

Chapter Eighteen

In Chapter Eighteen of "If These Wings Could Fly," the protagonist reflects on her progress reports, revealing her academic performance: a stellar AP English score of 100 and decent grades in other subjects except for a disappointing C in Art I. This grade frustrates her, as she had viewed art class as an easy break to focus more on her newspaper work and college applications. In her frustration, she navigates through crowded hallways, eager to escape the school environment and dive into her personal interests, which include reading and music.

As she makes her way to her locker, a classmate, Liam, playfully teases her about her grades. Their conversation reveals a budding friendship as he offers to help her improve in art. Despite her initial resistance and self-doubt regarding her skills, Leighton finds herself intrigued by the idea of spending time with Liam outside of school. While nominally an art tutoring session, it feels akin to a date to her.

Their playful banter continues, and Liam invites her to a football game that night, which also has a bonfire afterward—a prospect that makes her anxious as she's not one for parties. While she hesitates, it is evident that she is drawn to Liam's enthusiasm, and a part of her is tempted to join in.

After dismissing Liam's invitation, she boards the bus, feeling conflicted about her interactions with him. Campbell, her friend, questions her about Liam, and the topic shifts to her grades, highlighting her aspirations for New York University. Campbell makes a protective remark about Leighton's grades that indicates their deep bond and underlying fears about their future. The chapter closes with Leighton grappling with her decisions about school and friendships, pondering her own bravery in leaving her current life behind, with the weight of uncertainty hanging over her as she contemplates what will ultimately propel her forward: courage or cowardice.