

## 48 Hours 601

### Chapter 601 Radish

Zhang Heng finally arrived at Lincoln County a day earlier than initially planned.

The night he met the bailiff, Zhang Heng mentioned that he wanted to learn his equestrianism. Morton was very patient. Not only did he answer all of Zhang Heng's questions, but he guided him on a personal level and corrected most of the wrong postures.

That night, Zhang Heng finally completed his self-learning process. The teaching continued until after midnight, and the poor bailiff did not expect to pay such a high price for a bowl of corn paste. So the two went separate ways the next morning. Morton was still yawning due to lack of sleep.

Amid his journey, Zhang Heng continued to hone his horsemanship to perfection. Such vigorous training would indeed cause him days of backache. It was one thing that couldn't be changed immediately, even after the right ways of riding a horse were learned. He would have to get used to it by himself.

However, the good news was that his riding was indeed improving. Although there was no change in his skill panel, he could personally feel the progress. At least for now, he had no problem with performing some of the basic skillsets.

Zhang Heng also gave his first horse a name Radish. After all, it was not a good idea to keep calling it a horse with a hair loss problem. According to plan, he replenished supplies halfway and reached the destination smoothly a couple of hours later.

The Lincoln County's county seat looked vivacious. This place was way more extensive than the two towns he visited earlier. Apparently, there were two mining areas and many farms nearby, so so many people lived here. The town was also equipped with a bank, telegraph office, grocery store, hotel, bar, schools, and even a printing press. It was an excellent place to settle down.

Zhang Heng jumped off the Radish's back and patted the dust off his body. Getting to Lincoln County had been no less a challenging journey. Having spent six days and five nights in the wilderness, corn paste had become almost tasteless. As of now, the matter of settlement or the search for lucky horseshoes wasn't on his mind. The most important thing was to look for a place to take a hot bath and fill his stomach with food.

But before that, he still had some small problems to solve.

Not long after he entered the town, he felt a faint hostility along the way. An old man was sitting in front of his house spat at his feet, the spit landing only two steps away from Radish. Two cowboys were leaning against the stables, catcalling every single girl who passed them. One of them said to Zhang Heng, "Hey, boy from the east, you'd better back the f\*ck off to wherever you came from. You are not welcome here."

Zhang Heng had faced the same situation in the small town, and now, he had a good idea of how to deal with them. He drew his gun and shot at the hat of an old man nearby. The latter froze for a moment, then sent out a salvo of all kinds of filthy words. Until Zhang Heng shot at the cup he was holding, he quickly shut his mouth, and his face was reddened.

The two cowboys did not expect a new visitor like Zhang Heng to be so arrogant. Immediately, they drew their guns without saying a word. While they were doing that, Zhang Heng had already drew the second revolver and pointed it at them.

“If I were you, I would go to the bar to have a drink before the sunset. After all, life is short, and no one knows what will happen next moment.”

The two cowboys then glanced at each other. Although they were unhappy with the outcome, they decided to step back and better understand the current situation.

Then Zhang Heng looked at the old man again, “Hey, it looks like you are going to need a new cup. I hope the next one will spend a little longer time with you.”

The old man was so furious that his veins popped, his arms trembling.

However, since the revolver was pointing at his head now, not a word could be said no matter how angry he was.

Suddenly, another person spoke.

“You have gotten what you want, now, can you put away your weapons?”

It was a middle-aged man who was about fifty years old. He was wearing a dirty shirt and reeked of alcohol. If it were not for the grayish, weathered police badge on his chest, Zhang Heng would have thought that he was a tramp.

Since he walked out of the police station, he should be the sheriff here. Although Morton and the middle-aged drunkard standing in front of him were considered law enforcers, they somewhat differed. The sheriff was usually known as sergeant as well, and the town elected a sheriff to maintain the safety of an area. On rare occasions, a sheriff would act as the local magistrate to hold trials.

Bailiffs, on the other hand, were also called lawmen. Usually affiliated with the feds, their main job was to hunt down or escort fugitives.

One was in charge of their local area, and the other worked for the federation. The nature of their work was to maintain an area’s stability, punish the evil, and reward the good.

Zhang Heng saw that Lincoln County’s sheriff had come forward, so he decided to put away his revolvers. He came here to settle in this place, not to make trouble. It was not too bad if he provoked the ordinary people here. However, if he angered the sheriff here, he would be forced to leave this place.

However, Zhang Heng did not regret what he did earlier. Although cowboys and pirates were not the same kinds of people, they both bore many similarities. To be more precise, all humans had many things in common. The two shots he fired weren’t a mere vent of anger, but rather, to send a signal that they should not be messing with him.

Considering his skin color, it would be tough to get a head start in the West of this era. Coming to a new territory alone did not mean that you will be safe even if one decided to lay low. Instead of waiting for others to bully him, Zhang Heng took this opportunity to make a scene.

In this way, if someone wanted to badmouth him, they would now have to think about the consequences. Of course, it didn't mean that Zhang Heng would be fine afterward. In fact, things would get more serious than he imagined. Although he had temporarily scared them off, it was not easy to live in a hostile environment like this. In this world where everyone had a gun, Zhang Heng would not be able to do as he pleased.

A few glasses of whiskey, coupled with a few provocations, was enough to make a person abandon all sanity. No matter how strong Zhang Heng was, it was impossible to go up against an entire town alone. And he couldn't be on guard 24 hours a day either. He was, after all, a human, and he would get fatigued. He might be able to hang on for a day or two, or even a week, but eventually, he would get tired.

Zhang Heng had already begun to realize that it was not easy to complete the first half of the main mission and settle in Lincoln County.

### **Chapter 602 Bounty and the Alcoholic Sheriff**

The little conflict that had just taken place in the county town quickly settled down in the presence of the sheriff.

But many heard the gunshots and had come out to see what was happening, thereby witnessing the whole incident.

Zhang Heng had achieved his first goal. Later, when he walked the streets again, no one dared to provoke him anymore. But, on the other hand, he had gotten himself on Lincoln County's unpopular list.

The way the sheriff looked at him said it all.

As a matter of fact, the townspeople's attitude towards him hadn't changed much at all, except that they were now more wary of him. When Zhang Heng and Radish passed by, the women would drag their children into their homes while the men would stop in their tracks, offering nothing but a look of nervousness and hostility on their faces.

Zhang Heng found a pub where he bought some grass fodder and beans for the Radish as a reward for all the hard work for the past few days. He also ordered a pint of dark lager recommended by the bailiff, alongside a staple of steak and fried eggs. As he ate, he contemplated his situation and his next move.

He had found Lincoln county, but this place was harsher than he thought it would be.

In terms of unpopularity, he was probably ranked second only to the Native Americans. In fact, he might even be ranked higher than outlaws and gang members.

Zhang Heng wasn't even sure if the cook had actually spat in his steak.

Having spent three out of the forty-nine dollars he had taken from Rich, he was now left with forty-six. If he were to put up at a hotel, he would be looking at one dollar a day; meals included, which meant the money was only enough to last him about a month and a half.

As usual, Zhang Heng still needed to find a way to make more money to survive in this quest. At that time, he began to miss that 40 kilograms of gold. Zhang Heng didn't know what the system meant when it asked him to settle down in Lincoln County as the main quest. Was he supposed to look for a place to

stay, or was he supposed to stay here for some time? Or, was he supposed to just live here until the system sent him back to the real world. The first two requirements could be achieved easily. As for the third requirement, if he were about to stay here for an extended period, he would have to consider a property purchase.

Nonetheless, thinking about things that would only take place in the future was pointless. After Zhang Heng finished lunch, he decided to head over to the police station in town. There were actually many jobs that he could involve himself in, but when he thought about the way the townspeople treated him, he didn't have many options left to choose.

Among the odd jobs on offer, the work that could provide him with quick money and required no cooperation from anyone would undoubtedly be a bounty hunter.

The police station's sore lack of manpower could barely cope with the West's vast and complex environment. Most towns had only a law enforcement officer or two, and their enemies outnumbered many a time. Not only did they have to maintain local law and order, but they even doubled up as judges. It was almost impossible for them to take the time to go out of town.

Even with the bailiffs' help, they still required a great deal of workforce to help them deal with the problem in the West. It was the main reason why the law was nearly non-existent in those parts at that time. Once someone committed a crime at a certain place, it was difficult for the police to track the person down after they changed their name or lay low.

Thus, the inception of the bounty hunter profession.

According to the criminals' threat level and the scale of the crime, the police would offer different rewards to the bounty hunter. If they agreed to the reward, these bounty hunters would hunt down the fugitives on their behalf.

It was a profession only brave men and adventurers dared pursue. Zhang Heng had never doubted his combat ability, but when he came to the police station and looked at the wanted list, he oversimplified the whole thing.

Zhang Heng eliminated fugitives with a relatively low bounty. Although it was less risky going after these small-time criminals, the gains were not proportional to the pay, especially for novices like Zhang Heng. He doubted that the money he made during this round of hunting would be less than the money spent on the trip.

The wanted criminals that came with larger rewards; on the other hand, they did not usually act alone. However, Zhang Heng was not bothered by it. The reason why they were hard to track down was that they were simply good at hiding themselves. No one really knew where their whereabouts were and had evasive skills that rivaled a ghost. Zhang Heng's sailing skill was at Lv. 3, and his driving at a Lv.2, and he had even flown a spaceship before. Unfortunately, none of these skills could be put to much use during this quest.

Along the way, Zhang Heng and Radish had acquainted quite well with each other. That said, he knew that his riding skills and the speed of his steed were considered below average in this era. In other words, he would not be able to complete any bounty since almost everyone was a lot faster than him.

Moreover, Zhang Heng's marksmanship could only be fully optimized when Radish stopped moving or dismounted. Once Radish started to gallop, his accuracy would drop a lot. In summary, the money offered on the list looked very attractive, but it was unprofitable. And Zhang Heng also held a disadvantage—He was unfamiliar with the surrounding towns, and it was likely that he'd get lost. However, his analytical reasoning and combat skills weren't something many possessed.

Zhang Heng was confident that he could get it done, but he would have to take some time choosing the right target.

As he was standing outside the door looking at the list, the drunk sheriff he dealt with not long ago also walked out from the room with his low-hanging potbelly preceding him. "Boy, let me warn you about something. When you're in the county, you had better behave. I've seen lots of young men like you who thought it wise to be arrogant after learning a bit of shooting. Know how they end up?"

"Back then, I gunned five people down in one go," the sheriff made a cool shooting gesture while exhaling a breath that reeked of whisky from his nostrils. But the next moment, he slipped and nearly fell to the ground. Fortunately, someone by his side propped him up, with the person urging, "Sheriff, it's time. Everyone is waiting for you."

"Do I have to go, Jameson?!"

The sheriff, immersed in the glory of the past, grunted when he was interrupted.

"I'm afraid in this Lincoln County; you are the embodiment of the law and nemesis of criminals. I am god-awful sure you need to show up to scare them off. And you also need to read the final judgment." The visitor glanced at Zhang Heng unintentionally.

"Well, it is necessary to let those outlaws know how powerful the law is," the drunk sheriff replied with a nod. Instead of leaving with Jameson, he turned and returned to the police station.

"Uh... are you going in the wrong direction, Sheriff?"

"Damn! Do I look useless to you? I'm just going to get the bottle I haven't finished, Jameson," the sheriff replied before slowly stumbling back to his table. After he grabbed the whisky, he picked up his hat and slowly walked out of the station.

At that time, Zhang Heng also noticed that a crowd had gathered in the officialdom not far away. There was a tall wooden platform in the center of the place.

### **Chapter 603 Death Sentence and Repentance**

"Twelve... Twelve good people who are so different from you have put you on trial, saying you are guilty. Look at the crimes that you have committed. You..." The drunk sheriff on the wooden stand pointed at the man with his hands and ankles tied with a rope.

"You fought against a man for a horse, stabbed the owner with a knife, made a mother lose her son, a wife to lose her husband, and an innocent child to lose her father! Do you any last words?"

"Yes, I didn't control my temper at the time. I killed him by mistake, and it got to where I am today. Now, it's too late to say anything about it." The shorty obviously knew that his death was imminent. He

then took a deep breath and said, "I just hope I can apologize to the family of the man I killed. Although I know they won't forgive me, so be it."

After he spoke, he nodded at the sheriff and closed his mouth.

The next moment, a black cloth was put on his head.

Meanwhile, the drunk sheriff walked toward the other person, a strong-looking hunk of a man. When the sheriff saw him, undisguised disgust flashed across the sheriff's eyes.

"You raped your sister-in-law when your brother was selling the cattle elsewhere. After you were exposed, you killed your brother. Such evil acts that happen on this land are blatant to the judicial system and human morality! I should have killed you when you attempted to run away. I shouldn't have let you live for so many days and waste our food. Say your last words."

"No, you've got the wrong man. You shouldn't believe that (BEEP). It is not me who killed my brother! The adulterer is someone else! They've banded together and framed me! The moment my brother and I both die, the ranch will fall into the hands of that whore and her lover!"

Compared with the previous shorty, the second man's emotions were obviously more aggressive. Yelling and struggling in panicked desperation, the executioner had to pat his back, signaling him to keep his voice down. The drunk sheriff snorted coldly, "Your trial is over, and the jury has decided. If you have any objections, you can tell your grievances to God directly when you see him. Oh... sorry, I almost forgot, an evil man like you can't see God. Go to hell, bastard, next one."

Once again, the sheriff pulled out his bottle, took a sip of whiskey, and walked towards the one-armed man. "You..." The drunk sheriff was stuck after saying only one word. He then pointed at him, stared at him for some time before squeezing another word from his mouth, "What have you done?"

The man named Jameson standing under the wooden pedestal smacked his forehead, unable to bear the scene. At the same time, the crowd became increasingly agitated.

"Quiet and quiet!" the sheriff bellowed. He then took out a crumpled piece of paper from his pocket, unfolded it, and read it.

"Oh, damn, you are from Cook's gang. You've robbed the trains countless times and ransacked two towns, killing unarmed civilians. The laws you violated are enough to fill up a piece of paper. To be honest, sentencing you to death has to be too merciful. You should be glad you weren't born in the Middle Ages. Otherwise, I would have nailed you to the wall and let you die slowly! Then, perhaps I can hear your wailing from below every day."

The one-armed man was the calmest of the three. He shook his head when he heard that. "You are wrong," he retorted boldly. "I have robbed trains and caravans, but that was before I lost my arm. After that, I left the Cook Gang and decided to reside here. Town looting has nothing to do with me." "It doesn't matter. Anyway, the deeds you have done are enough for you to be sentenced to death," the sheriff barked impatiently, "If you want to confess, hurry up! I'm about to finish my whiskey."

"I won't repent. It's you who should be the one to repent," the one-armed man said lightly, his gaze sweeping over the crowd under the wooden stage. For some reason, no one dared to look him in the eye when he scanned them. The once judgemental eyes of the folk looked away in silence.

This scene was one of stark absurdity. The one-armed man was the one who committed those crimes, yet he made it look like the townsfolk were the ones on trial.

“Now that you know my true identity, you should also know how the Cook treats their enemies,” the one-armed man smiled. “If you hang me today, the news will spread tomorrow, and the Cook will know very soon. It won’t be long before my brothers come to avenge me, and what happened in those two towns will repeat here. They will turn every inch of this land into scorched earth. Those whom you care and love will die before your very eyes. Their tormented screams and wails will resonate in your ears. Then it will be your turn to die... My trial here is over, but yours has just begun! I’m done talking. Just do it.” After speaking his last words, he, too, nodded at the sheriff.

The words of the one-armed man caused the entire square to descend into silence. An atmosphere of anxiety and angst continued to spread among the crowd. With more than 50 members, the Cook Gang was the largest in New Mexico. Ruthless and brutal men, not only did they slaughter civilians, but they also dared to fight head-on with a brigade of marshals. Their notoriety was infamous, and the moment the people heard that they might provoke these evil beings, those who knew better began to fear for their lives.

Some even hoped that the drunk sheriff would just let him go and call it a day.

However, the lawman simply smiled contemptuously, “Put away your nonsense. People that live in this land will not be intimidated by you. As long as I am here, if Jeremy Cook and his minions dare step in my town, they will not leave here alive!”

“Let’s just wait and see.”

A black cloth was put on his head as well.

As the executioner pulled the lever, the wooden board under the three people’s feet opened, and they fell into the hole. After a few minutes’ struggle, the accused men breathed their last.

The crowd screamed and gasped in shock, where many ladies covered their mouths, not knowing how to react. Zhang Heng was watching the execution outside the police station, but he did not respond. After all, probably no one in this world was more familiar with the gallows than a pirate. Zhang Heng had even led someone to save a pirate about to be executed, the reason why he did not take one-armed man’s words too seriously.

Unlike the myriad of small hamlets of the wild West, Lincoln County was a distance from Santa Fe, the political center of New Mexico. It was densely populated for its time, and although it faced a shortage of law enforcement officers like other towns, there were many ranches in the county. That meant that there were many cowboys, ones equipped with the necessary skills to fight off the invaders. Hence, it wasn’t going to be so easy for Cook and his fifty-odd minions to ransack this place.

At the same time, Zhang Heng’s sixth sense told him that something wasn’t right. After he went into conflict with the two cowboys earlier, he always felt that someone kept an eye on him. The feeling was still there after he walked out of the bar. Even when everyone was watching the execution, he could sense that the person was always watching him.

Could the person be the accomplice of those two cowboys? Zhang Heng thought to himself that even though the drunk sheriff had just warned him, he would have to do something about it if he felt that his life was in danger.

#### **Chapter 604 Wendy**

The three men who were still alive not long ago turned into corpses in a blink of an eye, swining under the wooden pedestal by their necks and motionless like dried salted fish. To ensure that they were dead, the law enforcement officers waited for a long time before untying the noose around their necks. The corpses were then collected. The drunk sheriff climbed down from the wooden platform slowly after carrying out his social calling; and so, the crowd dispersed. As they returned home, they chatted about what had just taken place, especially what the one-armed man said at the end. His unsettling last words had put many on edge, and they started to worry significantly about their own safety. Preoccupied, the new oriental man in town wasn't the cause for concern at the moment.

Zhang Heng looked at the bounty list on the wall, but there were no good targets to choose from. Left with no other options, he could only pull the faces of a few fugitives he wanted to capture from his memory.

After that, Zhang Heng brought Radish on a stroll to the grocery store in town. A person who had been watching him from afar also came to the grocery store. After some time, though, the Asian man didn't come out. A little anxious, the person wanted to check out the grocery store but was afraid of getting spotted by Zhang Heng. Since his horse was still outside the grocery store, it did not make sense that he would just disappear suddenly. Just when he hesitated, a voice came from behind him.

"Are you following me?" Zhang Heng was also a little surprised when he saw the person who'd been tailing him. Although the person tried hard to pretend to be an adult, he seemed like she was only eleven or twelve years old and had a face full of freckles. No wonder Zhang Heng did not notice her when he turned around earlier.

"Are you the sister of those two cowboys?"

"What cowboys... oh, you are talking about those guys. No, I have nothing to do with them, sir," the girl said. "Then why are you following me?" Zhang Heng stuffed some soap and daily necessities that he bought from the grocery store into the bags beside the saddle.

"Please allow me to introduce myself, I... my name is Wendy, and my father is a rancher nearby."

"So?" Zhang Heng raised his eyebrows.

"I see you are looking for a job. This is the case: About two weeks ago, my father went out to talk business with someone. He said that he would be back in ten days at most, but as you can see, the deadline has arrived, but he is not home yet."

"Maybe something held him back along the way," Zhang Heng said. Since the freckled girl in front of him had nothing to do with the two cowboys, Zhang Heng had no intention to embarrass her. So, he turned around and prepared to leave with Radish.

When Wendy saw that he was leaving, she quickly ran in front of him.

"No, my father has always been a very punctual person, and the town he went to has a telegraph office as well. If he couldn't come back because of some emergency, he would've definitely sent my mother and me a telegram!" "And then?"

"He didn't send us anything, and it's been a long time since we lost contact with him. My mother and I are both worried about his safety."

"I can understand your worries, but shouldn't you go to the town's sheriff for this kind of thing?" Zhang Heng changed directions and brought Radish to walk past Wendy's side. "I went to Sheriff Terrell. He sent a telegram to the police station in that town, and they told him that my father left six days ago."

"So, is your problem solved?"

"No, of course not. I think they are lying. This is obvious. If my father left six days ago, he should have arrived home by now, and he will definitely send a telegram to my mother and me before he leaves," replied Wendy as she followed Zhang Heng.

"But the sheriff did say that he had left that town."

"I don't know. I have a bad hunch. I think something bad had happened to him. I told Sheriff Terrell about my hunch, but he didn't believe me at all, and he asked me to go home and wait patiently. The bailiffs in the town are also busy with other cases. They refuse to take the time to find my father."

"Where are your father's friends? Why don't you ask them for help?"

"Our family has no friends here. My mother is a Spanish immigrant, and my father is half Apache. You are not the first person to be alienated in this town, and you will not be the last," Wendy went on. "I know how it feels. I saw the things that you did when you first entered the town. I think you are a tough person, just like my father. So, I want to offer you a job, Mister."

"Help you find your father?"

"Yes, I can pay you sixty dollars after you complete the task." Wendy looked nervously into Zhang Heng's eyes. This was basically the same as a standard bounty reward. Besides, Zhang Heng could use his investigation skills in this matter, and he did not need to travel far. Although the investigation might require him to leave Lincoln County for a period of time, it was not a problem since he had extra 24 hours every day. Besides, if he wanted to earn some extra cash, he would eventually have to leave town whether he liked it or not.

But there were some things Zhang Heng wanted to clarify in advance. He stopped, asking, "What will happen if I accept this job offer, and your father returns home by himself?"

"I will still pay you the money." Zhang Heng nodded, "I'm going to say something that you may not like to hear...what if something horrible happened to your father?"

"It doesn't matter. I have already considered all kinds of possibilities myself," Wendy hesitated, "As long as you can prove that he is no longer in this world, I will pay you the money." "Very well, I'll take the job," Zhang Heng said., "Pay me half of the money for the deposit, then write an employment contract. I also need you to tell me more information about your father. I will come back once I discover your father's whereabouts."

Wendy was overjoyed when she heard Zhang Heng's promise, but she added, "No need for all that trouble. I will go with you, and I will tell you more about my father on the road. I want to know the results as soon as possible."

"Hold up. Did you just say that you want to find your father with me?" Zhang Heng frowned.

"Yes, don't despise me just because of my age. I can provide you with a lot of help," Wendy insisted. "In addition to providing information about my father, there are many things I can do. I tamed my first pony when I was only seven..."

"But you know that we might come across great danger when we leave town."

Zhang Heng did not want someone dragging his feet.

"Of course! It is the reason why I hired you. Otherwise, I would have gone by myself." Wendy's eyes widened, puzzled.

"So... you just want to hire a bodyguard?"

"Yes, if you want to call yourself that."

"Goodbye."

Zhang Heng walked towards the hotel with Radish.

Wendy hurriedly shouted when she saw Zhang Heng left, "How about the 70 dollars, or 75? This is as much as I can pay you. If you want more, I'll just go to other people. Although the people in town don't like us, they will not refuse the job if I pay them money. As long as I pay a good price, someone will definitely be willing to be my bodyguard."

"Please, I have no interest in being directed by a kid." Zhang Heng shrugged her off with a wave and kept walking, "I hope you find your father as soon as possible, Wendy."

as soon.

### **Chapter 605 Do You Know What Time It Is?**

Zhang Heng had done a lot of walking in the past few days. When he arrived at the hotel, the first thing he did was to take a hot shower, getting rid of all that dirt and mud off him. While at it, he also washed his clothes and hung them on the window sill. With the temperature in the area, Zhang Heng's clothes would dry the next morning. Once he got up the following day, he would have clean and fresh clothes to wear.

Before sunset, he had already taken off his boots and laid on the bed. He did not know how long he slept, but it was definitely not that long. It was still dark outside when the sudden knocking on his door woke him up.

For the first time, Zhang Heng grabbed his revolver under the pillow and leaned against the door.

"Who are you?"

"It's me, sir, Wendy. We met at the grocery store in the afternoon."

Zhang Heng did not open the door immediately after hearing her voice. Frowning, he asked, "Why are you here?"

"I re... thought about your proposal. I think what you said finally makes sense to me now," Wendy replied. "What did I say?"

Zhang Heng combed his messy hair and quickly put on his damp trousers. As for his shirt, he decided to let it wring out for a little longer.

"You said you were not interested in getting directed by a kid."

"Yes, that was my answer to you. Go and look for someone else to help you. By the way, do you know what time it is?" "Five o'clock in the morning, sir," replied Wendy. "I pondered on it after that and felt that you should be the one in charge of this investigation. I am only responsible for providing suggestions. I wonder if you find this arrangement acceptable?"

"Why would you come here to talk to me at five in the morning?" Zhang Heng yawned.

"Sorry, I heard you fell asleep very early. If we depart now, we might still reach Glen Town in the evening. I just hope to find my father as soon as possible. The thought of him getting kidnapped by bad men makes it impossible for me to sleep. Please help me!"

Wendy felt like she was waiting for a trial after she spoke to Zhang Heng. Every passing second was torture to her. After a while, she heard something moving from behind the door. Zhang Heng moved the chair barricading the door and said, "Come in, slowly."

Wendy was ecstatic when she heard Zhang Heng's reply. She then entered the room, gingerly treading as per Zhang Heng's request.

She saw Zhang Heng, who was holding a revolver but couldn't help doing a second take at Zhang Heng's naked body.

After making sure that Wendy wasn't followed, and that nobody was hiding near the stairs, he put away the gun and closed the door.

"Didn't your mother teach you not to enter a stranger's room?" Zhang Heng asked.

"I can protect myself," Wendy insisted. Seeing that Zhang Heng didn't believe a word she said, she added, "If you want to do something vile to me, I will scream as loudly as I can! This hotel has many guests, and we are not too far from the police station as well. The sheriff will get here as soon as he can the moment I make a scene. Although I am not the most likable character in this town, it depends on who I compare to. Of course, I believe that you are an honest and friendly man."

"You are too naive. Say I'm a villain, poised to do something bad to you, I wouldn't even give you the chance to scream in the first place. You can't be so lucky every time. The best way to protect yourself is not to put yourself in danger."

"80 dollars... 80 dollars. You are in charge of this investigation." Wendy wanted to dwell no longer on this topic, so she raised her offer again.

Zhang Heng was noncommittal when he heard this. "In contrast, I am more curious as to why you insist on getting me to help you? As you said, you could have hired someone else for this price."

"I can't be sure if they can be credible," Wendy confessed after a moment's silence. "There is one thing I didn't tell you. My father has offended Lawrence G. Murphy. He is the most powerful man in town. All the grocery stores, bars, banks, and hotels are his. Except for Sheriff Terrell, the townsfolk all either work for him or would side with him. That's why I chose you to help me. I don't know if my father's disappearance is related to Major Murphy, and I don't want anybody to see that we are in frequent contact. The last thing I want is to trigger his vigilance." "Well, this explains why you hired an outsider like me to help your father," Zhang Heng snorted, "How long were you planning to hide this from me? So, you want me to offend this town's kingpin by offering me a mere 80 dollars? This is not a good deal at all."

"No, sir. I planned to tell you all this, and then some more, as we journey to Glen Town. Things are not as bad as you think. Lincoln County is indeed massive, but Major Murphy has the final say in the town. Outside town, the owners of many ranches and mines are all against him."

"Even so, it's still going to be a big loss for me." Zhang Heng poured himself a glass of water.

Wendy gritted her teeth, "How about I offer you a good horse? We have thirty horses on our ranch. You can pick one. I noticed that your steed is not thoroughbred, and it is ancient. ."

Zhang Heng did not know how Radish would react if it heard Wendy's evaluation. However, what Wendy said was still a fact. Unfortunately, Zhang Heng's horseriding skills weren't good enough to handle a thoroughbred horse.

A good horse certainly didn't come cheap. Each going for at least eighty to ninety dollars, Wendy had just doubled-up on her offer by offering him a good horse. This should also be the last time she was going to ask him.

A hundred and seventy dollars was enough to make Zhang Heng reconsider the whole thing. The amount was good enough to sustain him for a year, and even if he didn't mess with the man named Murphy, he would still be chastised because of skin color. Besides, he was just looking for a missing person.

Zhang Heng thought for a moment, then suddenly asked, "Do you know where the lucky horseshoe is?"

"Huh?" Wendy was at a loss when she heard the question, "You want horseshoes?"

"It's nothing. Forget about it." Zhang Heng asked the question because Wendy told her that her ranch had lots of horses. Zhang Heng was not surprised when he did not get the answer that he wanted. He then said to Wendy, "Let's go and grab something to eat."

"What do you mean?" Wendy asked nervously.

"Let's get to Glen Town after breakfast. Didn't you say we will arrive by nightfall?"

"No, it's actually quite a long journey. We can only get to the town between here and our destination in the evening." Wendy was ecstatic, "Let me bring you something to eat immediately."

"What about you? How are you going to get there? Do you need to rent a carriage?"

“You have just underestimated a rancher’s daughter. I will ride with you.”

### **Chapter 606 Note**

Zhang Heng initially thought that Lightning was a pony. And Wendy did say so as well. However, he ignored the fact that Wendy said she had been taming Lightning since she was seven years old. Five years later, Lightning had grown into an adult horse with a tall body, shiny fur, and strong muscles. It was filled with vitality and strength.

In contrast, Radish looked like a value-added purchase or a gift after he bought something.

“If you wish to receive a portion of your pay, you can go to my ranch to pick a horse...”

“No need,” Zhang Heng interrupted, “I’m a sentimental man. For now, I will continue to ride my steed. You are right. We should depart earlier.”

“You have the final say.” Wendy mounted her horse; her speed and smoothness made it look like she had done it a thousand times.

Zhang Heng jumped on his horse.

The sun was only rising over the horizon, and most of the countryfolk were still fast asleep. Hence, no one noticed the two leaving.

To Zhang Heng’s surprise, Wendy behaved really well along the way. Other than answering every question that Zhang Heng posed, she silently rode her horse and said nothing. Half a day had passed, the two only completed half of the journey to the next town. Wendy could not help but speak out.

“Sir, you don’t have to worry about me. Just speed up. I promise I will not be left behind.” “As you can see, my horse is ancient. I don’t think it can survive a ride of such great distance,” Zhang Heng said. Wendy wanted to reply, but she decided not to say it in the end.

“What do you want to say?” “Your horse is old, but it is not that old. It would eat the grass on the ground secretly every two steps it makes. I think it is far from reaching its limit.”

“Do you know horses well?” Zhang Heng raised his eyebrows.

“Yes, to be precise, my father knows horses very well. Our family’s ranch may not be the largest in Lincoln County, but my father has to be the one most acquainted with horses within a hundred miles. He taught me everything about these magnificent beasts.”

Zhang Heng thought for a while. “How about revising the contract we agreed on earlier?”

“What?” Wendy became nervous when she heard that.

It was out of sheer desperation that she hired Zhang Heng to search for her father. After all, the man had been missing for many days, and she couldn’t afford to wait any longer. However, not many outsiders were in Lincoln County, and it was rare to find an excellent marksman. Wendy had never met Zhang Heng before, so she did not know what kind of person he was. Although she tried to remain as calm as possible, they were no longer at the hotel. In other words, if Zhang Heng wished to hurt her right now, there was nothing she could do about it.

Throughout the journey, Wendy silently held a knife in her pocket. Zhang Heng noticed she was holding a weapon, but it did not bother him. "You teach me about horses, and you can deduct ten dollars from my pay," he offered.

"You want to know more about horses?" Wendy was baffled by Zhang Heng's request. She then let go of the knife, "What do you want to know?"

"Various aspects, including how to pick, raise, ride, how to calm a grumpy horse, and what are spurs." Zhang Heng pointed at the wheel-like contraption behind his boots. Having read about it in novels and seen it in western movies, he knew that they were used to stimulate the horse to run faster. It allowed the rider to free up their hands to gun down their enemies.

That said, he had no idea how to use it.

These were more advanced techniques, and he could not learn them that night from the bailiff.

"I'm happy to share this knowledge with you, but most of them are very basic. I'm worried that you might get impatient," Wendy said cautiously.

"No. I won't."

As an amateur, Zhang Heng was happy that someone was willing to teach him.

"Where do we start?" This was the first time Wendy faced such a weird request.

"It's better to start with types of horses." Zhang Heng pointed at Lightning, "What breed is your horse?"

Wendy stroked her mane and said, "Lightning is an Indian colt. It was first brought to the American continent by Spanish colonists. It thrives here and has finally become what it is today. It is seven years old this year, equivalent to a middle-aged human. And it is my best partner."

"How about my horse?" Zhang Heng then pointed at Radish and asked.

Wendy looked at Radish carefully for a while and said, "I want to take back what I said earlier. It is actually not too bad of a breed. If I read correctly, it should be a Hungarian hybrid, considered a stable breed of hybrid horses. Usually, hybrids are very smart, and after some training, they can often complete tasks that other horses cannot complete. Besides that, they have strong self-control."

"Really? I don't see any self-control in it." Zhang Heng looked at the undisciplined Radish, who walked a few steps away and lowered its head to gnaw on some weeds on the ground.

"You have to learn to control it, and it is indeed getting old. I estimate it is almost twenty-five to twenty-six years old." "What about riding it?"

After a while, Wendy confirmed that Zhang Heng knew next to nothing about horses. She found it really hard to believe. Several men on the east coast knew nothing about riding horses, and these usually traveled in carriages and trains. However, in the west, especially in the more remote areas where trains were not reachable, most men had to learn how to ride horses, especially where Wendy lived. Countless equestrian masters were living around her.

Zhang Heng had never said that he could ride a horse. He came to Lincoln County alone. Coupled with his superb marksmanship and a cowboy outfit, people subconsciously thought that he was a master horseman. Thus, half a day into the journey, Wendy now felt that she had hired the wrong man for the job.

But it was too late to change her mind now.

Wendy could only comfort herself. At least she felt safer. And if Zhang Heng did intend any harm, he would be unable to catch up to her.

These thoughts clouded Wendy's mind, but she did not express them. Having the patience of a saint, she slowly imparted all kinds of information Zhang Heng wanted to know as they went on their way. Initially, he wanted to learn about western culture, but it turned out that it was something Wendy knew nothing about.

According to her words, apart from a family outing, this was the first time she had strayed so far away without her family. In the past, she was only active in Lincoln County or, more precise, only her ranch and county seat.

Zhang Heng suddenly remembered a question and asked Wendy, "Does your mother know that you are looking for your father?"

"Yes, sir," Wendy replied calmly, "I left her a note."

"That means you snuck out."

"No, I left a note."

"Which is why we call such behavior as sneaking out. You didn't tell your mother about it because you knew she wouldn't have agreed."

### **Chapter 607 Misunderstanding**

Although they had only worked together for less than half a day, doubts about each other had begun to materialize. Wendy suspected Zhang Heng wasn't as good as she initially thought him to be, and Zhang Heng began to doubt if Wendy would fulfill her promise at all.

For Wendy, she had no other choice. Since she had chosen Zhang Heng, she could only rely on him no matter what would happen. At the same time, Zhang Heng gained valuable knowledge and skills, and since it could be considered part of the reward, his doubts didn't bother him too much.

To avoid having to spend the night in the wilderness, the two sped up their horses. Zhang Heng could actually make Radish run faster. After all, he came to Lincoln County alone. Only one thing worried him—Radish would become difficult to control if it started running more quickly, in turn, increasing the risk of accidents. Hence, he felt that the journey shouldn't be rushed.

But when compared to sleeping on the grass, a little suffering was nothing.

In the end, the two arrived at Glen Town at about seven in the evening.

“This is the town.” Wendy pointed at a bar in the middle of the town square. “My father always tells me about this place, saying that their apple pie is delicious. Every time he passes by, he will buy one, and sometimes, even two for my mother and me.”

Zhang Heng nodded, “Let’s stick to your plan. You go inside and ask when the last time your father showed up and if he passed through here on his return trip. I’ll head to the hotel to book two rooms.”

If he wanted to, Zhang Heng could actually head to the bar himself to ask those questions. Nonetheless, the terrible experience he had to endure when he entered a bar last time made him decide to keep a low profile and leave the communications part to Wendy. Even though the latter was only twelve years old, the rancher’s daughter was very good at what she was supposed to do, and she also knew how to communicate well, revealing maturity far beyond her age.

Undoubtedly, the harsh environment she lived in played a big part in shaping her into who she was today.

Every time her father went out to sell cattle, he would have to leave home for an extended period. During this time, she was required to take care of the remaining horses and cattle in the ranch and look after her mother. Coupled with the townsfolk’s hostility, being brave wasn’t just an option.

“Okay,” Wendy nodded. “Don’t worry, just leave it to me.”

“See you at the hotel.”

The hotel and bar in Glen Town were very close to each other. After the two separated, Zhang Heng paid for the accommodation and asked someone to care for Lightning and Radish before retreating to his room. There, he removed his revolvers and used the time to perform simple maintenance on the guns.

However, after a quarter of an hour, he didn’t see Wendy entering her room. Thus, Zhang Heng waited another five minutes before he got up and walked downstairs.

Wendy carefully avoided a pile of horse dung and what seemed to be vomit under her feet and pushed the bar’s doors open.

A woman with a flower-dotted skirt was near the door. Seeing Wendy, she said, “This is no place for a child.”

“I’m not a kid anymore, madam,” Wendy said.

“I am not a madam either,” the woman smiled.

“Oh, you are that...” Wendy suddenly exclaimed, “Sorry, I didn’t mean to discriminate against you.”

“It’s okay. Your attire is terrible. Are your parents abusing you? Fortunately, you are actually quite pretty. Perhaps when you get older, you can come here to find me if you want to escape marriage, a husband, or your children.”

“Thank you, but I don’t think something like that would be possible,” snorted Wendy. “Actually, I am here to inquire about something,” she said after a pause.

“Many people come to the bar for information. Usually, they buy me a glass of wine first. But for the sake of us both being females, I will not ask that of you.” She then nodded at Wendy, “What do you want to know?”

“I want to inquire about a man named Matthew Robbins. He is a rancher who should have passed this place fourteen days ago. He was in a gray shirt and some old-looking boots and is about thirty-five years old. His eyes are firm, and there is a scar on his left abdomen. He may have stopped by the past few days. Do you remember seeing him?”

“I can say that this man named Matthew is definitely not among those I slept with,” scoffed the woman in the flower-dotted skirt. “Sorry, I don’t stay in this bar all the time. I will go to the second floor if I have work. Now, fourteen days ago... let me think. Business seemed to be pretty good that day. Maybe he came in while I was working.” The woman in the flower-dotted skirt rushed to the bar and said, “Perhaps you can ask the bartender over there. He is always here.” “Thank you, madam... oh, sorry.”

Wendy squeezed a smile on her face, but before she could walk to the bar, she felt someone slapping her bum.

“Is this the newcomer you told me about two days ago? She is younger than I thought. Is she really 16?”

The man stank of tobacco, and his behavior frivolous.

“Ah, it appears there’s a misunderstanding. Bacchus, this lady here is not the Maggie I told you about.” Noticing how Wendy’s expressions had suddenly changed, the woman in the flower-dotted skirt realized that something was wrong. So, she hurriedly stood up and helped her.

Bacchus then shrugged, “It doesn’t matter. I’m fine with her. Although she is kind of ugly, at least she is young...”

Before he finished speaking, he saw Wendy suddenly pulling out a knife from her pocket and was about to stab him. By a stroke of luck, Bacchus reacted quickly and blocked it with his hand at the critical moment. He managed to avoid being ripped apart, but the knife sliced into his hand, almost piercing through his palm.

Instantly, Bacchus erupted into a string of curses.

The woman in the flower-dotted skirt covered her mouth at the sight of the bloody scene. She then hurriedly walked up to him and said, “Oh god, Mr. Bacchus, are you okay? I’ve said this is all a misunderstanding!”

However, in a senseless outburst of anger, Bacchus shoved her aside. Her waist was slammed on a table next to her, spilling along with her the drinks of two other customers.

“Royce, what the f\*ck is wrong with your people?!” Bacchus roared in fury. He plucked out the knife from his hand, and blood started gushing out of the wound. It splattered and spewed onto the floor, almost forming a bloody mini stream.

“Mr. Bacchus, you need to look for a doctor in town to deal with that wound!” Royce ignored the pain in her waist and persuaded the man to look for treatment. Although this was her first time meeting

Wendy, she had a good impression of this girl. In retrospect, she did not expect the latter to react so harshly.

This was just a small misunderstanding, and a simple explanation could have solved it. With Wendy stabbing the man with a knife, however, the situation had definitely escalated. Then, she saw Bacchus' eyes flashing with a bloodthirsty and murderous intent. It was pointless talking him out of it. The most important thing to do right now was to ensure Wendy's safety and to stop Bacchus from doing something stupid.

### **Chapter 608 I Regret It, So What?**

This was the sight that greeted Zhang Heng when he walked into the bar:

Wendy was pinned to the table, desperately struggling to free herself. One of her hands was fixed on the table, and her other was wounded. A man with bandages wrapped around his hand had his knife stabbed between her fingers, yelling at the same time, "You little [BEEP]! Aren't you going to apologize? This is your last chance! I swear I will cut off your hand if you make me ask you the same question again!!!"

Instead of caving in, Wendy gritted her teeth and did not say a word. On the other side, a woman in a flower-dotted skirt was trying to talk the man out of it, while the others in the bar were watching the drama unfold before them.

The man only sought to become more and more furious. Wendy's stubbornness had embarrassed him in front of everyone. And the wound on his hand also made him lose his mind gradually. And finally, he put on a murderous look and readied to cut off Wendy's palm.

But the very next moment, a loud gunshot could be heard, and the knife in his hand flew away. The deafening explosion instantly silenced the noisy bar.

"I think she is quite happy with her right hand. She still wants to keep it," the visitor sniffed.

Bacchus turned his head and saw an oriental man with yellow skin and black hair, but wearing cowboy clothes. He was still holding a revolver in his right hand, and smoke poured out from its muzzle.

The moment Bacchus's companions saw someone shooting at him, they instinctively drew their guns as well. "I would advise you not to test your luck."

"Who are you? What is your relationship with this little (BEEP)? Why so, nosy?!" Bacchus scoffed with an expression most unkind.

"She is my employer, and I need her to keep paying me... the full amount."

"Is that right? Know what your employer did to me? She pierced my palm!" Bacchus raised his wounded hand, continuing aggressively, "and you know where she initially aimed at? She was going for my bowels! This little (BEEP) wanted to murder me!!!"

"Really, I'm really sorry about that. Then, what?"

“Then... until now, she hasn’t even given me a simple apology. I don’t care where you’re the f\*ck you came from, but here, where I live, people have to admit their mistakes and pay the price for their wrongdoings. They have to beg for forgiveness!”

“Don’t listen to him. He touched my bum first! I just fought back in self-defense. I didn’t do anything wrong!” Wendy, who was still being pressed on the table, shouted in exasperation.

“You heard what she said,” Zhang Heng interjected. “It seems you both have a disagreement on this matter. Why not let her go, and we can talk about this like civilized men.”

“Now, why should I listen to you?” Bacchus retorted.

“Because... You hurt your right hand, and I’m pretty sure you want your left hand intact, right? Otherwise, you will have to be at the mercy of others to feed you.” Zhang Heng lowered his revolver and aimed at Bacchus’s left hand, “Well, let me pay you ten dollars so you can find a doctor to bandage the wound. Whatever money that’s left after you paid the doctor will be your compensation.” “I can earn one dollar a day. Such a serious injury can’t be healed in a week!” disagreed Bacchus. “50 dollars and she must apologize first.”

“Fifteen,” replied Zhang Heng after considering a while.

“I’m not f\*cking bargaining with you! Do you take me as a beggar?” Bacchus felt insulted, and the way he looked at Zhang Heng had only worsened.

Although Zhang Heng drew his gun first, this incident happened in front of so many people. Bacchus did not believe that Zhang Heng would dare to kill him. Besides, he was still holding Wendy hostage.

However, Zhang Heng seemed to know what he was thinking. “I dare you never to leave this town for eternity!”

“What is that? Is that a threat?” Bacchus grinned.

He did not expect that he would be threatened by an outsider in his territory, even when he was the one in the right.

“The one who should be watching out is you,” Bacchus sneered. “You can ask around, who hasn’t heard the name, Bison Bacchus? My brothers and I served in the Fourth Rangers. You should be worrying about how to leave Glen alive.”

“Thanks for the reminder. It seems I’ll need to buy two more boxes of ammunition.”

As soon as his voice fell, the bar’s wooden doors were pushed open again. “Damn. Can’t you guys live peacefully around here? Why do you guys have to give me trouble every single day?” resounded a husky voice.

The person here was the sheriff of Glen Town, a good-looking elderly cowboy. Someone had gone to look for him when they saw how bad the situation had become.

“Oh, Bacchus. It’s you and your people again.”

The sheriff was not happy to see them.

Sheriff, it was not us who caused the trouble this time. I am the victim!" Bacchus then showed his injured hand to the sheriff.

"So you plan to cry all day like a woman just because of a tiny gash?" The sheriff then looked at Zhang Heng, "And you. You just fired your gun in my town. I have never seen another Chinese as brave as you. Are you planning to raise your gun all night?"

Zhang Heng put away the revolver when he heard the sheriff's comment, intending to show that he harbored no malice.

The sheriff then stared at Bacchus again, to which the latte harrumphed, and asked his allies to let Wendy go. Immediately, Wendy ran to Zhang Heng's side.

"Okay, I already know what happened here. Twenty dollars. After that, you both should shake hands and forget everything that happened," the sheriff said.

"Twenty dollars is too little," Bacchus protested. "My hand is severely wounded. I can't work for at least two months, and I need her apology!" growled Bacchus as he pointed at Wendy.

"Shut up. If you want to continue to live in this town, you'll have to abide by my rules!" the sheriff sternly implored. "I said, twenty dollars is more than enough. As for the apology..."

"I won't apologize!" Wendy said. Although her life was hanging by a thread earlier, she still did not intend to go soft. Zhang Heng was a little curious now. How did she become so stubborn at such a young age?

The sheriff looked at Zhang Heng, who shrugged in reply.

"Don't look at me. I think it's fine to apologize. But as I said before, we just share an employer-employee relationship. I can't order my employer to do what she doesn't want to do."

"Never mind the apology. Man up, Bacchus! Why are you bothered by a kid?" The sheriff raised his voice and bellowed, "So many people are watching you! What more, you used to be a f\*cking ranger!"

### **Chapter 609 You Are Too Young**

"Thank you, sheriff, for helping us out. Although I still have doubts about the twenty-dollar compensation, we are reasonable people. We know how hard it is to maintain order in a town." Wendy said to the sheriff when Bacchus and his gang left.

The latter was amused by Wendy's adult-like words and smiled. "I'm glad that you understand and are willing to give me your full cooperation. Madam, your father... he is not as reasonable as you..."

Afterward, he seemed to realize that he had said something that he wasn't supposed to say. A frustrated look quickly formed across the sheriff's face.

"Wait, you know about my father and me? How is that possible?" Wendy's eyes widened.

"Your father and I are friends. He loves you very much. He has shown me your pictures a couple of times." The sheriff had no choice but to tell her everything.

"But I never heard my father mention you."

"Well, perhaps each of us has a past we don't want to mention..."

"And what is that past?" Wendy asked.

"I'm afraid our past is meant to be kept secret. No one else can know about it," replied the adamant sheriff.

"Please, my father is missing now. It may be related to the past you talked about."

"Your father disappeared?! When?" The sheriff was stunned.

"I don't know the exact time. Fifteen days ago, he mentioned that he needed to leave home to discuss business with someone. My mother and I didn't see anything out of the ordinary, and we thought nothing of it. Usually, he would be back in a few days. However, it has been fifteen days, and he is still not home."

"So, you are here to look for your father? Hold on, does your mother know that you are in Glen Town?" the sheriff questioned as he threw a glance at Zhang Heng. "Mr. Zhang was hired by me to help me find my father. He is also responsible for my safety along the way," Wendy introduced. "Ahh... he is an excellent gunman, may I say." "Really? No matter how good the gunman is, they don't usually end well. However, I do know that those who don't carry guns live longer," the sheriff snorted.

"I have different opinions. If I had a gun with me, what just happened wouldn't have happened."

The sheriff smiled and did not refute. There were some things a young man could not possibly understand. He said sincerely, "You should go home. Your father will take care of his affairs. You just need to wait at home." "But unfortunately, I am not the kind of person who is willing to sit at home and wait for something bad to happen. I will blame myself forever if I didn't do something," Wendy said with stubborn insistence. "If the storm comes, I will walk into the storm. So whether you want to help me or not, I will keep looking for my father!"

"But you are only twelve years old." "Twelve is old enough, sheriff." The sheriff was dumbfounded, managing to only reply after a long while. "Why don't I do this for you. I still have important business to attend to, and I really can't get away now. Give me a week. After that, I will look for your father."

"Thank you for your kindness, but it dragged on for too long. I am afraid I can't wait for another week. I should do this myself." Wendy replied politely but firmly refused.

"With all due respect, Wendy, you are too young to understand this world. The world is a dark place. Some people are not who they appear to be. You can't just grab someone with and venture out on the road!"

"Mr. Zhang is a good man. I don't need to live until your age to know that. As for you, Mr. Sheriff, you appeared suddenly and claimed to know my father. My father has never mentioned you to me. Why should I believe what you told me?" Wendy paused, "Who knows... maybe my father's disappearance is related to you."

"You are quite smart." Even though his honesty was being put on trial, the old cowboy was not angry. Instead, he laughed. "Matthew has a good daughter. Okay, it looks like I can't stop you. Madam, let me

send you off at least tomorrow. You just offended Bacchus. He and his former Ranger friends still have a lot of power in the vicinity.”

“Thank you, sheriff. After I find my father, I will tell him you saved me tonight.”

After the incident, Wendy couldn't ask about her father's whereabouts in the bar anymore. After bidding farewell to the sheriff, she ordered two apple pies and went back to the hotel with Zhang Heng.

“You should listen to him.” Zhang Heng said, “Now it seems your father's disappearance may not be as simple as it seems. I think he is hiding something from you, and he doesn't want you to know about it.”

“In that case, you won't get your reward.”

“I can go and complete other bounties to make money,” Zhang Heng rebuked her calmly. “Also, remember what I said before?”

“You dared that man not to leave the county seat forever?”

“It's not that. Earlier, I told you not to get into trouble. You promised me, and I let you go to the bar to investigate your father's disappearance.” “I didn't cause any trouble. He touched me first,” Wendy emphasized.

“Is that why you turned around and planned to stab him to death?”

“My father told me that if I'm the shortest and weakest person in the room, I have to make sure that I act the toughest, so no one dares mess with me. They need to know that there are consequences...”

“Then the man pinned you to the table, and he almost cut off your palm.” Zhang Heng stopped and looked into Wendy's eyes, “Hey, kid, listen, I can't guarantee that I will be right there to save you whenever you are in danger. You could have come to me for help.”

Wendy went silent for a moment before continuing, “The people in town don't like our family. My father is often away, and my mother doesn't know how to read. I am used to solving everything by myself.”

“But didn't you pay me to let me solve these problems for you? You have to assure me that you won't be so reckless when you reencounter such troubles. Otherwise, I will be forced to send you home.”

“There is an agreement between us. You promised that you'd help me find my father,” Wendy protested.

“Yes, but the agreement also says that you must listen to my orders. It means that when I ask you to stop, you must stop. And when I think we can't go any further, we have to head home.”

“This is too cunning. You are shameless.”

“It's okay if you think this way. Now, repeat after me. Sir, I have made a mistake, and I will opt for other ways to solve the problem in the future.”

“You'd better say it quickly, or I'll leave you to the sheriff. He seems to be interested in sending you home.”

“Sir, I have made a mistake, and I will opt for other ways to solve the problem in the future.” Wendy turned her neck and whispered reluctantly.

“Very good. I’m glad we have reached a consensus again. Take your apple pie back to the room to eat. We have to get up early tomorrow morning and continue our journey.” Zhang Heng said, “Also, I will pay that twenty dollars for you. Could you write it down somewhere? You must remember to pay me back when this is over.”

### **Chapter 610 Chewing Tobacco**

Zhang Heng got out of bed as the day’s first light poured into the room. He briefly cleaned himself up and went downstairs.

The sheriff arrived when he was having breakfast with Wendy. The white horse he rode on whinnied majestically, perfectly matching his uniform and the badge on his chest. He looked so good he had the female owner of the hotel stare at him twice.

“Would you like a cup of coffee, Sheriff?” Wendy asked.

“That would be perfect, dear madam.” The sheriff smiled and dismounted his horse, “I will escort you two out of the river valley, where you are most likely to encounter ambushes. You will be much safer when you get to the plains. From there, you are on your own. “

“What a sweet man.”

“If something bad happened to Matthew’s in my territory, then I’m not qualified to become a sheriff here?” The sheriff gave Zhang Heng a nod, handed the reins to the hotel’s handyman, and walked to the table. “It’s a shame you have to leave so soon. We should go on a hunting trip together after you find your father.”

“I like hunting. When I was a kid, I always followed my dad to the forest and watched him hunt for hares. However, he had never let me lay my hands on the gun,” Wendy said.

“He is right, but I think we can make an exception this time. There are lots of prey around here.” The sheriff blinked at Wendy.

“Are there wolves and bears too?!” Wendy asked excitedly.

“Haha, those are rare. Most have been killed by the Indians who lived nearby earlier.”

“It’s a pity. I haven’t seen a bear before.”

The sheriff took the cup of coffee handed to him personally by the female boss. “Thank you.”

“I don’t know, just want to see it.”

“There will be opportunities; there will always be opportunities.”

Thus, the three chatted while eating breakfast. The atmosphere was light and hearty—the sheriff was the kind of person who knew how to create the right atmosphere at the right time. In his own words, he was supposedly good at charming girls when he was young. That was why he knew the perfect conversation to be cozy up to a girl like Wendy. He even managed to convince Wendy that it would be

better to join her on the quest to search for her father. She dismissed this idea, though. As she had said, her father had been missing for a while. She could not afford to wait any longer. "Sheriff, I think it's time we depart from here."

The sheriff then patted her head, "Oh, sorry. I'm getting old, and I'm getting chattier. I hope I didn't bore you."

"You are the funniest and heartiest person that I have ever met! It has been a great pleasure chatting with you, but I'm afraid I have more important matters to attend to."

"Of course. I'm ready. We can set off now," the sheriff said.

"That couldn't be better."

"I will be waiting for you outside." The sheriff smiled at Wendy again, got up, and walked outside the door.

At the same time, Wendy had also finished her breakfast and was about to get up. But the next moment, something touched her thigh.

Wendy lowered her head and saw Zhang Heng handing something to her from under the table. She was taken aback.

"Take it. I hope we won't get to use it later." Wendy had a lot of questions to ask. However, when she took the thing from Zhang Heng, he had already stood up from where he sat and said to the sheriff, "Is that a Kentucky horse?"

"No, Snowflake is an Arabian horse," the sheriff proudly replied. "It can run real fast, and there are hardly any horses in the plains that can catch up with it."

"It seems I have much to study about horses," Zhang Heng said. His body happened to block Wendy, who was behind the table, and she quickly hid the object in her clothes as soon as possible. Then the three of them got on their horses and walked out of Glen Town. The sheriff was still talking and laughing along the way, but Wendy's mind seemed absent, thinking about the object Zhang Heng handed to her.

In an attempt to take her off the focal point of attention, Zhang Heng took over the conversation and started to chat with the sheriff. He took the opportunity to ask the sheriff about the culture around here, to which the sheriff also asked Zhang Heng to taste his chewing tobacco. Following his instruction, Zhang Heng first placed the shredded tobacco between his jaw and his teeth. After a few seconds, a pungent smell filled his mouth and pierced his throat. Although the shredded tobacco had been blended with spices, Zhang Heng still found it was hard to accept the peculiar taste.

It was said that chewing tobacco had become so popular in the United States because of the pioneering period. The wind and bumpy ride proved it difficult for cowboys to light up their cigarettes while they were on their horses, and they put tobacco in their mouths instead when they craved a smoke. If they spat from time to time, they could smoke while working, convenient and easy.

However, chewing tobacco directly would cause the mouth to stimulate more saliva than an ordinary cigarette. Besides, there were not a lot of places for smokers to spit in modern society. Hence, chewing tobacco gradually died off from the market.

Zhang Heng tasted it and spat out the tobacco.

"It's a pity," the sheriff said, "you speak English, and I heard that you have good marksmanship. If you want to make it in the wild West, you have to act more like a westerner."

"I do still have a lot of things to learn."

"Don't worry. Take your time." The sheriff patted on Zhang Heng's shoulder as a sign of encouragement.

The three people then rode towards the entrance of the river valley. It had technically been a river valley tens of thousands of years ago. Now there was no water here, but the rock walls on both sides remained. It was indeed easy to set up an ambush at this place.

"Let's go." The sheriff took the lead and walked in the forefront position, followed by Wendy, and Zhang Heng.

As soon as the three of them walked far enough, the sheriff said to Wendy, "I have to apologize."

"Apologize for what?"

"I lied to you before. I couldn't leave you alone and allow you to follow a random stranger." The sheriff pulled the reins, stopped the horse and turned around. "It's simply too dangerous!" "You have attempted to stop me from finding my father again and again. Is it for my safety or to cover up the truth behind my father's disappearance?" Wendy confronted him.

"Things... are always complicated." The sheriff sighed, "Maybe I will explain to you again when I have the opportunity, but for now, you should say goodbye to Mr. Zhang. Then I'll go home. I promise that I will help you find your father later. Although it's always hard to wait, it is at times the most effective way to solve a problem."

"Really, how are you going to send me home? With all due respect, sir, even if you are twenty years younger, you are no match for Mr. Zhang," Wendy said.

"Maybe." The sheriff did not argue with her, "Fortunately, I still have helpers."

Two people with rifles appeared on both sides of the rock walls after he finished talking.

"It's an honor to introduce you to the Deputy Sheriff of Glen Town, Joseph, and his brother, Jonathan."