

"Run. Get Grandpa."

But even as he stood, the hole pulsed wider. The dirt around it began to soften.

"I could leave and get help. But what if the levee breaks before I get back?"

The rain began then — hard, cold, and sudden. The river roared louder, as if the storm were feeding it extra strength. Matthew knew he had to act.

He dropped to his knees in the mud and pressed his palm flat over the hole. Cold water forced itself around his fingers with surprising power. Anna grabbed a flat stone and tried to jam it into the opening. The river spit it right back out. They tried grass. They tried mud. Nothing held.

Finally, with all his strength, Matthew held his hand firmly in place. The surge slowed. Anna pressed both her hands over his, trying to seal the edges where water sprayed through. Together, they held the levee.



*It was up to him now.*