

## TV Show 75

### Chapter 75: Roaming the World

**\*\*A Western Restaurant.\*\***

After "Captain America" Caroline delivered her dreamy speech, the atmosphere at the gathering became increasingly lively. Everyone surrounded Caroline, eagerly discussing the American Dream.

Adam couldn't help but smile wryly in his heart. He cautiously lowered his presence, as if he had returned to his days of being an actor.

No one noticed that among the crowd, there was another dreamer lurking.

Compared to Phoebe's frequent moments of surprise, Adam could tell that Caroline genuinely embodied the ideals of "Captain America"—righteous, bright, and noble.

It seemed that her father's passing had truly impacted her deeply.

Adam respected that, but he didn't feel the need to actively agree or get caught up in the sentiment.

He had long outgrown the impulsive passion of youth and viewed everything with a balanced perspective.

As famous person once said: \*Don't listen to what people say; watch what they do.\*

Adam wholeheartedly agreed.

Like an audience member observing from the sidelines, his mind wandered. Inspired by Caroline's "Captain America" aura, he started thinking about \*The Avengers\*, letting his imagination run wild:

**\*\*"Captain America couldn't defeat Loki and nearly had to kneel. Loki sneered: 'I said, kneel...'"\*\***

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After the gathering, Adam finally experienced what it felt like to be famous.

A second print run of 100,000 copies was widely distributed. Reviews of \*Lord of the Mysteries\* began appearing in newspapers. Every time Joey saw a related article while using the newspaper to wrap ham, he would excitedly show it to Adam.

Of course, these were just small newspapers, not prestigious publications like \*The New York Times\*. The so-called "booming popularity" was really just a buzz within a niche community.

Still, compared to the obscurity of the past, it was a huge improvement.

What truly moved Adam was the increasing number of comic book publishers and film production companies reaching out through Jack. Though, for now, they were all smaller studios and publishers.

These small production companies had a clear business model: they acquired promising works before they became massively successful, then resold them at a higher price to big studios once the hype built up—essentially acting as middlemen.

Adam turned them all down.

No matter how sincere they sounded, even if they claimed not to be middlemen, he wouldn't agree.

Because that would be even worse.

For example, in his previous life, a legendary hard sci-fi author had his work sold off cheaply to a small studio. The studio wasn't a middleman; they genuinely wanted to create a sci-fi blockbuster. But they lacked the resources, and after years of failed attempts, the project fell apart.

That was still a relatively good outcome.

Imagine if the project *hadn't* fallen apart, but instead turned into a *sci-fi romance*—now *that* would be truly disgusting.

The comic book publishers reaching out were slightly better.

Still, Adam declined offers from the smaller ones, as their distribution channels and resources were too weak. They probably couldn't even guarantee the quality of a *Lord of the Mysteries* comic adaptation.

Then Dark Horse Comics came knocking.

In the American comic book industry, the "Big Three" are DC, Marvel, and Dark Horse.

DC and Marvel need no introduction—they continuously churn out superhero stories, rebooting them whenever necessary. Fans eat it up every time, so they have no reason to seek new material.

Dark Horse, on the other hand, focuses on adapting popular non-comic works into graphic novels, leveraging the original's popularity to drive sales.

As *Lord of the Mysteries* gained traction, it naturally caught Dark Horse's attention.

After negotiations—pushed forward by Random House—Dark Horse offered a generous 30% royalty rate.

Comics are usually sold as individual issues, thin booklets priced around \$4 each. The first volume of *Lord of the Mysteries: The Fool* alone could be split into over thirty single issues, bringing the total price to \$120 or more—twice the earnings of the novel.

As long as the average sales per issue reached 50,000 copies, even after deducting Random House's 30% distribution fee, Adam would make:

**\*\*50,000 × \$120 × 0.3 × 0.7 = \$1.26 million.\*\***

And that was just from the comic.

The real goldmine lay in film, television, video games, and commercial licensing rights.

Franchises like *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*, *Marvel*, and *DC* have built fully monetized intellectual property (IP) universes worth billions, even trillions.

No wonder in later years, everything in the East revolved around "IP"—full-spectrum copyright development was simply too lucrative to ignore.

Adapting a novel into a comic was far easier than creating an original story. Dark Horse was a major player, and they quickly assembled a team of artists to complete the first issue. They leveraged the novel's popularity to simultaneously release the comic under the same name.

Unlike the bulky, text-heavy *Lord of the Mysteries* novel, comics—where images and text work together in a storyboard-like format—felt closer to a film script. Their compact size and lower price point (less than a tenth of a novel) made them much easier to distribute and promote widely.

"Four dollars—no risk, no regrets!"

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Leonard stepped out of school in high spirits.

Ever since Adam had scared Jimmy away with his fearless "I can do this all day" attitude, word had spread—Leonard had a tough friend now. No one dared bully him anymore.

Even Jimmy, a towering figure on the football team, had backed down. After all, someone with the same face and physical build as Sheldon's father wouldn't have made it as a football player—let alone a coach—without being tough.

That wasn't the only change.

Becky, the girl Leonard had always considered his secret girlfriend—though she had to keep their relationship hidden for various reasons—had also started treating him differently.

Before, whenever he helped her with homework, she would just sip her White Russian cocktail and repeat the same line:

\*"Leonard, you're amazing. I wish all men were like you."\*

Now, she actually showed some curiosity about where his "tough friend" had come from.

Leonard, ever the quick thinker, strung together exaggerated stories using classic comic book tropes.

The funny part? A tipsy, rambling Becky actually *believed* him. As she drunkenly leaned on Leonard, she slurred her way through discussions of Adam—calling him *Captain America, Spider-Man, Batman... Duncan*—as if he were a legend.

Years later, Becky would use the essays Leonard ghostwrote for her to get into Cornell University—one of the Ivy League schools.

Of course, her acceptance had little to do with those essays or her GPA, and everything to do with her privileged background.

Not everyone can afford to drink White Russians every night as a teenager.

Leonard's life was finally brightening—aside from one constant: his cold and critical mother, Beverly. He had never had a proper birthday or holiday celebration in his life.

The closest thing to a birthday party was when his grandfather passed away. All the relatives gathered, and there was even a cake.

Even though he knew it was inappropriate, he still felt a little happy that day.

Growing up in a household where gifts were never exchanged—only academic papers—wasn't so bad. For a science-loving kid like him, it was actually kind of fun.

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As he walked, Leonard noticed a comic book store.

\*"New comics!"\*

His eyes lit up as he stepped inside.

\*"Huh? \*Lord of the Mysteries\* ... Adam Duncan?!"\*

The store had prominently displayed the comic for promotion. The unique art style, distinct from traditional superhero comics, immediately caught Leonard's attention.

When he flipped through it and saw the author's name, his eyes widened in shock.