

# Chapter Twenty-Four

In Chapter Twenty-Four of *If These Wings Could Fly*, the protagonist arrives home with a smile, reflecting on a pleasant evening, but that quickly turns to dread upon discovering chaos in the kitchen. A shattered dish lies in the sink, alongside burnt chicken and boiling water, indicating a disaster that occurred in her absence. As she investigates, she hears a whimper and finds her siblings, Campbell and Juniper, huddled in the dark living room. They reveal that things went awry while she was gone, with Campbell reacting angrily to burnt food, breaking dishes in the process.

As the tension builds, the protagonist senses unspoken family dynamics and struggles, especially regarding their father's volatile temperament. She is concerned for her mother, who may be upstairs, and the fear of what could happen next hangs in the air. There are hints that the father's anger could escalate further, and the quiet that follows is more frightening than shouting. The siblings converse quietly about their day, revealing their fears and innocence amidst the chaos.

The protagonist attempts to reassure them while grappling with her own worries about their father's behavior. Sounds from upstairs suggest conflict, but when their parents finally appear, the father's smug demeanor doesn't alleviate the tension. As the atmosphere fills with loud music, the mother's dismissive attitude triggers frustration and anger within the protagonist.

Struggling to deal with the emotional turmoil of her home life, she engages in cleaning and straightening up, desperately trying to restore some sense of normalcy and safety. In a moment of solace, she encounters Joe, a crow, who brings back Juniper's lost leather cuff, symbolizing hope amid despair. This gesture resonates deeply with the protagonist, reflecting on the idea of loss and the potential for recovery.

Drawing parallels between Amelia Earhart's story and the folklore of crows, the protagonist contemplates the nature of bravery and survival, suggesting that perhaps, like the crow, finding safety can also mean choosing to stay away from home—a poignant meditation on fearlessness in the face of chaos. The chapter encapsulates themes of family struggle, courage, and the intricacies of finding one's place in a turbulent environment.