

Hitched 1501

Chapter 1501

"Sure. Besides helping families who are struggling, we can help with other things too, like roads, schools, clinics, you name it."

Diana looked up at Lowell again, still skeptical.

Lowell smiled. "I'm serious."

Diana hesitated for a moment before speaking. "Our school here only has one teacher. I heard if they can't find a new one by next year, the school will have to shut down. The kids will have to go to a school that's really far away."

"It's a two-hour ride on horseback through the mountains. If the weather's bad, they can't go at all."

"If your boss is willing to help, I hope he can find us a teacher."

Diaz was seven and in elementary school. Diana was very worried about his brother's future education.

Before he died, his father had told him, "No matter what, you have to learn to read." His pa said he had a friend who always said that knowledge could change your life.

He himself never got to go to school because of their circumstances, and he hoped his younger son could use knowledge to build a better future.

Lowell said, "That's easy. When I get back, I'll look into it and arrange for a teacher to come right away."

Diana hadn't expected such a quick and confident reply. He looked at Lowell, surprised. "Easy?"

Lowell told him the truth. "The conditions are tough, so we'll just offer a high salary. As long as the pay and benefits are good enough, finding a teacher won't be a problem. Don't worry, it really is easy. My boss is a good guy, generous, and loaded."

Diana asked, "Could you build a library, too?"

Lowell grinned. "Of course. That's a small thing."

Diana was speechless.

Lowell's smile was genuine, without a hint of bragging. "Trust me. If I say we can do it, we definitely can. And there won't be any delays. You'll see progress starting tomorrow."

A school and a library? Forget Tarquin, he could handle that himself with no trouble.

Diana watched him for a moment and decided to believe him. "Then, on behalf of all the villagers around here, thank you."

Lowell gave a hearty laugh. "Don't mention it. For us, this really isn't a big deal. Do you like to read, too?"

Diana nodded. "I do, but I never went to school. I can only read the children's versions."

Lowell was surprised, but on second thought, it made sense. These mountain folk used to be nomadic herders, so it wasn't unheard of for children not to attend school.

He asked, "If you never went to school, who taught you to read?"

"My pa."

"Your pa knew how?"

"Yeah, a friend of his taught him."

Lowell kept the conversation going trying to get closer to Diana's like to read, "What kind of books have you read?"

At the mention of books, Diana's interest was piqued. He turned down the fire and went back to his bedroom.

A moment later, he came out carrying a small box, placing it on the floor with great care. It was obvious he cherished it.

The box was full of books.

There were children's editions of classics like *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer Moby Dick and The Hobbit, as well as One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The Grapes of Wrath*.

All in all, there were over a dozen books, all simplified editions for young readers.

Lowell asked, "Where did you get all these?"

"I bought them online."

Lowell looked through them. "You've got some great classics here, but I don't see

The Lord of the Rings. Not a fan?"

Diana shook his head and ran back to the bedroom to get another book.

This one was wrapped in several layers of old newspaper and cloth. Diana carefully unwrapped it and handed the book to Lowell. "We already have it so. didn't buy another one."

Lowell took it and glanced at the cover. The pages were yellowed, giving it a very old feel.

He checked the publication date and was shocked. It was an early printing of *The Lord of the Rings*—a collector's edition!

This version sold for a high price. Back then, an ordinary person could never have afforded it.

"Where did this book come from?"

Diana said, "My pa left it to me. His friend gave it to him."

"Who was his friend?"

"I don't know. He signed it inside. Can you see what the name is?"

Lowell opened the book to look at the signature. The moment he saw it, his expression changed completely.

Chapter 1502

The signature read: Kendrick

Kendrick's signature was a flamboyant scrawl, almost illegible to most people.

But Lowell had been with Tarquin for so long that he was very familiar with Kendrick's signature.

He recognized it instantly. It was Kendrick's!

Kendrick and Diana's father knew each other-they were friends!

So Tarquin's photo wasn't a mistake. The person they were looking for in Border City was Diana's father!

But Diana's father had never left this area. He couldn't have been the one who brought the virus back!

So what was going on?

Diana noticed his strange expression. "What's wrong?"

Lowell snapped back to reality. "Nothing. I'm just surprised by this signature..."

Diana asked, "You can't read it either?"

Lowell neither nodded nor shook his head, changing the subject instead. "This one isn't a children's version. How do you read it?"

Diana said, "I haven't read it yet. I can't read it without the simplified text. I don't know a lot of the words."

Lowell asked, "Then why not buy an easier version?"

Diana, who had let his guard down, shrugged helplessly. "It would be a waste of money to buy another one when we already have it. Books are expensive. I saved up for a long time to buy these."

Lowell looked at Diana, feeling a pang of sympathy.

Life really wasn't fair.

Some people had every opportunity to study and learn but couldn't be bothered. Others would do anything for the chance but didn't have the means.

Lowell said, "I'll send you some books later. I love to read, just like you, and I have a ton at home."

Diana was too shy to accept. "Once the library is built, you can donate them there. I'll just borrow them."

Lowell smiled. "That works, too."

They chatted for a while about books, and the distance between them shrank

considerably. Diana relaxed around Lowell, his attitude softening.

The lamb stew were cooked. Diana turned off the fire and served them.

As they sat down to eat together, Diana looked at Lowell and asked, "It's lamb. You okay with that?"

Lowell tried one. "This is delicious! You can't beat the lamb from around here."

Diana was in a good mood and poured him some homemade hard cider. "Try this. We make it ourselves."

Lowell took a sip. It had a fruity aroma but wasn't harsh. "This is great."

Diana just smiled without saying anything.

After they finished eating, Diana said, "You can rest in my brother's room for a bit I'm going up the mountain to bring Wyatt some food I'll take you to the old man's place when I get back."

"Can I go with you?"

"No, your ankle is sprained. The doctor's wife said you need to rest."

Lowell didn't insist. "Alright. Be careful on the trail."

Diana packed the freshly cooked stew into an insulated container and headed out.

The moment Diana was gone,

Lowell's expression hardened. He didn't rummage through Diana's belongings, but he frowned, took a photo of the old picture on the wall, and sent it to Tarquin.

Up on the mountain.

The crazy guy was on edge, constantly looking down the path. When he saw Diana

in the distance, he rushed to meet him, and the sheepdogs ran toward Diana as

well.

Diana first pulled a few bones from

his sack and tossed them to the dogs, then dismounted as he got closer to the crazy guy. He opened the container and handed it over. "Wyatt, time to eat."

The crazy guy glanced down the path again. Diana knew he was looking for Lowell.

"He's fine, just a sprained ankle. He's resting at my house right now."

Upon hearing this, the crazy guy's eyes widened as he stared at Diana. After a

moment, he said agitatedly, "Go! Make him go!"

Diana said, "I checked him out. He's not a bad person. They're here to learn martial

arts from the old man. They might even be able to help us."

Wyatt glared at Diana, unhappy. "Make him go! Go!"

Chapter 1503

Dane smiled. "Of course he's going to leave. We can't keep him forever. I'll send him on his way when I go to pick up my brother. Now, don't be upset. Eat. It's your favorite, lamb stew."

The crazy guy said, "Soon. He leaves soon!"

"I know, I know. He'll leave soon. Now eat." Dane's tone was gentle, like he was coaxing a child.

Only then did Wyatt take the food and squat on the ground, wolfing it down.

Dane said, "Wyatt, I'll bring you home tonight to take a bath and change into some clean clothes."

Wyatt immediately shook his head, resisting the idea. "No bath, no change."

He always kept himself filthy. Every time Dane tried to get him to clean up, he refused. But today was different...

Dane said, "It's the Fourth of July. The country's birthday."

Wyatt paused at his words and looked up. "The Fourth of July?"

"Yeah."

Only then did Wyatt nod. "Bath. Change clothes."

Dane smiled. Even though Wyatt had lost his mind, he was still a patriot.

"Okay. After I pick up my brother, I'll heat up the water and come get you."

"Okay, okay."

After Wyatt finished eating, Dane packed up the container, mounted his horse, and left. "I'm heading out now. I'll be back for you later."

Wyatt waved at him. "Bye."

"Bye, Wyatt."

After Dane left, Wyatt frowned, his face clouded with worry as he watched him ride away.

...

When Dane returned home, Lowell was still asleep. The medicine had worked, and he had actually fallen asleep on Diaz's bed.

Dane stared at him in surprise for a few seconds, then quietly backed out of the room. He took a quick ěkaround the main room and saw everything was in its original

that

place. It meant Lowell hadn't

touched a thing while he was gone.

To Dane, this was a sign of good manners, and his impression of Lowell improved even more.

After washing the container in the kitchen, he went to the storeroom to pack some things.

When Lowell woke up, it was already past four in the afternoon. Hearing noises outside, he limped out of the room. "When did you get back?"

Dane glanced at him. "Feeling any better?"

"Much better. It doesn't hurt as much."

"Then let's go. I need to pick up my brother."

Lowell nodded. He noticed the bundles tied to the horse's back and asked curiously, "What's this?"

Dane said, "Some of our local specialties. Just a little something to say thank you. This is for your boss, and this is for you."

Lowell knew he was returning the favor. He smiled and graciously accepted the gifts. "Thanks."

Dane didn't reply, just helped him

onto the horse. Once Lowell was et

steady Dane swung himself up, and

before the

set of

he reminded him,

"Grab on here!"

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Lowell chuckled. "I know. Are you this jumpy with girls, too?"

Dane ignored the jab, flicked the reins, and they set off for the Suttons' house.

Jove circled high above, following them.

Lowell was curious. "I heard Jove

has been with you for over ten years. But I read online that you falconers release your eagles back into the wild after a few years to let them breed."

Dane said, "I released him a long time ago. He just refused to leave."

Jove had no tethers; he could leave Dane at any time. He stayed because he wanted to.

Lowell thought of White. "Our Evan has a little snake named White. It's always clinging to him, too. They're like brothers. Animals have feelings."

Dane looked up at the eagle soaring in the sky and murmured, "Jove is my brother,

too."

Chapter 1504

Lowell asked again, "I see other people's eagles perched on their master's arm. Why does Jove always like to stand on your shoulder? Doesn't he scratch you?"

"No, Jove knows what he's doing. He doesn't extend his talons when he's on my shoulder, and I wear a shoulder pad."

"A shoulder pad? Where? Under your clothes?" Lowell curiously reached out to touch his shoulder.

Dane's face instantly changed, and his reaction was sharp. "Hands off!"

Lowell was taken aback for a second, then let out an awkward chuckle. "Is it just me you're wary of, or are you like this with everyone?"

Dane said, annoyed, "I told you, I don't like people getting too close."

"I wasn't getting 'too close.' I just touched your shoulder. What's the big deal?"

Dane pursed his lips and flicked the reins. "Yah!"

The horse, as if given a shot of adrenaline, surged forward.

The sudden speed threw Lowell backward, then forward again, like a pendulum. "Whoa, whoa, slow down!"

Dane ignored him and urged the horse to go even faster.

Lowell felt his soul was going to pound out of his chest. "Slow down, slow down! A little slower!"

Dane scoffed. "Coward. Who's not a man now?"

Lowell yelled at the top of his lungs, "Fine, you're the tough guy! Now slow down, I'm serious, I'm terrified!"

Dane bit his lip to hide a smile, feeling much better.

Lowell howled, "If you don't slow down, I'm really going to have to grab onto you!"

Dane's expression soured instantly, and he slowed the horse. "You're a wimp."

Lowell let out a long breath and took several deep breaths before saying, "I can't ride a horse to save my life but can race cars. If you ever get a chance to come to Indale City, take you racing. I'll show you what I'm really good at."

Dane's immediate reply was, "Not going."

"Why not?"

"I like my home. I'm not going anywhere."

Lowell said, "It's not like you'd be moving there. You could just visit. You can't stay in

the mountains your whole life. You should get out and see the world."

There was a flicker of longing in Dane's eyes, but he didn't respond.

An hour later, they arrived at the Sutton's house. Seeing Lowell injured, Tarquin frowned. "What happened?"

Lowell said, "I accidentally rolled down a hillside."

Dane confessed, "My friend Wyatt isn't in his right mind. He pushed him down the slope. I'm very sorry."

Tarquin's brow furrowed slightly as he asked Lowell, "Did you see a doctor?"

"Yeah, I did. It's just a sprain.

Nothing serious, just a minor injury."

Lowell looked over at Djaz and

smiling, pulled a handful of föllipops

from his pocket. "Here, have some candy."

Dane froze for a second, and so did Diaz. No one had expected him to have candy

in his pocket; it was clearly something he'd brought for Diaz.

Diaz looked at Dane. Dane said, "It's okay to take it. Say thank you to the man."

Diaz was very polite. "Thank you, mister."

"You're welcome." Lowell smiled and patted Diaz's little head, his grin gentle.

Dane unloaded the bundles from the horse, exchanged a few brief words, and left with Diaz.

Lowell opened the packages to find a freshly dressed wild deer, a few jugs of homemade hard cider, and some other local specialties. All things you couldn't buy in a store.

Lowell explained, "I brought them a gift when went to their house, and the kid didn't want to owe me anything, so he returned the favor. The gift for you is because of the school and library..."

Chapter 1505

After Lowell finished explaining, Tarquin turned to the town mayor. "Please help us contact a construction crew. I'll cover the costs. We will arrange for the school's teachers. Once the libraries are built, we'll stock them with books."

The town mayor was overjoyed. "Wonderful! Do you have a location in mind for the libraries?"

Tarquin said, "One library for each village, centered in the community. While we're at it, let's upgrade the village clinics, too. We'll pay for everything."

The official nodded eagerly. "Excellent, excellent, that's wonderful."

They had dinner at the old man's house. They couldn't cook the fresh venison at the inn, so they prepared it at the Suttons' and everyone ate together.

After dinner, back at the inn, Lowell finally said, "You saw the photo I sent, right? The person we're looking for is Dane's father!"

"But he's been dead for years, and he never left this area. He couldn't have been the one who brought the virus back!"

"But he definitely has a connection to Mr. Bradford. He owned a collector's edition of *The Lord of the Rings* that Mr. Bradford gave him. It has Mr. Bradford's signature in it."

Tarquin's brow tightened. "Are you sure it's my father's signature?"

"Positive. Dane was right there, so I didn't dare take a picture in case he got suspicious, but I am absolutely certain it was Mr. Bradford's signature."

Lowell continued, "Also, according to the village doctor, back in their time, the only person from the village who ever left was the crazy guy-the one who pushed me down the hill."

"I was originally suspicious of him, but Dane's father is the one we're looking for!"

"So here's the situation: Dane's father had a connection with Mr. Bradford, but he never left. The crazy guy left when he was young and could have brought the virus back, but he's not the person we're looking for."

Tarquin frowned and asked, "Is he really mad, or is he faking it?"

Lowell shook his head. "I'm not sure. Everyone in the village says he's genuinely lost his mind."

Tarquin asked, "What's his relationship with Dane's father?"

"They were childhood friends, grew up together. Now, the crazy guy attacks anyone he sees, but he listens to Dane. Dane has been taking care of him all these years."

Tarquin thought for a few moments. "Are you certain Dane's father is dead?"

"Certain. One hundred percent certain."

Tarquin fell silent, his brow furrowed in thought. It was a long time before he spoke again.

"Go back there tomorrow. Try to feel out the crazy guy and Dane. They might not know anything about the Gen-8 virus, but we can definitely find clues from them. Focus the investigation on the crazy guy!"

The virus wasn't brought back by Dane's father, but his own father had pointed him to Border City for reason. It had to be connected to him!

He was the only person his father had a tie to in Border City. Since he was dead, the clues must lie with his family and friends.

The crazy guy had left the area before. He was the prime suspect!

Lowell frowned. "Getting information out of a crazy guy is going to be tough."

Tarquin said, "Then your first step is to find a way to confirm whether he's really crazy or not!"

If all went as expected, the clue was with him. If they could confirm he was faking it, then they would have their answer.

Chapter 1506

Lowell understood what Tarquin was implying, and his mind was heavy with it.

He couldn't sleep that night, tossing and turning as he tried to figure out how to test the crazy guy. If the guy was just pretending to be crazy, there was no easy way. He wouldn't expose himself that easily.

So, what could he do?

Lowell racked his brain all night. He had just drifted off when Evan's call woke him up.

He answered the video call with a yawn. "Hey, Evan."

The little guy on the screen was bursting with energy, his voice loud and clear. "Mr. Lowell, why are you still sleeping?"

Lowell glanced at the time. "It's not even five yet. You're up already?"

"Yep! Early to bed, early to rise! I've been up for a while. Where are the pretty girl and Jove?"

Lowell corrected him tiredly, "That's a guy, Evan. An older boy."

"No, not an older boy, a pretty girl!"

"He's a man!"

"A girl!"

Lowell was speechless. "...How can you tell she's a girl?"

"She's so good-looking, and her eyes are so gentle. You can just tell she's a lady. Can't you see it?"

Lowell questioned, "Can't a guy be good-looking and have gentle eyes?"

"Sure, but the gentleness and good looks of a guy and a lady are different."

"How are they different?"

"The feeling is different."

Lowell: "..."

Evan delivered a ruthless critique. "You're doomed, Mr. Lowell. If you can't even tell the difference between a man and a lady, how are you ever going to find a girlfriend?"

Lowell chuckled. "If I can't find one, I'll just be a bachelor forever. You can take care of me when I'm old, right?"

"Of course!" Eyan said. "But when you're old, be grown up, and I'll definitely have my own wife. I have to be good to my wife, so I'll have to spend a lot of time with her. I won't be able to hang out with you every day! So instead of me taking care of you, it would be better if just found you a girlfriend."

Lowell laughed. "You're already thinking about finding a wife at your age?"

"Not right now, but I definitely will when I grow up!"

"So, what kind of wife are you looking for, Evan?"

"Someone as beautiful and kind as my mommy, and as cute and adorable as my little sister! She has to be as pretty as a princess and as brave as a superhero! Someone who lights up the whole room the second she walks in!"

Lowell laughed. "Attaboy, you've got high standards! Sounds like you're describing an angel."

"Well, my wife will be the best in the world! And she'll be the happiest in the world!" Evan declared.

Lowell believed that last part. Any girl Evan fell for in the future would be incredibly happy. The kid was clearly destined to be completely devoted to his wife.

Lowell asked with renewed interest, "So you think you can find me a girlfriend?"

"Yep! How about the pretty lady? If you like her, I can charm her into coming home with me to be your wife."

Seeing the little guy's confidence, Lowell's smile widened. "Alright! I'm putting my love life in your hands! But let's pass on Dane. Find me someone else."

Evan didn't understand. "Why someone else? You don't like her?"

Lowell gave an awkward laugh. Why? Because he wasn't into men, that's why.

He said tactfully, "We're not a good match. Why don't you go do your morning training with your trainer for a bit? We're scheduled for a video call at seven, I'll call you then."

"Okay, then. Bye, Mr. Lowell."

"Bye."

After hanging up, Lowell was wide

awake, no longer feeling tired. Chatting with the kid had lifted his spirits. He got up, washed his face, got dressed, and went out to buy some breakfast, not giving a second thought to Evan's words or Danes gender. His mind was completely occupied with the virus and the mission.

Chapter 1507

At a little after six in the morning, Tarquin and Lowell arrived at Sutton's home. Dane and his younger brother were already there.

Seeing Tarquin and Lowell, Diaz ran over happily and gave a deep bow. "My brother said you're going to help the village build a school and a library, and you'll even help us find teachers! I won't have to go away to study next year! Thank you!" he said excitedly.

"You're welcome," Tarquin replied in a gentle tone.

Lowell smiled and ruffled the boy's hair. "You have to study hard. Your dad and your brother are right-knowledge can change your destiny."

"I will! I'll work hard!"

Dane also approached to express his gratitude to Tarquin, who responded politely, "If there's anything else you need, just let Lowell know. We'll help if we can."

Dane was touched and thanked them profusely. He had been skeptical of Lowell's words yesterday, but he hadn't expected the village elder to find him before dawn today.

"Dane, it's great news!" the mayor had said. "Someone has donated money to build schools and libraries in the villages and to improve the hospital facilities. They even said they'll help us with the teacher shortage. The kids won't have to leave for school next year! The mayor said the donors are outsiders, real saints! I heard you've been in contact with them. You must thank them properly on our behalf!"

As soon as he heard it, he knew Lowell had kept his promise. The last bit of suspicion he held for Lowell and Tarquin vanished, replaced by overwhelming gratitude.

Tarquin and Diaz went to find Sutton, and Dane turned to Lowell. "We still have some time before the video call with Evan. Let me take you somewhere first." Lowell was happy to go. He mounted Dane's horse behind him, and they set off. "Hold on tight," Dane warned. "We're a bit short on time, so I'm going to ride fast!" "Don't rush," Lowell said immediately. "There's no hurry. We can push the call back if we need to."

But Dane wanted to be on time. He spurred the horse into a gallop. Lowell's face went pale. He didn't know how long they had been riding when a river appeared ahead.

Seeing Dane showed no signs of stopping, Lowell's eyes widened. "...Are we crossing the river?!"

"Yeah, don't worry, the water is shallow!"

The big black horse was as calm as its owner. It charged toward the riverbank without hesitation and plunged into the water, sending splashes everywhere. Something in

the water must have ending net

because the horse suddenly reared up on its hind legs. Lowell felt himself about to fall.

On pure instinct, he threw his arms around Dane's waist!

Dane's body stiffened. His first impulse was to pry Lowell's hands off and shove him off the horse. But then he felt the frantic thumping of Lowell's heart against his back and hesitated... Lowell really wasn't trying to grope him; he was terrified.

Dane frowned but didn't move him, letting Lowell hold on. It wasn't until they reached the other side that Dane pried his hands away. It's okay, we've crossed the river!"

Lowell opened his eyes, gasping for air, too stunned to speak. "..."

Dane couldn't help but ask, "I thought you were a race car driver? Why are you such a coward?"

Lowell took a moment to steady himself. "It's not that I'm a coward. I just had a bad experience. I got kicked by a horse when I was a kid, so I'm terrified of riding." Dane fell silent.

"How much farther?" Lowell asked.

"Just over this mountain, and we're there. Hold on tight."

This time, Lowell didn't need a reminder. He grabbed onto the saddle where he was supposed to, not Dane.

Dane led him on horseback over the mountain. When they arrived, Lowell was utterly stunned.

Chapter 1508

Stretching out before them was a deep canyon, and across from it stood sheer, dangerous cliffs. Countless eagles soared through the air, their calls echoing through the chasm. The scene was breathtaking, like something out of a movie.

"This is one of the eagles' main habitats," Dane explained. "Look over there, a mother eagle is teaching her fledgling to fly. And over there, a young one is learning to hunt."

Lowell turned to look at Dane, finally understanding why he had brought him here. Evan loved eagles. Dane had gone to all this trouble just for the video call. It was thoughtful.

"Evan will love this. I'll call him right now."

Lowell dialed the number on Evan's watch phone. It rang for a moment before Evan answered, breathless and covered in sweat. "Mr. Lowell!"

Lowell smiled warmly. "Still training?"

"Yeah. Did you see the pretty lady and Jove?"

Lowell's mouth twitched. "I'm with the *Dane* right now. Look."

Lowell switched the camera and slowly panned the phone around to show Evan the view.

"Whoa- Whoa-"

A smile touched Dane's lips at Evan's exclamations of wonder. Suddenly, the

camera focused on him. Dane froze as he heard Evan shout, "Pretty lady!"

Dane's smile froze on his face, and for a moment, he didn't know how to respond.

Lowell stepped in. "Evan, don't be rude. This is a man, an older guy."

Evan pursed his lips and corrected himself. "Hello, Dane. Are all these your eagles?"

Dane recovered. "No, only Jove is mine. The others are wild eagles from the mountains."

"It's spectacular! Where's Jove?"

Dane looked up at the sky and called out, "Jove!"

An eagle, soaring high above, heard the call and immediately screeched as it dove

down. It slowed as it neared Dane, landing steadily on his shoulder.

Evan immediately yelled, "That's so cool! Jove, you're awesome!"

Jove screeched back at Evan.

"Hold on, I'll show you something right now," Evan said. He handed his watch phone to the scarred man next to him and asked him to film. Then, he scrambled up a huge tree and leaped down from the top branch! He even showed off his karate moves for Jove, snapping a thick branch with a swift kick and breaking a small wooden board with a punch.

Dane was astonished. "!"

Jove spread its wings and cried out!

"See my strength?" Evan asked. "Am I worthy of being your friend?"

Jove screeched, and Evan giggled. "Let me show you my White."

White was currently coiled around Evan's wrist, asleep. Evan tapped its head. "Wake up, White. Say hello to the Dane and Jove."

White's tiny eyes opened a crack, its forked tongue flicking out toward the camera. Jove let out a panicked cry and flew a good distance away.

Dane: "?!"

Evan laughed. "Don't be scared! You're my friend, so you're White's friend. Even if you met in person, White wouldn't hurt you."

Jove took a defensive stance, screeching from a distance.

"White and I can't fly," Evan said. "Jove, you can fly really, really high, can't you?"

At that, Jove gathered its strength and shot up into the clouds. Lowell quickly raised his phone to follow its flight. After sparing into the sky,

canyon, then reversed direction just before hitting the ground and shot

Jove plunged headfirst into

back up again.

Evan watched, ecstatic, clapping his hands. "Go, Jove!"

After showing off for a while, Jove suddenly spotted something. It dove down and snatched a large bird, returning to Dante's side. It placed the bird on the ground, pinning its head with its sharp talons, looking majestic.

Evan applauded enthusiastically. "Jove, you're amazing! So amazing!"

Chapter 1509

The video call lasted for over half an hour, and Evan only reluctantly hung up when Elysia called him home for dinner, promising to see them again tomorrow.

As soon as the call ended, Dane immediately asked Lowell, "Was that a real snake?"

Lowell nodded with a smile. "Yes, it was."

Dane was shocked. "It's such a tiny snake. Why would it scare Jove?"

"White isn't an ordinary little snake," Lowell said. "It's highly venomous."

Dane frowned. "Why does Evan have such a dangerous pet?"

Lowell smiled back. "Evan saved White's life, and White has saved Evan's. They have a life-and-death bond, and their relationship is very strong, just like you and Jove."

"Isn't Evan only five?" Dane asked. "How is he so skilled?"

"He's been trained by the best," Lowell said. "Plus, Evan is naturally gifted, so he's very capable."

"...My brother is two years older than Evan, but he's not nearly as skilled."

"You can't compare them," Lowell said quickly. "Evan is a special case. Forget Diaz, even I'm no match for him."

Dane was stunned. "!"

Lowell just smiled. "Our Evan is truly incredible, but he's also a very sweet and well-behaved kid. When you get a chance to meet, he can teach Diaz a few moves."

Dane was dazed for a moment, then something clicked. His eyes filled with suspicion. "If he's that powerful, why would his father come here to learn martial arts from Sutton?"

Lowell paused for a second before answering, "Our boss has a match against a martial artist from Thyama Sutton has fought that mar before, so our boss is here to gather information on him. "You know what they say: a little reconnaissance goes a long way."

Dane stared at him for a moment, then seemed to accept the explanation. He was filled with curiosity about Evan and White. He really wanted to meet them...

The sky suddenly darkened. Dane looked up. "It's going to rain. Let's go. I'll take you back and pick up my brother on the way."

"We won't make it," Lowell said immediately. "By the time you get Diaz and head back, you'll be caught in the downpour. Let's go to your place first to get the cattle and sheep settled. I'm worried Wyatt can't handle it himself."

He continued, "Don't worry about me and Diaz. Diaz is safe from the rain at Sutton's house. If it gets really bad, my boss can send a car to pick me up later, and we can give him a ride back at the same time."

Dane thought his reasoning was sound and nodded. "Let's go!"

The two of them rode back toward the hillside. By the time they arrived, a strong wind was blowing, and dark clouds had gathered, signaling an immmmment storm. Wyatt the crazy guy, and a few sheepdogs were already herding the animals into their pens.

"Your foot is injured, you shouldn't be moving around! I'll help!" Dane said, dismounting and running toward the flock.

Lowell watched Wyatt, frowning slightly. The man's methodical way of herding the sheep didn't look like the work of someone who had completely lost his mind. But that alone wasn't enough to prove he wasn't one.

Lowell glanced at the sky, and a plan formed in his mind. While they were busy, he quietly made his way toward the crazy guy's hut.

Wyatt had been watching him. When he saw Lowell sneaking toward his home, he frowned. Seeing Lowell enter without a word, he grew suspicious. When Lowell didn't come out after several minutes, he became uneasy.

A moment later, Wyatt called out to Dane. "Dane, I need to relieve myself."

Dane, on the other side of the flock, called back, "Go ahead! I've got this!"

Wyatt nodded and headed for his hut.

Inside, Lowell was rummaging through the simple belongings. When he sensed someone approaching outside, his eyes narrowed.

Chapter 1510

He deliberately lowered his voice and spoke into his phone.

"A big storm's about to hit. Perfect cover for us to move."

"I've already checked. His parents are dead. He's only got a crazy guy and a seven- year-old brother. If he disappears, no one will look for him for long."

"You've got the brother? Good. Hide him well! In a minute, I'll trick the older one into going to look for him, and we'll knock him out on the way and grab him too!"

"Tell the buyer he can have his liver transplant tomorrow. Make sure he has the money ready!"

"And find two more buyers, for the retinas and the heart. A kid's would work too; his brother is very healthy."

"Alright, I'm going to get him now. Send me a video of his brother so he knows he's really been kidnapped."

Outside, Wyatt stood frozen, holding his breath, his brow tightly furrowed. Suddenly, he heard Diaz's crying voice from the phone.

"Who are you? Let me go! Let me go! Brother, Wyatt, help me! Waaaaah..."

Wyatt's breath hitched. "!"

Then he heard Lowell say, "Okay, this video is perfect for tricking Dane. Now, tape that brat's mouth shut. That'll stop him from screaming and messing up our plans!"

Wyatt's breathing grew ragged, his whole body trembling! He gritted his teeth, and just as he was about to charge in, Lowell suddenly stepped out.

Their eyes met. In a flash, Wyatt lunged, tackling Lowell to the ground and snatching his phone. "Unlock it! Unlock it!"

Lowell feigned panic. "Wh-what... what's wrong with you?"

"Unlock the phone!" Wyatt snarled, his teeth clenched.

Looking terrified, Lowell obediently unlocked the phone and showed Wyatt the video of Diaz's 'kidnapping.' In the video, Diaz was bound hand and foot and thrown in the trunk of a car, crying for help. Brother, Wyatt, save me

Waaaaah..."

"I just got news that Diaz was kidnapped," Lowell explained. "I was about to go find

Dane to rescue him! Don't worry, we'll definitely get him back!"

Having no idea the video was an AI fake, Wyatt suddenly pulled a dagger from his clothes and pressed it to Lowell's throat, his lips

rembling. "Call your partners. If they dare hurt Diaz, I'll kill you!"

Lowell made a subtle swallowing motion and tried to explain. "I'm not one of the kidnappers. I've been with Dane all day. He can vouch for me."

Wyatt was agitated. "Liar! I heard you on the phone just now! You were plotting! You want to kill Dane and Diaz!"

"Wyatt, you misheard me," Lowell continued, trying to reason with him. "I'm Dane's friend. Why would I ever hurt him?!"

Wyatt pressed the blade harder, drawing a thin line of blood on Lowell's neck. He roared, "Stop the nonsense! Call your partners right now! If they dare hurt Diaz, I'll slit your throat!"

Dane noticed the commotion and came running over. Seeing Wyatt holding a knife to Lowell's neck, his eyes went wide. "Wyatt! What's going on?!"

"He's a bad man!" Wyatt cried out. "He wants to kill you and Diaz! They've kidnapped Diaz, and they want to use him to kidnap you! He's not a friend! He's a monster!"

After saying his piece, Wyatt shoved Lowell's phone at Dane.

When Dane saw the video, his eyes widened to their absolute limit.

Lowell looked at Dane, pleading for help. "Dane Díaz has been kidnapped, it's true, but I didn't do it! I just got the news and was about to tell you Don't listen to this crazy guy's ravings! His mind isn't right he's making things up! Get him off me, and let's go save Diaz together!"