

The rain poured and the wind lashed their faces. The river threw itself against the barrier like it was a living thing.

Fear began to whisper in Matthew's mind.

You are too small.

You cannot stop this.

Run.

"I'm scared,"

"Me too,"

The water pressing through the hole strained against his hand. The pressure burned. Mud soaked through their clothes, and their knees sank deeper into the rising muck. The dirt around their hands began to loosen and crumble.

In that moment of darkness, Matthew realized something important.

Courage isn't the absence of fear. It is standing firm — even when your knees are shaking.

"Let's stay one more minute,"

"One minute more,"

They decided they could do anything for just sixty more seconds. And when that minute was over, they decided to do it again.