

## **An Excerpt From The Diary Of Wendy O'Connel**

My mom told me yesterday that I should probably get a new screen protector. It's shattered, only held together by the adhesive plastic and a surplus of super glue. I've nearly cut my ring finger twice today from the relentless doom-scrolling I commit my afternoons to.

Being famous is... not as exciting as people think. I sit around all day, waiting for e-mails that always end up delayed by anywhere between a few hours and a few weeks, watch edits of myself while eating ice cream, and listen to the bigger and better celebrities' music and podcasts.

On the rare occasion I get invited to any red carpet events or galas, I try to get out of them as best as I can. If I can't, I go, stay for five minutes, get whiplash from the press, then head home. It's routine, really. And I like it that way.

When plus ones are required, and my agents push me to "go with a guy for once", I just call Mason or Raven. And usually they pull through. It's nothing romantic, God, that'd be awkward. But the internet seems to think so. Ship edits, fanfictions, roleplay discord servers that some 12 year old started, you name it, Mason and I are in it.

The fans seem to be more casual about Raven and I. Of course, his actual name is Ryan, so maybe they think he's some cool, cold, goth dude that tries to keep his relationships on the down-low. Sure, Raven and I are close, but we're definitely platonic.

A notification drops down from the top of my screen. Over the cracks, I can make out the contact name and the message.

**L:**

*Still waiting for the call?*

I immediately replied. I haven't heard from Leo in years.

**W:**

*Yeah! Jesus, Leo, it's been four years!*

**L:**

*I know, I know. U missed me. I'm just that great.*

**W:**

*Ever the charmer. Are you coming into London if you book the part?*

**L:**

*Yes, I am. Are you still planning on moving there one day?*

*W:*

*Leo, I moved here three years ago.*

*L:*

*Oh wait, really? I do not remember that.*

*W:*

*I do.*

BACK TO DECEMBER starts playing from the unwatched edit I'd scrolled onto. Speak of the devil, it's an edit of Pearce and I. Seems like someone dug up old clips and interviews from when we were still dating. That summer is burned into my mind. I know how wrong it was to drop the relationship out of nowhere and run for the green, gold hills that is London's West End. So, this is me swallowing my pride. I'm sorry, Pearce. I hardly got a chance to grow into whatever that was with you. And I ran away the second I got the chance. My old nicknames vary, but I never expected them to describe just one single summer. Fireball, Bolter, Calamity.

So, that's my answer, everyone. No, Mason and I never did, and never will date.

No, Raven and I will never date. Raven may never date again.

But yes, Pearce and I did. And we never will again.

Unless this gets 200,000 sales by tomorrow morning.