

Chapter Forty-Nine

In Chapter Forty-Nine of *If These Wings Could Fly*, the narrative explores themes of change, personal growth, and relationships, using crows as a symbolic backbone. The protagonist wakes up in Liam's bed and is initially unsettled by the intimacy of the situation. Upon checking the window, she finds odd gifts that Joe had left for her, further tying her past experiences to her current life. She decides to collect these gifts for Juniper, recognizing their significance.

As she enters the kitchen, she discovers that Liam has made plans for a morning hike. Though the protagonist expresses reservations about the cold weather, Liam, enthusiastic about the outdoors, assures her that it will be invigorating. Their playful banter showcases their growing chemistry; he offers her cozy clothing and brews instant oatmeal for breakfast. When she hesitates about the hike, he frames it as an opportunity for "crow research," cleverly playing on her interests as a writer.

They meet friends Amelia and Sofia at the hiking trail. In their conversation, she learns more about Sofia's art pieces for an upcoming show, and they share excitement for the event. This is contrasted by introspection as she reflects on Liam's previous confession of love. Their hike allows for light-hearted exchanges, particularly about hot cocoa versus coffee, revealing more about Liam's character and his caffeine aversion due to anxiety.

At a lookout point, they enjoy the view while Amelia and Liam discuss student council matters. Sofia presses Leighton about last night with Liam, prompting her to admit to panicking after his declaration of love. Encouraged by Sofia, she contemplates her feelings for Liam, who has shown consistent affection. The chapter ends with a strong metaphor as the crows gather, reflecting on the challenges of managing wild populations and hinting at deeper life lessons about control and freedom. The protagonist concludes that the crows will leave when they choose, paralleling her own journey toward understanding love and relationships.