evening sunshine passing through...”

“I can’t seem to forget the songs I wrote for you...”

As the song neared the end, he slowed the tempo down. In this part, he needed to lower the pitch slowly while keeping up with the rhythm.

It was not an easy thing to do, but Aiden had practised it many times.

One of the reasons why he was able to sing despite being nervous was because he had practised it so many times that his body and mind had gotten used to playing the song.

[Song name: I can't seem to forget

Composer: Aiden [Original]

Proficiency: 92%

-As a bonus for being the composer of the song, it is easier to increase proficiency.]

The System displayed information about the song in front of him on a transparent screen.

Even though it was his own song, his proficiency in it wasn't at 100%.

But it was good enough for the judges to appreciate his talent. When he sang the last line, he saw the judges smiling.

It looked like they were pretty content with the performance.

"I was quite surprised if I'm being honest." Alyssa began first. "We have heard some originals today, and they weren't that good. Most of them lacked the rhythm, and the lyrics were just jumbled together, turned meaningless in an attempt to rhyme."

Aiden wasn't the only contestant who had thought of using an original to impress the judges. There were many others, too, and it was always one of the riskiest methods.

"But your song was different. It has a cliché but a relatable story that you were trying to portray, and those emotions really stuck with me. I loved your singing as well. So it's a Yes from me!"

Aiden smiled, getting a 'Yes' from her. He only needed two judges to give him a 'Yes' out of three to pass the round.

Next was Andrew.

"There's not much to say. You have a very charming voice, and there's obviously something special in you. At least that's what I felt during your performance. As for your

original, I feel like it would work better if you changed the composition a little. You can do a lot with it to make it better.”

“I understand.”

“You are a talented musician and exactly the reason why this show exists. So it’s a ‘Yes’ from me too!”

With that, Aiden passed the preliminary round. He felt excited thinking about it, but Steven had still not spoken yet.

He shifted his eyes towards the latter as he gave back a cheeky smile.

“You know, sometimes there are singers that come that make me want to cheer for them. You are the first one of this kind this year. It’s a ‘Yes’ from me too!”

Aiden pumped his fist in the air after hearing that. It was a perfect start for him.

“Just keep improving, and I’m sure you will go a long way.”

“Thank you!”

After saying that, Aiden bowed a little and left the stage. As he exited the stage, the judges began to discuss among themselves in a lowered tone.

“Do you really think he will go a long way?”

Alyssa asked Steven, knowing that he was rarely interested in contestants.

“Maybe. Though, he needs to improve a lot. Thanks to his original song and his familiarity with it and his ability to showcase it, this round was easy for him, but if he doesn’t improve himself, he will fall behind quickly.”

“Well, the competition this year is very intense.”

Andrew said, humming Aiden’s song. It was truly a catchy melody.

“Let’s hope he goes a long way. He had the potential to be our find from this season.”

Tip: You can use left, right, A and D keyboard keys to browse between chapters.