

Margot stands on the roof, her arms outstretched like angel wings. From two stories below, Brody and I plead with her to turn around, crawl back through the open attic window, and get the hell back inside.

“I can fly!” she says with too much conviction. “We all can. We’re just too afraid to take that first step into the air.”

Her sapphire eyes don’t drop our way but remain fixed on the brilliant blue sky above. Her expression is soft and relaxed, almost euphoric as if she’s eye to eye with heaven and entirely at peace.

Her lips bend into a confident smile, one that scares the shit out of me.

“Is *he* telling you that?” Brody screams, interlacing his fingers behind his neck as he tries to convince her *not* to listen to the voice that lives in her head. “You know he’s not real! Look at me, dammit!”

His breaths are loud and quick beside me, each one drenched in terror. A bead of sweat trickles from the edge of his brow and races toward his squared jaw. Underneath the trail it leaves behind, his tan skin glistens in the daylight.

Margot doesn’t respond. Instead, she takes one step closer to the edge. The wind whips through her blond hair, tossing it about wildly.

“I’m running up to the attic. Stay here and keep talking to her, Liv,” Brody instructs me as he sprints toward the front door in long, urgent steps. “Don’t let her jump!”

Ten minutes ago, the three of us were in the kitchen enjoying some chips and guacamole after they’d put Ellie down for a nap. Margot, I thought, was doing better. Brody says that she’s

had a few good days without any episodes. So, when she excused herself to the bathroom, I didn't think anything of it. Neither did he...until we heard footsteps above our heads.

The only thing above their kitchen is the roof.

"Margot," I shout, shielding my eyes from the sun as I try to reason with her, "I need you to listen to me. You cannot fly. You're a smart person. You know better. Just stop and think about this for a second!"

"You just wait and see, Livy Lou," she replies. She looks down at me and winks.

The grin on her face is foreign. It's one I don't recognize.

She refers to me as Livy Lou, a term that zaps me right back to our college years. She was drunk when she bestowed the name upon me one boozy night at our favorite bar. Over time, it stuck. She only calls me Livy Lou when she's *not* coherent.

She inches closer to the edge. My stomach drops, like I'm on a rollercoaster roaring down its initial descent.

"Seriously," I shout, flailing my arms above my head, "I'm not joking. Don't you dare take one more step!"

She laughs, and it doesn't sound right. Her laugh, the one I know like the back of my hand, comes from somewhere deep inside her gut, and if it goes on for too long, snorting sometimes follows. It's contagious. But this particular cackle originates in her throat and contains a roughness that makes the hair stand up on the back of my neck.

After what feels like an eternity, I spot Brody, a flicker of hope, at the attic window. He can fix this. He always does.

He sends one leg out and over the window sill, then the other, until he's upright and steady on two feet. His white Adidas sneakers navigate the slanted roof in small shuffles, nearing

her with caution. Perspiration bleeds right through his thin gray t-shirt, gathering under his armpits and around his collar.

Margot has no idea he's behind her. She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath that sends her shoulders back and lifts her chin. Her left foot creeps a little closer to the edge, and she wobbles.

Before I have time to push out a scream, Brody makes it to where she stands. He yanks the back of her crème blouse and pulls her toward him. They both stumble a bit before collapsing backward onto the black shingles. She lands on his chest. For a moment, I worry they'll tumble right off the edge, but they don't. He keeps a tight hold around her waist, preventing her from slipping out of his grip. She fights him with a series of slaps and elbow jabs, spewing a wild array of curse words into the air. He manages to secure her hands so she can't hit him anymore, and when she finally gives in, she cries.