

Chapter Eight

In Chapter Eight of **If These Wings Could Fly**, the narrator finds herself ensnared in the tension of her household, specifically in her room while preparing for a calculus assignment. Despite her intentions to focus, her anxiety grows as she anticipates her father's imminent outburst, a cycle she knows all too well. The atmosphere becomes unnervingly quiet, prompting her to slip out of her room, driven by a mix of fear and curiosity to listen. She understands that the dread of anticipating the conflict is often worse than the actual event, wishing for the turmoil to begin to reclaim a fleeting sense of safety after it passes.

Peering out her window, she observes her father dealing with a trash bag in the yard, a task that stirs a deeper sense of unrest. His truck, emblazoned with "BARNES CONSTRUCTION," caters to the expectation of family pride, yet she knows the truth—that her father's dreams of football glory were crushed by an injury, relegating him to local legend status, thus leaving a legacy of unrealized potential entwined with anger and disappointment.

When the narrator notes the mess on the truck, sullied by crow droppings, it symbolizes much more than a petty inconvenience; it's a reflection of their chaotic life. Her father's anger manifests as he discards trash recklessly, providing fodder for the townsfolk's jokes and her own underlying fear. The presence of her mother, passively trying to maintain order, only exacerbates the narrator's feelings of helplessness.

As the night progresses, tension escalates when a dish slips from her mother's hands, which incites further anger from her father, resulting in shattering glass scattered across the floor. In a moment of desperation, the narrator defends her mother, but this only earns her father's ire. He storms out, temporarily leaving the family in the aftermath of his rage.

Right after, the narrator tries to comfort her mother as they clean up the broken glass, underscoring the disquiet that hangs over their household. Her mother's lament that things weren't always this way starkly contrasts with the narrator's perception that her father's anger is a constant in their lives. The chapter closes with the narrator contemplating the nature of their father's rage, pondering whether he needs them present to fuel it—reflecting on a painful truth that resonates within their fraught existence.