

Chapter Thirty-Five

In Chapter Thirty-Five of "If These Wings Could Fly," Leighton finds herself emotionally overwhelmed after a distressing encounter with her father the previous night. She rushes to Liam's car in the pouring rain, seeking solace. As she settles in, his casual greeting, "Good morning, beautiful," triggers a wave of tears. Despite her attempts to hold back her emotions, the storm within her erupts, leaving her vulnerable and exposed as she reveals her pain to Liam.

Liam, noticing her distress, pulls over instead of taking her to school, showing genuine concern for her well-being. Amid her tears, Leighton struggles to articulate the turmoil she's experiencing at home, revealing that her father's emotional abuse has persisted for years, intensifying over time. The complex emotions surrounding her family dynamics, especially her mother's blind love for her father, render her incapable of leaving despite the pain.

As they sit together, the rain pouring down mirrors Leighton's inner turmoil. Liam urges her to distance herself from her toxic home life, emphasizing that she doesn't deserve such treatment. His encouragement, though well-meaning, clashes with Leighton's reality, as returning home feels inevitable given her mother's unwavering attachment.

Eventually, Leighton begins to feel a sense of relief from sharing her burden, and she thanks Liam, acknowledging they should return to school. Liam proposes staying away until after the first period, a suggestion Leighton readily agrees to, finding comfort in their shared moments of vulnerability.

As the rain lessens, they observe crows playing in the trees, a moment of levity that contrasts with Leighton's internal struggles. When they finally arrive at school, they're late, and Leighton remembers her impending calculus exam, hastily making her way through the hall. A flyer about a crow hunt catches her attention, reminding her that she isn't the only one dealing with urgent, troubling matters. The chapter encapsulates a tender and tumultuous moment as Leighton grapples with her emotions and complex family situation, providing a poignant exploration of her struggles amid fleeting connections and harsh realities.