

Chapter 75

Chapter 75 of *If These Wings Could Fly* takes the intensity to new heights as the characters are thrust into a deadly struggle within a burning house. Campbell, overwhelmed by panic, charges into the raging fire, and his mother, driven by the instinct to protect him, attempts to stop him. Despite her best efforts, she fails to intercept him in time, and the tragic realization sets in that her actions unintentionally led to this deadly scenario. The protagonist, filled with an overwhelming sense of guilt, cannot escape the haunting thought that had they been the one to cause the fire, it might have been easier to bear the weight of responsibility. The protagonist reveals an emotionally complex and painful truth: they would have chosen to allow Campbell to burn if it meant that they wouldn't have to face the emotional turmoil that now consumes them. This internal conflict serves as the heart-wrenching foundation for the protagonist's actions throughout the chapter.

Despite the deepening emotional turmoil, the protagonist's determination to save Campbell rises above the overwhelming feelings of guilt. As smoke swirls thickly around them and flames roar, the protagonist charges into the burning house, undeterred by the crows that once guarded the entrance. The environment inside is suffocating, with the air thickened by smoke and the intense heat of the fire. Inside, the protagonist finds Campbell lying unconscious, his body weighed down by debris, a stark contrast to the frantic desperation driving their every move. Every second counts as they struggle to navigate the fiery peril to reach him, and though each breath becomes increasingly difficult, the protagonist presses on. They call out to Campbell, urging him to leave the burning house, but their path is hindered by Mom's insistence on saving her son, complicating their already perilous escape. Despite this, the protagonist realizes that working together with Mom is their only hope. The two join forces, dragging Campbell toward safety while contending with the intense heat and

smoke that threatens to suffocate them.

As they continue to fight their way out, the situation becomes even more dire. The house begins to collapse around them, its structure weakened by the intense flames that rage inside. The tension in the air is palpable, each moment filled with agonizing hesitation as they struggle to free Campbell from the wreckage. Finally, they manage to pull him from the burning house and roll him out into the yard, where they can finally breathe a sigh of relief—if only for a moment. The house, now unable to withstand the flames, ~~shudders~~ violently before the entire structure collapses inward. This devastating moment serves as a stark visual representation of the emotional and physical toll the fire has taken on them. It is a final, terrifying acknowledgment of their near-impossible odds, as their frantic efforts to escape the inferno almost cost them everything. The collapse marks the culmination of their struggle, a literal and symbolic end to a chapter defined by survival against overwhelming odds.

Throughout the chapter, the emotional complexity of the protagonist is explored in depth, revealing how guilt, fear, and the desire to protect loved ones collide in the face of danger. Their instinctive drive to save Campbell, despite the overwhelming odds, underscores the deep, primal need to protect those they love, even when facing destruction. The protagonist's internal battle between guilt and responsibility adds layers of emotional depth to the narrative, making each decision feel more agonizing than the last. By the end of the chapter, the theme of familial bonds is brought into sharp focus, with the protagonist's actions driven by both love and the need to atone for the past. The collapse of the house serves not only as a physical destruction but also as a metaphor for the emotional destruction the characters are experiencing. The final moments of the chapter are filled with urgency, but they also hint at the possibility of redemption and recovery, offering a glimpse of hope amidst the ashes of tragedy. This chapter serves as a poignant reminder of the strength of familial love and the lengths one will go to protect those they care about, even when faced with impossible circumstances.