

## Hitched 1491

### Chapter 1491

Elysia Thorne said, "Emmett's staying at the hospital with his sister and grandpa."

"...How's Maria doing?"

Elysia frowned and shook her head. "Not great. The doctors aren't sure if she'll make it to next spring. It's an incurable congenital disease; there's nothing they can do."

"...Can she be transferred to another hospital?"

"She could be, but Maria doesn't want to. She's very close to Claire Yeager, and since Claire's in Silver City, she wants to stay in Silver City too."

Tarquin Bradford sighed. "Everyone's dealt a different hand in life. Some are born to have it easy, and some are born to suffer. I just hope she finds peace."

Emmett's sister had truly had a tough run. Born with a terminal illness, saddled with a deadbeat dad and a clueless mom, her life was nothing but hardship.

Elysia also let out a long breath. It really was true that everyone has their own fate. Some people who had every reason to live chose to end their own lives. Others, filled with a desperate will to live, were denied the chance.

"Where are Mom and Dad?" Tarquin changed the subject.

Elysia composed herself. "They're in the room next door. How many days will you be busy in Border City?"

"Not sure yet. When are you all heading back to Oceanopolis?"

"Tomorrow."

"Is Emmett coming with you?"

"No, he's not coming back to Oceanopolis with us. He wants to stay in Silver City with Maria. We'll swing by Silver City to pick him up on our way to Jindale City."

"Okay. You guys have fun, and remember to call me if you need anything."

"I know. You should get some rest. I need to give the baby a bath, and we have an early morning tomorrow."

Tarquin didn't want to hang up. "I miss you."

"The kids are in the room," Elysia said. Then, lowering her voice conspiratorially, she whispered, "I miss you too."

She immediately raised her voice again. "Alright, alright, get some sleep! I'm hanging up!"

Elysia ended the video call, and a smile spread across Tarquin's lips.

He scrolled up, rereading his chat history with Elysia, a smile on his face the whole time. He kept at it until his eyes grew heavy, then put his phone away and went to sleep.

The next morning.

After a simple breakfast at their lodge, Tarquin and Lowell headed out to the old man's house.

On the way, they saw a young man on horseback!

They couldn't see his face clearly, but he cut an impressive figure sitting atop his horse. A falcon cried out as it circled above him, sometimes soaring into the clouds, other times diving low, following him all the way.

Inside the car, Lowell exclaimed, "A falconer?!"

The local driver said, "That's Diana. He's the most outstanding young man in this mountain community. He was on horseback at two, started learning falconry at three, and had his own eagle before he was ten! He's incredible!"

"Don't let his age fool you. That eagle of his has been with him for over a decade!"

"That's his younger brother sitting in front of him. He's seven now and also studies martial arts with Sutton. He sees Sutton every Saturday and Sunday."

Lowell was surprised. "There's someone else with him?"

The driver chuckled. "Yep. You just couldn't see clearly. You'll meet them in a bit."

Lowell asked, "Diana... is that a girl?"

The driver laughed and shook his

head. "Around here, the art of

falconry is passed down from father to son, not to daughters. It's

dangerous practice, not suitable for girls. Diana is a boy."

"Oh... The name just sounds like a girl's name."

"Diana means 'precious' here," the driver explained. "It's a boy's name for us."

Tarquin glanced at Diana through the car window but said nothing.

About ten minutes later, they saw the two brothers at Sutton's house.

This time, they got a clear look at Diana's face. Before even getting out of the car, Lowell remarked, "The name fits him. He's as pretty as a girl!"

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Tarquin didn't respond, simply opening the car door and stepping out.

Lowell couldn't help but ask the local driver again, "Doesn't he look just like a girl to you?"

The driver chuckled and joked, "I wouldn't say that out loud. Diana hates when people say he looks like a girl. He might just punch you if he heard that."

Lowell laughed along. "It's just that he's so good-looking."

"He takes after his mother," the driver said with a smile. "His mother was very beautiful. Look at his younger brother-he's a handsome kid, too."

Lowell glanced at the little boy and saw that it was true. Just like Diana, he had delicate features.

The old man was introducing them to Tarquin. "Mr. Bradford, let me introduce you. This is Diana, and this is his brother, Diaz. They are mountain locals."

"He's the little boy I told you about yesterday, the one who studies martial arts with me."

Tarquin took the initiative. "Hello."

The two brothers looked at Tarquin-one with a wary gaze, the other with a face full of curiosity.

Diana's eagle stood on his shoulder, its sharp eyes just as cautious as its owner's.

Diana was handsome, but he was far from approachable. His expression was cold. "Hello."

Lowell walked over. "That eagle is so cool!"

Diana glanced at him but offered no response. He turned to the old man. "Mr. Sutton, thank you for your trouble. I'll come back to pick him up tonight." After instructing his brother to behave, he mounted his horse and rode off.

His eagle once again soared into the sky, following him home.

The old man explained on his behalf, "Don't mind him. Diana's just a bit of a loner, but he's a good person at heart."

Tarquin shot Lowell a look. Lowell understood instantly and said with a smile, "We don't mind at all. Tarquin, looks like I'm not needed here today. I think I'll go have a chat with Diana about his eagle. It's my first time seeing a real falconer, and I'm fascinated."

"...Go ahead."

Lowell turned back to the car and told the driver to follow Diana.

Noticing he was being followed, Diana stopped by the side of the road, watching Lowell with a wary expression as eagle swooped down to land on his shoulder, its gaze menacing.

Lowell grinned. "Hey, don't be nervous. I don't mean any harm. I'm just really impressed, since it's my first time seeing a falconer up close. Can I... pet him?" Diana frowned and flatly refused. "No."

Feeling awkward, Lowell pressed on shamelessly. "Can I take a picture then?"

Diana: "No!"

Seeing how unapproachable he was, Lowell decided to play his trump card: Evan.

"My kid, Evan, he's a couple of years younger than your brother, and he absolutely loves eagles. I'll just take one quick picture to make him happy, how about it?"

Diana's brow furrowed in hesitation for a moment. "Only of the eagle. Not me." Lowell's face lit up. "No problem!" He quickly pulled out his phone, snapped a picture, and sent it to Evan.

As expected, Evan didn't disappoint. A video call came through almost immediately. The first words out of his mouth were, "Mr. Lowell, you met a falconer?"

Lowell, who had been waiting for this chance to use the kid to break the ice, aimed the camera at Diana and his eagle. "I sure did! Look, how cool is this?"

"So cool! How does she do that?"

Diana's brow tightened, and Lowell's smile twitched awkwardly. "Whoa, you can't just say that. This isn't a 'she,' it's a 'he.' A man."

Evan was confused. "A man? But he's so pretty!"

"He really is a man," Lowell insisted.

Evan grumbled to himself, \*But he looks just like a pretty girl.\* Seeing Diana's displeased expression,

however, he had the sense to apologize immediately I'm sorry, Diana. You're just so good-looking, I thought you were an older sister."

Diana's lips moved. Looking at the camera, he said, "It's okay." Perhaps because Evan was so charming, and just a child, his tone was a little gentler when he spoke to him

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Evan chattered on, "What a cool eagle! If I'd known Daddy and Mr. Lowell were going to visit you, I would have come too! Diana, what's his name?"

Diana said, "Jove."

"Jove? That's a cool name! Does it mean something?" Evan asked.

Diana chuckled, amused by the question. "It's just a name. I brought him home in September, and it took a whole year to fully train him."

"Ohhh, so you trained him for a whole year?"

"Yes."

"I have a pet too! His name is White. Let me show you... oh, shoot, he's not with me right now. I'll show you when he gets back. Diana, can you make him fly for me?"

Diana hesitated for a moment, then turned to his hawk. "Jove, go!"

The hawk was obedient, immediately launching into the sky. It soared high, showing off with a few aerial flips.

Evan shrieked, "Whoa! Coooool!"

Diana looked up at his eagle, his eyes filled with gentle pride.

After showing off for a bit, the hawk returned to Diana's shoulder, its big eyes staring at Evan through the screen.

Evan said, "Jove, you're so cool. Let's be friends, okay? My name is Evan Thorne. You can just call me Evan."

Jove let out a cry, his eyes full of what looked like disdain for the little human on the

screen.

Evan protested, "Hey, don't look down on a kid! I'm pretty tough, you know! I can't fly like you, but I can fight. I can protect you and Diana!"

"Plus, my family are super rich! I can get them to buy you lots and lots of treats!"

Jove cried out again.

Evan insisted, "I'm not a liar! You can ask Mr. Lowell if you don't believe me. Mr. Lowell, tell him! Tell him I'm super tough!"

Lowell, knowing Evan could communicate with animals, nodded. "That's right, he's not lying. He's a really tough kid. You won't regret being his friend."

Jove spread his wings, stretched his neck toward the screen, and let out another cry.



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"How about tomorrow? I'll video call you tomorrow morning and give you a demonstration, okay?!"

Jove screeched, and Evan nodded. "It's a date, then! See you tomorrow morning!"

Evan then turned to Diana. "Diana, Jove and I have a date to video chat tomorrow morning. You're okay with that, right?"

As Evan spoke, Jove also looked at Diana.

Pet

Diana was speechless. He'd been watching Evan and Jove for a while now, completely baffled. It looked like they were having a conversation, but how was that possible? A.

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his eagle, but it was more of mutual understanding built over time, not a human-like dialogue.

Driven by curiosity, Diana said, "...See you tomorrow."

Evan was delighted. "Okay! See you tomorrow morning! Bye-bye, Diana! Bye-bye, Jove!"

Jove flapped his wings and cried out in response.

As soon as the call ended, Diana frowned and asked Lowell, "Can he actually communicate with animals?"

Lowell gave a vague answer. "I'm not entirely sure myself. But he says he can. Our Evan really loves animals, and they all seem to love him back."

Diana was silent.

He stared at Jove with a puzzled expression for a moment, then ignored Cowell completely. Tugging on the reins, he urged his horse forward, and it galloped away at high speed.

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Lowell was taken aback and called after him, "Hey, hey, don't go! I have more questions!"

Diana just frowned and kept riding, not even turning his head.

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Watching Diana ride off into the distance, Lowell scratched his head, got back in the car, and asked, "Sir, is there a general store around here?"

"There's one just up ahead. You want to go?"

"Yeah, I'd like to buy a few things. Would you mind taking me?"

"Sure thing."

The area was remote, so there were no large supermarkets. They arrived at a small general store.

The store was tiny, and Lowell was buying so much it looked like he was stocking up for an army. The owner, seeing such a generous customer for the first time, enthusiastically helped him carry his purchases to the car.

"You're not from around here, are you, son? You here to impress your future in-laws?" People usually only bought this much when they were trying to win over a girl's family.

Lowell shook his head with a smile. "Nope, just visiting a friend."

"A girlfriend?"

"A boyfriend."

The store owner and the driver, who were in the middle of loading the car, both froze. "A boyfriend?"

Realizing they had misunderstood, Lowell quickly clarified, "I mean, a male friend. A platonic friend who is a boy."

The owner and driver both nodded slowly. "Oh... Well, love is love these days. It's not our place to judge you young folks' ways, but we respect it!"

"A girlfriend, a boyfriend, it's all good. As long as you're happy, that's what matters."

Lowell was speechless. The sentiment was so earnest, he almost felt like he should thank them.

After loading everything into the car, Lowell handed the driver a crisp hundred-dollar bill. "This is for you, sir."

The driver, startled, quickly refused. "I'm getting paid for the drive. I can't take gifts from you on top of that."

Lowell smiled. "The fare is for your hard work. The gift is just a token of my appreciation. Please, take it. Consider it a friendly gesture."

The driver hesitated for a moment before accepting the cigarettes, his smile growing wider. He struck up a conversation knew you were here. to learn martial arts, but I didn't realize your boyfriend was from around here too."

Lowell gave an awkward smile and explained, "My boss is the one here to learn I'm just tagging along. And I don't have a boyfriend. The male friend I mentioned is Diana."

The driver was surprised. "Diana? You're going to see Diana?"

"Yep. Let's go. You know where he lives, right?"

The driver gave Lowell a skeptical look. "You've taken a liking to Diana? You want him to be your boyfriend?"

Lowell's smile twitched. "You've

misunderstood. To be honest, my boss's young son is a huge fan of eagles. He's very curious about how falconers train them, so thought I'd pay Diana a visit. 'FindNovel.net

"Keeping the boss's kid happy is like keeping the boss happy—it leads to a raise. I'm just doing this for the paycheck."

Now the driver understood. "Oh, so that's what it is! And here I thought you were, you know, into boys. Heh, just a misunderstanding."

Lowell maintained a polite smile. "Yes, a misunderstanding."

The driver said, "I don't know exactly where Diana's house is, but I know which village he's from. I can take you there, and we can ask around once we arrive."

Lowell nodded. "Perfect!"

"It's a bit of a long drive, though," the driver added. "Will take the better part of the day."

Border City was vast and sparsely populated, with great distances between villages. Lowell said, "That's fine, I've got nothing but time. You can tell me stories about mountain locals on the way. I can tell them to my boss's son when I get back."

He needed a good cover story for poking around the village. This way, even if someone questioned the driver later, his story would hold up.

The driver started the car. "The mountain locals have a stable life now, no more migrating all over the place."

"It's like most villages. The young people, some are off studying, some are working in the cities to earn money, and some have settled down elsewhere and don't come back."

"These days, it's mostly children and the elderly who still live in the village."

"Diana is pretty much the role model for the younger generation in the village."

Lowell asked, "Why didn't he leave?"

"He can't," the driver said. "He has to take care of his younger brother. They're orphans; their parents passed away a long time ago."

Lowell was surprised. "He's an orphan?"

"Yep. His father died before Diaz was even born, and his mother died in childbirth. Diana raised Diaz all by himself. It's just the two of them, depending on each other."

Lowell frowned. "How do they get by?"

"When they were little, they needed help from the neighbors. Now, Diana is the one helping everyone else."

"Diana is a hard worker. He raises over a hundred head of cattle and sheep, and sells them for money to support his family."

"His eagle is incredible, too. It catches fresh prey every single day."

"If the catch is small, Diana and his brother eat it themselves. If it's big, he shares it with the neighbors or sells it at the market for cash."

"Even without parents to rely on, Diana has raised his brother to be strong and healthy."

Lowell nodded in agreement. "That is impressive."

"He's not just capable, he's also very kind," the driver added. "Whenever the elders

in the village need a hand, he never refuses. If he can help, he will."

Lowell asked, "How many families are still in the village now?"

The driver shook his head. "I don't know the exact number, but the town should have a record of it."

"Are they doing okay now?"

"Definitely better than before..."

The two chatted casually all the way to their destination.

At the entrance to the village, a few old men were basking in the sun. Lowell and the driver got out of the car to ask for Diana's house.

When the old men heard they were looking for Diana, one of them immediately asked, "What do you want with him?"

The driver answered for Lowell. "This friend came from far away to see Diana's falconry. He even brought a lot of gifts for him."

Lowell smiled, looking perfectly

innocent and harmless. "We met this morning at old man Sutton's house. was fascinated by his eagle, and since I had some free time, thought I'd come visit him at home."

Unlike Axel or Tarquin, Lowell had a kind face and a gentle demeanor. He didn't look like a bad person.

The old man pointed the way. "Follow this road to the very last row. The house closest to the mountain is Diana's. But you've come at a bad time. He's not home right now."

Lowell was curious. "Where did he go?"

"He went up the mountain to bring food to the madman," the old man said.

"The madman?"

The driver spoke up. "I know about this one. Their village has a madman named Wyatt. He's always muttering to himself and attacks anyone who gets near him. He attacks everyone except Diana."

Lowell was intrigued. "Why can Diana get close to him?"

The driver shook his head. "Must be

shook

some kind of connection. I heard he

came back from the outside and just went to live on the mountain. Once Diana got a little older, he started bringing him food regularly. return, the man helps watch over Diana's cattle and sheep

Lowell grew suspicious. "He came back from the outside?"

The driver nodded. "The story goes that when he was young, he went to the big city to make his fortune, He earned a lot of money but then someone cheated him out of all of it and he just... went mad."

A strange look flashed in Lowell's eyes. He expertly concealed his thoughts, bid farewell to the old men at the village entrance, and headed towards Diana's house.



Diana's home was a small brick bungalow, not much different from the others. It clearly looked like part of a newer housing development.

Lowell asked the driver to wait for him at Diana's house while he went up the mountain to find him.

The driver, worried about him, even handed him a stick for fending off stray dogs. "Just stick to the mountain path. Don't take any of the smaller trails; it's easy to get lost."

Lowell smiled. "Okay, I will."

After Lowell left, a few villagers came over to ask the driver about him. The driver repeated the cover story, "He's an outsider, here to see Diana's falconry. His boss's son loves eagles..."

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Lowell made his way up the mountain, a wooden stick in hand for support. He couldn't ride a horse, so walking was his only option. He didn't know how long he'd been climbing when he finally reached a high vantage point, so winded that even with all his training, he was gasping for air. Standing on the slope, he looked down and saw a vast expanse of cattle and sheep. A few sheepdogs were scattered around, diligently guarding their flock. In the distance, a dashing figure galloped across the grassland on horseback. An eagle shrieked and circled high above him, soaring on the wind. Even from this far away, Lowell recognized them instantly: Diana and Jove! Suddenly, Jove spotted prey on the ground and dove, its sharp talons piercing the creature's hide. It tumbled across the grass with its victim before gaining the upper hand, pinning it down with no chance of escape. Diana immediately reined in his horse and galloped over, extending his right arm. Jove snatched its prey and launched into the air, landing gracefully on Diana's arm. Diana secured the catch and they took off across the prairie again, the sheepdogs barking excitedly and running alongside them. It was a scene straight out of some epic tale, a hunter and his hawk, masters of the wild plains. Standing on the hillside, Lowell forgot his exhaustion, adrenaline surging through his veins at the raw energy of the moment. He couldn't help but pull out his phone and start recording, trying to follow Diana's path. Suddenly, something smacked him on the back of the head. It was a rock. Lowell whipped around, his heart jumping into his throat. A huge, disheveled man had appeared out of nowhere behind him. He was covered in dirt, and his face was a mask of grime. He glared at Lowell, his eyes full of hostility. Before Lowell could say a word, the man lunged at him. Lowell yelped and instinctively bolted. The man gave chase, roaring like an animal, as if he wanted to tear Lowell limb from limb. "Hey, don't! We can talk about this! I'm not a bad guy!" Lowell shouted as he ran. The man knew the terrain and was surprisingly fast. He caught up to Lowell and started swinging. Lowell quickly grabbed his hands, trying to restrain him so he could explain. But before he could get a word out, the man started yelling, "Bad man! Get away! Bad man!" His cries alerted the sheepdogs.

Several of them looked over, barking furiously as they charged toward them. Lowell realized this was bad. Very bad. He knew herding dogs could be vicious. If a whole pack of them ganged up on him, he'd be seriously injured, if not worse. He wasn't a powerhouse like Axel or Tarquin. One word flashed in his mind: RUN! He let go of the man and tried to scramble away, but the man suddenly grabbed his ankle. With a powerful tug, Lowell lost his balance and went tumbling down the steep slope. He was trying to get *\*away\** from the dogs, and now he was rolling right *\*towards\** them. Talk about of the frying pan and into the fire! Lowell was panicking, unable to stop his descent. He was about to roll right into a pile of angry dogs. He screamed, "Aaaah—!" "Woof! Woof!" The dogs closed in, leaping at him like a furry, snarling wave. The eagle also saw him as an enemy, diving down with its talons extended, just as it had with the prey, ready to tear into his flesh. At the last second, a sharp voice cut through the chaos. "Stand down!" The eagle instantly changed course and soared back into the sky. The sheepdogs lost their aggression, their tails wagging as they watched him quietly. Diana, still on his horse, glanced down at Lowell but didn't say anything just yet.

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He looked up at the crazy guy. "Wyatt, did he hurt you?" Before the man could answer, Lowell scrambled to defend himself. "I didn't hurt him, he hurt me! I was just taking a video when he attacked me out of nowhere. I was only defending myself, not trying to fight him." He added, "And he's the one who pushed me down the hill! I wouldn't have fallen otherwise." Diana's brow furrowed, but he remained silent until the man, Wyatt, was beside him. "Wyatt, are you hurt?" The man shook his head and pointed at Lowell. "Bad man!" Lowell felt a surge of indignation. "Hey, what part of me looks like a bad guy?" "Hit! Hit!" Wyatt tried to lunge at Lowell again, but Diana stopped him. "Wyatt, go help me watch the sheep." The man was surprisingly obedient. After shooting Lowell a few more dirty looks, he trudged off to the flock. Lowell watched him go, wondering, *\*So that's the crazy guy who came back from the city? But... he looks nothing like the person in the photo!\** "What are you doing here?" Diana asked, his brow still furrowed. Lowell snapped his attention back. "I came to find you. My boss, Evan, wanted to schedule a video call with you tomorrow, but you left before we could finish. I need to set a time and place with you." He added, "Plus, Evan wanted me to get some videos of you and Jove for him to see." Diana stared at him for a few seconds. "Where are you hurt?" "My ankle," Lowell said. "Is it serious?" "Not serious, I think it's just sprained." "Stand up and try to walk." Lowell got to his feet, but the moment he put weight on his foot, he hissed in pain. Diana frowned. "I'll take you to see a doctor. How did you get up here?" "I walked." Diana looked surprised. "You walked all the way up here?" "Yeah. The car couldn't make it, and I don't know how to ride a horse. It took forever." "...Alright, get on. I'll take you to the doctor." Lowell nodded eagerly. "Okay, okay!" Injured or not, he had no desire to walk back down that mountain. Lowell tried to swing his leg over the horse, but he couldn't get any power into it and failed to mount. He looked at Diana, embarrassed. "Uh, can you give me a hand?" Diana pursed his lips, a flicker of annoyance in his eyes, but he helped pull him onto the horse. Diana sat in front, with Lowell behind him. "Hold on tight," Diana said before snapping the reins. "Giddy-up!" The big black stallion shot forward at a blistering pace. As a reflex, Lowell grabbed Diana's waist and held on for dear life. The next second, Diana pried his hands off and shoved him right off the horse. Lowell hit the ground with a muffled grunt. "!" Before he could get angry, he heard Diana roar, "What do you think you're doing?!" Lowell protested, "... You said to hold on tight!" Diana was furious. "Did I say to hold on to *\*me\**?" "Well, where am I supposed to hold on?" Lowell asked innocently. "You..." Diana pulled hard

on the reins, and the black horse reared up its front legs threateningly. Lowell was floored. He just put his arms around his waist, and the guy wanted his horse to trample him? Was he serious? It wasn't like he was trying to cop a feel! It's not like he was making a pass at him. Why was he acting like such a drama queen? So not manly. Seeing how genuinely angry Diana was, Lowell didn't dare say any of this out loud. After all, he wasn't here for fun; he had a mission. Diana was his key to getting close to the local community, and he couldn't afford to offend him.

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Lowell bit his tongue and apologized. "Sorry about that. I got a little scared. It was just a reflex..." Diana scowled. "Scared? Are you even a man?" Lowell's eyes widened. "...Of course I am! I've just never ridden a horse before!" Diana glared at him for a few more moments. "I don't like people getting close to me. If you're that scared, I can just knock you out and carry you back. You can't be scared if you're unconscious." Lowell quickly shook his head. "No need! I'll be careful! Just tell me where to hold on, and I promise I won't touch you. If I touch you again, I'll walk the rest of the way with my injured foot!" he declared dramatically. "You can even go complain to my boss that I was harassing you! He's a man of principle; he'd fire me for sure!" Diana stared at him a little longer. "Get on." After pulling Lowell back onto the horse, Diana pointed. "Hold on here." Lowell quickly gripped the back of the saddle. "Got it this time!" Diana shot him one last warning glance before leading the horse down the mountain. The horse moved so fast, and with his injured foot, Lowell felt completely insecure. His heart was in his throat, and he had to fight the urge to grab Diana several times. When they arrived at the village clinic, Diana helped him dismount and called out to the doctor, "Ma'am, he rolled down the hill and got hurt. Can you take a look at him?" The middle-aged doctor asked, "And this is...?" "A tourist from out of town," Diana replied. The doctor put on a pair of medical gloves and rolled up Lowell's pant leg to examine him. His ankle was definitely swollen, and his knee was scraped up. "Any other injuries?" "My back, my chest... here... and here....." Lowell mumbled. The doctor's expression turned serious. "Take off your shirt, I'll take a look. Your pants too." "Huh?" Lowell froze for a second, then quickly shook his head. "No, it's fine. The other ones are just minor scrapes. You can just look at my ankle." The doctor raised an eyebrow. "Are you shy?" Lowell flushed. "...No, it's just... they're minor injuries, it's not necessary." The doctor turned to Diana. "Diana, why don't you help him onto the bed in the back? Help him get his shirt off and check where he's hurt." Now it was Diana's turn to be surprised. "You want \*me\* to undress him?" "Yes. He seems embarrassed. You're both boys, so you can help him check. If it's just minor scrapes, you can clean and disinfect them for him. If it's serious, I'll have to take over." Seeing Diana's frown, the doctor asked, surprised, "Are you embarrassed too?!" Diana's expression was conflicted. "I barely know the guy." "It doesn't matter if he's a stranger, you're both boys." Diana's lips moved, but then he said, "You can clean his leg first. I'll go get someone." And with that, he dashed out the door. The doctor couldn't help but grumble, "What's with you boys these days? You're all so prudish." Lowell was speechless. While the doctor treated his ankle, she started to chat. "Where are you from?" "Jindale City," Lowell replied. "Here for a visit?" "Yep." "How old are you?" "Twenty-nine." "Got a girlfriend?" Lowell smiled faintly. "Not yet." The doctor was curious. "How come?" "Work's been busy." "That's just an excuse," she said. "No matter how busy you are, there's always time for romance." Lowell just smiled again. "I guess the right one just hasn't come along yet." The doctor mused, "You know, I've always wondered. I can understand why the ugly ones have trouble finding a wife, but why are good-looking guys like you still single? You're handsome, our Diana is handsome, and you're both single."

## Chapter 1499

Lowell asked with a smile, "How old is Diana?" The doctor thought for a moment. "He should be twenty-two this year." "Oh, he's still young then. No rush," Lowell said. The doctor immediately shook her head. "Not young at all! Around here, boys his age are already fathers!" "...Well, then I guess it's just fate. By the way, that dirty guy up on the mountain, the one who attacks people on sight, is he the 'wild man' Diana looks after?" The doctor countered, "Does he listen to Diana?" "Yes." "Then that's him," the doctor said with certainty. "He's the only one like that around here. Don't mind how fierce and grubby he is now. He was a great person when he was young, and very handsome too." "Really? Do you have any photos of him from back then?" "I don't, but Diana's family does. His dad and the crazy guy grew up together, they have some old photos." Lowell nodded, smiling casually, and probed further. "...Did everyone from their generation leave the village to make a name for themselves?" "No, not many people left back then. In our whole village, the crazy guy was the only one who went out to see the world." Lowell fell silent. He was the only one who left. Logically, that meant it was very likely him. But... why did he look so different from the man in the photo? As they chatted, Diana returned with a young man to help. Lowell couldn't refuse Diana's gesture, so he went into the back room, lifted his shirt, and let the man clean the scrapes on his back. As he was leaving, the doctor advised, "Go rest at Diana's place for a bit before you head out. And remember to come back in a couple of days to get your dressing changed." "Okay, thank you, ma'am." After leaving the clinic, Diana felt he couldn't just kick Lowell out, so he led him back to his house to rest. On the way, Diana spoke up. "I apologize on Wyatt's behalf." He didn't think he was wrong for pushing Lowell off the horse-Lowell had been disrespectful first. But Wyatt pushing him down the hill was wrong. "Don't worry about it," Lowell said. "I heard from the doctor that he's... not all there." Diana nodded. "Everyone around here just calls him the crazy guy." Lowell took the opportunity to ask, "But I heard he was quite something when he was young. What happened to him?" Diana frowned slightly and gave a vague reply. "I don't really know." Lowell pressed on. "The doctor said he even went out to see the world when he was young. Did he ever travel abroad?" At this, Diana's frown deepened. He clearly disliked the topic, muttered that he didn't know, and fell silent. The driver was still waiting at the gate. When he saw Lowell was injured, he rushed over, full of concern. "Are you sure you don't need me to take you to the hospital in town?" Lowell smiled. "No need, the doctor looked at it. It's nothing serious. Sir, would you mind helping me bring my things in?" "Of course. You go on inside and rest. I'll bring the stuff in for you." "Thanks." Lowell followed Diana into the house. Diana's home wasn't large, but it was neat and tidy, clearly showing that he was a meticulous and clean person. "Have a seat. I'll go help you with your things." Diana, not realizing they were gifts, turned to go help bring them in. Lowell's eyes scanned the room and suddenly landed on an old photograph on the wall. His eyes shot wide open. "Diana!" Diana had just reached the door. "What's wrong?" Lowell pointed at a man in the photo. "Is he..." Diana glanced at it. "My dad. He passed away many years ago." He said it calmly and turned to go outside. It took Lowell a few seconds to process what he'd heard. He whipped his head back toward the doorway. What did he just say?!

## Chapter 1500

"Why did you buy us so many things?" Diana asked with a frown as he came back inside. Lowell seemed not to hear him. He asked again, "This is your dad?" Diana looked at him with suspicion. "What's wrong?"

Is there a problem?" Of course there was a problem! If the man they were looking for was Diana's father, didn't that mean the trail had gone cold? Diana's father was dead. How were they supposed to find out about the 8th generation virus now?! Lowell forced himself to calm down and said casually, "No problem. I was just curious because you two don't look much alike." "My brother and I both take after our mom," Diana said. "Oh, you do look like her. I heard from the doctor that the crazy guy went out to see the world when he was young. Did your father ever leave the village?" Diana shook his head. "No." Lowell was confused. If he never left, then he couldn't have been the one to bring the virus back. So what was the deal with the photo Tarquin had? Seeing Lowell's frown, Diana asked warily, "Did you know my dad?" Lowell snapped out of it and quickly shook his head with a smile. "No." The driver came in carrying more gifts. "Is it okay if I put these here?" "I don't want them. Take them with you," Diana protested. "Just leave them here for now," Lowell said. "Thanks for your trouble." The driver ignored Diana and set the things down. "There's more. I'll go get the rest." After the driver left, Diana stared at Lowell suspiciously. "What are you doing, buying all this stuff?!" Lowell smiled. "My boss, Evan, asked me to. The snacks are for your younger brother. The raw meat is for Jove. And these are for you. I didn't know what you like, so I just bought a few things." Diana glanced at the beer and cigarettes Lowell had bought and was about to speak when Lowell cut him off. "This is all a token of Evan's goodwill. Please accept it. If you don't, the little guy will think you don't want to be friends with him. Evan's a good kid, optimistic and friendly. He likes you guys." Diana was silent. After a moment's hesitation, he asked, "What time is Evan free in the morning?" Lowell quickly replied, "Whenever works for you and Jove. Evan's schedule is wide open tomorrow." Diana thought for a moment. "Then seven in the morning. I'll be taking my brother to Mr. Sutton's for his training. We can have the video call from his house." Lowell nodded immediately. "Perfect!" The driver came back in with the last of the items, looking apologetic. "Something urgent just came up at home. I'm afraid I have to head back now. It might be very late before I can come back to pick you up." Lowell said, "That's alright. Diana can give me a ride. He's going to pick up his brother anyway." The driver immediately looked at Diana. "Then I'll have to trouble you." Diana couldn't really refuse. "It's no trouble. You go take care of your business." The driver left. Diana glanced at the time. It was still too early to get his brother, but it was lunchtime. He asked politely, "Are you okay with stew? I can go make us lunch." Lowell wasn't picky. "Sounds great to me!" The stew was pre-made and frozen in the fridge, so all Diana had to do was heat it up. Lowell chimed in from the side, "My boss is a wealthy man. While he's here to learn your skills, he also wants to do some charity work. Are there people in your village who need help? You could recommend some, and I'll report back to him." Diana glanced at him. Lowell's smile was warm and friendly. "You don't have to be so resistant to us. We're not scammers, or the locals wouldn't have even bothered with us. I'm not just saying this to butter you up, either. We came here with the intention of doing some charitable projects where we can. Just helping out whoever is in need." Diana said, "There are a few older folk who are really struggling to get by. Their children moved away and haven't been back in years, and they don't send any money." Lowell said, "Then write down their names and addresses for me, and I'll show them to my boss." A flash of awkwardness crossed Diana's face. He replied, "When you're ready, you can just find me. I'll take you to them."