

TV Show 261

Chapter 261

A small cabin in the woods.

"I choose to have loving parents, a happy childhood, and a warm family."

Amy Wonder murmured.

"You still have the chance to make that choice," Juno said with a smile. "As long as you want to."

"What should I do?"

Amy Wonder looked at Juno eagerly.

"This book, *Gone Lover*, is your turning point."

Juno grinned. "When the time comes, it will be published under your name. You won't have to kill your long-time backup lover, intimidate your future husband, or go through all that trouble to make a name for yourself. If you want it, in just a few months, you'll be the real Amy Wonder—not the one from your parents' book, but your own person."

"Under my name?"

Amy Wonder was stunned.

"Yes."

Juno looked at her. "You don't want to?"

"I do, I do!"

Amy Wonder nodded eagerly but then hesitated. "But what about the scene where the ex-boyfriend assaults the protagonist?"

"That has to stay, of course," Juno said with amusement. "It's an important part of the story. It shows that the male lead isn't the first victim and elevates the female protagonist's character development."

"...Alright."

Amy Wonder lowered her head slightly.

"Don't worry."

Juno's eyes narrowed. "If there's controversy, that's a good thing. We can frame it as giving women a voice, making all men cautious about how they treat women. We may seem weak in our daily lives, but when pushed to the limit, even we fear how ruthless we can be."

Amy Wonder looked up at Juno, a mix of surprise and anticipation in her gaze.

This angle was intriguing.

"As for your ex-boyfriend..."

Juno smirked. "You can say that this experience is what inspired you to write the book. Imagine—if your ex had read *Gone Lover*, would he have dared to assault you?"

Even if it goes to court, there's nothing to fear. He's broke, and you have money—you're naturally in an unbeatable position. Plus, it'll keep the public interest high, boost your reputation. As long as the world never learns your true inner thoughts, there's no problem at all..."

At that moment, Juno gave Amy Wonder a knowing smirk.

Amy Wonder suddenly remembered the moment she had blurted out her deepest thoughts under pressure. Her face turned pale.

She wasn't stupid—she could guess that Juno had probably recorded everything.

And sure, there were a lot of benefits. But was there really no downside?

Of course, that was impossible.

The protagonist in the book was basically a reflection of herself, with many details that matched her real life. If the book became a hit, her ex-boyfriend would surely come forward with accusations, maybe even take legal action.

Money beats lack of money—winning a lawsuit would be easy.

But how would the world see her?

Would people really believe it was "just a novel, purely fictional"?

What a joke.

Once the truth got out, no one would dare get close to someone as ruthless as her. It would be social death.

"You're really giving this to me?"

Suppressing her shock, Amy Wonder still found it hard to believe.

With her keen eye, she could tell that once *Gone Lover* was published, paired with the explosive real-life backstory, it would definitely become a sensation. And it was perfect for a film adaptation—the profits would be astronomical.

With enough money, even social death could be reversed.

"You'll get the fame."

Juno smiled. "But most of the profits must be donated. Since we're claiming to advocate for women's rights, we need to take action. That way, your reputation will be even stronger. Even if only a small portion of the profits go to you, it will still be a lot."

Amy Wonder's face stiffened.

She knew Juno wouldn't leave such a glaring loophole.

For the rest of the day, Juno alternated between the scalpel and the carrot, continuously molding Amy Wonder.

Heather was stunned.

Under her gaze, Amy Wonder's eyes began to resemble Karen's when she looked at Juno.

Karen, on the other hand, was burning with jealousy. But since Juno had warned her in advance, she couldn't say anything. She could only stew in frustration, pouting.

Eventually—

Juno stopped the drip of the sedative and waited for Amy Wonder to fully regain control of her body. Holding a scalpel in one hand and pulling open her pocket with the other, Juno smiled.

"What's your choice?"

This was a classic prison ritual—pulling someone's pocket meant acknowledging them as one's "bitch," a complete act of submission.

Amy Wonder was taller than Juno, yet without hesitation, she crouched down, grabbed Juno's pocket, and even knelt, kissing the tip of Juno's shoe. Then she looked up at Juno, her face full of admiration.

"Very good."

Juno nodded approvingly.

Amy Wonder smiled joyfully in return.

But the next second, her smile froze. She reached for her throat, eyes wide with shock and confusion as she stared at Juno.

"You overacted."

Juno flicked the blood from the scalpel.

Amy Wonder's eyes filled with venomous hatred as she collapsed to the ground, convulsing. In mere seconds, she lay still, eyes wide open in death.

"What just happened?"

The turn of events was so sudden that Heather was completely dumbfounded.

"I failed."

Juno sighed. "Amy Wonder truly lived up to her name. She progressed too quickly. We were the ones who opened the door to a new world for her—she evolved into the final version of herself from the book ahead of schedule. Someone like that could never be controlled. I was too confident."

"You mean she was acting the whole time?"

Heather was in disbelief. "But her eyes... they looked at you just like Karen does!"

"That's exactly why I couldn't keep her alive."

Juno looked wistful. "Originally, I planned to control her with a mix of persuasion and coercion, then release her, allowing weekly visits to gradually reshape her into the person we wanted her to be.

But in just two days, she managed to fool even you two. I only asked her to pull my pocket as a sign of submission—yet she went as far as kneeling and kissing my shoe.

If she had truly been reformed, she wouldn't have made that extra move. It looked like deeper submission, but it actually showed she still had her own thoughts."

"But... what if she really was convinced?"

Heather hesitated.

"No way."

Juno shook her head. "The time frame was too short. Maybe for a regular person, it would work. But she was Amy Wonder—a top graduate from Harvard's psychology department. She couldn't have changed that much."

And there was another reason—her instincts.

Amy Wonder had progressed rapidly under extreme circumstances, acting flawlessly, even deceiving with her eyes. But Juno's intuition had been warning her the whole time.

And in the final moment, Amy Wonder's gaze confirmed everything.

Juno's instincts had never been wrong.

And indeed—

After enduring several crushing blows, Amy Wonder hadn't crumbled. Instead, she awakened her true talent, effortlessly playing along with Juno's script.

But in reality, she preferred writing her own.

If she had escaped, it would have become her legendary story.

When she pulled Juno's pocket, the reason she added that extra kneeling and kissing gesture wasn't just to show submission. More importantly, it was to mask and adjust the uncontrollable joy she felt at what she thought was her success.

But talent couldn't beat experience.

Juno saw through her act—and in a cruel twist of irony, ended her life with a sudden slash to the throat, just like in *Gone With the Wind*, when the protagonist seduced her backup lover, only to slit his throat in his moment of peak pleasure.

It was just as sudden. Just as terrifying.

A grim joke with deep irony.

And in her final moment, Amy Wonder felt it—then came the overwhelming fury, flashing in her eyes one last time...

Chapter 262: The Guardian

New York.

Duncan's Apartment.

Ring... Ring...

The phone rang.

"Ignore it!"

The octopus, MAX, stopped Adam from answering the phone.

"Don't be ridiculous."

Adam got up with MAX in his arms and picked up the receiver.

"Hello?"

"It's me. Is this a good time?"

On the other end, Juno's voice came through, sounding different from usual.

"Hold on a second."

Adam's heart skipped a beat. He pried MAX off, firmly held her back as she playfully lunged at him, and gave her a warning look before walking out of the bedroom.

In the Study Room.

"What's going on?"

After locking the door, Adam's voice turned serious.

"Are you still writing that manuscript?"

Juno asked.

"Yes, I am."

Adam's heart tightened.

"Delete it."

Juno sighed, "Forget about it."

"..."

Adam was stunned. After a moment of silence, he asked, "Are you sure?"

"I'm sure."

Juno's tone was firm.

"Got it."

Adam already had his suspicions, so he didn't hesitate. But before hanging up, he couldn't help but call out, "Juno!"

"Hmm?"

Juno was taken aback.

"Be careful."

Of all the words he wanted to say, they condensed into that one sentence.

"Heh."

After a brief silence, Juno laughed softly and hung up.

"Heh."

Hearing the cheerfulness in her laughter, Adam also smiled, his earlier shock and worry completely dissipating.

To have a confidante like this in life is enough!

He turned on his computer and looked at the manuscript of *Gone Girl*, nearly 200,000 words long, with its terrifyingly cunning character, Amazing Amy. The gratitude he felt for Juno surged within him.

This whole situation had nothing to do with Juno, yet she did all this for him!

How lucky he was!

He deleted the manuscript from his computer, then took out the hard drive and physically destroyed it. Afterward, he returned to the bedroom and hugged MAX tightly.

MAX initially wanted to squirm playfully, but feeling the strength of Adam's embrace and his overwhelming emotions, she lay still, refraining from any flirtatious jokes, quietly savoring the warmth of the moment.

That Night.

"Oh, come on!"

Chandler exclaimed as Adam brought him to a nightclub. Seeing the energetic dancers, he shouted, "This is what you meant by donating to help underprivileged students?"

"Exactly."

Adam held him close, preventing his escape as they sat by the stage. "Many of them are students who can't afford tuition. Shouldn't we do some charity work?"

"But what does this have to do with Kathy?"

Chandler asked in frustration.

"It has everything to do with her."

Adam grinned. "Scientific research shows that a man's brain can only store a limited number of... indescribable images. Right now, your brain is completely occupied by Kathy, which is why you're so obsessed.

What we need to do is help your brain store as many new images as possible to dilute or even replace those of Kathy. Then you'll realize just how ridiculous it was to think you needed her."

"Will this really work?"

Chandler was skeptical.

"You don't have to trust me, but you should trust science!"

Adam declared with mock seriousness.

"Alright."

Chandler did want to get over Kathy, so he reluctantly agreed. As he looked over, his eyes widened.

The dancers here might not have the most beautiful faces, but they definitely had great figures and mesmerizing dance moves. For a man, that was more than enough.

Even Adam was enjoying the view.

After watching for a while, Adam noticed Chandler staring in disbelief at the dancers' jaw-dropping moves and couldn't help but chuckle.

These types of clubs were perfectly legal and respectable in the U.S.

Joey, Barney, and Howard were regulars at places like this.

Even Penny, Bernadette, and Amy had been to one.

And yes, that included Monica.

Watching the performances was no big deal, really.

In *How I Met Your Mother*, Lily had a doppelgänger who was one of the dancers, and she even paid her to switch places so she could experience dancing on stage herself.

If this could lessen Chandler's obsession with Kathy, it would be perfect.

Otherwise, Adam was out of ideas.

He couldn't exactly persuade Chandler to engage in more... direct charity work, could he?

No matter how touching the story, it wouldn't change the questionable nature of it.

As for setting him up with someone new, Chandler clearly wasn't in the right headspace for that.

So, Adam could only hope that Barney Stinson's MAXAM Theory would actually work.

Even if it helped just a little, it might be enough to get Chandler through until Joey and Kathy broke up.

Even then, Adam still wouldn't approve of Chandler dating Kathy, but for Joey's sake, that would be enough.

As long as Joey didn't mind.

"Here."

Adam handed Chandler a bag full of dollar bills. "Don't just watch—tip them. It's polite and part of the experience!"

Chandler looked at the stack of dollar bills, torn between amusement and embarrassment.

Meanwhile, one of the dancers, noticing the commotion, gracefully made her way over to Chandler and started performing right in front of him.

Caught off guard, Chandler awkwardly followed the crowd's lead and began tipping her.

Over the Next Few Weeks.

Adam continued helping Chandler battle his emotional turmoil while quietly monitoring any news about Amazing Amy.

Just as he expected, news reports gradually started to surface.

Amazing Amy was missing.

Her parents realized they couldn't reach her about a week ago and reported her disappearance to the police.

But the authorities had no leads whatsoever.

Amazing Amy had crafted the perfect persona—surrounded by friends with no apparent enemies.

There were no suspects, no clear timeline of her disappearance, and certainly no motive.

Her parents turned to the media, pressuring the police to solve the case. But with so many cold cases each year, public interest quickly waned.

Unless new evidence emerged, her case would just be another file in the cold case archives.

No one would think to investigate further, nor would anyone suspect the real story behind it all.

Amazing Amy would never reveal her dark side, and her parents were too ignorant to realize that she had plotted against Adam, only to be preemptively thwarted by Juno and her team.

Juno had chosen the perfect timing and method, leaving no trace because they seemingly had "no motive."

Although Adam didn't know the details, he could piece it together after seeing news that Amy's parents had settled in New York.

Compared to publishing a novel that exposed Amy's potential schemes, eliminating the threat entirely was far safer for Adam.

For that, he felt even more grateful to Juno.

In this dangerously unpredictable world, having a 'guardian' willing to go to such lengths for him was truly a gift from above.

Chapter 263: The Chief Best Man

1998.

Ever since the "Amazing Amy" incident ended, time seemed to speed up like someone had hit the fast-forward button.

In the blink of an eye, more than three years had passed.

Adam was now on the verge of graduating from medical school.

Looking back on these years, what struck Adam the most was that he had become Chandler's chief best man. Soon, he would stand beside Chandler at the church altar, ready to hand him the wedding ring at just the right moment.

That's right!

The bride was still Monica.

Even with Adam, the charming "butterfly," stirring up strong winds, fate had tightly intertwined Monica and Chandler, bringing them together in the end.

Among Ross, Joey, and Adam, Chandler had chosen Adam as his chief best man without hesitation.

At first, Ross and Joey were quite unhappy about it.

But when Chandler listed all the things Adam had done for him over the years, everyone was shocked.

It was one of those "you don't realize it until you count it" moments.

Ross and Joey let go of their dissatisfaction and sincerely admitted defeat.

Adam, however, felt a little strange about the whole thing—especially when he thought about how Chandler's mother, Nora, would react when she saw him standing beside her son on the big day.

Still, he gladly accepted.

Being the chief best man was a true honor—an ultimate sign of trust from the groom. No one would refuse such a role.

If you asked Chandler now about Kathy, he probably wouldn't even remember her right away. He might even ask, "Who's Kathy?"

That woman he had once been obsessed with—the one who nearly drove a wedge between him and Joey—had become a thing of the past, thanks to Adam's help.

Chandler donating to a club for underprivileged girls had only delayed the inevitable. What truly changed his mindset was Adam taking him to see one of Kathy's theater performances.

When Chandler saw Kathy on stage, passionately acting out an almost R-rated scene with a handsome male co-star, he was devastated.

For Joey, who was also an actor and could perform romantic scenes with other actresses without issue, this wasn't a big deal.

But for Chandler, who wasn't a professional, watching the woman he adored engage in something so intimate with another man—right in front of an audience—was unbearable.

When he subtly asked Joey what he thought about it, Joey confidently shared his self-deceptive philosophy:

"The more passionate they are on stage, the less likely they are together in real life."

Adam rolled his eyes at that nonsense.

Actors falling for each other while working together was hardly rare.

Chandler wasn't convinced by Joey's reasoning either, and his feelings for Kathy quickly faded.

And sure enough, Joey proved to be an amateur in the acting world—his understanding of the profession was only surface-level. Kathy didn't end up with Chandler, but she did cheat on him with her on-stage partner.

This time, Joey was a little hurt, but it was nothing compared to what Chandler had done to him in the original timeline. He moved on quickly.

After all, Joey wasn't exactly innocent himself—he had been seeing other women while dating Kathy.

At that point, it was hard to say who had cheated on whom.

As for Chandler and Monica, their relationship still started at Ross's second wedding.

The bride was Emily, a woman with a noble air, a British accent, and an irresistible charm for Americans. Ironically, it was Rachel who had brought them together in the first place—only for Emily to be swept away by "Marriage Man" Ross.

Ross, believing that when you feel something, you should marry, proposed and was accepted.

The wedding was held in Emily's hometown, London, and everyone flew over to attend.

Then Rachel, as expected, made a mess of things.

She struggled through every obstacle, determined to confess her sudden emotions to Ross...

Did she want to get back together with him?

Oddly enough, no.

She just felt the need to say it out loud—to be true to her own feelings.

It was the emotional equivalent of someone pulling their pants down, only to be handed an instruction manual instead of what they expected.

Luckily, when Rachel arrived, she saw Ross and Emily sharing a heartfelt moment and held back.

But just as she resisted the urge to cause drama, Ross went ahead and created his own disaster.

During the "I do" portion of the ceremony, he said Rachel's name instead of Emily's.

You can imagine the awkwardness.

If this were a fantasy novel, it would be the ultimate "humiliation at the engagement ceremony" trope.

But Emily didn't storm out right away or declare, "You'll regret this in thirty years!" She just stood there, face darkened, as Ross nervously tried to restart the vows.

That was true love, no doubt about it.

Of course, Ross could forget about the wedding night.

As soon as the ceremony ended, Emily disappeared.

Meanwhile, Chandler and Monica, who had secretly hooked up, were desperately searching for a private place to be together. Every attempt was interrupted—until they looked at the beautifully decorated honeymoon suite and figured, "Why waste it?"

They almost had their moment there...

Until Ross, unable to find Emily, returned and declared he would wait for her in the honeymoon suite.

Everyone else didn't realize what was happening, but Adam knew immediately.

So, he took Max out for the night, giving Chandler and Monica the room they needed after all their built-up tension.

After the wedding, Chandler and Monica kept their relationship a secret for an entire year.

Partly because they weren't sure how to tell everyone.

And partly because sneaking around was thrilling.

This time, thanks to Adam's training over the past year, Chandler's stamina wasn't what it used to be. He might not have had Adam's superhuman endurance, but he was far from the weakling he had been in the original timeline.

Combined with Monica's "customized techniques," Chandler's natural talents, and the excitement of a secret relationship, the two of them became a force to be reckoned with.

Of course, secrets like this don't last forever.

In fact, if it hadn't been so unexpected, they would have been found out much earlier.

A year later, Ross was the last to know.

With that, Chandler and Monica finally went public and received everyone's blessings.

Another year passed.

Ross, having divorced Emily, got drunk and impulsively married Rachel in Vegas—only to get divorced again shortly after, cementing his title as either "Marriage Man" or "Divorce Man."

Finally, Chandler decided to propose.

With Adam keeping an eye on him, Chandler avoided any ridiculous mind games or risky strategies and proposed properly.

Monica, who had always dreamed of a perfect wedding, accepted without hesitation and immediately threw herself into planning it with boundless energy.

Over the years, Chandler had built a successful career in advertising, earning a solid income and savings. Even though Monica's parents had spent her wedding fund, Chandler could still give her the perfect, high-class wedding she deserved.

Chapter 264: Criticizing Adam

New York.

520 Apartment.

"Adam, are you sure you're not bringing a date?"

Monica asked.

"Yes."

Adam responded helplessly, "I've already said it a hundred times."

"I just wanted to double-check."

Monica pinned a blue pushpin onto the wedding seating plan. "I'm telling you, once the seating is finalized, even if you want to invite a date, you can't."

"I know."

Adam chuckled. "Even if I find a new date before then, I won't invite her. I wouldn't want to mess up your seating arrangement. Happy now?"

"Okay."

Monica finally nodded in satisfaction.

"Adam, you really are a player."

Rachel teased from the side. "No girlfriend can ever keep you tied down."

"Exactly."

Phoebe chimed in. "Max was so cool. How could you break up with her?"

"I'm like a cloud, a free cloud."

Adam laughed. "Wherever the wind blows, I drift. I won't land unless I hit a cold front."

"And even if you hit a cold front and turn into rain, once the sun comes out and the air warms up, you'll evaporate and float away again, continuing your so-called freedom."

Monica rolled her eyes. "Am I right?"

"A bride is always a bride. Your insights into marriage, love, and freedom are truly something else."

Adam smiled indifferently. "Very perceptive."

"Seriously, though,"

Phoebe huffed. "Why did you break up with Max?"

"Because he's a jerk!"

Rachel snarked.

"Is this a public condemnation?"

Adam smirked, then stood up. "I can't sit here any longer. Chandler, come on, let's go pick out suits."

"Alright."

Chandler readily agreed but still checked with Monica.

"You don't have to ask me about this. You're free to go wherever you want."

Monica felt a little embarrassed in front of the others, but then she secretly whispered to Chandler, "You can go."

Adam found the scene amusing.

He had seen countless similar classic moments in his previous life. After traveling to this one, even the most loving couples, like his parents, hadn't interacted like this. Only someone as strong-willed as Monica could recreate this familiar dynamic.

Always checking in with the girlfriend or wife, waiting for approval before making a move.

Why does this happen?

Simple.

According to Sheldon's theory, negative reinforcement is more effective than positive reinforcement.

In layman's terms, you're just too attached to her.

Disobey? No intimacy for you.

During the honeymoon phase or early years of marriage, this method works like a charm.

Adam and Chandler made their escape.

But the conversation didn't end.

The "Criticizing Adam" session continued.

Phoebe and Rachel led the charge, ridiculing Adam's flirtatious ways and expressing their regret for Max.

"Don't get so worked up. They broke up on good terms. Even Max never blamed him."

Monica offered a fair point.

"That's because Max is a good person."

Phoebe argued. "Which makes Adam even more heartless."

"Adam is definitely a bit of a player, but calling him heartless is too much."

Monica explained, "From the beginning, he was clear with Max. They were something more than friends but not quite lovers. They had a great time together. Adam even helped her get into college, and last year when Max graduated, he got her a high-paying job, helping her achieve her dreams and completely changing her life."

"But Max wanted to take things further with Adam."

Rachel interrupted. "Isn't that a reasonable request?"

"It is reasonable."

Monica nodded. "But Adam has the right to refuse. He's not ready to settle down. Should we force him?"

Besides, could Adam even settle down?

Max figured it out a long time ago. With Adam's stamina, even if they took the next step, he wouldn't stay put. He'd eventually cheat.

Ending it early was probably for the best."

"Is Adam really that... intense?"

Phoebe and Rachel's curiosity was piqued.

"That's what Max said."

Monica hesitated, then added, "You guys know Max—she's straightforward and says whatever's on her mind. She wouldn't lie about this.

Plus, Chandler and I run with Adam every morning. No matter how much we push, he never even breaks a sweat. His stamina is insane."

Phoebe and Rachel seemed lost in thought.

"After the breakup, aside from a little initial sadness, Max actually felt relieved."

Monica continued, "It really was an amicable split. Otherwise, with Max's personality, do you think she'd still work for Adam without holding a grudge?"

"High-paying jobs aren't easy to come by."

Phoebe said enviously.

She genuinely envied Max.

Their backgrounds were similar—both had rough childhoods and had to fend for themselves early on.

Back then, Max was just a waitress, while Phoebe at least had a trade as a masseuse and was doing much better.

But in just three years...

Max went to college, became an artist, and Adam even set up a small publishing company for her. She now had a high salary and a prestigious position—she had transformed from a nobody into someone extraordinary.

Meanwhile, Phoebe was still just a masseuse.

It was impossible not to feel a little bitter.

"Max isn't the type to fake happiness."

Monica reminded them. "You can't pretend to be that genuinely content."

"I know."

Phoebe quickly hid her jealousy and covered it up. "I just think Max deserved better."

"I wonder what kind of woman Adam will marry in the future?"

Rachel suddenly mused with a smile.

"There's a good chance he won't get married at all."

Monica thought for a moment. "He leans toward not wanting marriage."

"He's rich, he's handsome, and he's... well, let's just say energetic. He might end up changing his nationality and marrying multiple wives."

Phoebe teased. "Then he'd make them all wear veils so no other man could look at them."

"..."

Monica was speechless. "You do realize polygamy exists outside of that one place, right? And making women wear veils? Come on!"

"You guys give him too much credit."

Rachel laughed. "Sure, he might seem unstoppable now, but that's just because he's young and having fun.

Once he gets older and actually wants to settle down, let's see if he can still keep up this act.

Marry multiple wives?

He'd be lucky to keep one!

Monogamy became the standard for a reason—it doesn't just protect women, it protects men too!"

"Haha, Rachel's got a point."

Phoebe burst out laughing.

Monica also smiled, clearly in agreement.

The battle of the sexes had always been uneven.

Even though Monica and the others weren't familiar with old sayings like "Youthful arrogance leads to regret in old age" or "There are no exhausted fields, only overworked oxen,"

They understood the sentiment. And through their own relationships, they had confirmed the truth behind it.

This was why they were so confident.

In the long run, women always win.

Chapter 265:

New York.

Inside a high-end custom suit shop.

"Is this really necessary?"

Chandler spread his arms as the tailor took his measurements, complaining, "The last time Joey had me get a suit, the experience wasn't exactly pleasant."

"Relax."

Adam, standing to the side, observed and couldn't help but laugh. "This place is the most professional. It's not a prison tailor's branch—no one's going to twist MR. BIG in all sorts of directions."

"I sure hope so."

Chandler pursed his lips.

Five years ago, when he needed a suit, Joey had recommended a tailor shop that his family frequented.

During the measuring process, the tailor had been too thorough, leaving Chandler utterly bewildered. When he later asked about it, he found out that Joey had been measured the exact same way and genuinely believed it was standard practice.

But when they learned that only prisoners were measured that way, Joey's face was utterly mortified.

"You know, I haven't had a custom suit made since then."

Chandler still felt uneasy. "Why not just rent a suit from Rachel's shop—one that a celebrity has worn before? It's convenient, cool, and saves money!"

"Forget about the money."

Adam chuckled. "As your best man, getting you a suit is the least I can do. What's so great about wearing something a celebrity wore? It's just a gimmick. Plus, it's not exactly sanitary. Do you really want to test Monica's obsessive cleanliness at a time like this?"

"It's not that extreme."

Chandler knew that Adam was already a billionaire and wouldn't even blink at the cost of a suit. And since he wasn't like Ross, the wedding enthusiast, he only planned to get married once. So, accepting Adam's generosity wasn't a big deal.

"Those suits are professionally cleaned."

"Are you sure?"

Adam smirked. "I've heard that some of those celebrity-worn suits are kept 'authentic'—you know, to maximize their appeal to die-hard fans. You're not one of those superfans, are you? Planning to extract residual DNA from the suit to clone a new idol?"

"Ugh!"

Chandler shuddered. "People actually do that?"

"This is America."

Adam laughed. "If you can think of it, someone's probably done it."

In the future, Penny would get Sheldon a used napkin with a celebrity's autograph on it. She had hesitated because the napkin was dirty, but Sheldon had held it like a holy relic.

To him, it was one of the greatest gifts he had ever received because if biotech advanced a little more, he could use the residual DNA on the napkin to clone his own version of that celebrity.

He was so thrilled that he handed Penny all of his gift baskets and, in an extremely rare moment, awkwardly gave her a hug.

Penny was stunned, calling for Leonard to witness the miracle.

Even Leonard was in awe. Sheldon was notorious for hating physical contact. Forget hugging—he barely even shook hands. Whenever he did, he immediately sanitized his hands like he was afraid of catching something.

So, the fact that a used napkin made Sheldon hug someone showed just how much it meant to him.

"All done."

The tailor finished measuring and nodded at Adam.

"Make sure to get it done quickly—my friend's wedding is in four weeks, and there can't be any delays."

Adam instructed firmly.

"Absolutely! No delays!"

Just then, a voice chimed in as a figure approached, slinging an arm over Adam's shoulder and earnestly adding, "This is my bro's wedding!"

"Got it."

The tailor smiled and walked away.

"So, guys, where's the bachelor party happening? Need me to arrange some strippers? I'm telling you, I know some incredible ones. I guarantee your bachelor night will be legen—wait for it—dary! Legendary! High five!"

The enthusiastic figure rattled on, leaving Chandler completely dumbfounded. He blankly let the guy lift his hand for a high five.

"Uh... who are you?"

Chandler stared in shock.

"You don't recognize me?"

The man looked offended and wrapped an arm around Chandler. "I'm Barney! Whatever, I'll let it slide since it's your big day. Now, tell me—how's the bachelor party coming along? Listen, I refuse to let my bro's bachelor night be boring. If you guys aren't up to the task, I'll handle everything!"

"As the best man, I'm in charge."

By now, Adam had already recognized the unexpected guest. He chuckled. "And I can guarantee you—there will be no strippers and none of those crazy activities. You wouldn't like it, so stop pretending."

"You know him?"

Chandler sighed in relief.

(Insert odd, random text that seemed out of place in the original.)

"Nope."

Adam smirked. "But I do know guys like him. They love crashing bachelor parties. They don't care if they even know the groom. Some of them even sneak into weddings just to hit on bridesmaids. Sound familiar?"

"Joey!"

Chandler gasped. "He's just like Joey!"

"Joey Tribbiani?"

Barney Stinson, who had been grinning through Adam's teasing, suddenly changed expressions at the mention of Joey's name.

"The actor?!"

"You know him?"

Adam's eyes lit up.

"Oh, hell yes, I know him."

Barney straightened his tie, his eyes gleaming dramatically. "He's stolen quite a few of my women. Joey Tribbiani is my greatest rival! You guys are his friends, right? He's never mentioned me?"

"Not once."

Chandler shook his head. "I was his roommate for years—never heard him bring you up."

"He. What. Didn't!"

Barney clutched his chest in mock agony, stumbling back in disbelief. "This is the ultimate insult! Tell him this for me—Joey Tribbiani, the game is on!"

With that, he pointed two fingers at his eyes, then at Adam and Chandler in a dramatic challenge before walking off, leaving Chandler bewildered and Adam struggling to hold back laughter.

"What just happened? Did we run into a lunatic?"

"No."

Adam chuckled. "He's actually pretty interesting. But I really didn't expect him to know Joey. Then again, I guess it makes sense. It'd be weird if they didn't know each other. Now, I can't wait to go back and ask Joey about this."

"Alright."

Chandler twitched his lips. "But he's not going to crash my bachelor party, right?"

"Absolutely not."

Adam said firmly. "I don't care what happens at other bachelor parties, but your bachelor party? No way he's getting in."

No chance.

There was no way Barney was going to mess this up.

Chapter 266: Who Will Sleep Beside Me Tonight?

Chandler's Apartment.

"Barney Stinson?"

Joey frowned the moment he heard the name. "How do you guys know him?"

"We met at the tailor's shop..."

Adam gave a brief explanation and then, with a hint of gossip, asked, "How long have you known him? Why haven't you mentioned him before?"

"That guy's just a punk!"

Joey scoffed. "I ran into him a few times while picking up women. He's arrogant and has zero respect for his seniors. So, I taught him a few lessons—stole a couple of his dates—just to show him that Joey Tribbiani is the real king of New York!"

"No wonder he had that look on his face," Chandler said, suddenly understanding.

"You taught him a lesson?"

Adam looked skeptical. "I can't speak to who's better looking, but his tactics seem way more advanced than yours. Plus, he clearly has money. How exactly did you steal his dates?"

"..."

Joey was at a loss for words.

The reason he never mentioned Barney Stinson to Adam and the others was that, while Barney might have been a newcomer, his game was on another level. He had no problem spending big money to support his strategies. Joey had the upper hand at first, but after that, Barney completely dominated him.

And there was no way Joey was going to bring up something that embarrassing.

"Of course!"

Joey stubbornly insisted, "He may have money and tactics, but I'm a star!"

"A soap opera star," Adam reminded him.

Over the past few years, Joey's career had followed a similar trajectory to what it was in the original timeline—appearing in several soap operas, somewhat famous but not exactly a big name. Still, at least his income had improved, making all those years of struggling worth it.

"So what if I'm a soap opera star?"

Joey objected. "Housewives love soap opera stars, you know?"

As he spoke, he started winking suggestively.

"So, you specialize in housewives and soap opera fans," Adam teased. "While Barney goes after... everyone?"

"Don't get me started!"

Joey huffed. "That bastard loves a challenge. Age, type, style—he has to try them all. And then he brags about it like he's the king of New York's dating scene."

"He didn't actually go and make himself a 'King of New York Pickup Artists' crown, did he?" Adam asked, amused.

"How did you know?"

Joey's eyes widened in shock. "Whether we acknowledge him or not, he really did that. Strutting around, smug as hell."

"..."

Chandler's mouth twitched. He looked at Adam and said seriously, "Barney is not coming to my bachelor party."

"Don't worry," Adam reassured him with a grin. "As long as I'm there, he won't ruin your party."

"And the wedding!"

Chandler shuddered at the thought. "The wedding is way more important!"

"I got this," Adam promised.

"What?!"

Joey's eyes went wide. "That guy is coming to Chandler's bachelor party and the wedding?!"

"He wasn't originally invited," Adam admitted. "But considering your complicated history and his personality, he'll probably show up to stir up trouble."

"There's nothing between us," Joey said firmly. "I don't want anything to do with him! The guy's insane!"

"Really?"

Adam smirked. "I always thought you two would become great friends. No, wait—legendary wingmen."

"Come on!"

Joey rolled his eyes dramatically. "Would you be friends with someone who constantly steals your dates?"

"Uh..."

Adam hesitated.

The whole "wingman" concept worked best when one was clearly the leader and the other the backup.

For example:

Lü Xiaobu liked bringing Zhang Wei as his wingman. Barney liked bringing Marshall and Ted as his.

Attractive women were a limited resource. When both guys were into the same woman, someone had to step aside.

If one was clearly the alpha and the other the wingman, the wingman would naturally back off and support the main player—sometimes even sacrificing himself for the mission.

Plus, having a less attractive wingman made the main guy look even better.

Same reason why gorgeous women often have plainer-looking best friends—it's all part of the strategy.

Joey and Barney had similar personalities and should have been great friends.

But they were both apex predators in the dating game. Instead of teaming up, they ended up clashing—each marking their own territory, and whenever they crossed paths, it turned into a battle.

Not to mention, Joey was already in his 30s, while Barney looked around 24 or 25. A five- or six-year age gap was enough to create a generational divide.

Not everyone could be like Adam—able to relate to people in their 30s and 40s, connect with peers in their 20s, and even get along with teenagers.

Understanding all this, Adam just shrugged—it made perfect sense now.

"It's getting late. I should head out."

Adam glanced at his watch and stood up.

"You're about to graduate. You must be really busy these days," Chandler said apologetically.

"Not really."

Adam smiled. "The two most important exams in medical school—the USMLE licensing exams—are already out of the way. I passed Step 1 back in my second year and scored high on Step 2 last year as a junior.

As for residency, I'm already set to train at the medical center. So compared to others, I actually have plenty of free time. Being your best man won't be a problem—don't worry about it."

"That's a relief."

Chandler exhaled.

Ever since Adam started med school, Chandler had learned a lot about the insane workload of medical students.

He knew how demanding it was, and if he could, he would have scheduled the wedding at a more convenient time to avoid interfering with Adam's studies.

But Adam assured him that this was actually the best time.

Once he graduated and started his residency, he'd be really busy. And worse—his schedule wouldn't be up to him anymore.

In med school, you could at least control your study time—even if it meant pulling all-nighters.

But in the hospital, you had to follow strict work hours.

During the first year of residency, interns were basically at the bottom of the food chain—not even considered full-fledged doctors yet.

Being on call for 36 hours straight was not a joke.

So this window, right before he started residency, was actually perfect.

If they had waited any longer, forget Chandler's wedding—Adam might not even have time for his own future wedding.

Near the Medical Center.

A luxury high-rise apartment.

After leaving Chandler's place, Adam drove here.

That's right.

He had moved.

This new place was much closer to the hospital, which was essential for a time-strapped intern.

With Chandler and Monica getting married soon, they'd be moving out of their apartment anyway, so there was no reason for Adam to keep living there.

After stepping into his sleek, modern apartment, he showered and lay down on his king-sized bed.

He thought for a moment, then picked up his phone and dialed a number.

Chapter 267: Adam Standing on the Fifth Level

After making the call, Adam found himself lost in thought.

His breakup with Max had happened two years ago.

The reason for the breakup? A cliché one.

Max wanted to take things further, but after reevaluating himself following his experience with Heather, Adam had no such desire.

That's how relationships go sometimes.

If you're not moving forward, you're moving backward.

Seeing Adam's firm stance, Max chose to step away.

Adam didn't try to stop her.

Because he had no reason to.

Nor did he have the desire to.

The "more than friends, but not quite lovers" dynamic ultimately couldn't withstand the test of time.

The longer it lasted, the more it crumbled.

Either you grew tired of it, or you fell too deep.

The saying "feelings grow over time" isn't just empty talk.

Max, who had always been carefree, changed after spending over a year with Adam.

The same was true for Adam and Heather after years together.

That's why knowing when to break up is a key skill for a good playboy.

Of course, after all this time since breaking up with Max, Adam hadn't been living like a monk.

That wouldn't be very American.

Besides his monthly trips to Texas to visit Heather, Adam still had other people to keep him company.

Ten minutes later.

The doorbell rang.

Adam looked through the peephole, and as always, was momentarily blinded before immediately opening the door.

In Western culture, there was once a saying about "blue-blooded" nobles.

In the past, aristocrats proudly rolled up their sleeves to show the blue veins beneath their pale, snow-white skin, calling it "blue blood."

Since they didn't engage in physical labor, their skin remained fair, distinguishing them from the darker-skinned working class.

But later, with the arrival of the Industrial Revolution, laborers were pushed into factories, working around the clock with little exposure to sunlight.

Over time, they, too, became pale.

That's when nobles started viewing tanned skin as the new mark of status—because only the wealthy and idle had the leisure to sunbathe and develop a golden tan.

It was still all about setting themselves apart from the common folk.

But Adam wasn't that pretentious—he had always preferred fair skin.

The kind so white it could almost blind you, like flawless jade.

He had a soft spot for it, heavily influenced by the Eastern literature he grew up with.

In the martial arts novels he read as a kid, descriptions of "jade-like women," "fair-skinned beauties," and "ivory arms" always carried a sense of allure.

And the person before him now was shockingly fair.

Who else could it be but Alice?

Neither of them spoke.

After closing the door with a nudge of their foot, the dimly lit room flickered rhythmically with its specially designed lighting.

The night was too beautiful.

An hour later.

"Have they assigned you to a hospital yet?"

Adam asked casually.

"Steven said he arranged it for me—I'll be in the surgical department at the Medical Center," Alice replied lazily.

"He really takes good care of you," Adam chuckled. "And what about your 'official' boyfriend, William?"

"Don't say that," Alice frowned. "William isn't my official boyfriend. We never made it official."

"He doesn't see it that way," Adam smirked. "You can tell he's pretty pleased with himself after beating Steven in the competition for you."

"Even if he's pleased, could he be more pleased than you?" Alice muttered, a little annoyed.

Adam simply laughed.

During their four years in med school, Adam had clashed with both Steven and William multiple times as rivals.

Especially William—he had resented Adam ever since the Heather situation and that trip to Las Vegas.

Adam, being highly perceptive, could see right through their dynamic.

Alice was impressive. She had both Steven and William wrapped around her fingers.

They both fell for her at first sight.

William had the looks, and Steven had the money—both were appealing in their own ways.

Though she knew Steven could help her more in the long run, she was still young and valued looks more, so she secretly leaned toward William.

But to keep Steven's support, she refused to make things official with William.

William was furious, but Alice had been upfront with him—she got into med school through connections.

He didn't have much room to argue, so he grudgingly accepted their secret relationship.

Over time, he got used to it and even found it thrilling.

Exciting.

Whenever he stood next to Steven, he was filled with a sense of superiority.

So what if you're rich?

Alice chose me!

He looked at Adam the same way.

He thought Adam had poor taste, always hanging around Ilyat and Bianca.

In his mind, even combined, they couldn't compare to one of Alice's long legs.

When he was with Alice, he often mocked Steven and Adam—partly to praise Alice, partly to vent his own smug satisfaction.

Lu Xun once said: No one is free from gossip, and no one refrains from gossiping about others.

Or as another saying goes: Privacy bows before even deeper secrets.

Adam understood all this perfectly.

Shortly after breaking up with Max, Adam had a heated argument with William and decided to have a "rational" conversation with Alice.

As expected, Alice was indeed a rational person.

The reason was simple.

Adam had the looks, the money, and the physique—basically an upgraded fusion of both Steven and William.

If he were actually interested in a real relationship, and not just a mutually beneficial arrangement, she would have ditched Steven and William in a heartbeat.

As Lu Xun also said: Women love bad boys.

Adam, being unapologetically "bad," was strangely appealing to Alice, who was just as "bad" but in a more discreet way.

Every time she thought about ending things, one call from Adam would have her running back to him, completely unable to resist.

And so, from their hidden vantage point, they often chatted about the people on the lower "levels"—the oblivious onlookers on the first level, Steven on the second, William on the third, and Alice herself on the fourth.

Of course, it was mostly Adam, standing on the fifth level, who led the conversation.

That's why he understood William's mindset so well.

Every time William flashed him that smug yet reserved smile, Adam never said a word—just smiled back.

That actually helped reduce conflicts between them and even eased some of the tension.

"William has been assigned too—he's in the Medical Center as well, but he chose internal medicine," Alice said.

She knew she couldn't win against Adam, so she instinctively leaned into him and indulged his love for gossip.

"Ilyat chose internal medicine too," Adam chuckled.

Though residency training required rotations in different specialties, the general direction was set.

The main division was between internal medicine and surgery.

Later, people would further specialize based on their interests, skills, and the hospital's needs.

For example, Adam planned to go into cardiothoracic surgery, and Juno into neurosurgery.

Alice, being ambitious and strategic, had long made up her mind—she was going into ophthalmology.

It wasn't the most prestigious field and was often looked down upon, only slightly better than dentistry, but like dentistry, it was highly profitable and relatively easy compared to other surgical specialties.

For someone like Alice, who wanted to make money, live a high-society life, and not work herself to death, it was the perfect choice.

Surgical specialties were far more competitive than internal medicine.

Ilyat, despite seeming ambitious, was actually quite timid inside.

After four years in med school, she had come to terms with her nature and chose internal medicine.

Ironically, quiet and reserved Bianca chose surgery.

Originally, she had planned to return to Chicago for her residency, but Adam convinced her to stay.

Because he had finally remembered who Bianca was.

The same Bianca from Shameless—the cancer-stricken doctor ruined by that bastard Frank Gallagher.

Now that he recognized her, and given their close relationship, Adam wasn't about to let her walk down that same path.

Chapter 268: When in Doubt, Go for the Big Explosion

"You have the same kind of relationship with Iliad and Bianca, don't you?"

When Alice heard Adam mention Iliad, she scoffed. "So, you managed to charm all three of the 'Golden Flowers' from Columbia Medical School's Class of '95? Impressive."

"Don't be ridiculous, I didn't."

Adam chuckled. "My relationships with Iliad and Bianca are completely pure."

"Pure like your relationship with me?"

Alice sneered.

"Heh."

Adam simply smiled and changed the subject. "Let me give you a heads-up—this year, the medical center's residency program is getting two top-tier graduates from Harvard Medical School. They're both incredibly skilled, especially Meredith Grey. Be careful, or she might just clip your wings and take off with them."

"Grey?"

Alice's eyes narrowed. "That Grey?"

"That's right."

Adam nodded.

Meredith's mother was a legend in the medical world—an icon among female doctors. The name Grey was instantly recognizable.

"Is she pretty?"

Alice half-sat up and looked at Adam.

The name Grey carried so much weight, and since the medical center had been Meredith's mother's primary workplace before moving to Boston, there were undoubtedly strong connections there.

Even if Alice wasn't aware that the surgical director at the medical center was a close friend of Meredith's mother, she still understood why a top Harvard Medical graduate like Meredith would choose to intern in New York instead of staying in Boston's prestigious hospitals.

Americans value networking above all else.

Look at their system—recommendation letters are more important than exams.

It's basically a modern version of an ancient Eastern system, where officials were selected based on personal endorsements rather than merit.

Back then, a well-known figure would nominate someone, a powerful person would approve it, and just like that, they'd land a government position. Over time, they could climb even higher.

In the U.S., it works the same way—famous endorsements, elite university admissions, networking in college, and then using those connections to secure jobs. Performance doesn't really matter—sometimes, the worse your grades, the higher you climb...

Truly, nothing under the sun is new.

"She's beautiful, and her voice is incredibly sultry," Adam said with a grin. "Very seductive. Plus, she's got a... liberal attitude."

"Another one of your so-called friends?"

Alice rolled her eyes.

"Of course not."

Adam feigned seriousness. "What do you take me for? Not just any woman can be my friend."

And that was the truth.

Women like Meredith Grey—who lost control after a few drinks—were tempting, sure, but Adam wouldn't touch her with a ten-foot pole.

Residency was about to start, and this was an American hospital in the world of a medical TV drama!

With the way this world worked, hospitals were high-risk zones.

If Alice had been the type to rely purely on her looks to manipulate men, Adam wouldn't have gotten involved with her either. But she was strategic—carefully managing her image and keeping Steven and William on a string. She even leaned toward being conservative in her approach.

William, on the other hand, was completely infatuated with Alice, acting like she was the only woman in the world for him.

If that weren't the case, Adam would never have gone near her.

The great Lü Joy Barney Smallcloth once said:

"Before getting into a relationship with a woman, make sure you have more boats than she does—otherwise, you're at a serious disadvantage."

On the surface, the message was obvious.

But underneath, it carried an unspoken rule that all playboys instinctively understood: If a woman is wilder than you, stay the hell away—unless you enjoy regret.

Alice stared at Adam for a moment, then smiled slightly. She lay back down and stared at the ceiling, lost in thought. Clearly, Adam's words had struck a nerve.

Steven and William—one a backup, the other a devoted admirer—were both assets she didn't want to lose. And if Meredith really was as Adam described, she could be a serious threat.

"Don't overthink it. Just enjoy the moment," Adam said, laughing.

"Yeah, right."

Alice shoved Adam away as he started getting handsy again, then got up and began dressing. "That's it for tonight. I don't have time to do extra hours of yoga just to recover."

"Just ignore William for a week."

Adam pulled her back. "Desire is strongest when you can't have what you want."

"And what does that make you?"

Alice, unable to fight Adam's strength, was pulled back into his arms. She smirked.

"Someone you'll never truly have."

Adam grinned.

"You're such a pervert!"

Alice laughed and cursed.

One hour later.

As always, Alice forced herself to walk away, refusing to stay the night. Aside from the first time when she spent all night debating with Adam, she never dared to stay over.

The Next Day.

"What's wrong?"

Adam rushed over after getting an urgent call from Chandler.

Ross and Joey were there too.

"My wedding vows! How the hell do I write them?"

Chandler was holding a blank sheet of paper and a pen, looking completely lost. "Monica wrote hers in no time, but I can't come up with a single word. She's clearly way more in love with me than I am with her!"

"Relax, take your time."

Adam reassured him. "We'll help you figure it out."

As the best man, anything the groom couldn't handle became his responsibility.

Glory and responsibility always go hand in hand.

"Relax?"

Chandler scoffed. "Monica keeps randomly shouting at me, 'Do you know we're getting married in four weeks? Four weeks, babe! FOUR WEEKS!' And every time, she gets louder and more intense. If she finds out I haven't written a single word, who knows what will happen?"

"That's just Monica."

Ross shrugged. "She's been planning this wedding since she was a kid. I've told you this before. You're the one who insisted on dating and marrying her."

"Thanks for reminding me."

Chandler rolled his eyes.

"You're welcome..."

Ross was about to keep joking, but Chandler's fiery glare shut him up. He mimed zipping his lips.

"Adam, you're a writer and the best man—this is your job," Joey declared, passing the responsibility along.

"Yeah," Ross agreed.

Chandler looked at Adam expectantly.

"..."

Adam's mouth twitched.

He was a novelist—what did he know about wedding vows?

Sure, *Lord of the Mysteries* had some great lines, but that was written by someone else. Back in his previous life, Adam had been a struggling writer with zero experience in crafting romantic speeches.

But now, he had to step up.

Luckily, he'd watched *The Big Bang Theory* religiously.

He quickly remembered a scene where Sheldon used a quote from Spider-Man to deal with an angry Amy.

If it worked there, it might work here.

"When I look into your eyes, and you look back into mine, everything feels different.

I feel stronger... yet weaker.

I feel excited... yet terrified.

The truth is, I don't know exactly how I feel.

But I do know one thing—I know the kind of man I want to be..."

Chapter 269: Shock! The Bride Actually Had This Thought!

"How does it feel?"

After Adam recited this classic line, he noticed they had no reaction. Unable to hold back, he added, "I was just throwing out an idea. Wedding vows should come from your own heart to be sincere and fitting. You're a writer, after all..."

Before he could finish, he was interrupted.

"Wow! Is this the power of a famous writer? This is so well-written and touching!"

"Write it down, write it down! This line is perfect for wooing girls!"

Joey and Ross snapped out of their daze, visibly excited.

"You expect me to come up with something?"

Chandler protested, "I could think for a hundred years and still not come up with such a beautiful line! This is it!"

Although he worked in advertising and had come up with countless catchy slogans and witty remarks, his forte was humor. That was just his personality.

Self-deprecating jokes and sarcastic quips? He could do those effortlessly.

But deep, heartfelt romance? That was beyond him.

That's exactly why men who can craft and deliver romantic lines—no matter how much of a player they are—still manage to attract women.

Rarity makes things valuable.

And women love this kind of thing.

"You sure?"

Adam's mouth twitched slightly.

He didn't deny that this line was deeply emotional and moving, but it was originally written for Spider-Man to say to Mary Jane. Using it in Chandler's wedding vows felt... a little off.

In the movie, Spider-Man had been secretly in love with his neighbor, Mary Jane, since childhood, and she was the only one he ever loved.

But Chandler and Monica's relationship was completely different.

They first met during a college break when Ross brought his roommate Chandler home. Back then, Monica was still overweight.

Monica developed a crush on Chandler at first sight, but he merely scoffed at her as a greeting. Later, he even made fun of her behind her back—only for Monica to overhear everything.

In retaliation, Monica "accidentally" cut off one of Chandler's toes...

For the next ten years, there were zero sparks between them.

Besides, this line was one of those universally romantic ones, so much so that even Sheldon used it to placate an angry Amy. And Amy, despite knowing it was a borrowed line, still accepted it. That alone proved the power of a well-crafted romantic phrase.

Thinking about it, it actually did suit Chandler and Monica's relationship pretty well.

"When I look into your eyes and you look back at me, everything feels different."

Originally, they only had a deep friendship. But after that night in London when they ended up in bed together, the way they looked at each other truly changed. Everything became different.

"The truth is, I don't know how to describe my feelings.

But I do know what kind of man I want to be..."

This line also fit Chandler perfectly.

Right now, he really didn't know how to put his feelings into words. But he did know exactly what kind of man he wanted to be—Monica's loving husband!

Thinking it over, the line Adam casually quoted to brush them off actually worked perfectly as Chandler's wedding vow.

Since Spider-Man was still four years away from its theatrical release, this quote technically counted as Adam's original work.

"Of course, I'm sure."

Chandler nodded firmly, shoving a pen and paper into Adam's hands. "Write it down exactly as you said it. This is my wedding vow."

"Adam, you're a genius."

Ross was convinced.

Before, he could at least comfort himself with the fact that he had a PhD. But now, Adam was about to get his medical doctorate and had just 'casually written' such a beautiful wedding vow. There was no competing with that.

"Heh."

Back when Adam first started borrowing famous works, he barely felt guilty. Now, he didn't feel guilty at all. He gladly accepted the praise.

This vow's emotional impact was no surprise.

Hollywood is known for its well-oiled filmmaking machine.

What does that mean?

Big budgets. Industrial-scale production.

Every aspect follows a standardized process, with each person functioning like a cog in a machine.

Take screenwriting, for example.

Normally, a story comes from a single writer's imagination. But in Hollywood's blockbuster filmmaking system, do you really think one writer alone can handle the script for a multi-million-dollar production?

Not a chance.

No matter how talented a writer is, they can't perfect every detail.

That's where the team comes in.

Some writers specialize in suspense.

Some specialize in comedy.

Some excel at inspiring messages.

And some are masters of romance.

The Spider-Man movie was a prime example of a Hollywood blockbuster, with each writer contributing their expertise. The most professional, top-tier romance writers penned the most fitting lines. Of course, they turned out to be iconic.

"Monica is going to love it."

Ross stated with certainty.

"You're in for a great wedding night," Joey teased, pointing both fingers at Chandler with a mischievous grin.

"Haha."

With his wedding vow settled and this unexpected bonus, Chandler couldn't help but laugh giddily.

"As long as you like it."

Adam finished writing it down and handed it to Chandler. After a moment's thought, he added, "Chandler, listen—keep this vow safe. Whatever you do, *don't let Monica see it before the wedding.*"

"Why?"

Chandler was puzzled.

"Isn't it obvious?"

Ross answered matter-of-factly, "If she sees it now, the surprise won't be as strong later."

"No."

Adam shook his head. "I'm worried that Monica might not have written a great vow herself. If she sees yours, she might just take it for herself."

"What?!"

Chandler and Ross shouted in unison. "No way!"

"Why not?"

Joey, the academic underachiever, immediately understood and pointed out, "If she speaks first, she can just change man to woman—

'I know what kind of woman I want to be.'

See? Still just as beautiful and moving."

"Don't underestimate this."

Adam chuckled. "Monica cares about this wedding more than anyone can imagine. If she thinks this is the ultimate wedding vow, do you really think she wouldn't take it for herself?"

"..."

Chandler and Ross were stunned speechless.

Knowing Monica's personality, she really would do that.

In this wedding, Chandler wasn't even the most important thing.

The wedding itself was the priority.

In the original timeline, Chandler actually ran away twice on the wedding day, and Monica didn't even notice. She was too busy excitedly pacing around, yelling, "I'm getting married today! I'm about to get married!"

Even when she tripped and fell, she immediately got back up and kept shouting, "I think I broke a rib, but I don't care because *I'm getting married today!*"

Of course, this time, with Adam around, Chandler had already grown into a more mature man. He no longer feared marriage and family, so he wasn't about to run away.

Chandler shoved the paper into Adam's hands and grabbed Joey's notes as well, handing them over. "You're the best man. Keep the vows with you."

"Hey!"

Joey protested.

Chandler shot him a glare.

"I mean, uh... that sounds like a great idea."

Joey grinned awkwardly.

No choice. The groom always has the final say!

Chapter 270: The Restroom Hero

There were two months left until Adam's graduation.

Four weeks remained until Chandler's wedding.

Everything was progressing in an orderly manner.

A determined wanderer was also advancing his own plans.

New York.

MacLaren's Pub.

"Joey Tribbiani? That name sounds so familiar," Ted said, tilting his head as he took a sip of beer.

"You forgot? He's Adam's friend," Lily reminded him.

"We even had dinner together back in freshman year," Matthew, who sat next to Lily and was practically attached to her, added before taking a big gulp of beer.

"Oh, I remember now!" Ted slapped his forehead. "That was when Adam made a fortune from his book and treated all his friends to dinner. There was this really handsome actor there who could eat an insane amount. Was that him?"

"That's the one!"

Sitting beside Ted was Barney Stinson, always dressed in a sharp suit. He twirled his glass in his hand, squinting slightly. "A total glutton."

"Oh, wow. Someone really doesn't like him," Lily teased.

"Did he steal your thunder?" Ted asked directly.

"Steal my thunder?" Barney scoffed. "No one steals my thunder!"

"You sure about that?" Lily smirked. "I know someone who, the moment he stands next to you, makes all your magic tricks and pickup routines useless. Every woman in the room will have eyes only for him."

"Impossible," Barney sneered, though curiosity got the better of him. "Who?"

"Adam Duncan."

Lily, Matthew, and Ted said his name in unison.

The three of them were Adam's old college friends from Columbia and had lived in the dorm next to his.

More than six years had passed since then.

Ted had graduated and become an architect.

Lily was now a kindergarten teacher.

As for Matthew, he had continued his studies after graduation and was now a first-year student at Columbia Law School.

Like medical school, law school didn't have an undergraduate program, meaning applicants needed a bachelor's degree. Admissions were competitive, and Columbia Law was one of the top institutions in the world. The fact that Matthew got in spoke volumes about his talent and hard work.

Much like med students, law students had to immerse themselves in massive textbooks, memorizing and analyzing complex legal statutes.

It was no surprise that both professions—medicine and law—were considered the backbone of America's middle class.

Currently, Matthew and Ted were roommates in an apartment above MacLaren's Pub. Lily was practically living with Matthew, even though she had her own apartment. She rarely went back, using it more as a storage space and backup plan.

The three of them were always together, much like Chandler, Monica, and Ross had been.

Matthew and Lily had been dating since freshman year. The casual attitude Matthew once had about their relationship—claiming they were just having fun—had turned into a running joke. Over six years later, they were still inseparable, practically co-owners of each other's lives.

Ted, on the other hand, had transformed from a hopeless romantic into a seasoned player. He had gone through girlfriend after girlfriend, breaking more hearts than he could count.

Half a year ago, Barney—who lived life like a game—had met Ted in the restroom of MacLaren's Pub.

They had been standing side by side, relieving themselves, when Barney suddenly spoke.

"Ever since my mom passed away, tonight is the first time I've taken my deaf brother out."

"Oh... I'm sorry," Ted said, momentarily stunned, quickly offering condolences.

"It's okay."

Barney leaned against the wall with one hand while the other held his drink, his voice full of emotion. "Now, I'm the only one who can take care of him. Even though I had to give up my dreams to do it, I'm happy. He's my brother—I love him!"

Ted was even more confused but, seeing the deep sincerity in Barney's expression, responded with another sympathetic nod. "Man, uh... I'm really sorry."

As he finished up, he prepared to leave, thinking about how bizarre the whole situation was. Meeting a stranger in a restroom was one thing, but having that stranger suddenly open up about such a tragic backstory in that setting? Definitely weird.

"Wow, you actually bought that?"

Barney suddenly grinned.

"Huh?" Ted blinked.

"I just made that story up while we were peeing," Barney said as he washed his hands, looking smug. "If you believed it, then that blonde chick at the bar definitely will too."

Ted was speechless.

Still washing his hands, Barney continued, "Of course, unless you're a total idiot... What's your name?"

"Ted."

"Ted, are you a total idiot?"

"I'm still talking to you, so?"

Ted finally caught on and shot back.

"Nice comeback. I think I like you."

Barney finished washing his hands and left.

Fifteen minutes later...

"Ted, I'm going to teach you how to live."

Barney had found Ted again, slung an arm around him, and declared his intentions.

They say birds of a feather flock together. Ted being chosen by Barney wasn't just coincidence—he had that romantic aura about him. And romance and being a player were just one step apart, forever intertwined.

Most players were romantic at heart—otherwise, how else would they be so good at the game?

Barney, after years of roaming the dating scene, immediately recognized Ted's potential. Recruiting him as a wingman was only natural.

That strange restroom encounter became one of Barney's legendary stories.

And soon, many more stories would start in that restroom—including the tale of a so-called "Restroom Hero."

With Barney finding his wingman, he naturally became part of their group—just like how Joey had inadvertently ended up as Chandler's roommate and part of the Friends crew.

Now, it was a common sight to see the four of them hanging out together at MacLaren's Pub.

Barney had heard Adam's name from Lily and the others before, but this was the first time he realized Adam and Joey were connected.

Clenching his teeth, Barney listened as the three of them showered Adam with praise. Then, he recalled the ridiculously handsome guy he had seen earlier—the one who knew Joey. Suddenly, the two figures merged in his mind.

"Adam Duncan!"

Barney described the man's features.

"Yeah! You ran into him?" Lily's eyes lit up.

As a self-proclaimed fangirl, she was devoted to Matthew but couldn't help her attraction to good-looking guys.

Even when she later met her best friend Robin, she couldn't help but fantasize about her, occasionally giving her that signature mischievous look.

Though Adam had been their college friend and neighbor, he had rarely stayed in the dorms. He quickly moved out, then spent most of his time with the Friends crew, so their interactions had been limited.

Adam had graduated a year early and gone straight to med school, making him even busier.

Then they had all graduated, and keeping in touch became even harder.

But as a well-known alumnus and an incredibly attractive friend, Adam remained a frequent topic in their conversations.

Back in college, Matthew and Ted had been close with Adam and took pride in having such an outstanding friend.

Even after all these years, Adam had never truly disappeared from their lives.