

INFLUENCE AND INFLUENZA

by Kelly Meadows

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A Comedy Monologue

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SYNOPSIS: Being a fashion influencer is hard work—and even harder when nobody’s following you. Famous fashion model Sophia Lavonne has alienated her constituency through her disinterest in their problems, but she’s still clinging to a lopsided life of luxury. And to top it off, she’s got the flu. Can Sophia win her fans back, and can she keep her lunch down through the end of her monologue?

TIME: Present day, or shortly after the COVID Pandemic was in full force.

SETTING: Can be done on a bare stage, or with a tropical island backdrop, something that looks like she’s at a resort.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female)

SOPHIA LAVONNE (f)..... a fashion influencer, also plays Alexia (another influencer), and some of her social media followers.

COSTUMING: Sophia would dress in upscale fashion and makeup, or at least the appearance of it.

DIRECTOR’S NOTES: Sophia is well-versed in speaking with people and acting for the camera, so she should be very at ease in her delivery, even if it can be artificial at times. Alexia, her nemesis, just doesn’t have that same confidence, and it should show in her delivery. The followers are angry and petty, but perhaps justifiably so. Also, are you rooting for her or against her? There’s not necessarily a right answer, but it’s important to address the question of how genuine Sophia needs to be, and tries to be, in order to win them back, and if you think she can be successful.

SOPHIA LAVONNE: (*Says these words with importance, and with a pause between them, very seriously.*) Influence. Influential. Influenza.

How I went from one to another is a sad, sad tale.

(*Speak these words the same way as the first.*) Congratulations. Contamination. Contagion.

I'm Sophia Lavonne, but many of you know me as the Irritatingly Iconic Influencer. Remember my slogan: *Wearing designer clothes you can't afford in exotic locations you'll never visit.* Remember that time I saw one of my followers outdress me in Fiji? We put her on the next plane to Portsmouth. Of course, it was hard to find a plane to Portsmouth, and it took weeks, and well... now she's more popular than I am, but that's another story that you'll never hear from me... even if you just did.

(*Big!*) Oh, but I got my revenge! (*As if this makes all the difference*) I unfollowed her.

All that said, I'm struggling, thanks to you. (*Indicate the audience, if desired.*) All of you, that is, my so-called fan base. Bitter, vengeful, looking to build me up to tear me down, to send me to Fiji and then revoke my passport to the international fashion world. Strand me on an island of self-indulgence and then deny me the luxury that I love.

P used to be for "pan fried," but then it turned out it was for... pandemic. Problematic. Pernicious. Everyone was forced to stay home, but since I still wanted to make a living in the fashion world, I chose to stay home in an exotic getaway with a closet full of the latest in upscale clothing, shoes, and jewelry. It's just like I'd been doing for years... to international acclaim—while at the same time, I was on the receiving end of a world's worth of jealousy. But this time? Nobody wanted to see it. You probably remember those days of pandemic pandemonium, where a life of luxury became even more and more remote to those who found themselves in a dismal disarray. Like this one:

(*As a follower.*) Sophia, my whole class is stuck at home on house arrest, my brother is sick, my mother lost her job, and we don't want to hear about how wonderful your artificial life is.

(*As herself.*) So, apparently, I have to apologize for just doing my job.

(*As another follower.*) Sophia, you don't get it. You're glamorous. You're perfect. You're pretty. You're...

(*As herself.*) Well, yes, I am. And thank you for noticing and being big enough to acknowledge it out loud.

(*As that same follower, hitting home.*) You're irrelevant!

(*As herself, with a gasp of dismay, perhaps stumbling backwards as if smacked.*) Do! Not!

(*As follower.*) We don't care anymore, Sophia Lavonne. If you want to influence me, stay home and open a book. How about *The United States in the Civil War Era* because I need to read it and I can't stay awake past the 1860 election. How about *Towards a Better Algebra* because if algebra gets better, and good luck with that, I really want to hear about it. Besides, I'm broke, and thanks to you, I now have a closet full of clothing, purses, and makeup, and nowhere to wear them since they immediately went out of date, again thanks to you suddenly pushing a new and more expensive line of product that doesn't fit anyone over size zero-and-a-half. And, sad to say, none of it made me happy despite your promises to the contrary. I know; you're just doing your job. (*Mocking*) "It's so hard being pretty all the time." Well, try *not* being pretty all the time and see how hard that is. While you're at it, why don't you pick up a copy of *Biology for the Faint of Heart* and help me with Chapter 17?

(*As herself, collecting herself after the tirade.*) Yes, it is my job. I'm too famous to ask about fries, flip veggie burgers, or even clean off conveyor belts at the grocery checkout.

(Imitating a store customer.) “Oh, aren’t you Sophia? Well, you were, but I guess you’re not anymore.”

(As herself, giving a sales pitch.) But speaking of belts, here I am in Bora Bora with a fabulous belt in these new jeans that make last year’s look like ancient history, and make ancient history seem like even before Egypt and... wait... esteemed follower, *(To that follower.)* wasn’t it history that you’re failing? Math, science, field hockey? I don’t think my influence extends that far, but... maybe it does. Maybe... just maybe... I did my job far too well, and you watched me instead of doing your schoolwork. Now you blame me for your failed life choices.

(Rethinks her position.) Well, look. I’m not going to fight with my fans. I saw the meter ticking. I misread the minds of four million people on Instagram, three million on Facebook, and 2,745,688 on TikTok. *[Feel free to change the names of these social media platforms if needed.]* Glamour, glitz, glitter went the way of the horse and buggy, and here I am, all dressed up, everywhere to go, but no one to care, no one to stare, no one to let me put on airs... and it’s just not fair.

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