

Chapter Twenty-Eight

In Chapter Twenty-Eight of "If These Wings Could Fly," the protagonist wakes up to the comforting aroma of coffee, finding her mother standing at her bedside with two mugs in hand. Despite the early hour, the mood is light as they share quiet moments while chatting about college choices, particularly New York University, which the protagonist is eager to attend against her father's expectations. The conversation reveals a mix of humor and seriousness, highlighting a mother-daughter bond where the mother senses her daughter's true aspirations.

As they prepare for the day, the protagonist hurriedly dresses and joins her siblings, Campbell and Juniper, at breakfast. Their playful banter indicates a sense of normalcy, yet the protagonist feels a disconnection, as if waking in an alternate reality. Her mother's sudden decision to embark on a spontaneous trip to New York City surprises the girls, especially since skipping school is highly unusual. The mother shares her intention to let her daughter experience the city firsthand, reinforcing the idea that she will indeed end up there if accepted into NYU.

On the journey, the family engages in nostalgic conversations about "Apple Days," cherished childhood memories filled with apple picking and baking, evoking a sense of longing for simpler times. The protagonist reflects on changes in their lives, particularly in relation to their father, whose absence has altered their family dynamics.

As they arrive in New York City, the excitement builds. They make stops at iconic locations, including a taxi ride, NYU, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, while sampling classic street food. These moments become a blend of cliché and perfection as the protagonist connects with her family again. However, she also grapples with the looming idea of leaving them as she contemplates her future at college.

While sharing an apple in Central Park, the protagonist faces a small setback when the apple turns out to be bruised, a metaphor for her mixed feelings about leaving home. The peace of the park contrasts with her anxieties, amplified when she notices three crows perched on a branch — a nostalgic symbol from her past. The chapter brilliantly captures the juxtaposition of family bonds, impending change, and the bittersweet nature of growing up.