

TV Show 171

Chapter 171: A Dangerous World

May.

Everything was going smoothly.

Chandler had sacrificed himself as a cross-dressing master to earn forgiveness, and in return, he won over a big-mouthed beauty.

Professional actor Joey, however, was too obvious in his attempt to steal a kiss—his lips were already positioned perfectly before he even lunged. Chandler caught on immediately and kicked him away, denying him the long-awaited practice opportunity.

But at least the audition went well.

Still, as always, he failed.

Having entered the industry right after high school without formal training, his foundation remained shaky.

Poor Ross, too softhearted as always, was in an unusually good mood one day. Wanting to support Joey as a friend, he decided to help—by closing his eyes and giving Joey a kiss.

It wasn't until after the kiss that he realized the audition had already ended...

Meanwhile, Monica, sobbing uncontrollably, ruined Adam's \$20,000 suit with her tears and snot. She then dragged Ross into a rough game of "Geller Cup" amateur football, leaving both of them battered and bruised. Only after this fierce battle did she finally break free from the lingering pain of her breakup with Richard, the love of her life.

As a distinguished graduate of Columbia University, Adam attended the commencement ceremony and delivered a speech. He successfully earned dual bachelor's degrees in Biology and Psychology.

With his already-prepared MCAT scores, GPA, extracurricular experiences, and personal statement, along with his degree certificate, he submitted his primary application to the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS).

Naturally, his top choice was Columbia University's medical school.

As soon as his application was reviewed, Columbia Med quickly approved it. The following steps—submitting supplemental materials and attending interviews—were mere formalities.

Since everyone involved already knew him and had a good impression of him, the process was effortless.

By early June, everything was set—he had secured his admission to Columbia Medical School. All that was left was to enjoy the summer before starting in the fall.

Apartment 520

"Now that you've graduated, any plans for the summer?" Monica asked.

"I'm heading home for a bit," Adam replied with a smile. "After that, I might travel abroad."

"Abroad? Where to?" Rachel asked enviously.

"Europe, maybe," Adam said uncertainly. "Or I might just explore the country. You know... it's not exactly safe out there."

"Not safe? What do you mean?" Rachel frowned. "Paris is the fashion capital of the world—my favorite city! How could it not be safe?"

"You haven't heard?" Adam looked surprised. "Every year, many female tourists in Paris go missing—even when traveling in groups. Do you know how they disappear?"

"Missing?" Rachel looked even more confused. "I've never heard of that."

"The news is covered up," Adam sighed. "Many of these women, especially young girls, are targeted the moment they step off the plane. They check into their hotel, only to have their doors kicked in and be taken away. Some are drugged and forced into prostitution.

The more attractive virgins? They're auctioned off like merchandise, sold to aristocrats who keep them as slaves in their estates. After they've been used up, they're resold as prostitutes."

A collective gasp filled the room.

"No way!"

"You've got to be joking!"

"That's Paris we're talking about!"

The group was in disbelief.

"I wish I were joking," Adam said grimly. "But it's the truth. That's why I'm hesitant about traveling abroad."

Liam Neeson had been in Taken, after all—who's to say human trafficking rings like that don't exist?

The world is full of dangers.

"OMG!"

Rachel was the most shaken, covering her mouth in shock. "I've always wanted to go there!"

"I strongly advise against it," Adam said sincerely. "Rachel, you're so beautiful—you'd be an easy target."

"You're not going!" Ross exclaimed. "Rachel, you absolutely can't go! That's horrifying!"

"Doesn't the Parisian government do anything about this?" Monica asked, bewildered.

"Of course they do," Adam said matter-of-factly. "If they didn't, it wouldn't be just a few disappearances—it'd be mass kidnappings. But do you really think there aren't powerful people involved in this operation?"

"Paris is a fashion capital, attracting young dreamers from all over the world. A few missing girls barely make a dent in the statistics."

Chandler nodded in agreement.

"Exactly," Adam continued. "It's safer to travel in groups, but solo travelers or even pairs—especially attractive women—are at high risk."

Even though they were a group of four, including himself, Heather and Karen were just too eye-catching. Even Juno had that fresh, indie-girl charm that some people would find irresistible. The risk of being targeted was just too high.

Adam had no interest in taking that gamble.

A Harsh Reality

Juno was usually cautious, but in an era before widespread information, she couldn't possibly imagine a place like Paris being so dangerous.

If Paris was like this, what about London? Or other popular European tourist destinations?

After all, this entire underground industry existed to serve the desires of corrupt and depraved aristocrats.

And where do aristocrats live?

Every major European city.

"Adam, you guys really shouldn't travel abroad. It's terrifying," Monica urged. "Just explore the U.S. instead—it's much safer here."

Adam chuckled.

Monica and the others lived in a bubble—wherever they went, the world seemed safe, people seemed kind, and the streets felt peaceful.

But for Adam, whether in the U.S. or abroad, the risks were significantly higher.

Was America safer than Europe?

Adam could only chuckle again.

Sure, there were risks.

But would he let that stop him from traveling?

Not a chance.

If he let fear dictate his life, he might as well never leave his house.

Besides, his hometown, Texas, was far more dangerous than Europe.

And yet, he still went home every year.

A Road Trip Begins

A few days later.

Juno and Karen drove to New York, parked beneath Adam's apartment, and swapped cars. The four of them piled into Adam's SUV and hit the road toward Texas.

In the car—

Adam was driving.

Juno sat in the passenger seat.

Heather and Karen sat in the back.

"Keep your eyes on the road, Adam," Juno teased, noticing his frequent glances at the rearview mirror. "Need me to take over?"

"I'm fine," Adam said, quickly looking away, forcing a sheepish smile.

It wasn't that he hadn't seen Heather and Karen before.

But for some reason, seeing them sitting side by side in the backseat made him feel... weird.

As if they belonged in the front.

Shaking off the strange thought, Adam told Juno about his conversation with Monica and the others.

"Is it really that bad?" Juno frowned.

"Just something I heard," Adam shrugged. "But when it comes to safety, it's better to assume the worst."

"Then forget it," Juno said decisively. She was always the cautious type. She turned to Heather and Karen. "Let's just stick to sightseeing within the U.S.?"

"Sounds good."

"Works for me."

Karen had no objections.

Heather didn't mind either.

After all, the U.S. was huge, and they'd barely seen any of it.

(End of Chapter)