

Unpopular Panic as celebrities flood Substack

On Tuesday morning, I had settled at my desk, coffee in hand, ready to write a killer article. The plan was simple: doomscroll Substack, catch an idea, start typing. I take my 106 subscribers very seriously.

I hadn't even spent ten minutes doomscrolling when I saw a piece titled "*The Realities of Being a Pop Star*." It had over 13k likes and 1.4k restacks. The title sounded cool enough, so it made sense.

What I wasn't prepared for was choking on my coffee when I checked the author's name and saw **the** Charli XCX. Suddenly, the title made *perfect* sense.

I read the piece. And to be fair, it was good — sharp, self-aware, and human. She already had over 65,000 subscribers from just three posts, which I suppose is *also* part of the reality of being a pop star (get it?).

A few days later, I was back at my desk, doomscrolling Substack again, and the pattern became impossible to ignore. This time, there was more commentary and more think pieces. More pop stars were entering what we *hoped* was a closed writing space.

Ayra Starr, Simi, Rosalía and even Lizzo have all taken a liking to our orange club. It feels like the dawn of a new era.

And everyone is asking the same question.

Why?

Why Substack? Why now?

When did artists leave melody for prose? What happened to cryptic Instagram captions and glossy life updates? Why the sudden intimacy and long-form honesty?

And more importantly — what does this mean for the average Nigerian writer whose claim to fame is a weekly newsletter read by twenty-something loyal strangers?

How do you compete when 43 posts earn you 106 subscribers, and three posts earn a pop star 65,000 — plus a pipeline of paying fans?

There are three sides to this coin.

On the dark side of it:

Timothée Chalamet once said he wanted to be one of the greats, and his honesty had the world in awe for weeks. People don't say it enough, but humans are insatiable — even with achievement. We are inclined to conquer everything within reach. Including platforms.

Substack offers what most platforms don't: direct access, loyal audiences, and money that isn't filtered through brutal algorithms or labels.

Why wouldn't celebrities want that?

There is absolutely no reason to stay confined to shallow Instagram highlights and exhausting streaming cycles when Substack offers quieter intimacy, loyal fans, and *paying* fans. There is no rule that says celebrities must not explore more profitable options when they exist.

They might be here for more money, more attention, and whatever extra they can get. What can we do but rant to our 20 or 100 subscribers and hope someone sympathizes?

On the bright side of it:

We love to chant *celebrities are human too* — until they act like it. They're "human" until they want more, until they burn out, and until they try something new.

In some quiet corner of our minds, many of us still believe celebrities have already won — and should stay content with what they have. But **fortunately**, their lives aren't ordered by anyone's comfort.

Celebrities sleep. They wake up. They aim higher. They burn out. They want more fans. They need more money — the same way *I* do, the same way *you* do, the same way Dangote does.

Celebrities are humans.

Plus, Substack does not reward mediocrity for long. If they write well, they'll last. If they don't, the platform will humble them like everyone else. Fame might open the door, but it doesn't guarantee the stay.

On the grey side:

This was always inevitable.

We've aestheticized Substack so much that we forgot: before it was anyone's "private public diary," it was — and still is — a social media platform. It's a tool. A place to share ideas, perform personality, and monetize attention.

Basically, Instagram in a different font.

The illusion of exclusivity was never going to last. Platforms get discovered. And when that happens, people flood in. Don't take it too personally. It's literally just a pattern, not a betrayal.

Opinions will rage. Think pieces will multiply. Panic will peak.

Then, it will settle.

The best we can do is double down amid the new competition, embrace the "competition" as humans first, and ultimately, have fun. The promise was opportunity — not fairness.

Ciao!

(Special ciao to my 106 besties.)