

Chapter Thirty-Six

In Chapter Thirty-Six of *If These Wings Could Fly*, the narrator reveals a tense dynamic with Campbell, who frequently demands that she stop talking back, especially when he is angry. The narrator acknowledges her ability to provoke him with sharp, pointed remarks that escalate his mood from mild irritation to full-blown rage. Despite this, she consciously restrains herself, suppressing many of the words she wishes to say. This internal conflict highlights a deep struggle between self-expression and self-censorship, emphasizing the emotional restraint she practices to avoid further conflict.

The narrator's vivid metaphor of swallowing words that are "pointy on their corners and sharp on their edges" conveys the physical and emotional pain caused by this silence. The words, though unspoken, remain lodged inside her, creating a persistent ache that symbolizes the burden of unexpressed feelings. This imagery powerfully illustrates the toll that suppression takes on her psyche, as the internalized emotions become increasingly difficult to bear, likened to a painful, inescapable presence within her.

Moreover, the narrator draws a poignant comparison between herself and a whale that has ingested too much human garbage, turning her body into a "time capsule" of discarded things. This metaphor extends the theme of internalized suffering, suggesting that the narrator's silence and withheld words accumulate like toxic waste, poisoning her from within. It underscores the destructive impact of emotional repression and the sense of being overwhelmed by the detritus of unspoken pain and resentment.

Overall, this chapter delves into the complex dynamics of communication and power within the narrator's relationship with Campbell. It explores themes of control, emotional suppression, and the physical manifestation of psychological distress. The narrator's introspective reflections reveal the deep cost of holding back her voice,

painting a vivid picture of the silent struggles that often lie beneath the surface of fraught interpersonal interactions.