

TV Show 38

Chapter 38: High School Wrap-Up **

Time flew by.

In the blink of an eye, graduation was approaching.

Adam had completed his SATs, scored impressively, secured his recommendation letters, and finally began his formal college applications.

In the U.S., college admissions are a two-way selection process, and there's no limit to the number of schools students can apply to, making the "apply widely and hope for the best" approach standard practice.

Adam sent his first college application to Harvard University.

Harvard, a private research university and a member of the Ivy League, consistently ranks among the top three universities worldwide. Its medical school is particularly renowned, perpetually holding the number-one global ranking, making it a dream destination for medical students.

Adam, who aspired to become a doctor and quickly rise to the ranks of top surgeons, saw Harvard Medical School as the ideal choice.

In the U.S., there is no undergraduate medical degree. Before applying to medical school, students must earn an undergraduate degree, preferably in a field related to medicine, such as biology or chemistry.

What could be a better choice than Harvard's biology program?

Harvard's biology program has consistently ranked first globally. If Adam were to graduate from this program, his chances of being admitted to Harvard Medical School would increase significantly.

After all, staying within the same institution for graduate studies isn't a practice exclusive to Eastern countries.

However, Adam wasn't placing all his bets on Harvard. The better the university, the tougher the competition. Harvard, as one of the world's most elite institutions, requires more than just high SAT scores and a few decent recommendation letters to get in.

Ultimately, admission depends on timing—how competitive other applicants are that year, and even factors like the gender ratio of the interview panel. If the panel were all female, Adam felt his chances would skyrocket.

Adam sent his second college application to Columbia University.

Like Harvard, Columbia is an Ivy League school, consistently ranking among the top 20 universities worldwide. Adam ranked it second on his list because it is located in Manhattan, New York—the epicenter of many iconic TV shows.

"Friends," "How I Met Your Mother," "2 Broke Girls," and "Sex and the City," among other classics, were all set there. Adam figured being in such an environment would naturally enhance his personal "attributes."

His third application went to the University of Texas at Austin.

As a public university, its global ranking was only in the top 100, making it Adam's safety school.

Dr. John Sturgis, a physics professor at UT Austin, had written Adam a recommendation letter that would carry significant weight at this institution.

That said, Adam wasn't too keen on attending. The university's reputation wasn't stellar, and he wasn't thrilled about the prospect of babysitting Sheldon Cooper, who also attended UT Austin.

In addition to these three schools, Adam applied to Cornell University, New York University, and the University of Rochester—all located in New York.

Yes, they were all New York schools, for the same reasons as Columbia.

Once the applications were sent, all Adam could do was anxiously wait. Unsurprisingly, Harvard turned him down, but Columbia and several other schools granted him interviews.

Adam declined his dad Bob's offer to drive him to New York, opting instead to take Bob's pickup truck and make the journey alone.

In many American TV shows, it seems like high schoolers receive a car—often a cheap used one—as soon as they get their driver's license.

Adam insisted that this was a myth!

He had held a license for over two years and was about to graduate, yet he hadn't even touched a used car's bumper. Every time he needed a vehicle, he had to borrow Bob's truck and hope for his dad's good mood.

The road trip spanned roughly 1,600 miles, requiring about 26 hours of driving. Adam planned to take three days, making stops along the way to enjoy what is practically a rite of passage for American high school graduates: the classic road trip.

As for Juno, it was bittersweet. She had passed Harvard's preliminary selection for its biology program and secured an interview. Otherwise, they could have carpooled, taking turns driving. Having her around would have made Adam feel safer during perilous turns or while staying at certain motels.

That's right—Juno had also chosen biology and even copied Adam's entire application strategy. According to her, she'd always said they might become doctors together someday.

On second thought, Adam figured the minor safety comfort of traveling with Juno wasn't worth the headache of her company.

Throughout the journey, Adam remained highly alert, wary of potential accidents. He was determined to avoid the fatal curiosity often portrayed in American movies where teens get into unnecessary trouble.

At his current level of strength and speed, Adam was far from being invincible. A careless moment could result in him becoming prey—or dinner.

Speaking of which, what were his current stats again?

While driving, Adam started reviewing his attribute panel.

****Intelligence:**** 138.25 (100 is normal, 120 is excellent, 140 is genius, 180 is super-genius)

****Initial Value:**** 108

****Juno's Contribution:**** $+1 + (0.005 \times 365 \times 4) = 8.3$

****Sheldon's Contribution:**** $+5 + (0.005 \times 365 \times 4) = 12.3$

****Peggy's Contribution:**** $+6 + (0.005 \times 365 \times 2) = 9.65$

With less than two points away from the genius threshold of 140, Adam was convinced that once he crossed this line, his financially strained life would take a major turn.

For someone with mild OCD, this small gap was maddening.

If he didn't find a way to bridge it soon, relying solely on contributions from Juno, Sheldon, and Peggy would take another 117 days—an eternity in Adam's eyes.

Fortunately, he had a plan. After the Columbia interview, he'd put it into action.

"Whew."

Exhaling deeply, Adam continued reviewing his other attributes.

****Strength:**** 180 (100 is normal, 200 is strong, 500 is superhuman, 1,000 is godlike)

His strength remained stagnant. If not for the 100 points contributed by Duncan's family and Emmett during his first year after transmigrating, he might have doubted his theories on how strength attributes increase.

****Endurance:**** 400 (100 is normal, 200 is excellent, 500 is superhuman, 1,000 is godlike)

Endurance was still as enigmatic as ever, inexplicably soaring to 400. Perhaps soon he'd reach the "superhuman" level. What would that even feel like?

****Speed:**** 160 (100 is normal, 200 is excellent, 500 is superhuman, 1,000 is godlike)

Like strength, his speed hadn't increased and wasn't worth discussing.

****Lifespan:**** 35.06 (under 40 is premature death, 80 is normal, 100 is excellent, 150 is superhuman, 200 is godlike)

Adam's lifespan hadn't changed. His decision to dedicate more time to studying for a future medical career had put an end to his small, good deeds, leaving the number stagnant.

In other words, if Adam didn't make any changes, he'd die prematurely at 35 years and 21 days.

Good thing he had an idea. Once Columbia's interview was over, he'd set his plan into motion.