

Versatile Superstar: Rise In Hollywood Chapter 3

As Aiden walked off the stage, various thoughts and emotions reverberated through his body. After a long time, there was a sense of satisfaction, and he felt like he had finally achieved something.

When he returned to the waiting room, literally every eye in the room turned toward him. They had all seen his performance on the TV screen.

Envy, genuine happiness, and even jealousy mixed with many other emotions directed toward him, but Aiden just smiled.

After two years of struggle in America, countless failed auditions, and many sleepless anxious nights, he had finally done something he could be proud of.

His shoulders relaxed subconsciously.

Two months ago, he wouldn't have thought about entering the X-Star auditions, but after getting his system and improving his skills, he was at least able to pass the first round with ease.

[You have received a lot of experience after singing in front of accomplished individuals and impressing them.]

[Your Singing level has increased from Basic Grade 7 to Basic Grade 8.]

He saw the system notifications in front of him and smiled.

It took him two months to gain two levels, but today, he successfully levelled up after just one performance.

Aiden felt like he would be able to increase his levels exponentially by performing more on this show.

As he pondered about it, a short and chubby man with a cameraman following him walked towards him.

He was Marlo Aniston, the host of X-Star and someone who Aiden had seen on various reality tv shows.

He remembered reading on a forum that Marlo was one of the highest-earning hosts in the reality tv industry. Every producer wanted him on their show due to his ability to connect with the audience.

He has been with X-Star since the first season's airing and was one of the factors behind the show's success.

“Hello, that was a great performance. Can I get an interview?”

“Ah, yeah, sure.”

“Follow me.”

He followed Marlo to a room where two chairs were placed. Marlo sat on one of them, and Aiden sat down across from him.

The cameraman stood at a distance, silently recording everything.

“So, Aiden. Um, Am I pronouncing it right?”

As Aiden nodded, Marlo continued, “You are one of the few contestants that made it to the next round today. How are you feeling?”

He started with a simple question, something that he would ask every contestant just to make them more comfortable.

“I’m feeling good. Probably the best I have felt in a while.”

“Were you always confident that you would pass this round?”

“I feel we should be decisive and play the game. There may have been a bit of nervousness, but there’s no doubt that confidence made the difference, and I was able to perform well enough.”

Marlo smiled inwardly upon hearing this. Aiden was one of the confident contestants with many points they could focus on.

These points would decide how the viewers would see him and how popular he would be.

One of the points was his confidence and skills. The second was his story of coming from India, and the third was his struggle after coming to America.

The audience loves a rag to riches story.

But in the end, Marlo and the producers were the ones to decide how Aiden would be shown and which point they were going to focus on.

As the interview went on, he asked Aiden many challenging questions. He was trying to get a story they could use in the broadcast.

“What was the reason for you coming here from India?”

Aiden thought about the question for a bit before replying.

“It was for an opportunity. I wanted to prove to myself and my family. My uncle is settled here, and he was okay with me moving over, so I came here.”

“Weren’t there opportunities in India?”

“There were many opportunities. But you can say I just wanted to make a mark in the US. In fact, I was inspired to come here when I heard the President once say, ‘In the unlikely story that is America, there has never been anything false about hope.’ I don’t know why, but this quote always stuck with me and increased my curiosity, which has brought me here, thousands of miles away from my home.”

His answer caused Marlo to smile. Then, running a hand through his brown hair, he said.

“I hope X-Star becomes the opportunity you are looking for, and you win the competition.”

“I feel like you say that to everyone.”

Marlo chuckled, “Trust me, the first part was genuine.”

The interview carried on with Aiden answering many questions, and in his mind, Marlo couldn’t help but think that his answers were very well thought out.

It was because Aiden was carefully considering before answering any question, knowing very well that even one mistake could be fatal.

Since he didn’t know what would be on the broadcast, he needed to be careful.

“You said you drive a cab for a living. Tell me a bit about that.”

“Uh, I don’t want to talk about it.”

Aiden said, feeling a bit uncomfortable with the question. However, he could see what Marlo was trying to do.

“A good story sells. In a reality show, you need one, and it’s not like you need to lie. A story can often take you to the finals and could become a reason for the public to favour you.”

Marlo said, trying to make a case. Just last season, one of the finalists was a fairly average singer, but he had reached the finals just because of his story of coming from poverty.

After losing his parents, he was the only one able to support his siblings, and because of that, the public automatically wanted him to do well.

Here, Marlo would definitely try to project Aiden's story as a taxi driver coming to X-Star with aspirations to become a singer.

He would even show him that Aiden barely survived while fighting poverty. This will give the show some ratings and Aiden some sympathy.

"I know a good story sells, but I don't want to win due to just a story and not skills."

Aiden replied. He didn't like the contestants who did well due to a background that influenced the viewers.

It was a singing competition, and he wanted to win by skill.

"Your story is also a part of your skills."

"I still don't like it."

Marlo shook his head hearing that. Though his expression was still the same, his words sounded slightly different.

"I understand where you are coming from, but it can't happen. No matter what, we can't just not show a story that could sell because you don't want to. Even if I let it be for now, the producers would want it if you keep passing rounds."

Aiden just looked at him without saying anything. He knew that Marlo was telling the truth. And, as a contestant, the power he had was almost negligible.

After thinking for a bit, he opened his mouth again.

"Then, I will just leave this to you."

"What?"

"I can't stop you from showing my story, so I will just trust you to show it the right way. I don't have the power, but you do."

Marlo just stared at him, wondering if his words were a joke, but Aiden's face was serious. In the end, he laughed.

"What if I showed it in a way you don't like?"

"I can do nothing then. That's why I can only request that you show it in the right way."

Marlo didn't reply to that and instead continued the interview. It was like the conversation had never happened.

This time, Aiden replied to all his questions and talked about the time when he had come to America, his struggles while starting as a taxi driver and his job as a waiter in a bar at night.

After they concluded the interview, Marlo shook hands with him.

"Okay, this will be enough footage. Thank you for your time. If you pass the next two rounds, I will interview you again."

"I hope you will ask me easier questions then."

"I can't promise anything." Marlo chuckled.

Aiden left the room after that and made his way outside, ready to celebrate his victory.

After he left, the cameraman closed the camera and then, glancing at Marlo, he asked.

"What will you do about what he said?"

"Huh?" Marlo looked back at him.

"About showing his story the right way. He seems like the exact opposite type of person we get most times."

Most contestants would try to make up struggle stories, knowing very well that the more impactful their story is, the bigger their chances of being shown in the broadcast.

Compared to that, Aiden was certainly different.

"I will do nothing. We will be done with the third round before the broadcast premiers. I don't think he will even go beyond that."

Marlo certainly liked Aiden, but there were a lot of contestants he found out of the ordinary. In that way, Aiden was nothing exceptional.

"What if he does make it to Star Week?"

Star week was the special round that came after the third round. Only 16 people will be left by then.

"I will decide what to do if he does."

Saying that, Marlo left the room, and the cameraman followed. There were still a lot of contestants to interview and a lot of stories to unearth.

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