

Chapter Forty

In Chapter Forty of "If These Wings Could Fly," the protagonist is confronted with a sense of dread as she prepares to return home alone after school, fearing the imminent confrontation with her father. Her plans to hide at the newspaper office are thwarted by its closure, leaving her vulnerable to the situation she dreads. Just as anxiety begins to dominate her thoughts, Liam, her supportive boyfriend, arrives at her locker and offers her a thoughtful gift—a phone, which he explains will be useful in emergencies. This gesture touches her deeply, but it also elicits fear as she instinctively worries about her father's potential reaction if he discovers it.

Despite Liam's insistence that she hide the phone well, the protagonist feels that there is no safe place for it. She ultimately decides to return the phone to Liam, unable to take the risk of putting herself and her family in jeopardy. This moment illustrates her inner struggles—while she craves safety, the reality of her home life makes her wary of accepting help.

Their interaction is interrupted by a tense situation with Brody, who makes lewd comments and attempts to invade her personal space. Reacting instinctively, she throws a basketball that strikes him in the face, resulting in an injury and chaos in the gym. Coach Tenley confronts the situation, imposing a detention on her despite her explanation of Brody's behavior. Liam stands up for her, confronting Brody and defending her honor, but the situation leaves her feeling conflicted about her reactions.

As they drive home, silence fills the car, thick with unspoken emotions. The protagonist reflects on the helplessness that amplifies her fear, even as she tries to reassure Liam about her safety and plans. The chapter ends with her feeling haunted by the burdens of her past, amplifying her sense of entrapment in a dangerous environment as she steps back into her home, a place that feels more like a prison than a sanctuary. Her emotions reveal the internal conflict of wanting to escape her circumstances while recognizing how fear paralyzes her.