

# Chapter 55

Chapter 55 of *If These Wings Could Fly* opens with the protagonist feeling weighed down by a promise made to Liam—to attend his game. Throughout the event, she struggles with regret and anxiety, caught in a whirlwind of conflicting emotions. The energy of the game surrounds her, with the loud cheers from fans and the lively performances of cheerleaders filling the air. Despite this outward excitement, the protagonist is keenly aware of the underlying tension within her family, particularly her father's increasingly volatile behavior. As they sit in the bleachers, surrounded by familiar faces from the town, the community's presence only adds to the sense of discomfort. Though the public appearance of the family suggests normalcy, the protagonist can feel the cracks in the surface of their relationships, particularly between her parents. The promise to Liam now feels like a burden, as the protagonist finds herself distracted by the emotional turmoil playing out before her eyes.

As the game unfolds, the father's irritation becomes increasingly visible, and it soon leads to a confrontation with the mother. The public display of unity among the family masks deeper, more troubling issues within their home life. The father's escalating behavior begins to draw the attention of those around them, but the mother, ever the peacemaker, tries to cover up the strain with a forced smile. Even as the crowd cheers for the Wolves, the protagonist cannot shake the awareness of how much damage is simmering just beneath the surface of their family dynamic. The mother's efforts to maintain appearances only heighten the tension, as it becomes evident that the cracks in their marriage are becoming harder to hide. For the protagonist, this public outing is a painful reminder of how fragile the veneer of normalcy truly is, as her family's struggles are laid bare amidst the festive atmosphere of the game.

The situation takes a darker turn as the father, in a tense exchange, forces the mother to leave, his grip on her signaling a disturbing escalation. The protagonist, desperate

to intervene and stop the growing conflict, finds herself paralyzed by fear, caught between loyalty to her family and the instinct to protect her mother. In this moment, the tension at the game seems to mirror the turmoil within their home life, where violence looms just beneath the surface. The protagonist longs to restore some sense of normalcy, to hold onto the fleeting moments of peace before everything unravels completely. As the family dynamics continue to deteriorate, the protagonist's struggle to find stability becomes more intense, and the fear of what might happen next begins to overwhelm her. The backdrop of the football game, a place usually filled with joy and excitement, becomes tainted by the fear and emotional strain that marks their personal lives, deepening the protagonist's sense of helplessness.

Amidst the chaos, the protagonist decides to follow her mother, attempting to shield her younger siblings from the escalating conflict. Although support is offered by friends at the game, it provides little relief from the emotional burden weighing on her. The situation feels out of her control, and the protagonist's desire to protect her family only intensifies the urgency with which she tries to keep them safe. This moment becomes a turning point, where the protagonist realizes that her family's struggles are no longer something she can ignore or compartmentalize. The chapter concludes with a sense of urgency, as the protagonist races to catch up with her mother, yearning for the stability that seems to elude them. The feeling of longing for peace in the face of such instability becomes a key theme, as the protagonist is forced to confront the emotional strain and chaos surrounding her. The chapter effectively underscores the protagonist's internal struggle and the devastating impact of her family's dysfunction, marking a poignant moment in the unfolding narrative.