TV Show 96

Chapter 96: Christmas and New Year

On the Plane.

"I'll go with you."

As soon as these words were spoken, everyone turned to look at her.

"I mean, thank you, but we only need one seat," she calmly explained.

She was a girl with single eyelids and a mature-looking face. She added, "My mom has an urgent matter and must take this flight. I'm fine staying behind. If each family sends one person, it's fairer that way."

"No need," Adam responded with a smile. "Since it's already come to this, my sister Teddy and I will take the next flight. It's better to split up one family rather than two during the holidays."

"Thanks, then," the girl nodded. "I'm Cristina Yang."

"Adam Duncan," he replied with a nod before saying a few words to his parents. Then, with his younger sister Teddy, he followed the flight attendant off the plane.

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Cristina watched Adam's back in silence.

She was intelligent and proud, aiming to become a top-tier surgeon like her stepfather. All elite surgeons had one thing in common—competitiveness and immense confidence—qualities essential for handling life-and-death situations.

Today's experience had deeply affected her. She had been planning to apply to Stanford Medical School, but now she felt the need to work even harder.

As for fighting for her rights, she never even considered it.

In America, tens of thousands of passengers are denied boarding by airlines each year. It's a well-known practice—just as it's commonly accepted that wealthy people can do whatever they want.

Major U.S. airlines have nearly monopolized the aviation market.

In some regions, a single airline dominates the market share.

You have the freedom to offend them, and they have the freedom to deny you service.

You can't do anything to them, but they can make it impossible for you to fly.

In a country without high-speed rail, airplanes are the only means of fast travel.

A monopolized industry, a monopolized market, government-backed regulations, and vast amounts of capital leave you with no options.

Being rational, Cristina wouldn't waste time on something pointless.

At the airport, Adam and Teddy were given compensation vouchers, but when they checked for available flights, the earliest option was three days later.

"What do we do?" Teddy asked, frowning.

"Let's rent a car," Adam said without hesitation.

Car rentals were widespread in the U.S. and easy to arrange.

Taking a long-distance bus was also an option, but buses carried all sorts of passengers—some even brought live poultry. Sitting on a bus for hours would be unbearable.

Since Adam had the stamina for it, driving was the better choice.

After an uneventful road trip, they finally arrived at their grandmother's house on Christmas Eve.

Meanwhile, on the parents' side…

A few hours later, their flight landed in Palm Springs.

"Honey, remember this one thing," Bob, Adam's father, said seriously as soon as they stepped out of the airport. "No matter what, do NOT leave me alone with your mother."

"I heard that," a woman's voice called from behind before Adam's mom, Amy, could respond.

Bob immediately froze, turning awkwardly to face his mother-in-law and father-in-law, who had come to pick them up.

"The car doesn't have enough room. You're too fat—take a taxi," his mother-in-law said mercilessly.

After some brief greetings, she took Amy, Charlie, and Gabby with her, leaving Bob alone to hail a cab.

"This Christmas is going to be very, very, very long…" Bob sighed as he got into a taxi.

The Christmas gathering was both warm and *eventful*.

Adam's grandmother disapproved of her son-in-law and blamed him for everything.

For example, before arriving, Amy had called her mother, reminding her to put away anything fragile. But her mother ignored the advice and even displayed her favorite antiques.

Bob watched in horror as Charlie, the little troublemaker, roamed around, reaching for things left and right. Luckily, Bob managed to snatch the items from his hands just in time.

Unfortunately, his mother-in-law saw him holding her antique crystal reindeer and immediately scolded him.

Meanwhile, the true culprit, Charlie, chimed in: "Daddy's a bad guy!"

Bob had no choice but to smile bitterly and endure it.

Compared to Bob, his third son, Gabby, had a much better time.

Initially, Gabby didn't want to come to Grandma's house. When his secret plan to bring his gaming console was foiled, he was even more disheartened.

But to his surprise, his grandfather—whom he considered an old-timer—actually owned a gaming console. Not just any console, but the latest model! The only problem? His grandfather used it *to play virtual golf*.

"Seriously? What's so fun about golf?" Gabby thought.

So, he took out the game discs he had brought and introduced his grandfather to a whole new world.

As expected, beginners get addicted easily.

Gabby soon regretted it. His grandfather became so obsessed that he wouldn't let Gabby play at all. In frustration, Gabby found himself saying something his parents often told him:

"Playing too many video games isn't good! I'm worried about your health…"

Oh god, was he actually saying *their* lines now?!

Meanwhile, Teddy happily put on her swimsuit and went to the pool to swim and sunbathe.

Unlike in the East, where women prefer pale skin, American women favored a tanned, "healthy" look. Not just women—many American men pursued the same aesthetic.

This led to the popularity of tanning salons and spray tans.

For example, in *Final Destination*, two reckless girls died while tanning in a malfunctioning booth.

Or in *Friends*, when Monica tried spray tanning.

Ross, curious to try it too, completely misunderstood the instructions. Instead of an even, two-sided spray, he ended up with double the color on just one side of his body.

After his overly bright white teeth incident, Ross nearly turned into a completely different ethnicity.

Adam, meanwhile, took a walk around the area before returning to his room to write.

Compared to New Year's celebrations in his previous life—where extended families gathered to exchange greetings, feast, and have fun—the Western Christmas holiday felt a bit underwhelming.

Most of the time, people just did their own thing.

The only highlights were the Christmas dinner and opening presents.

And really, that made sense. Christmas in America wasn't actually Jesus' birthday. The reason it became a global phenomenon?

Coca-Cola's genius marketing.

Just like China's Singles' Day sales in the future, Coca-Cola needed a way to boost sales. They adopted Christmas from Europe, redesigned Santa Claus, and relentlessly advertised the concept.

Soon, retailers jumped on board. The idea was perfect—Santa gives gifts to kids, but who actually buys the presents?

Parents, of course!

More shopping meant more profits, leading to a worldwide shopping frenzy.

Even Sheldon, despite his rational disdain for Christmas, was forced to participate when he had to buy gifts for Penny.

With America's vast cultural influence, Christmas grew bigger and spread across the world.

Most people had no idea—it wasn't some ancient, sacred Western tradition. It was just another brilliant move by *Coca-Cola*.

After Christmas, Adam returned to New York.

A new semester was about to begin.

On New Year's Eve, he celebrated with Monica and the gang.

As usual, they held a party at the apartment.

When midnight approached, they all turned toward Times Square, counting down together:

"10, 9, 8… Happy New Year!"

Then came the *next* tradition—finding someone to kiss.

Earlier, Monica and Phoebe had hinted at Adam, asking if he had a date. If not, they could all pair up to avoid the embarrassment of being alone.

Adam politely declined—he had already arranged to meet Caroline.

Though Caroline had been acting a little strange lately, she wasn't part of his three main friend groups, so it was an easy, flexible choice.

Monica, Phoebe, and Chandler, unwilling to face public embarrassment, all found exes to pair up with.

Joey, as always, had a casual date.

And Ross?

Well… Ross could only watch *helplessly*.