

Versatile Superstar: Rise In Hollywood Chapter 26

He was eliminated!

Aiden always knew this day was going to come. His current level wasn't enough to reach the finals. Earlier, he wasn't even sure if he could get to the current round, and as he passed the rounds, the chances of elimination also increased.

But the elimination still left an empty feeling in his heart that he couldn't seem to get over.

He just focused all his strength to smile somehow, and looking up at the judges, he said through the mic.

"I understand the decision."

"Aiden, you sang brilliantly, but we felt Rachel was better than you overall. Failure is not easy to accept but be strong!"

Steven said and just got a nod in response. The audience looked regretfully at him, and for the first time, even Rachel showed something other than coldness.

Somehow, she genuinely felt bad for him.

But she didn't know what to do as they both made their way backstage.

'Uh, why does this feel so depressing?'

He thought in his mind as he sat down in the corner of the room. All the other contestants looked at him with sympathy and a bit of pity. He ignored them, lost in his own thoughts.

Jackson sat down next to him, patting his shoulders and trying to say something but the only thing Aiden heard was the silence of his own thoughts. His brain was not processing any words at the moment.

"Jackson, can you leave me alone for some time?" He asked with a voice that seemed to crack a bit. His vocal cords were still hurting due to the performance.

"Uh, yeah. Sure."

Jackson nodded, understanding his state of mind. After he went away, Aiden leaned down on his seat and closed his eyes. So many thoughts were in his head, and he needed to process them.

His X-Star journey went on for longer than he had initially considered, and even though he felt depressed, he wanted to believe that there was still a chance left for him.

Trying to distract himself from the depressing thoughts, he opened up his system and saw a lot of notifications there.

[Your Singing level has increased from Basic Grade 9 to Basic Grade 10.]

[You have given a performance that saw you trying to break past your limits. As a result, you're rewarded with a special reward.]

[Your vocal cords have strengthened. You can sing high notes better now.]

Aiden felt the pain in his throat lessening before eventually ending as he read the messages. The system notifications made him feel a bit better.

After all, he was finally Basic Grade 10. One step away from stepping into the Intermediate grade.

But his elimination was still on his mind.

It was not something he could get over in a short time. He looked around backstage to see Jackson and Cameron looking at him from a distance. Michelle, sitting with her group, also seemed a bit worried, glancing at him from time to time.

Jackson had already qualified, beating his opponent, and Aiden had a hunch that Cameron would come out on top with the group Symphony getting eliminated just like him.

At that moment, he saw Rachel looking at him. Their gazes met, and her eyes became a bit sharp. Aiden, who was already used to that expression, didn't say anything.

'At least I lost to her, not someone random. She's way better than me.'

Thinking that he tried to make himself feel a bit better. Though, the thing to worry about for him was more to do with what he was going to do next.

He had come to X-Star with the hope of making a mark, but now he had been eliminated just after entering Star Week. Should he go back to auditioning for movies? Or try to make money as a singer?

At least with him getting a bit of traction on X-Star, he could earn from his singing.

'Uh, I don't know.'

He frowned, feeling his head hurting a bit.

“See the responses from the last episode. It’s blowing up way more than the second round. Especially Aiden’s song ‘Life is a story. We have never gotten such a response before. So many people loved the song!”

An employee of the social media PR team said while looking at the other employees, who happily nodded in unison.

The better the response, the higher their bonuses will be after X-Star concludes.

At that moment, the door to the room opened, and Marlo and Gary walked in. They seemed to have been going through an argument.

“You can’t eliminate him. Nor those girls.”

Gary said in a pretty high pitched voice. Everyone in the room understood who he was talking about. They all have heard what has happened in the shooting today.P.AND.A
n.O.V.EL

Aiden and Symphony were eliminated.

They were pretty big contestants going by the social media buzz around them. The PR team knew that better than anyone else.

Aiden was one of the prime contestants that people loved, and Symphony as a group has a lot of core fans already. Something about girl groups was always attractive, especially pretty girls.

“It’s not my doing.” Marlo frowned. “It’s just the round. One contestant was going to be eliminated anyway. Both of them are good enough to go ahead, but they were unlucky to face monsters.”

“Marlo, but the ratings will take a big hit. I can’t sell the program just with Cameron and Rachel. The other contestants are there, but they haven’t gotten that amount of buzz. Symphony is a unique idea this season. Getting contestants that got eliminated together and Aiden has gotten us great ratings, you know. Just ask anyone in the room how much his original performance in the third round shook the audience.”

Gary ranted and turned his head to look at an employee who got scared seeing his gaze but quickly handled himself.

“Yeah, it’s very big. We plan to upload it tomorrow on MeTube, but many want a full studio version of the song. The viewers found it that good!”

Although people wanted it, the song's copyrights were still with Aiden, and the program team couldn't do anything about that unless they bought the copyright.

Another employee, this time a female one with a ponytail, chipped in.

"Yeah, people relate it to their lives a lot as the lyrics are meaningful, and there are not many songs like that, which helped make it more popular."

Gary nodded, hearing those words and turned to look at Marlo, who had a helpless expression on his face.

"I understand. I know Aiden's popularity is really high, and Symphony is a group we should invest more in."

"Then?"

"The thing is, I can't do anything about it. I'm the host, not the judge, and it's their decision. More like, they were just following the rules. We can't shoot the round again, can we?"

Marlo glared a bit, but Gary just smiled. He had already thought of how he was going to save the show's ratings. Just he needed Marlo's help in his plan.

"I have something in mind."

Gary said, and Marlo raised an eyebrow, clearly sceptical of whatever was forming in his mind.

"We won't do the wild card entry," Gary said, and Marlo felt even more confused by his words.

"What?"

"Look, it doesn't make sense. It's a good idea, but it won't fit this season. The new contestants won't give as much competition as someone like Aiden. He's special with his original songs too."

The Wild card entry was something that they had planned to bring in two singers who are already a bit popular on social media but aren't a lot big yet. Someone who has a MeTube channel or someone who's been in the industry for a long time but never got a wider platform.

After all, they eliminated six contestants in this round which would be too quick for the show. So the final will only have five contestants anyway.

So there were going to be two wild card entries. But now, Gary didn't want that.

“What are you going to do if there is no wild card entry? We have already planned everything.”

“We will have another round with all the eliminated candidates. Only two will go ahead, and I’m pretty sure Aiden and Symphony can be the two. They are the best among the contestants that were eliminated today.”

Gary explained his plan, and Marlo felt like it was good, but there were too many complications he was ignoring.

“Then, that would mean additional shooting. The judges’ contract didn’t have it. They won’t like it. How will you get an empty slot from the channel to show this additional round?”

“I will handle the channel. They are pleased with the ratings. As for the judges, I want you to talk with them.”

“Me?”

Marlo frowned. He could clearly see where Gary was heading towards.

“You have a good relationship with them. Steven even calls you to his house parties, and you have known Alyssa for years. Only you can do it. The legal team will talk about the contract and additional money. They just need to agree. Only you can do it.”

Gary requested, and even Marlo understood his reasoning wasn’t bad. Both for the show and the ratings. A show needed great contestants, and both Symphony and Aiden were those.

pANDa novel In the end, he just meekly agreed.

“I will see what I can do.”

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//DreamNote//

It’s a new week! Please vote with your power stones

Ps. Bonus Chapters incoming...?

Tap the screen to use advanced tools Tip: You can use left and right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.