

Chapter 67

Chapter 67 of *If These Wings Could Fly* delves into a profoundly intimate and emotional moment as the protagonist, Leighton, requests that Liam take her home before the fireworks begin. The holiday season has always been difficult for her, filled with discomfort and lingering emotions that have made her feel disconnected. In response to these challenges, she and her siblings, Campbell and Juniper, created their own set of meaningful traditions, small but significant rituals that help them navigate the complexity of family dynamics. Every New Year's Eve, they climb to the roof to watch the fireworks together, a ritual that holds deep meaning for them despite the holiday's bittersweet undertones. This tradition serves as a quiet rebellion against the usual chaos, offering a sense of control and connection amidst a world that feels constantly uncertain. Despite the discomfort of the holiday season, she is unwilling to abandon this small but powerful ritual that has become a cornerstone of their bond.

As Leighton and Liam park near the end of her road, the mood shifts into something more personal. Liam steps out of the car to open her door with a warmth that contrasts with the chill in the night air. His gesture is simple, yet it carries a depth of affection that makes the moment feel special. They share a brief but meaningful kiss, one that deepens their connection even as they are surrounded by the sounds of Auburn's trees and the restless cawing of crows in the distance. These crows, with their eerie, echoing cries, seem to add an extra layer of tension to the otherwise serene moment. But the night sky, vast and filled with stars, envelops them in a sense of intimacy that overshadows everything else. The clarity of the heavens above feels like an extension of their bond, something eternal and unspoken, connecting them to both the present moment and a larger, more enduring love. It is a brief but significant pause in time, where the outside world falls away, and they are the only two people who matter.

Caught up in the transcendent beauty of the moment, Leighton suddenly finds herself overcome by an intense wave of emotion. Without thinking, she blurts out, "I love you," the words coming out as if they've been waiting for just the right moment to be expressed. This heartfelt confession is met with Liam's immediate embrace, his arms wrapping around her as if to reassure her that the feeling is mutual. His response, though simple, is enough to solidify the depth of their bond, and he teases her lightly, asking her to share something new with him. Leighton, with a playful glint in her eye, teases back, making no promises, yet the connection between them continues to grow with each shared glance, smile, and kiss. Their love, while new, feels profound and all-encompassing, as if it has been building for years in the quiet moments they've shared. Their playful exchange adds an element of lightheartedness to an otherwise emotionally charged scene, highlighting the balance between joy and gravity in their relationship.

As Liam holds her close, his warmth seems to wrap around her like a protective shield against the cold air that lingers around them. It's a moment of raw simplicity, yet it feels loaded with meaning. The stars above seem to gaze down at them, silent witnesses to the happiness that fills the space between them. The trees around them, alive with the restless movement of crows, seem to fade into the background as the couple finds a kind of peace in each other's arms. The quiet solitude of this moment stands in stark contrast to the noise of the world beyond them, making it feel even more sacred and profound. As they stand together, it becomes clear that their love, though still in its early stages, is already marked by a deep sense of understanding and trust. The chapter beautifully encapsulates the raw, vulnerable nature of their connection, showing how small, intimate moments can hold the most significant meaning. The night sky, the fireworks, and the crows all fade into the background, leaving only the two of them in a world that feels entirely their own. Their love, simple yet profound, becomes a reminder that despite the chaos around them, moments of peace, connection, and love can be found even in the most unexpected places.