

# Auburn, Pennsylvania - December 25

Auburn, Pennsylvania, serves as the setting for a quiet yet profound moment in *If These Wings Could Fly*, set on December 25. In the opening scene, the crow population is revealed to be a staggering 78,460, a precise statistic that immediately draws attention to the natural world around the town. This number is more than a simple fact; it establishes a sense of place and provides a lens through which the reader can reflect on the intersection of human life and the environment. The choice to focus on the crows, with their distinctive black feathers and mysterious presence, evokes an atmosphere that is both grounded in reality and tinged with symbolism. The holiday itself, typically filled with human warmth and celebration, contrasts with the stark image of these birds, who continue their lives unaffected by the hustle and bustle of human festivities. The quiet coexistence between the growing crow population and the activities of Auburn's residents suggests a deeper, often unspoken connection between the two worlds, where nature's presence lingers even in the midst of human celebrations and rituals.

The presence of the crows in such large numbers introduces a thematic undercurrent that is more than just an environmental observation. Crows are often associated with mystery, intelligence, and adaptability in literature, traits that make them an intriguing choice for the chapter's focal point. The significant number of crows in Auburn hints at a complex relationship between the natural world and human life, one that may not be immediately apparent but holds deeper meaning as the narrative develops. Crows are highly intelligent creatures, known for their ability to adapt to various environments, and their survival instincts make them a symbol of resilience. This symbolism is particularly potent within the context of a holiday season, a time when families gather and reflect on the year gone by, yet the crows continue with their lives, unperturbed by human concerns. The mention of the crows' growing population serves as a

reminder of nature's persistence, as well as its capacity to adapt and thrive alongside humans, even in the most unexpected places. Their numbers hint at the possibility that the relationship between nature and humanity will be explored more deeply in the chapters to come, and perhaps even serve as a metaphor for broader themes of survival and transformation in the face of adversity.

As the chapter progresses, the statistic about the crow population becomes more than just a moment of observation; it transforms into a symbol of the delicate balance between the human world and the natural world. The fact that this observation is made on December 25, a holiday marked by reflection and family gatherings, adds another layer of meaning. Christmas, traditionally a time to celebrate human connection, is contrasted by the cold, indifferent presence of nature, represented by the crows. This juxtaposition forces the reader to think about the often-overlooked role that nature plays in shaping the rhythms of human life, even on a day that is typically focused on personal connections and familial bonds. The mention of the crow population provides a microcosm of life in Auburn, suggesting that the natural world continues its own cycles, unaffected by human concerns. The statistic becomes a subtle invitation for the reader to think beyond the immediate celebrations and reflect on the broader environmental and ecological forces that persist alongside everyday life. The crows, ever-present, highlight the interconnections between humans and nature, reminding us of the quiet yet powerful forces at work around us. This detail encourages readers to appreciate the complexity of the world around them, urging reflection on how even the smallest aspects of nature can have profound effects on the larger community. By weaving this environmental element into the story, the author invites readers to consider the roles that all creatures play in shaping our experiences, offering a deeper understanding of the delicate balance that sustains both human and ecological life.