

## Versatile Superstar: Rise In Hollywood Chapter 23

“Dude, she’s still giving you that death look. If looks could kill, I feel like I would be standing in your funeral.”

Jackson whispered to Aiden.

They were currently sitting in the lounge area, waiting for a staff member to call them for a short interview before the next round.

“I don’t even know why she’s so angry? I should be more offended by that edited clip. Everyone thinks I have a crush on her now.”

Aiden sighed, glancing toward Rachel, who had a constant frown on her face. Since last night, they had not really talked with each other, and even if he wanted to talk to her about the last episode, he didn’t know how to approach her.

“I think it’s because it affected her image. Something like that. I mean, people are talking about her now, so she obviously won’t feel good, especially when she was dragged in.”

Jackson gave out his reasoning, and Aiden agreed with it. Though, if he was being honest, it wasn’t his fault either, but Rachel was surely going to think of him as guilty.

“Uh, I will talk to her when I get the time. It’s better to clear up any misunderstandings.”

Aiden felt Rachel’s reaction was natural. But his anger was directed towards Marlo and the program team, who had edited his interview in this way.

If they had not edited it, there would have been no issue.

‘I feel like punching Marlo in the face.’

Even his uncle had called him to ask if there was something between him and Rachel, as social media had already started to consider something brewing between them. Thankfully, he had no girlfriend, or he would have been in way worse trouble.

“Aiden Silvereye, go in.”

A staff member suddenly walked out of the door on the side and told him to go into the interview room. He stood up and followed him to the interview room.

Marlo was sitting alone in the room, reading a file that had a list of questions on it. A cameraman was shooting everything from the side.

As Aiden sat down on the seat in front of him, Marlo gave out a sheepish smile.

“How are you feeling?”

“Very bad. Thanks to you.” Aiden simply replied, trying to get straight to the point.

“What did I do now?”

“Don’t play innocent. You know what’s going on with social media. The clip was clearly edited, but people don’t know that. They think I have a crush on Rachel for no reason. I obviously won’t be good because of all that.”

Marlo made an awkward smile. He knew Aiden was going to be angry about this. The program team had edited it to add some spice to the program, but it somehow got out of proportion.

Knowing that he can’t just ignore it, Marlo answered.

“Look, I’m sorry. I understand what you are going through but trust me, this went worse than I thought. I agreed to add it, thinking it might come in handy to make people discuss a topic related to X-Star. After all, people love to gossip, but this went way out of proportion.”

“How?”

“Because of many things. One of them is that you and Rachel have gotten a small following, so those fans talked a lot about this. Normally, it would have died down, but your second-round performance made you very popular. You should check the MeTube channel of X-Star if you have not.”

Aiden knew that his group’s video performing in the second round had already gotten 800k views on MeTube. It would soon cross 1 million from the way it was going.

“That performance made people talk more about the clip at the end, spreading it. I’m sorry, but we did it for the show, and you don’t really have a say in it.”

Aiden meekly nodded his head, hearing that. Marlo’s words suddenly made him realise that he didn’t really contain any power as a contestant.

The program team can edit him however they like, and he won’t be able to do anything just because he was at the bottom of the bottom.

‘For now, I can do nothing aside from being very careful in what I say.’

He thought in his mind, and although he felt all sorts of emotions, he knew the reality of life. His career was just starting, and it would be a while before he got any power to do stuff.

In the end, Marlo was at least answering his questions. He was sure that if it was someone else, they wouldn't even give him an answer.

"I, I understand. Let's get on with the interview."

Aiden said with a conflicted expression. Sighing, Marlo nodded, and another interview started.

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"The topic for the next round is a battle between two contestants. You will be singing the same song and competing against each other. Only one contestant will go ahead while the other will be face elimination."

Alyssa announced the next round's theme with a grin on her face, and every contestant glanced around. They have already seen enough of the others that they know who would be a tough singer to beat. P.A.N.D.A N.O.V.E.L

Pairing with someone like Rachel or Cameron would be the endgame for most contestants.

"To know who's gonna be battling with who, we will let the contestants choose for themselves." The contestants' eyes shined, but she wasn't finished speaking. "By that, I mean every contestant would pick out the name of the one he or she would be battling."

A staff member came out with a glass jar as she said that. Aiden was able to see small pieces of paper in the jar. They have the contestants' names written on them.

"We will name a contestant, and he would come here and take out a chit."

Andrew said and looked around the room before his eyes locked onto one contestant.

"Jackson, you go first."

"Okay."

With hesitant steps, Jackson walked toward the glass jar. Everyone's eyes landed on his back as he put his hand inside the jar and took out a chit.

'Please, someone easy.'

He prayed in his mind and passed the chit to Alyssa, who opened it up with a big smile that looked a bit mocking.

"Jackson, the contestant you will be facing, would be... Archie Fox."

Alyssa looked at a guy with brown hair who was standing in the corner. Aiden checked his skill interface and found out that he was also in Basic Grade 7.

‘Jackson has a pretty big plot armour.’

PANDA novel He thought as the judges started calling out some other contestants. After Jackson, Cameron coincidentally got paired with Michelle’s group Symphony.

Aiden didn’t know how it would pan out as although they weren’t a match for Cameron individually, the group had given some good performances.

Aside from that, Emily was paired against Elon Husk, a science student more interested in space travel, trying out his singing skills. He was not bad, but Aiden thought Emily would beat him.

“Aiden, go ahead.”

Steven suddenly took his name, and he nodded his head.

“Uh, okay.”

He walked to the glass jar and took out a chit. Looking it up, he sighed a bit.

He didn’t know who he would pick out, but he sure hoped it wasn’t someone he couldn’t beat. Otherwise, he won’t know what to do.

“Bring that chit to me.”

“Yeah.”

He passed it to Steven, who opened it up, and for a second, his eyes looked a bit surprised. Then, glancing at Aiden, he slowly read out the name that was written on the chit.

“Rachel Rose.”

Aiden felt like Steven was an executioner announcing that he would be sentenced to death when he heard that name from his mouth. Then, glancing back, he saw that Rachel looked a bit shocked too.

Her face hardened when her eyes met his, and she glared at him.

‘This is going to be very awkward.’

Aiden thought, trying hard not to frown. For a second, he thought that the chits were fabricated to get him and Rachel as a pair, but it didn’t seem possible.

In the end, it was just his luck.

He could even imagine a deity in the skies with a beer bottle in his hand, watching all this and laughing at him.

'How exactly am I going to beat her...'

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//DreamNote//

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PS. Check creator's thought for mass release goals

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