

Stage Two: Pushing - Ruth 5

The chapter captures Ruth's profound emotional journey following a favorable courtroom verdict. She reflects on freedom as a fragile yet powerful force, likening it to a daffodil's neck after winter—a symbol of hope and possibility. Despite the physical sameness of her surroundings, Ruth feels everything has changed internally. As she exits the courtroom, her lawyer, Kennedy, handles the media swarm, prioritizing Ruth's need to reunite with her son. The narrative underscores the abrupt shift from defendant to free woman, marked by both relief and disorientation.

Outside the courtroom, Ruth processes her newfound freedom through connections with loved ones. She shares the verdict with her son Edison and sister Adisa, whose joyous reactions contrast with her own subdued disbelief. A celebratory text from her friend Christina goes unanswered as Ruth grapples with the surreal reality of her acquittal. Kennedy and Howard reassure her the ordeal is truly over, and Ruth struggles to articulate her gratitude, signaling a shift in their dynamic from attorney-client to equals. The moment highlights her dazed transition back to autonomy.

Ruth's return to the empty courtroom to retrieve her mother's scarf becomes a poignant reflection on transformation. The silent chamber contrasts sharply with her earlier arraignment, where she was shackled and voiceless. As she envisions a future where her son might occupy this space as a lawyer or judge, Ruth absorbs the weight of her journey. The scarf—a tangible link to her past—symbolizes resilience, while the quiet room embodies the peace she now claims.

The chapter culminates in Ruth's cathartic affirmation of freedom. Standing alone, she whispers "Yes," then shouts it repeatedly, reclaiming her voice and agency. This act defies the constraints once imposed on her, breaking metaphorical chains. The repetition of "Yes" echoes her triumph over systemic oppression, marking not just legal victory but personal liberation. The scene closes with Ruth embracing the power

to define her own narrative, a stark contrast to the silencing she endured earlier.

