



*They had saved the town.*

The minutes felt like hours. Then a whistle pierced the storm. Matthew looked up. Lantern light bobbed in the darkness. A wave of relief nearly loosened his grip.

Men ran forward — Mr. Dawson, the sheriff, and neighbors carrying sandbags and shovels. Grandpa Eli dropped into the mud beside them. His face went pale when he saw the hole.

"Hold just a moment longer,"

He placed a steadying hand on Matthew's shoulder.