

Chapter Fifty-Three

In Chapter Fifty-Three of "If These Wings Could Fly," the protagonist attends a town hall meeting dedicated to discussing how to remove crows from Auburn. Unable to secure a ride, she decides to bike three miles in December, opting against asking her parents for help due to recent tensions. Upon arriving at the municipal building, she encounters a lone crow—a detail that strikes her as she shares a brief exchange with the bird.

Inside, the meeting begins with the game warden reporting on previous crow hunts, revealing a disappointing outcome: while over six hundred crows were captured in a prior hunt, the recent effort yielded none, as the crows eluded the hunters, seemingly aware of their attempts. The protagonist contemplates the notion that the crows might indeed remember the hunts, prompting her to consider consulting her ornithologist.

The atmosphere is heavy as residents express frustration over the crows' disruptive behavior—raiding trash and attacking garbage bags. Mr. DiMarco, a noted figure in town, seems dismissive of the concerns raised by residents, which deepens the protagonist's dislike for him. As complaints continue, one man claims the crows killed his cat, which leads another councilman to urge focus on verifiable arguments.

Amidst this discussion, Mrs. Stieg, a neighbor and rose gardener, shares her distress over the crows damaging her precious plants. Her passionate testimony about the years of care required to cultivate her rose garden resonates with some attendees, and she calls for expert intervention to eradicate the nuisances. The room buzzes with mixed reactions.

Ultimately, when a vote is called on Town Ordinance 4420 to fund crow eradication, the room goes silent. The protagonist boldly votes "nay," but her opinion drowns in the overwhelming chorus of "aye" votes from her neighbors. As she rushes outside, she is met by a cacophony of crows mirroring the meeting's sentiments, embodying the conflict between humans and the avian invaders. The stark imagery of crows echoing "nay" signifies an intriguing connection between their world and the town's concerns.