

TV Show 17

Chapter 17: A School Full of Red Sleeves Waving
County High School.

Auditorium.

Backstage.

Five minutes ago.

"Sheldon, are you sure you don't want to stay backstage?"

Adam confirmed again and again, "You can play the piano backstage—it's just separated by a curtain, and the sound won't really be blocked."

"No need."

Little Sheldon asked curiously, "Why would I stay backstage?"

"Yeah, why?"

Emmett was puzzled.

"Are you worried that Sheldon might get stage fright?"

Juno's eyes darted around, quickly guessing the truth.

"Uh, not 'might.'"

Adam smiled bitterly. "He **will** get stage fright. Sheldon has panic disorder. If he gets on stage, there are only two possible outcomes: either he bolts, or his legs give out, and he faints right there."

"Huh? How do you know I have panic disorder?"

Sheldon looked surprised.

Adam internally rolled his eyes: **I know way too much about your quirks.**

Outwardly, he said, "Mrs. Cooper mentioned it. Now, are you still sure you want to go on stage? Maybe you should take a peek from behind the curtain first?"

Adam also hoped Sheldon would get on stage—the effects are definitely better when performing in front. But he knew Sheldon too well. Despite Sheldon's confidence now, Adam was sure only the two scenarios he mentioned earlier would play out.

This was one of the unforeseen problems Adam hadn't anticipated when inviting Sheldon to join the band.

"Mm, alright."

Sheldon tilted his head, thinking it over. It seemed like a good idea, so he walked to the curtain, gently pulled it aside, and peeked at the stage. Kash was singing passionately, and the audience was a sea of screaming students.

Thud!

Thud thud!

Thud thud thud!

Sheldon's pupils dilated. Everything before him started to feel surreal, his heart racing, his breathing quickened... and then nothing.

"Adam, you're right. I'll stay backstage."

Sheldon closed the curtain, his body slightly weak. He walked back to the three of them, mumbling as if eating humble pie.

Juno: "..."

Emmett: "..."

Adam gave Juno a look that said, *Told you so,* nodded, and smiled. "Relax. Take a deep breath. If you still feel uncomfortable, you don't have to perform this time. We can ease into it."

After all, they weren't professionals. Missing a keyboard player wouldn't have much impact.

"Hoo, hoo."

Sheldon took a few deep breaths, his panic easing considerably. He shook his head. "I can do it."

Then quickly added, "From backstage."

"Alright, that's the plan."

Adam saw Kash and his group wrapping up and decided to stop dragging it out. He moved Sheldon's keyboard to a suitable spot backstage.

Soon, the emcee's voice boomed out.

"...Now, let's welcome the Fruit Hard Candy Band with their semi-original piece: *Don't Cry!*"

"Softly tell me,

I see a thousand words hidden in your eyes.

Don't hang your head in sorrow,

Please don't cry."

Adam strummed his guitar and stepped onto the stage with a gentle rhythm. Under the spotlight, his otherwise ordinary face seemed to glow. His soft whispers, paired with his looks, felt like intimate murmurs in a lover's ear.

The audience didn't erupt into screams or frenzy. But standing at the edge of the stage, Kash's face turned dark.

The reason? Most of the girls in the audience were either clutching their chests or covering their mouths, their eyes burning with intensity.

If Kash knew a certain Eastern proverb, he would have muttered, *Silence speaks louder than words.*

This temporary calm was merely the precursor to a storm.

"...

Tonight, don't cry again!

I still love you, baby!

Tonight, don't cry again!

Heaven's right above you!

Tonight, don't cry again!

I thought I lived in your world!

..."

Sure enough, as the song transitioned into the soaring chorus, the audience exploded.

It wasn't just the girls—boys and even parents were swept up in the emotions, shouting along with the rhythm. After all, who hasn't felt the reckless impulse of being madly in love?

The entire auditorium seemed to revolve around Adam's presence.

The Emotion Band members stared at the scene, dumbfounded.

"This... this!"

One of them muttered, "This sounds like a Guns N' Roses song..."

"But the chorus is so different. Honestly, it feels even better than the original."

Guns N' Roses—or GN'R—was formed in 1985. After their breakout album in 1987, they shot to superstardom, becoming the hottest rock band of the era, adored by countless young fans.

Don't Cry was a song GN'R had performed in bars during their early days. It hadn't been released officially yet and wasn't widely known—only hardcore rock fans were familiar with it.

The Emotion Band members happened to be among those die-hard fans. Knowing this made them even more shocked than the captivated audience.

They were just a high school amateur band, and now they were competing against someone who could not only adapt the songs of rock legends but do it so well!

Oh, God. What have we gotten ourselves into?!

Adam poured his soul into his performance, his peripheral vision catching the dumbfounded looks of the rival band. A faint smile flickered across his face.

Ah, the perks of being a plagiarist in another world.

He had no idea this song would someday top global lists of classic rock tracks or become an anthem of American culture. All he knew was that he wouldn't have to streak as a forfeit.

And...

Looking at the crowd's enraptured faces, Adam shivered slightly, silently warning himself: *This is America. A guy needs to protect himself out here.*

"Kash, what do we do?"

The Emotion Band members finally snapped out of it and looked nervously at their leader.

"Should we strip or not?"

"Strip!"

After a long silence, Kash gritted his teeth.

"Seriously?!"

The others exclaimed in shock.

"For real!"

Kash declared. "Tonight's performance is destined to rock the world of rock 'n' roll. If we want to keep playing, we have to stay true to our word. Streaking is nothing—it's art, just like rock. But breaking our promise? That's not art. So yes, we're doing it!"

"Ughhh!"

The band groaned in unison.

When the party ended, under the cover of night and amidst raucous laughter, Kash led his bandmates on ten laps of streaking. While Adam and his crew were vindicated, they couldn't help but admire the other band's boldness.

Wild animals. These guys really know how to play.

The next day.

"Hi, Adam."

"Hi, Adam~"

"Hi, Adam!"

As Adam walked through the school gate, he immediately felt the difference. Everywhere he went, clusters of girls whispered, pointed, and exchanged glances—some bold and passionate, others shy and fleeting. Laughter and teasing followed him like an aura.

For a moment, it truly felt like: riding his bike down the path, the whole school's red sleeves waved in admiration!