

# Chapter Fifty-One

In Chapter Fifty-One of "If These Wings Could Fly," the protagonist, Leighton, returns home to find her family gathered in the living room. Her father, clearly burdened by guilt and stress, expresses regret for his recent outburst, attributing it to the pressure of his failing business and a desire to shield his daughters from his problems. His words are filled with remorse as he apologizes, but the underlying tension remains palpable.

Leighton's mother attempts to support him by suggesting they keep the house in order to relieve his stress, thereby indicating that they believe their actions might have triggered his anger. This notion frustrates Leighton and her sister, Campbell, as they silently acknowledge the inadequacy of such a justification. They realize this focus on the house and their behavior overlooks the real issue at hand.

As the conversation continues, their father proposes adding more enjoyable activities to their family dynamic, hoping to create positive experiences despite financial constraints. When he pleads with Leighton to be a part of this newfound plan, she reluctantly agrees but remains conflicted about the sincerity behind their father's apologetic demeanor.

Later, as Leighton seeks refuge on the front stoop with her mother, they discuss the multitude of birds in their tree—a moment that juxtaposes the chaos in their home life with the tranquility in nature. Her mother insists that her father isn't a monster, but merely a flawed person grappling with his demons. Leighton, however, struggles to accept this idea; she feels their father's humiliation is a small comfort in light of his destructive behavior.

The discussion reveals tensions about their father's recent actions, including staying with Officer DiMarco, which Leighton views with disdain. As she contemplates the issues within their family unit, she recognizes that even though they are bound by love, their relationships are fragile and could easily collapse under the weight of unresolved conflicts. The chapter closes with Leighton contemplating the complexity of their familial bonds while holding her mother's hand, signifying a moment of solidarity amidst the turmoil.