

Chapter Fifty

In Chapter Fifty of *If These Wings Could Fly*, the protagonist reflects on the experience of attending an art show where she must present her own work. Standing next to her piece, *Portrait of an Old Crow*, she feels the weight of humiliation typical of high school events. Although Liam encourages her to take Art II next spring, she views his praise skeptically, comparing herself to an old house in need of restoration.

As the evening progresses, time drags on painfully, and when the clock strikes 7:30, she hastily leaves her display to find Liam. Suddenly, she discovers his artwork, which captivates her attention. His drawings depict a narrative of three girls, one of whom resembles her in expressions and features, conveying feelings of isolation and devastation. The title, "THESE BROKEN WINGS: AN ORIGIN STORY," leads her to confront Liam about the piece. Their eye contact intensifies the emotional connection, prompting her to question if he truly sees her this way.

Feeling raw and exposed, Leighton escapes toward the girls' locker room, where Liam follows, reminding her that he is her ride and she is staying at his house. Despite the cold winds outside, their drive to his home is filled with tension and silence, with Leighton processing her hurt. Upon arriving, she firmly asserts, "I am not broken," as Liam apologizes for the unintended portrayal. He insists that his artwork was purely coincidental and expresses his regret for not warning her prior.

After a pause, Liam invites her to see more of the comic he created, which reveals the transformative journey of the female character—initially vulnerable but evolving into a powerful hero. As they explore his drawings, Leighton admires the fearless representation, appreciating the artistic narrative and Liam's intent. Their connection deepens as they share laughter and gentle physical contact, suggesting a budding understanding between them. Ultimately, Leighton chooses to let go of anger, recognizing the importance of what to carry forward in their relationship .