

# Fire in the Skies

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Nobody knows the reason why the small hotel somewhere in Alaska was set on fire. Maybe it was some kind of weather's wimsy, maybe an unfortunate mistake, maybe even some malevolent vengeance of a madman. But somehow, it just *happened*.

Most people were evacuated from the hotel as soon as some vigilant guest started shouting "Fire!". The whole building caught fire soon after. Firefighters were called immediately, but only very little could be done against raging inferno which swallowed most of the building.

Almost all people were guided out of the building in time... except for one, who refused to leave.

With flames all around him, a tall, rather skinny man of age twenty-five with messy fair hair and glasses on his face rushed through the hallway of the burning hotel. His sight was already blurred because of the heat and smoke.

He decided to stay in that dangerous place, but not because he had gone crazy. There was something he had to save from the living hell, something which he valued more than his own life.

The man's name was Chester. He had married his lifelong love, a young woman named Grace, only a few weeks ago. They decided to celebrate their marriage with a nice trip, but none of the two was fond of sunny weather, the sea and beaches – they've decided to explore wild and beautiful nature of Alaska. They've booked a

room in the hotel and left immediately.

Unfortunately, the hotel was ignited right after their arrival. Chester was among the people gathered in front of the building waiting to be transported somewhere else, but soon after, he had realized a grievous truth: Grace wasn't there.

He turned around promptly and rushed back into the building, not minding firefighters' shouts and commands. As soon as he arrived into the destroyed hallway, he realized that he had bitten more than he could swallow. But he didn't care. *I'll find her or die trying*, he thought.

"Grace!" Chester shouted, but instantly began to cough because the smoke entered his lungs. His consciousness slowly began to fade away, but Chester shook his head and continued his hopeless actions.

He ran up the stairs – the stairs were made of stone, so they had withstood the fire. Chester couldn't touch anything because everything was too hot; he tripped once and fell on his face, but quickly got up on his feet and continued running. His glasses cracked slightly, worsening his vision even further.

"Grace!" he shouted again, but his voice became rasping and the shout resulted in another wave of coughing. The sound was completely lost in the roaring of the flames.

Chester stumbled forward silently and his hopes were wearing off every second. He remembered Grace's storm-blue eyes and adorable smile.

*Once more... I want to see her just once more...*

Chester stopped and listened carefully. He had heard some voice piercing the sound of flames consuming walls of the building.

*Or was it just my imagination?*

No, it wasn't. It was a quiet moan coming from the hallway to the right. As if he had received an electric shock, Chester rushed into the said hallway. There he found his wife.

Grace was a charming young lady with slight figure and long, wavy hair colored like a tree bark. She was also very bright-minded and loved reading. Her sweet personality had caused Chester to fall in love with her very soon after they met.

Now her pale face was blackened due to smoke and her usually intense eyes stared in front of her in a dull way. Both her legs were buried under a big piece of debris which fell from the ceiling, making her unable to run away.

“Grace... Grace!” Chester yelled and rushed towards her.

The girl raised her head slightly. “Chester... is that you?”

“Yeah... and I'm going to get you out of here!”

Grace shook her head. “No... you can't raise that stone block alone. Run while you still can.”

Chester didn't listen. He grabbed the edge of the stone block and tried to lift it with his bare hands. He screamed out of effort and almost fainted, but the wreckage didn't move. Not even an inch.

He swiped the sweat out of his forehead and tried again, with the same results.

“I can’t do it,” he finally admitted.

“Run, run away,” said Grace.

“Not in a million years. I can’t just leave you here. If we die, we die together.”

“Chester, you idiot,” the girl whispered.

He sat next to Grace and grabbed her hand. Then he quickly reconciled with approaching death.

*If we come together, it’s fine...*

He opened his eyes for one last time. He shouted out of surprise when he saw a shadowy figure right in front of him. He thought it’s just an illusion, but even after he blinked rapidly several times, the figure was still there.

The figure turned out to be a middle-aged man with short black hair and five’o’clock shadow on his face, dressed like a sportsman. He was just standing there and looking around.

“Hey, sir!” Chester shouted, hoping that the man will hear his hoarse voice. “Over here! I need some help!”

Unknown man turned around and walked towards Chester. He looked at trapped Grace and nodded slowly.

“Be easy about it, lad,” he said. “We can do this together.”

“Thank you ver-“ Chester said, but the man halted him with a raised hand.

“No time for this. We have to rescue this cute lady first,” he muttered.

“What’s your name?” Chester asked.

The man smiled. “I’m Casey C. Levermorgue. Nice to meet ya. Now let’s get to work!”

Both men grabbed the edge of the stone block. “When I say ‘*three!*’ Casey

commanded. “One... two... three!”

Chester and Casey started to lift the piece of debris. Even the effort of two men looked insufficient at first, but after a minute or so, which seemed like an eternity to all the three, the block moved a little.

“Grace, now!” Chester groaned. The girl crawled from beneath the rubble to safety. The men then dropped the block, which hit the floor with immense noise.

Both of Grace’s lower legs were seriously injured. Even though he was completely exhausted, Chester grabbed his wife and gave her a piggyback. He looked around and saw Casey C. Levermorgue disappearing around the corner.

Chester followed him with Grace on his back. “Casey!” he shouted. “Mr. Levermorgue! Say something!”

“I’m sure he’s alright,” Grace said. “Let’s leave this place.”

Chester discovered a safe-looking stairway and carried Grace all the way down. Then he threw the front door open and finally stumbled outside. Both started to inhale fresh air deep into their lungs. Medical care arrived in a minute and took Grace to the ambulance. Then, after the hardest day they’ve been through, the couple finally fainted and allowed the merciful darkness to take over their minds.

A few days later, Chester met Grace in the hospital. Chester has ended only with a few burns and bruises, along with slight intoxication due to inhaled smoke. Grace’s legs needed a surgery, but the injury wasn’t as serious as it seemed at the first glance. They were told that Grace should fully recover in a matter of weeks.

“I still have nightmares about that day,” Chester said. “How do you feel?”

“Surprisingly good,” Grace smiled. “Even my legs hurt only moderately. The nurses are so nice to me. You could actually learn something from them,” she winked.

Chester sighed dramatically, but inside, he was happy that Grace has regained his sense of humour.

“We were so lucky that the guy, Casey C. Levermorgue, appeared at the right time,” he said.

Grace put on more serious expression.

“Is something wrong?” Chester asked anxiously.

“Chester, you have to believe me now,” said Grace quietly. “In that building, there was no other man. Just you and me.”

“What are you talking about?” Chester exclaimed. “That guy was there, talked to me, helped me with that piece of debris which trapped you. If you think he wasn’t there, your judgment must have been inaccurate due to smoke.”

“You were talking to yourself,” she insisted. “I thought that you have gone crazy.”

“Nonsense,” Chester said. “That would mean I lifted that block alone.”

“You did, and I’ll give you a proof. Your mind has crossed some borders, surpassed some limits, and created mr. Levermorgue to help you rescue me.” Grace grabbed a piece of paper and began to write something. She wrote:

*Casey C. Levermorgue*

“It’s really disturbing,” she muttered. “That name... is an anagram.”

She began to rearrange the letters of the man’s name. Then showed the results to Chester.

“That’s... impossible,” he said, shocked with his eyes wide open. “Impossible. Totally crazy.”

He double-checked the letters to ensure Grace didn’t make any mistake. She didn’t. The paper looked like this:

*Casey C. Levermorgue*

*Rescue Grace, my love.*