

# Chapter Seven

In Chapter Seven of *If These Wings Could Fly*, the narrator reflects on her profound disconnection from her surroundings and the world beyond her small town of Auburn. Feeling like she's on the edge of a precipice without support, she seeks solace in the written word—a comforting legacy from her mother who loved classic literature. However, she has grown weary of the tragedies inherent in these stories; instead, she prefers the truth of journalism, which offers her a different perspective on life. Despite her disdain for the classics, she finds herself in a literature class discussing *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, dreading the inevitable heartache contained within.

Throughout the class, she becomes acutely aware of Liam, a classmate who, unlike the stereotypical popular kids, exudes a quiet charisma that attracts both admiration and scrutiny. The class dynamic is tense, particularly when Brody, a popular boy, makes disparaging comments about feminism, using derogatory language. The narrator attempts to advocate for the concept of feminism, emphasizing that it simply means supporting equal rights for women—not a radical stance as Brody suggests.

Interestingly, Liam interjects that he considers himself a feminist, yet he falters when prompted to define it. The narrator, feeling bristly yet resolute, challenges Brody's ignorance, which leads to an escalating tension in the classroom. It is evident that although Liam is well-liked and socially adept, he also faces the underlying racism that exists in their small town, something the narrator feels guilty for having ignored in their youth.

The chapter encapsulates a moment of profound reflection as the narrator grapples with the social complexities of her environment. Through her experience, she navigates themes of identity, societal norms, and the effect of small-town dynamics on personal relationships. Ultimately, Liam represents both a familiar figure from her past and an enigmatic presence that ignites curiosity in her, further complicating her feelings as she balances her sheltered upbringing with the broader issues of race and acceptance in Auburn.