

Chapter Nine: Inez Milholland_New York, 1910

In "Chapter Nine: Inez Milholland," the narrative revolves around the vibrant personality of Inez Milholland, a young woman of striking beauty and intelligence, who emerged as a prominent figure in the women's suffrage movement in early 20th-century America. As the chapter unfolds in New York in 1910, Inez is depicted as an audacious and modern woman who defied the traditional roles of femininity shaped by the Gilded Age's cult of domesticity. Educated at Vassar College, her ambitions extended beyond personal fulfillment; she sought to engage in legal reform to advocate for women's rights, prison reform, and civil rights.

Inez's upbringing in a progressive family significantly influenced her convictions. Her father, John Milholland, was a co-founder of the NAACP, and he instilled in her a sense of social justice. The chapter likens her family's experiences in London to the fictional Banks family from the Disney classic "Mary Poppins," hinting at their progressive and adventurous lifestyle.

Inez quickly became a striking figure in the suffrage movement, not just due to her beauty but because of her passionate advocacy. Her presence at events drew media attention, and she often used her charm to further the cause of women's rights. However, this movement often exhibited racial exclusion, particularly towards Black women, highlighting a troubling dynamic in the suffrage campaign. Some white suffragists prioritized their desires for voting rights over allyship with Black women, resulting in systemic marginalization.

The chapter culminates in the aftermath of the infamous 1913 suffrage parade, where Inez led a throng of protesters who faced vehement aggression from onlookers. Despite the chaos and violence that erupted, Inez's determination remained unshaken, exemplifying the ongoing struggles women faced in demanding equality. The chapter emphasizes her enduring legacy and the sacrifices made by countless suffragists, including the painful trials ahead for Inez as she devoted herself entirely to the cause.