

TV Show 92

Chapter 92: Family Matters

****The Duncan Household****

Everyone was delighted with Adam's gifts.

"Dad, let's stop at Duncan #5. Please, no Duncan #6," Adam urged. "Back then, Teddy and I helped out, so it wasn't too hard on you guys. But next year, Teddy and I will both be off to college. We won't be home. Are you really planning to leave Charlie and Duncan #5 in Gabe's care?"

"Stop calling them Duncan #5 and Duncan #6. It sounds awful," Mom, Amy, interrupted, clearly displeased. "Bob and I have already picked names. If it's a boy, we'll name him Toby. If it's a girl, Angela. And, of course, we won't leave them to Gabe. I'll take care of them myself."

"Toby?"

Adam's mouth twitched as he thought, **Is this a cricket or Spider-Man?**

The name instantly brought to mind a scene from **The Big Bang Theory**—when Sheldon and Howard argued over the species of a cricket they found. Unable to convince each other, they took the cricket (which they named Toby) to an entomologist for identification.

That entomologist, completely consumed by his work, had been abandoned by his wife, who ran off with all his money. On top of that, his research funding had been cut. He was so frustrated that he ranted about how naming a cricket "Toby" was the dumbest thing ever.

Even Sheldon, the ultimate know-it-all, was left speechless by the scientist's furious tirade. He ended up conceding defeat—to none other than Howard, whom he usually looked down on—and lost his prized **Flash** comic book collection, which he had stored in a bank vault.

Toby. What a ridiculously dumb name for a cricket.

That line and the way it was delivered were unforgettable.

"Mom, are you quitting your job?" Adam asked.

"Between work and taking care of my child, of course, my child comes first," Amy replied matter-of-factly. "Besides, before Charlie was born, wasn't I always the one taking care of the kids?"

"How about hiring a nanny?" Adam suggested.

In his opinion, becoming a full-time stay-at-home mom wasn't the best idea. No matter how loving a relationship seemed now, the future was unpredictable. The risks were too high.

Take, for example, his friend Sheldon's family.

Sheldon's mom was a housewife. Although she had a part-time job at church, she didn't keep it for long. Later, she even quit that to accompany Sheldon to college.

Not long after, Sheldon walked in on his dad having an "intimate conversation" with another woman. That scarring experience led him to develop his famous three-knock rule—giving people enough time to make themselves "presentable" before he walked in.

And then, of course, there were the *Desperate Housewives* types.

To avoid such risks, Adam thought it best to persuade Amy to keep her job and just hire a nanny. They could afford it, after all.

"I don't feel comfortable leaving my baby with a nanny," Amy frowned.

"What's there to worry about?" Adam countered. "Even we managed to take care of the younger ones. And besides, there's always Gabe. He wouldn't be the one babysitting—just supervising. And when it comes to keeping an eye on others, no one does it better than him."

Gabe was a troublemaker, but if tasked with making sure *others* didn't cause trouble, he could actually be quite useful.

Teddy, the second eldest, had a few things to say about that.

Back when she had finally managed to get her parents out of the house and convinced Adam to watch Charlie, she invited her crush, Spencer, over to "study."

But every single time the atmosphere turned romantic, Gabe would appear out of nowhere, interrupting the moment. It drove Teddy crazy. She was certain he was doing it on purpose.

"If you give me a cut of the nanny's pay, I have no problem with it," Gabe immediately bargained.

In America, it was common for kids to earn allowance by doing chores. Older kids could even take on small jobs.

Paperboys, for instance, were a classic sight in American neighborhoods.

In the original timeline, both young Sheldon and young George worked as paperboys—though for different reasons. Sheldon needed money to fix a broken fridge, while George just wanted to buy *Playboy* magazines.

Every morning before dawn, newspaper companies would drive through neighborhoods, tossing bundles of newspapers onto the sidewalks. The paperboys would pick them up, fold them, and deliver them house to house.

They were paid weekly by the households subscribing to the newspaper. If they were punctual and polite, they'd get better tips. Otherwise, not so much.

Parents encouraged their kids to do these jobs—not just to earn money, but to develop responsibility and life skills. It was a rite of passage.

Sheldon, of course, didn't last long. After a few days of angrily ranting at everything and everyone, his dad gave him a scolding. But instead of quitting outright, Sheldon outsourced the job to a neighborhood kid—essentially becoming a tiny capitalist, making money in his sleep.

Why didn't that neighborhood kid just become a paperboy himself?

Because he was dumb.

Adam's past self, PJ, had also worked as a paperboy. Later, he took on more challenging chores, like mowing lawns.

Sheldon's brother, George, started by flipping small items for profit. Later, he fixed cars and sold fishing gear and hardware. He made a good amount of money and got cocky. So when his dad asked him to mow the lawn, he refused and even hired someone else to do it. That earned him a beating.

For parents, the money wasn't the point. It was about teaching responsibility and work ethic. Otherwise, it would just be child labor.

"Deal," Bob, their dad, agreed right away.

As for concerns about Gabe's supervision? Bob wasn't too worried. After all, when it came to handling kids, he wasn't much better than Gabe.

PJ's goofy personality was a direct result of Bob dropping him too many times as a baby. In fact, every single one of the kids had been dropped at some point. When Bob dropped Charlie, Amy's only reaction was, "Again?"

Bob also didn't want Amy to be a full-time stay-at-home mom again.

A housewife in loose loungewear and a nurse in a crisp white or pink uniform were **not** the same.

The appeal wasn't even in the same league!

"We'll see," Amy rolled her eyes.

For her, when it came to choosing between work and family, family would always win.

"Bob, did you book the plane tickets? Flights during Christmas are hard to get. You should book early," Amy reminded.

"Uh..."

Bob's face fell.

He had been hoping to stall long enough to claim that the flights were sold out—just so he wouldn't have to endure another Christmas in Palm Springs, being mocked by his mother-in-law.

But now? No chance.

"I'll go book them now," he sighed in defeat.

As Bob turned away from Amy, looking utterly miserable, Adam and the others couldn't help but laugh.

Adam also didn't offer to pay for the tickets himself.

He wasn't as naive or cocky as young George.

Spending money on gifts for family? No problem.

But their dad paying for the tickets? That was **his** responsibility—as the provider, the head of the household.

That was his pride. His dignity.

And that was something Adam would never challenge.