

TV Show 40

Chapter 40: Searching for Leonard **

New York.

West Side.

Adam casually checked into a motel and, looking at his increasingly thin wallet, began to contemplate ways to make money.

Back in Galveston, he hadn't noticed it as much, but now that he was out, he realized how quickly money drained away.

Gas costs money, food costs money, water costs money, lodging costs money—everything costs money.

During his four years in high school, thanks to the Fruit Hard Candy band, he had earned a total of \$10,000.

Most of it came from Gretchen, the only daughter of the local billionaire. Of course, he earned it through legitimate means, like singing and tutoring her.

Yes, actual tutoring—the proper kind.

He wasn't the type of scoundrel who would let someone despise him under the table while pretending to tutor them and taking their money. So, after Gretchen spat a "ugh" at him in disgust, Adam reluctantly gave up charging her.

If he had persisted for just a few more months, he might've had enough for college tuition and living expenses.

The carefree spending habits of a billionaire's only daughter are no joke.

Ten thousand dollars, the average three-month salary for an American, is a decent amount for a high schooler. But driving around and going out with girls like Jennifer burned through \$2,000 in gas alone.

Anyone who's driven a pickup in America knows—they guzzle gas!

This time, when he left for an interview, he declined the \$2,000 his dad, Bob, offered him.

The family had too many expenses. Just baby Charlie's formula alone was a significant cost, not to mention Gabe, the troublemaker sibling who constantly got into mischief, which always required money to resolve.

Even though his mom, Amy, had started working, her income wasn't much. His younger sister, Teddy, was about to take college entrance exams, which would bring another big expense.

Having replaced someone else's son, Adam felt a twinge of guilt and resolved to save the family as much money as possible. No matter what, he refused to take that money.

He hadn't qualified for Columbia University's scholarship, but thanks to a helpful female teacher, his student loan was approved without a hitch. As for living expenses, Adam was confident he could earn those himself.

In a few months, he would be living long-term in this expensive and extravagant city. Being broke would be unbearable.

His desire to make money had never been stronger. But for now, his top priority was to boost his intelligence points, which were stuck at 138.25, and push them above 140.

And there was only one person who could help Adam achieve that quickly—Leonard Hofstadter!

First of all, he had to exist because Sheldon existed!

Secondly, Leonard was likely in New Jersey, just outside New York. Adam could head there tomorrow.

Thirdly, Leonard was smart yet approachable, making it easy for Adam to gain his friendship.

Finally, there was no alternative.

Though New York was the hub of the multiverse for American TV shows, there weren't many characters who could boost Adam's intelligence points. The six friends from **Friends** were mostly ordinary people. The only one with a PhD was Ross, whose field—paleontology—wasn't intellectually demanding.

The hierarchy of scientific fields isn't arbitrary; Sheldon's disdain for Ross's profession had its reasons. Fields like paleontology require more hard work than sheer intelligence.

And Ross didn't seem like a genius.

The **How I Met Your Mother** gang was also full of ordinary people. The only potential genius was the future Supreme Court judge, but law, like paleontology, is mostly about effort rather than innate talent.

That's why Adam didn't bother searching too hard at familiar locations.

On the other hand, the seven characters from **The Big Bang Theory** (excluding the academically challenged Penny and the already tapped Sheldon) could all help Adam.

But Howard was in Pasadena, thousands of miles away, and Adam didn't know his exact address.

Rajesh's family, known as the "knockoff Iron Man family," was likely famous in their country. But considering the costs and risks, Adam ruled that option out as well.

As for Bernadette and Amy, there wasn't enough information to track them down.

The only viable option was Leonard Hofstadter, the originally intended protagonist of **The Big Bang Theory**.

The show provided plenty of clues about Leonard.

First, Leonard was around the same age as Sheldon, likely 12 or 13 years old now. When the show premiered in 2007, Leonard and Sheldon had been roommates for two to three years.

This means Leonard earned his PhD and became an experimental physicist at Caltech around 2004 or 2005, at about 24 or 25 years old.

In the U.S., students typically graduate high school at 17 or 18 and finish college at 21 or 22. Earning a PhD takes an additional 5 to 8 years, typically at age 26 to 30.

Given Leonard's IQ of 173, earning his PhD at 24 or 25 was reasonable. Plus, Leonard admitted he wasn't as extraordinary as Sheldon, who started college at 11. Leonard likely followed a more standard academic path, even if he skipped a grade or two.

So, at 12 or 13, Leonard was either in middle or high school.

Which brings up the next question: where did Leonard attend school?

Leonard's family lived in New Jersey. His mother was a neuroscientist, and his father a sociologist. Raised in a scientific household and treated like an experiment, Leonard's intelligence ensured he attended one of New Jersey's top schools.

However, considering Leonard was frequently bullied by a school jock played by the same actor as "Sheldon's dad," it was unlikely he attended a private school.

Adam just needed to check the top-ranked public schools in New Jersey to find Leonard. If that didn't work, he could track down Leonard's mother.

After all, Leonard's mother wasn't just a neuroscientist but also an author. With enough effort, Adam could locate her.

As for identifying the inconspicuous Leonard at school, Adam had an idea: instead of looking for Leonard, he'd look for the jock who bullied him.

The jock, an athlete on the football team, would be a school celebrity and easy to find.

If the jock looked different now than in adulthood?

No problem. Adam had seen young George Cooper's photos at Sheldon's house. He doubted the two would look drastically different in their youth.

New Jersey.

Bergen County's elite high school.

"Nancy, is it delicious? If it's delicious, eat more. That way, when others dote on you, they won't have to shave it for you."

"Hahaha!"

A group of students in football uniforms surrounded a small, bespectacled boy. They watched as their leader held the boy's head down, forcing him to eat his own arm hair, while they all erupted in raucous laughter.

A flicker of helplessness crossed the boy's eyes, but there was no sign of the despair one might expect. He was already used to this...