

TV Show 55

Chapter 55: Sorry for the Disturbance

****Random House****

****Editor-in-Chief's Office****

"I think we should talk about the publishing deal first."

Adam declined Jack Serf's request for a manuscript and got straight to the point.

After all, just asking for the manuscript without discussing publishing terms would be pure exploitation.

Although he held the original manuscript, Adam couldn't help but assume the worst when dealing with a publishing giant like Random House.

In his previous life, official editions often couldn't compete with pirated versions. The legitimate ones lost to high-quality counterfeits time and time again.

And this was America—the land where capital reigned supreme.

If the profits were enticing enough, copyright protection was nothing more than a joke.

How was copyright protection enforced?

By going to court.

If you were an average person without money or influence, you'd be up against a team of high-powered lawyers. They could cite obscure laws and drag the case out indefinitely, leaving you helpless.

In most cases, you'd run out of money before you could even afford to continue the lawsuit.

And even if you somehow managed to win after years of litigation, the biggest beneficiaries wouldn't be you, but the lawyers on both sides.

After all, they worked on commission—the more lawsuits they handled, the more they earned.

There was even a chance you could lose the case entirely, no matter how right you were—even if you were God himself, speaking undeniable truths.

Otherwise, why do so many crime lords in American TV shows walk out of courtrooms so arrogantly, spouting blatant lies in front of the media while honest people fume in frustration?

Ever heard of the "Pizza Connection" trial in New York? Look it up.

Most American judges were former attorneys, with friends and family still in the legal profession. Naturally, they had a vested interest in maintaining the dominance of the legal industry.

For lawyers, the best-case scenario was to turn small cases into big cases, keeping the courtroom busy at all times.

Otherwise, why would judges allow attorneys to argue endlessly, call for recesses on a whim, and drag cases out for years, sometimes even decades?

In America, lawyers are considered as prestigious as doctors, both seen as symbols of the middle class. Law schools and medical schools require a bachelor's degree just to apply—do you think that's a coincidence?

Blindness is rarely due to ignorance—it's usually due to self-interest.

With all this in mind, Adam played it safe—he only handed over the first thirty chapters.

In his previous life, *Lord of the Mysteries* was published on a website that emphasized the "Golden Three Chapters" rule—where the opening three chapters had to immediately hook readers.

Now, Adam was giving them thirty chapters—more than enough for them to assess the quality of the book.

"Heh."

Jack Serf chuckled. "Of course."

Lord of the Mysteries had a vast and intricate world-building, with the potential to expand into a massive fantasy universe.

Although the concept of cinematic universes didn't exist yet—*The Lord of the Rings* hadn't been made into its blockbuster trilogy, nor had the *Harry Potter* films become box office juggernauts—Americans were no strangers to the value of a sprawling fantasy world.

After all, they had *Star Wars*!

In Adam's past life, he could never get into *Star Wars*, but in America, it was a cultural phenomenon, almost a religion. Millions of fans were obsessed with it.

Just look at *The Big Bang Theory*—Sheldon and his friends were the perfect examples.

Neon-lit lightsaber replicas.

Hardcore fans camping outside theaters overnight just to see the midnight premiere. Some even wore adult diapers to avoid losing their spot in line—both for convenience and warmth, a win-win situation.

In one episode, when Sheldon and Leonard were invited to give a lecture at another university, they passed by George Lucas's ranch. Without hesitation, they decided to stop for a tour, which led to Sheldon being chased and tasered by security guards.

Even after all that, they still considered it a magical experience—while Howard and Rajesh, who didn't get to go, were jealous.

Although **Lord of the Mysteries** wasn't the same genre as **Star Wars**, its hints of a vast and mysterious world deeply impressed Jack Serf.

It was a story that combined the epic grandeur of **The Lord of the Rings**, the eerie mystery of Lovecraftian horror, the intrigue of **Sherlock Holmes**, and even elements of Eastern mysticism—all seamlessly woven together.

The ensemble cast made it perfect for a film or TV adaptation.

This could be a goldmine.

Jack Serf was thrilled, but he kept a straight face.

"Alright, how about this—I'll offer a flat fee of \$10,000 to buy out the rights. What do you think? Not many new authors get an offer this high."

****"Sorry for the disturbance."****

Adam picked up his manuscript, smiled, and stood up.

Without another word, he turned and walked toward the door.

****" ... "****

Jack Serf's mouth twitched. He quickly stood up and grabbed Adam's arm.

"Mr. Duncan, if there's an issue, we can discuss it."

"Heh."

Adam chuckled. "Mr. Serf, that didn't sound like a discussion. Look, why don't you take some time to reconsider? I have an appointment with HarperCollins later today. We can set up another meeting?"

New York, as one of the biggest publishing hubs, wasn't just home to Random House. HarperCollins was also one of the industry giants.

And those were just the major players—there were countless mid-sized and small publishers, too.

Jack Serf had immediately proposed a full buyout—for a mere \$10,000, no less. Adam didn't even want to entertain the idea.

He wasn't some pushover—why should he let them take advantage of him?

"Mr. Duncan, you misunderstand."

Jack Serf maintained his smile. "This is actually a very generous offer for a new author... But of course, if you have concerns, we can negotiate. There's no need to rush to another publisher. To be honest, for new writers, the offers from all major publishers will be roughly the same."

"A buyout is off the table."

Hearing this, Adam nodded internally. He knew all capitalists operated the same way—HarperCollins wouldn't be much different. This was all part of the negotiation process.

Besides, he had chosen Random House first for a reason.

Random House was one of the most powerful publishers, with unmatched marketing and distribution channels. More than half of the books on bestseller lists were published by them.

HarperCollins was also a major player, but it leaned more toward literary fiction and classics. Big corporations had their own internal issues—rigid hierarchies and a sense of superiority were common, and they might not even be interested in a fantasy novel like *Lord of the Mysteries*.

Of course, if things went south, Adam would rather not publish at all.

He wasn't desperate for a deal. More importantly, he deeply respected the original author of *Lord of the Mysteries* in his past life, and no matter what universe he was in, he wouldn't let this masterpiece be sold off for peanuts.

"We can negotiate the price—I'll make sure you're satisfied."

Jack Serf was persistent. What he truly wanted was full rights—the equivalent of an IP deal in Adam's previous world.

Ironically, the American concept of IP was nothing like the overhyped version later adopted in his homeland.

Adam remained unfazed.

A lowball offer for full rights? Keep dreaming.

No matter what "sky-high" price they proposed, in Adam's eyes, it would still be a lowball.

Their expectations were on completely different levels—there was nothing more to discuss.