# Tiger Rising PDF (Limited Copy)

**Kate Dicamillo**

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# Tiger Rising Summary

Finding courage and connection amidst hidden struggles.

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## About the book

In the heart of rural Florida, ten-year-old Rob Horton grapples with the weight of lost dreams and the emotional scars left by his mother's death, finding solace in the quiet of a rundown motel. His life takes an unexpected turn when he discovers a caged tiger hidden in the woods, a powerful symbol of his own untamed fears and desires. Alongside the spirited new girl, Sistine Bailey, Rob embarks on a poignant journey of friendship, courage, and the daring of hope, as they confront the wildness within themselves and the world around them.  "Tiger Rising" is a beautifully woven tale that explores the delicate balance between grief and healing, urging readers to discover the extraordinary resilience that lies beneath the surface.

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## About the author

Kate DiCamillo is a celebrated American author renowned for her poignant storytelling and ability to capture the complexities of childhood. Born on March 25, 1964, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, she moved to Florida at a young age, where she found inspiration for her beloved characters and heartwarming narratives. DiCamillo's literary contributions resonate with readers of all ages, earning her prestigious awards such as the Newbery Medal for her works including "Because of Winn-Dixie" and "The Tale of Despereaux." With a deep understanding of friendship, loss, and resilience, her writing effortlessly weaves together themes of hope and emotional growth, making her a cherished figure in children's literature.

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## Chapter 1 Summary:

In the opening chapter of "Tiger Rising" by Kate DiCamillo, we meet a boy named Rob who stands under the glowing Kentucky Star Motel sign, waiting for the school bus. This ordinary moment becomes extraordinary when Rob recalls the remarkable sight he encountered just hours earlier—a tiger confined in a cage near an old, dilapidated gas station deep in the woods. The tiger, vibrant in its orange and gold stripes, captivates Rob as a symbol of beauty and freedom, contrasting with his own feelings of entrapment in his life.

Rob's internal world is filled with sorrow and struggle, particularly since the death of his mother six months prior. He avoids thinking about his painful emotions, particularly the grief that surfaced at her funeral, where his father's harshness pushed him to suppress his tears. Instead, Rob focuses on his discovery, viewing the tiger as a magical entity representing hope amidst his dreariness. The persistent rain and gray skies mirror his somber mood, creating a thick atmosphere around him.

As he awaits the school bus, Rob is reminded of the bullying he faces from classmates and his struggle to handle his rash, which he tries to ignore. He cleverly likens his emotional state to a suitcase filled to the brim with feelings he prefers to keep bottled up. Yet, the tiger serves as a powerful distraction, providing him with a sense of strength and pride that he longs to

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possess.

Through Rob’s eyes, we see the dual themes of loss and the quest for freedom. The tiger symbolizes his hopes and dreams, a stark reminder of everything he wishes to escape from. As the rain begins to fall, Rob imagines the tiger watching over his locked-away emotions, hinting at both the wildness of his heart and the yearning for a life beyond his current struggles.

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## Chapter 2 Summary:

In Chapter 2 of "Tiger Rising," we find Rob, a quiet and introspective boy, facing taunts and bullying from the Threemonger brothers, Norton and Billy, as he boards the school bus. Norton takes the lead, mocking Rob with the nickname “Kentucky Star,” a reference to his past and suggesting he doesn’t belong in Florida. Rob remains stoic, shrugging off their insults and finds solace in sitting alone at the back of the bus. Despite the verbal and physical aggression from the Threemongers—who push him and taunt him about a skin condition Rob has—he chooses not to fight back. Instead, he exercises a silent resilience, relying on his ability to refrain from crying, which seems to frustrate his bullies even more. Rob’s thoughts drift to the tiger he is secretly caring for in a cage, which gives him strength and hope.

The mundane routine of the bus ride takes an unexpected turn when Mr. Nelson, the driver, abruptly stops the bus in the middle of its route—an unusual occurrence that captures the attention of everyone on board. In this moment of surprise, a new character enters: a girl with yellow hair in a pink dress, who walks up the bus steps. This introduction creates a sense of potential change and hints at new dynamics that could unfold. Themes of loneliness, resilience, and the possibility of friendship are vividly present in Rob's experience, setting the stage for his journey ahead. The chapter balances the harsh realities of bullying with a flicker of hope as new beginnings loom on the horizon.

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## Chapter 3:

In Chapter 3 of "Tiger Rising," we meet a new girl on the school bus named Sistine, who stands out in her pink dress and emits a strong, unapologetic vibe. The other kids, especially Norton and Billy, tease her, calling her out for dressing up as if she's headed to a party. Sistine, however, holds her ground, responding sharply to their mockery, revealing her confidence and resilience. Her name sparks intrigue when she mentions it’s like the Sistine Chapel, a reference that resonates with Rob, who has a fond memory of the stunning artwork depicted in a book at his school library.

Rob, often shy and bullied for his skin condition, admires Sistine's boldness amidst the harshness of his peers. He is drawn to her, connecting her name to the beauty of the chapel's artwork, which evokes a sense of wonder in him. While he's subjected to teasing from Norton and Billy, who sit behind her and whisper insults, Rob chooses to focus on more uplifting thoughts—like the tiger he cares for and the sacred imagery he holds dear—rather than dwelling on negativity or his own struggles. The chapter encapsulates themes of individuality, resilience in the face of bullying, and

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## Chapter 4 Summary:

In Chapter 4 of "Tiger Rising," we are introduced to Sistine Bailey, a new girl in Rob's sixth-grade homeroom class. Her introduction is striking; she stands confidently in a pink dress, captivating the attention of her classmates with her bold and straightforward demeanor. As she declares she's from Philadelphia and voices her disdain for the South and its people, the room buzzes with surprise and laughter. Her defiance sets her apart, and the other students, including Rob, are instantly intrigued yet apprehensive.

Rob, who prefers to avoid confrontation, focuses on his passion for drawing, specifically a tiger he longs to carve out of wood, a skill passed down from his mother. His memories of her are bittersweet; she taught him that his hands knew how to create, even while suffering from illness. Rob's artistic world provides him solace in a setting where he grapples with school bullying, evidenced when a classmate trips him and mocks him.

As Sistine glares at Rob after he’s tripped, there's an immediate tension between them, hinting at a potential connection born from their shared outsider status. The chapter beautifully contrasts Rob's gentle nature and love for art with Sistine's fiery spirit, foreshadowing their evolving relationship. Themes of identity, the complexities of childhood, and the longing for connection permeate the narrative, emphasizing the struggles of fitting in and the strength found in expressing oneself.

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## Chapter 5 Summary:

In Chapter 5 of "Tiger Rising," we find Rob sitting nervously in the small, dim office of Mr. Phelmer, the school principal. The room has a strong smell of pipe tobacco, and the secretary gives him a supportive nod as he walks in. Mr. Phelmer, a man prone to worry, soon expresses his concerns about Rob's behavior and his legs, which have been a source of worry for both the principal and some parents who think Rob's condition might be contagious. These worries reflect a theme of isolation, as Rob struggles to connect with others at school.

Rob is asked if he's been using the medicine prescribed by a doctor, to which he answers truthfully. Mr. Phelmer proposes that Rob should stay home for a few days to allow the medicine to take effect, a suggestion that fills Rob with unexpected joy. Underneath the formalities of the conversation, Rob feels a sense of freedom at the thought of being away from school and his peers, even though he knows deep down that his legs will never truly heal.

As Mr. Phelmer writes a note to Rob's father, Rob keeps his head down, worried but secretly pleased. He knows something that Mr. Phelmer doesn't — that his condition is permanent. With a smile finally emerging on his face, he realizes he's finally free from the constraints of school, capturing a moment of self-acceptance and a glimmer of hope amid his struggles.

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In this chapter, we see pivotal character development in Rob, showcasing his internal conflict and desire for freedom. The themes of isolation, societal pressure, and the longing for acceptance weave through the interactions, painting a vivid picture of Rob's life and emotions. The tiger drawing in his pocket symbolizes both his pain and his emerging sense of liberty, making this moment rich with meaning.

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## Chapter 6:

In Chapter 6 of "Tiger Rising," Rob is buoyed by a sense of freedom as he reflects on the fact that he will never have to return to school after the recent events. He feels detached from his surroundings, preferring to sit outside during lunch instead of facing the chaos inside, particularly the taunts of classmates like Norton and Billy Threemonger. Lost in thought, he examines a drawing of a tiger he hopes to carve from wood, yearning for the creative outlet it represents.

However, the peaceful moment is disrupted when he notices Sistine Bailey striding through the lunchroom doors, confidently navigating a crowd of kids. But the atmosphere quickly turns hostile, as one of the children throws something at her, prompting Rob’s instinct to intervene. Despite his desire to shout a warning, he remains frozen as Sistine provocatively engages with the group, showcasing her fierce spirit even against the odds.

When Rob finally finds his voice and attempts to defend her, the situation escalates. The schoolyard drama reveals not only the cruelty of their peers

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## Chapter 7 Summary:

In this eventful chapter of "Tiger Rising," Rob Horton experiences a day that shifts everything as he finds himself sitting next to a new girl, Sistine Bailey, on the bus home. The chapter begins with the discovery of a tiger, hinting at adventure and transformation. Sistine, a bold and spirited girl, enters with a torn dress and a scraped arm, making a striking impression on Rob. Their interaction is charged; Sistine immediately asserts herself by sitting next to him, claiming it’s the only empty seat. Rob, who is usually reserved, finds himself unable to maintain his usual silence around her.

Sistine expresses her disdain for their town and school, describing it as dull and uninspiring. Rob surprises himself by responding to her complaints, revealing his knowledge about the Sistine Chapel—a topic that seems to light a spark of connection between them. This moment of shared understanding is significant as it draws Rob out of his shell; he finds himself sharing more about his situation, including the reason he doesn't attend school due to a perceived contagious condition with his legs.

A poignant moment occurs when Sistine reaches out to touch Rob's leg, wishing to "catch" his condition so she could avoid school. This gesture exposes both her vulnerability and her desire for escape. Rob's reaction is a mix of surprise and a quick instinct to shield his true feelings—a reflection of his internal struggles and desire for connection, juxtaposed against his

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tendency to keep to himself.

As the chapter unfolds, it becomes clear that while Rob is grappling with personal challenges, including living in a motel and facing social isolation, Sistine’s boldness offers a contrasting energy. She's fiercely independent and unafraid to speak her mind, making Rob question the boundaries of his own silence. Their budding relationship signifies a pivotal point in Rob’s life, as he is drawn to Sistine's courage yet intimidated by her intensity.

However, their moment of connection is interrupted by the antagonistic presence of other boys on the bus. Rob’s relief at their arrival reveals his lingering fears and discomfort with opening up to Sistine. The chapter encapsulates themes of connection, fear of vulnerability, and the desire for escape. It emphasizes the transformative potential of friendship, particularly in the context of shared struggles, as Rob begins to realize that he might not be as alone as he thought.

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## Chapter 8 Summary:

In Chapter 8 of "Tiger Rising" by Kate DiCamillo, we see a poignant glimpse into Rob's home life and his complicated relationship with his father. The chapter begins with Rob’s father reading a note from the principal, which leaves both of them unsettled. Rob feels the weight of his struggles at school, and his father, though dismissive of the principal's concerns, shows a glimmer of understanding by offering to get a doctor's note to validate Rob's condition. Their conversation reveals the tension between Rob's desire to avoid conflict with school bullies and his father's insistence on fighting back.

As the chapter unfolds, Rob’s father asks him to help around the motel, signaling a blend of burden and responsibility for Rob. Their evening routine includes a less-than-ideal dinner of overcooked macaroni and cheese, which his father prepares with aspirations of better days ahead. This moment underscores the family's precarious living situation but also hints at a longing for stability and normalcy.

Rob’s thoughts drift to an encounter with a tiger, suggesting a deep yearning for freedom and adventure that starkly contrasts with the constraints of his everyday life. After his father falls asleep in the recliner, Rob engages in carving, a creative outlet demonstrating his artistic talent and imagination. Interestingly, instead of carving the tiger, he finds himself shaping a figure

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resembling Sistine, revealing his complicated feelings towards her as both a friend and a potential source of inspiration.

His dreams take him to a fantastical place where he envisions Sistine riding the tiger, symbolizing a shared desire for escape. This vivid imagery connects Rob’s inner world with the wildness of the tiger, embodying his hopes and fears. The chapter intricately weaves themes of longing, creativity, and the struggle between fear and courage, capturing the essence of Rob's journey as he navigates the complexities of childhood in a challenging environment.

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## Chapter 9:

In this poignant chapter of "Tiger Rising," we find Rob waking up early, prompted by his father to embrace his new role as a "working man." Still enveloped in the dark of the morning, Rob gazes at the glowing sign of the Kentucky Star outside their motel room, likening it to a shooting star yet refraining from making wishes. This moment reflects his inner struggle—he’s cautious about hopes and dreams, as they are intertwined with his grief and regrets.

As they step outside, the rain continues to fall, symbolizing the emotional heaviness Rob carries with him after his mother's funeral. The contrast between the sunlit day of the funeral and the rain-soaked morning speaks volumes about his state of mind. The memories of awkward hugs, well-intentioned comments about his appearance, and the violent outburst from his father create a suffocating atmosphere of sorrow and restraint. Rob silently resolves not to cry, reinforcing his emotional armor amidst his father’s own concealed pain.

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## Chapter 10 Summary:

In Chapter 10 of "Tiger Rising," we find Rob working in the laundry room of the Kentucky Star motel when Willie May, the housekeeper, enters with a heavy sigh. She expresses her deep frustration with her job, joking that she would prefer to clean after pigs than deal with people. Rob admires Willie May's striking features, noting how beautifully she seems to embody strength and warmth. Their exchange reveals Rob's quiet demeanor and his reluctance to share much about himself. When Willie May questions why he’s out of school, Rob hesitates and explains that he has a skin condition on his legs that has kept him from attending.

Willie May surprises him by suggesting that his illness is linked to unprocessed sadness, urging him to let that sadness rise up instead of keeping it trapped. At first, Rob feels relieved, thinking that Willie May’s insight doesn’t apply to him, since he can't go back to school anyway. Their conversation is playful yet touching, and Rob’s admiration for Willie May grows as she speaks with both wisdom and humor.

As the chapter progresses, we see the genuine bond forming between Rob and Willie May, highlighting themes of understanding and the importance of expressing one's feelings. The exchange leaves Rob pondering the weight of his secret about the tiger he found in the woods, fueling his yearning to share this crucial part of his life with someone who would believe him. Willie

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May's parting words resonate with him, emphasizing the need to confront his sadness, while he is left feeling both relieved and a bit more connected to the vibrant world around him, tinged with the mystery of the tiger that continues to occupy his thoughts.

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## Chapter 11 Summary:

In Chapter 11 of "Tiger Rising," we find Rob, a quiet boy grappling with bullying and isolation, working on the sidewalk in front of the Kentucky Star motel, pulling weeds. As he hums to himself, the familiar taunts of Norton Threemonger and his friend Billy cut through his focus, cruelly mocking him with slurs about his skin condition. Rob, determined to block them out, imagines a fantastical scene where a tiger devours his tormentors – a reflection of his frustration and desire for escape.

Just when he thinks the afternoon might dull in loneliness, Sistine appears, bringing him his homework. Her vibrant lime green dress contrasts sharply with her torn, dirty appearance, and the sight of her bleeding knuckles hints at her own struggles. Despite Rob's instinct to remain silent and keep his feelings bottled up, he feels a connection stirring within him, much like the way he feels when he crafts wood into something beautiful.

As rain begins to fall, Sistine stands before him, her curiosity piqued by the motel's odd name. Rob gives her the briefest of explanations, showcasing his reluctance to engage deeply. Yet, her unwavering gaze seems to demand more from him. Feeling compelled to share a secret that intertwines their two worlds, he reveals that he knows where a tiger is hidden. Instead of dismissing him or questioning his sanity, Sistine's fierce response is simply, “Where?” In that moment, Rob recognizes that he has found a kindred spirit

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in Sistine, someone who is willing to believe in the extraordinary, marking a pivotal point in their budding friendship.

This chapter highlights themes of bullying, isolation, and the yearning for connection. It reflects Rob’s struggle between silence and vulnerability, alongside Sistine’s fierce spirit that beckons him to express himself, setting the stage for what lies ahead in their adventure.

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## Chapter 12:

In Chapter 12 of "Tiger Rising," Rob and Sistine continue to build their friendship, despite their different backgrounds. They embark on an adventure walking through the woods, but Sistine’s bright dress and shiny shoes prompt her to ask Rob for some of his clothes. This leads them to his motel room, where Sistine looks around, taking in the clutter and the remnants of Rob’s life. Her gaze falls on Rob's impressive wooden carvings, which he has made all by himself, and she expresses genuine admiration for them, comparing him to the great artist Michelangelo.

Rob feels a mix of embarrassment and joy at her praise, especially when she notices a carving of her that he had mistakenly left out. Instead of being upset, Sistine is amazed, calling it "perfect" and like "looking in a little wooden mirror." Her reaction surprises Rob, as he’s not used to receiving such appreciation.

After they share this moment, Sistine asks him for some clothes so they can go see the tiger, illustrating her adventurous spirit and determination. Rob

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## Chapter 13 Summary:

In Chapter 13 of "Tiger Rising" by Kate DiCamillo, the mood is set as Rob and Sistine walk through the wet, drippy landscape of Lister, a place steeped in history for Sistine. As she shares her story—about her mother returning to this town after a painful split from her father—it shines a light on her longing for connection and her resentment towards her situation. While Sistine passionately expresses her disdain for her mother's controlling nature and the flimsy reasons for her family's upheaval, Rob feels a sense of loneliness and sadness take hold of him.

Their conversation reveals stark contrasts between the characters: Sistine's fiery determination to escape her past collides with Rob's quieter, more reserved demeanor rooted in loss. When Sistine asks about Rob's mother, he deflects, reflecting his own emotional barriers. The tension escalates when Sistine, frustrated by his secrets, declares she doesn't care about the tiger, which symbolizes Rob's internal struggles and desires.

As she begins to walk away, a sense of despair washes over Rob as he compares her departure to a dream he cherishes—of her riding a tiger. This prompts him to confront his pain, leading to a moment of vulnerability. He finally reveals that his mother is dead, a truth he struggles to share. Sistine responds with understanding, showing growth in their budding friendship. The chapter ends with them now united in their quest, heading back toward

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the tiger, suggesting a shared journey of healing and understanding.

This chapter beautifully captures themes of grief, isolation, and the power of connection, highlighting how two lonely souls can find solace in each other amidst their personal struggles.

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## Critical Thinking

Key Point: The power of sharing one's pain and vulnerability to foster connection

Critical Interpretation: In life, just like Rob and Sistine, we often carry invisible burdens that isolate us from those around us. Chapter 13 teaches us that true connection arises when we open up about our struggles and allow others to see our authentic selves. By being vulnerable, we invite empathy and understanding, creating bonds that can guide us through our darkest moments. This chapter inspires us to embrace our shared humanity, reminding us that expressing our pain can illuminate pathways to healing and friendship.

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## Chapter 14 Summary:

In Chapter 14 of "Tiger Rising," Rob and Sistine find themselves at the cage of a tiger, which is locked away behind rusted chain-link fencing. The tiger is a magnificent sight, captivating Sistine who compares him to a line from a famous poem. Rob, protective of the tiger but also aware of the reality of its captivity, warns Sistine not to get too close. Their conversation turns serious as Sistine expresses her outrage over the tiger's situation, insisting it's wrong for him to be in a cage and suggesting that they should free him. While Rob is hesitant and feels the weight of the locks that keep the tiger imprisoned, Sistine's passion pushes against his unwillingness to act. Their dialogue reveals a deepening bond between them, with Sistine's fierce determination contrasting Rob's hesitant compliance.

As they hear a car approaching, likely belonging to Beauchamp, the owner of the tiger, Rob instinctively grabs Sistine's hand and they flee into the woods together. As they run, Rob feels a surge of happiness for the first time; he notices how connected he is to Sistine, her small hand in his making him feel alive in a profound way. Despite their fear, laughter escapes them, bridging their fears and highlighting the joy of their friendship. This moment beautifully captures the theme of connection, as Rob realizes that true happiness comes not from the thrill of adventure alone, but from the bonds we share with others, emphasizing the need to seek freedom and beauty in a world that often keeps them confined.

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## Chapter 15:

As Rob and Sistine return to the motel parking lot after an adventurous day in the woods, they are filled with laughter and joy. However, the moment turns serious when Rob's father greets them, demanding to know where they've been and checking up on Sistine. Rob stands tall but feels the weight of his father's scrutiny. Sistine confidently introduces herself, asserting her independence, and mentions her intention to call her mother, highlighting her desire for connection even in a foreign place.

Rob’s father, practical and somewhat stern, provides Sistine with change to use the pay phone in the laundry room since they lack a phone in their room. This exchange illustrates the starkness of their lives in the motel, underscoring themes of isolation and longing for normalcy. Sistine's disbelief about the lack of a phone reflects her frustration and highlights her spirited character.

As Sistine strides away to make her call, Rob's father questions his son's choice of companionship, subtly hinting at parental concerns over Sistine's

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## Chapter 16 Summary:

In Chapter 16 of "Tiger Rising" by Kate DiCamillo, Rob sits outside their motel room, anxiously waiting for Sistine as she makes a phone call. He awkwardly holds her green dress wrapped in a grocery bag, trying to keep it clean from the ointment on his legs. When Sistine returns, they share a moment under the stars, and she tells him about her name, inspired by her parents meeting in the Sistine Chapel. As they look up at the night sky, Sistine expresses her longing to free the caged tiger they've been concerned about, emphasizing the animal's inability to look up at the stars, just like her own struggles to look ahead in her life.

Their conversation takes a poignant turn when Sistine inquires about Rob's mother, leading him to reveal her name, Caroline. Rob's reluctance to discuss his mother's death from cancer highlights his desire to move on, a sentiment enforced by his father's insistence on not dwelling on the past. The car headlights soon signal the arrival of Sistine’s mother, Mrs. Bailey, who comes across as imposing and critical. Despite her mother’s attempts to control her, Sistine stands her ground, showcasing her fierce spirit.

Sistine feels trapped between her mother's expectations and her own desires, culminating in her outburst towards Mrs. Bailey in the car. Rob witnesses this conflict and feels the weight of his own family issues, whispering her mother’s name into the night, evoking a connection that is both tender and

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haunting. The chapter beautifully captures themes of loss, freedom, and the complexities of family relationships, as both Rob and Sistine navigate their struggles for understanding and autonomy amidst their respective pains.

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## Chapter 17 Summary:

The next morning, Rob is busy helping Willie May in the laundry room, folding sheets and chewing Eight Ball gum. His mind is consumed by thoughts of the tiger he has caged and Sistine's insistence that it deserves freedom. Seeking guidance, he turns to Willie May and asks if she has ever been to a zoo. She recalls a past visit to a stinky zoo in Sorley but admits she never considered if the animals minded their imprisonment. As their conversation unfolds, Rob probes deeper into the ethics of keeping animals locked up.

Willie May shares a poignant memory from her childhood about a parakeet named Cricket that her father gifted her. She recalls holding the tiny bird and feeling its heartbeat, but ultimately, she couldn't bear to see it confined and decided to set it free. Tragically, her father responded with violence, saying she only condemned the bird to being someone's meal. Rob is deeply affected by this story, reflecting on the weight of his own past that includes a memory of his father shooting a bird, a moment that left him emotionally scarred.

The exchange reveals Rob’s inner turmoil about his own situation with the tiger and the implications of freedom versus confinement. The idea that everyone knows something in a cage resonates with both characters, highlighting the universal struggle with captivity, whether it's physical or

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emotional. The conversation reveals the close bond between Rob and Willie May as they grapple with their feelings in silence, with Rob haunted by the loss of that bird and his father's dismissive attitude toward his emotions. The chapter intricately weaves themes of freedom, loss, and the consequences of choices, leaving Rob contemplating the cost of liberation amidst heavy memories.

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## Chapter 18:

In Chapter 18 of "Tiger Rising" by Kate DiCamillo, Rob is busy sweeping the walkway at the Kentucky Star motel when Beauchamp, a large man with vibrant orange hair and a toothpick, pulls up in his red jeep. Beauchamp’s boisterous personality and easy demeanor set the tone as he jokingly asks Rob if he’s working for free. Sensing Rob's discomfort, he casually brings up school and questions whether Rob has graduated. When Rob lies about being sick to avoid school, Beauchamp takes this as an opportunity and offers him a chance to make some extra money.

Beauchamp’s tone shifts as he begins to hint at having a wild animal on his property that needs care. Rob’s heart races at the possibility of encountering this animal, but he knows his instincts are telling him to be cautious. Beauchamp, recognizing Rob's growing curiosity, urges him to join him in the jeep for a ride to see the animal, dismissing Rob's hesitance to stay behind and work.

Reluctantly, Rob climbs into the passenger seat. He’s unnerved by a large,

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## Chapter 19 Summary:

In Chapter 19 of "Tiger Rising" by Kate DiCamillo, Rob and Beauchamp approach a tiger cage with an air of excitement and tension. Beauchamp, brimming with pride, reveals the tiger to Rob, claiming ownership after a dubious transaction. He fantasizes about using the tiger to attract business to his motel or possibly killing it for a coat. He reveals that Rob is now responsible for feeding the tiger, offering him money for the job while handing over a set of keys that includes a small key for the food door.

Rob feels a mix of awe and dread as he realizes the potential danger that comes with having the keys. Beauchamp demonstrates how to feed the tiger, and Rob watches, nervous as the wild animal leaps forward for the meat. Beauchamp's mocking and domineering behavior contrasts starkly with Rob's fear and innocence. When he shakes the fence to get the tiger's attention, he declares that the tiger now recognizes Rob as its "meal ticket," thereby thrusting Rob into an uncomfortable position of power over the creature.

As they ride back, Rob can't shake the connection between the tiger's defiant stare and his friend Sistine's fierce spirit. He anticipates that sharing his secret—the keys to the cage—will ignite her passionate desire to free the tiger, hinting at a budding alliance between them born from their mutual longing for freedom and understanding. This chapter beautifully illustrates

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themes of power, fear, and the bond between humans and animals, setting the stage for possible rebellion against confinement.

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## Chapter 20 Summary:

In Chapter 20 of "Tiger Rising," the tension between Rob and Sistine intensifies as they confront the reality of the tiger in the cage. Beauchamp reminds Rob of their secret business deal, emphasizing that it's nobody else's concern. When the school bus arrives, Sistine's serious demeanor catches Rob off guard, especially since she's still wearing his clothes. She reveals new knowledge about big cats from a library book and expresses her fervent wish to free the tiger.

As they approach the cage, the weight of the keys Rob carries becomes a symbol of his growing burden. Sistine's passionate plea to save the tiger ignites a fierce debate between them. Rob feels responsible for the tiger's safety, recalling a past incident with a bird, and vehemently opposes Sistine's reckless determination to release the animal. Her anger and frustration lead her to shake the cage, both as a demonstration of her feelings about the captivity and as an expression of her own entrapment in her current life.

When Sistine breaks down in tears, it is a pivotal moment for Rob. He remembers the comfort his mother once offered him, and instinctively, he reaches out to console her, telling her, "I got you." This moment of connection highlights a deepening bond between them, as Rob steps into a nurturing role he hasn't embraced since his mother's death. Sisitne's

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vulnerability reveals her internal struggles, making her character more relatable and layered.

Together, their emotions converge around the tiger, underscoring themes of freedom, responsibility, and the complexities of human connections in times of distress. Rob’s protective instincts clash with Sistine’s fierce determination, illustrating the challenges of navigating childhood trauma and the yearning for agency in a world that feels overwhelming. This chapter encapsulates a rich tapestry of emotions, as both characters confront their pain and struggle to understand their place in each other's lives.

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## Chapter 21:

As Rob and Sistine head back to the Kentucky Star motel, the evening sky casts a purple hue around them, marking a transition in their emotional states. Sistine is quiet, not crying but also not engaging in discussion, even about the fate of the tiger they encountered. When they reach the motel, she mentions needing to call her mother, and Rob offers to accompany her.

As they make their way to the laundry room, they unexpectedly run into Willie May, an intriguing woman who works at the motel. With a cigarette in hand, she greets Rob and takes an instant interest in Sistine. Willie May's presence is both intimidating and commanding; she picks up on Sistine's anger and confronts her about it, acknowledging that she recognizes such a powerful emotion. Despite Sistine's defensive snap back, Willie May gently challenges her perspective, handing Sistine a piece of gum as an olive branch.

The interaction grows deeper as Willie May assesses the pair—Rob, filled with silent sorrow, and Sistine, bursting with anger. She offers them insight,

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## Chapter 22 Summary:

In Chapter 22 of "Tiger Rising" by Kate DiCamillo, we delve into Rob's challenging home life, particularly his fraught relationship with his father. As soon as Rob steps inside their small motel room, his father confronts him about a bag of meat he had hidden, intended for feeding the tiger. Rob's attempt to deflect the blame to Beauchamp, the man who runs the motel, reveals the pressure he feels to protect himself and others. His father, consumed by anger and resentment over his low-income job, lashes out, contemplating revenge on Beauchamp for the "rotten meat" he's been given.

Rob feels powerless in the face of his father's fury, longing for the calming presence of his deceased mother, who had the ability to soothe his father with just a touch or a soft word. This longing highlights the emotional turmoil Rob experiences as he struggles to navigate a household filled with tension and unresolved anger. To escape, he goes outside, seeking solace beneath the Kentucky Star sign, where he attempts to turn his thoughts to creativity by carving a piece of wood.

As he reflects on a cherished memory of his mother, who had once pointed out the beauty of a tree's leaves, Rob finds peace in the image of the vibrant green and channels it into his carving. To his delight, he unknowingly brings to life a tiny bird, Cricket, symbolizing hope and connection to happier memories. When he returns to the motel, he finds his father asleep, and

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despite the looming absence of the food for the tiger, this moment of quiet becomes a chance for Rob to remember his father in a gentler light.

At the end of the chapter, the dynamic between father and son softens slightly as Rob helps his father with medication, revealing an underlying bond amidst the struggles. This chapter beautifully captures themes of childhood innocence, loss, and the fragility of familial relationships, as Rob navigates both his father's anger and his own yearning for connection and understanding.

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## Chapter 23 Summary:

In this engaging chapter from "Tiger Rising," Rob wakes up determined to take a significant step forward in his relationship with Willie May. He carries the keys to the tiger cage in one pocket and a wooden bird he carved in the other, feeling a mix of excitement and apprehension about sharing his creation. When he finds Willie May in the laundry room, she is relaxed, smoking a cigarette, and in her usual straightforward manner, she asks about his friend Sistine.

Feeling nervous about presenting his handmade gift, Rob quickly decides to reveal it, urging Willie May to close her eyes and hold out her hand. To his relief, when she holds the wooden bird, she instantly recognizes it as Cricket, the bird she holds dear in her heart. Willie May's reaction—a mixture of joy and bittersweet acknowledgment—fills Rob with pride. Despite her tough exterior, she admits that even a wooden replica can soothe her heart, illustrating the theme of finding solace in small things.

As their conversation flows, Rob mentions that his dad has no work for him until later, so he offers to help Willie May in her duties. This sets the stage for a close bond between them, as Rob spends the morning assisting her in the laundry, stripping bedsheets. The jingling keys are a constant reminder of the tiger in the cage, symbolizing Rob's internal struggle between his desire for freedom and the weight of responsibility. This chapter beautifully

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contrasts the innocence of a child's creation with the harshness of reality, deepening Rob’s character as he navigates friendship, loss, and the hope that lies in small moments of connection.

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## Chapter 24:

In Chapter 24 of "Tiger Rising" by Kate DiCamillo, we find Sistine stepping off the bus in a striking orange dress, her left knee scraped and her right eye swollen, a testament to her tough spirit and willingness to fight. She immediately asks Rob about Willie May, the "prophetess," revealing her urgent need for guidance. Sistine is struggling with challenges at home, particularly after her mother took away her clothes because she's been wearing them to school. Rob tries to counsel her on handling conflicts without resorting to violence, but Sistine is adamant about her desire to confront her troubles head-on.

Determined, she runs to find Willie May, with Rob chasing after her. When they find Willie May vacuuming, the narrative shifts as Sistine demands answers about their situation. Willie May, initially startled, reveals a delicate bird she had in her hand, showcasing a softer side beneath her tough exterior. The conversation turns to art and beauty as Sistine asks a thought-provoking question about freeing something beautiful locked away unfairly, which leads to the revelation that they have a tiger in a cage.

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## Chapter 25 Summary:

In Chapter 25 of "Tiger Rising," Rob, Sistine, and Willie May make their way through the woods in a tense silence, each wrapped up in their own thoughts. As they approach the cage that holds the tiger, Willie May expresses her dismay at the creature's captivity, questioning how anyone could cage such a fierce animal, especially someone like Beauchamp, who she clearly disdains. Sistine, driven by a fierce sense of justice, argues that the tiger should be set free, echoing Willie May's earlier stories about her own bird that she had to let go.

Willie May pragmatically counters that while the idea of liberation is appealing, the reality for the tiger—a wild animal—would be harsh in a world where it can no longer thrive. As tensions rise, Sistine insists her father will rescue her and, by extension, the tiger, revealing her deep-rooted hope. Rob gently confronts her with the painful truth that her father isn't coming, causing Sistine to lash out in anger, declaring hatred for Rob and branding him as a coward or "sissy."

Rob, deeply affected by Sistine's harsh words, feels them pierce through him. In a moment of vulnerability, he physically reacts to his internal pain by scratching at his legs, trying to find release from the underlying grief that permeates his existence.

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Willie May, recognizing Rob's struggle, attempts to console him while expressing her desire to see the tiger rise and confront Beauchamp. This notion resonates with Rob, linking the tiger's potential freedom to his own sorrow and yearning for liberation. He realizes that both the tiger and his sadness have a need to break free. Inspired by Willie May’s words, Rob contemplates a bold decision, understanding that he must confront his fears and take action for both himself and the tiger. This chapter encapsulates themes of captivity, the search for freedom, and the struggle against despair, showcasing the connection between Rob's internal battles and the plight of the tiger in captivity.

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## Chapter 26 Summary:

In Chapter 26 of "Tiger Rising," Rob leaves Willie May at the motel to find Sistine, calling out her name as he races down the highway. When he spots her in her bright orange dress, he excitedly tells her he plans to release the tiger, which he had been keeping hidden. Initially, Sistine is skeptical and challenges his resolve, but Rob confidently shows her the keys to the tiger's cage, declaring that he'll let the tiger go for her sake.

Suddenly, they are interrupted by Beauchamp, a local man who drives up in a red jeep, disrupting the moment. He approaches them with a boisterous presence, jokingly implying Rob is chasing after girls and showing interest in Sistine. Despite the tension, Sistine surprises Rob by calmly introducing herself and engaging with Beauchamp in a way that catches Rob off guard. Beauchamp, who holds a position of authority over Rob, hints at the ongoing deal they have, using this interaction to remind Rob to keep his secrets safe.

Once Beauchamp leaves, Sistine expresses her insight into his character, noting that he is afraid of the tiger, just as Rob realizes a deeper understanding of their situation—the fear and complexities that surround them both. The conversation turns more personal as Rob apologizes for a previous remark about Sistine's estranged father, but Sistine brushes off the comment. She insists that the past doesn't matter, shifting their focus back to the tiger and re-igniting her determination to set it free.

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This chapter highlights themes of courage and the bond developing between Rob and Sistine. Although they are both grappling with their fears and uncertainties, the pursuit of freedom—for themselves and the tiger—brings them together, driving them toward a pivotal moment that could offer a release from their troubled lives. The tension with Beauchamp serves as a reminder of the oppressive forces they face, while their shared mission symbolizes hope and action amid personal struggles.

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## Chapter 27:

In this gripping chapter of "Tiger Rising," Rob and Sistine take a daring step to free the tiger that's been locked away. The first lock clicks open, filling Rob with a dizzying sense of hope and urgency. Sistine's excitement propels them forward as she encourages Rob to remove the remaining locks, which he does with growing anticipation. When the door finally swings open, however, the tiger remains unaware of his newfound freedom, continuing to pace inside his cage.

A mix of fear and excitement jolts through Rob as he worries about what might happen next, but Sistine firmly believes the tiger will appreciate their act of kindness. They call out to the tiger, urging him to escape, but he seems indifferent at first. As Sistine shakes the cage, Rob's frustration bubbles over—why won't the tiger leave? In a moment of pure emotion, he howls at the sky, pouring all his pent-up feelings into a desperate cry for the tiger to break free.

Then, something magical happens. The tiger, drawn by their call, steps out

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## Chapter 28 Summary:

In this poignant chapter from "Tiger Rising," the emotional turmoil of Rob and Sistine reaches a climax after a tragic event. Rob is initially comforted by Sistine’s words affirming his earlier actions, but then he is jarred by the sound of his father's voice calling him, followed by Willie May's frantic cry and the sudden crack of a gunshot. As Willie May rushes in, thankful that the children are safe, Rob feels a deep sense of loss and anger, realizing that the tiger he loved is now dead.

When Rob confronts his father, emotions spill out in a powerful confrontation where Rob expresses his rage not just about the tiger’s death, but about his broken family. He feels abandoned and trapped, wishing it had been his father who had died instead. Their raw exchange culminates in the whisper of his mother's name, revealing the shared grief between them. This moment allows for a momentary connection as they both acknowledge their loss and the absence of their mother, Caroline.

Willie May, acting as a supportive figure, brings a sense of grounding amidst the chaos, ensuring that Rob does not resort to further violence. As Rob looks upon the dead tiger, he grapples with the weight of his grief. Sistine, too, is affected and suggests they honor the tiger with a funeral, recognizing it as a majestic and beautiful creature that deserved respect in death.

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Together, they kneel beside the tiger, sharing a moment of reflection and sorrow. Rob's tears flow freely as he mourns not only the tiger but also the pain from the loss of his mother and the strained relationship with his father. The chapter beautifully portrays themes of grief, loss, and the need for connection, capturing the depth of their shared heartache and the fragility of life. It leaves the reader with a sense of hope that through this shared experience, Rob and his father may find a way to heal together.

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## Chapter 29 Summary:

In this poignant chapter of "Tiger Rising," Rob and his father dig a grave for the tiger that Rob's father had to shoot. The rain pours down as a backdrop to this somber task, reflecting the sadness of the moment. Willie May, a character whose wisdom shines through, emphasizes the importance of saying words to honor the tiger, leading to a touching scene where Sistine recites a part of the famous poem "The Tiger." The lines echo Rob's feelings, stirring deep emotions as he tears up, fearing he may never stop crying.

Sistine shares her guilt about the tiger's fate, believing their actions led to this tragedy. Rob reassures her that he doesn’t regret what he did, highlighting his growth and acceptance of responsibility. Willie May contributes by laying her wooden bird on the grave as a gesture of companionship for the tiger. Rob’s father reflects on the difficult choice he made, and for a brief moment, Rob feels a connection with him. As they fill the grave with dirt, Rob feels the warmth of the sun breaking through the clouds, symbolizing a glimmer of hope and closure.

In a moving display of friendship, Sistine suggests they create a headstone and bring fresh flowers to honor the tiger's memory. Their hands intertwine as they walk back to the Kentucky Star, illustrating a newfound bond between them. Rob is struck by the comfort of holding her hand and experiences an emotional lightness, indicating a significant shift within

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himself as he starts to move on from the weight of grief. This chapter encapsulates themes of loss, guilt, friendship, and healing, resonating with the universal experience of saying goodbye while also embracing new beginnings.

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## Chapter 30:

In Chapter 30 of "Tiger Rising," Rob shares a tender moment with his father as he gets ready for bed. His father sings a nostalgic song about mining for gold, which he used to sing with Rob's late mother, Caroline. This moment reflects the deep grief they both feel over her absence, but it also highlights the bond they continue to share. As they discuss the consequences of Rob's choice to let the tiger go, there's a palpable shift in their relationship. Rob’s father insists he must confess to Mr. Beauchamp about his actions, indicating a desire for honesty and responsibility, which Rob, feeling a newfound courage, accepts as a part of his growth.

The chapter also emphasizes Rob's thoughts on returning to school, which brings him excitement primarily because of Sistine, the spirited girl who has become a pivotal part of his life. His father, determined to get Rob back to school, underscores his commitment to moving forward, even amid their loss. This desire to restore normalcy signals a turning point in their healing journey.

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