

## TV Show 76

Chapter 76: Friends

**\*\*New Jersey\*\***

**\*\*Comic Book Store\*\***

"Holy shit!"

Leonard stared at the words on the comic book cover—**\*\*"Adapted from the novel \*Lord of the Mysteries\* by Adam Duncan"\*\*\***—for a long moment before finally cursing out loud.

Unlike Eastern authors, who often preferred pen names, Western writers tended to use their real names. Of course, this wasn't an absolute rule.

As for the reason?

In the East, novels were once considered a lower form of literature. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been called "novels" but something grander—perhaps "big tales." That single word, "novel" (or "small tale"), encapsulated the awkward position of novelists in literary circles.

Because of this, even after the explosive rise of online literature in Adam's past life, pen names remained the norm for authors. Almost no one used their real name.

What were the benefits of a pen name?

For struggling writers, a pen name meant anonymity. No acquaintances would recognize them, so they could write whatever they wanted without worrying about personal attacks from people who disliked their work.

If they couldn't continue a story due to poor performance or other uncontrollable factors, they could simply abandon their pen name and start fresh under a new alias.

Moreover, a pen name with a unique meaning was far more memorable than a common real name that could be shared by dozens of people in the same school.

It was just like how many celebrities changed their names to something catchier for fame.

In the West, pen names were also used in the past, but not because of literature's low status—rather, because much of what was written was explicit, violent, or otherwise inappropriate. Writers had no choice but to use pseudonyms.

Take Adam's benefactor, the \*Queen of Erotic Fiction\*, Nora Bean. In the past, she would never have dared to use her real name.

Her novels followed a simple formula—one that she summarized herself: \*"Start by describing a few European cities, use 30 euphemisms for the unspeakable, and boom! You've got a bestseller!"\*

It was that straightforward and crude.

But in modern times, with increasing openness and the implementation of content rating systems, writers could publish anything.

At that point, what mattered most?

Fame.

Between using a pen name or a real name, there was no question—real names were the way to go.

A pen name was just an asset—it could be taken, transferred, or diluted. But a real name? That couldn't be stripped away.

No matter the occasion, a writer's name would be attached to their work, ensuring people knew who they were.

Never underestimate the importance of this distinction. Ninety-nine percent of readers wouldn't bother searching for an author's real name beyond their pen name. Even changing a name could damage one's reputation.

For example, Nora Bean had long divorced her *\*charming\** ex-husband. But why did she still use his last name?

Because when she first became famous, she published under "Nora Bean." That was the name her readers remembered.

Adam, being reborn, understood this well. So when he borrowed *\*Lord of the Mysteries\**, he didn't adopt a tribute pen name like *\*Cuttlefish Who Loves Diving\**—he used his real name: Adam Duncan.

Now, even in the comic book adaptation, the cover read **\*\*"Adapted from the novel *\*Lord of the Mysteries\** by Adam Duncan,"\*\*** rather than **\*\*"Adapted from a novel published by Random House."\*\***

Of course—

As the saying goes: **\*\*Everything has two sides.\*\***

Fame and privacy were mutually exclusive. Wanting both was just a child's dream.

And so, with Adam Duncan's real name printed on the comic book, Leonard saw it immediately.

Thus—he was exposed.

"What's wrong, Leonard?"

A bespectacled boy standing nearby looked over curiously.

The comic book and nerd communities overlapped significantly. It was a small, niche circle. The same people came in and out, buying and reading comics, so most of them knew each other.

"I know the author of the original novel for this comic," Leonard responded.

At first, he was furious, thinking, \*Adam didn't even tell me he published a book?! Doesn't he consider me a friend?\*

But that anger quickly faded, replaced by an uncontrollable grin. He straightened his back, puffed out his chest, and declared proudly:

"He's my best friend!"

"No way!"

"Adam Duncan is your friend?"

"Impossible!"

The comic store wasn't that big. As soon as Leonard said this, everyone gathered around.

"It's true!" Leonard said loudly. "Adam is my best friend! He even helped me beat up Jimmy once!"

"What?! Adam Duncan is \*that\* badass friend of yours?"

The store erupted into chaos. No one had ever associated a writer with a tough guy before. The contrast was too extreme—it was something straight out of a superhero comic.

"Stop making things up."

At first, some believed him, but now, most were skeptical.

"I'm serious!"

Leonard was so agitated he almost reached for his asthma inhaler. "Adam really is my best friend!"

"Then prove it!" someone challenged.

"I..."

Leonard opened his mouth but realized—he had no way to prove it.

"See? You're just bluffing!"

The doubters burst into laughter.

"I'll prove it to you!"

Leonard grabbed the first volume of \*Lord of the Mysteries\*' comic adaptation, paid for it, and stormed out of the store in frustration.

---

California

Pasadena

"Howard, breakfast is ready!"

A large figure bustled in the kitchen before shouting upstairs.

"I'm coming!"

A frustrated, childish voice called down from above.

"Don't yell at me!"

The large figure retorted, "I'm your mother!"

"I know!"

The young voice grew closer. Footsteps sounded on the stairs, and a short, skinny figure came into view.  
"Everybody knows you're my mother!"

"Eat your breakfast quickly. We have a doctor's appointment later."

The large figure reminded him.

"I know," the scrawny boy muttered as he sat at the table. Then, he bargained, "But on the way back, I want to stop by the comic book store. I need to restock."

"Are you sure you're just buying comics?"

The large figure narrowed her eyes. "You *\*do\** realize the tissue supply at home is disappearing fast, right?"

"I have no idea what you're talking about!"

The boy stiffened, then shouted again, "If you don't believe me, you can come in with me! \*If\* you can even fit through the door!"

"It's all your \*damn\* father's fault! If he hadn't abandoned us, I wouldn't have needed to eat so much! I wouldn't have ended up like this!"

The large figure lamented, her voice filled with grief. "And now, even you despise me! What's the point of living anymore? I might as well be dead! \*Boohoo...\*"

The boy rolled his eyes. He had seen this act too many times to count. He \*should\* have built up immunity by now.

But no matter how much he yelled at his mother, deep down, he still cared about her. That's why this old, cliché guilt trip always worked.

"I don't despise you," the boy said helplessly.

"Yes, you do!"

The large figure remained unconvinced.

"I could never despise you!"

The boy snapped again, shouting.

"See?! You \*do\* despise me!"

The large figure accused, her voice suddenly strong and full of energy—no trace of grief left.

"..."

The boy was speechless.