

# The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue



## INTRODUCTION

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF V. E. SCHWAB

Victoria Schwab (who also writes under the name V.E. Schwab) was born on July 7, 1987. Her mother is British, and her father is from California. She grew up in Nashville, Tennessee and attended college at Washington University in St. Louis, graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2009. Her debut novel, a young adult novel called *The Near Witch*, was published in 2011. She published her first adult novel, *Vicious*, in 2013. Schwab writes primarily children's and young adult fiction, which she publishes under the name Victoria Schwab. She's also known for the *Shades of Magic* trilogy, a fantasy series for adults, and *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*. For *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, Schwab received the 2020 Locus Award for Best Fantasy Novel. In 2020, Netflix ordered production of a supernatural teen drama series based on Schwab's 2020 short story "First Kill." Schwab created and served as executive producer for the series, which ran for one season. Schwab currently lives in Edinburgh, Scotland.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

*The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* takes place over the course of 300 years, with the main action beginning in 1714, the year Addie makes a deal with the devil to escape an undesirable marriage, and ending in the novel's present, 2014. The novel inserts Addie into numerous significant events in Western history, including the French Revolution, the prohibition era, and World War II. During Addie's early years in Paris, she frequents the city's salons. A salon is a gathering of people who come together to engage in riveting intellectual conversation. They were a major part of 17th- and 18th-century French literary and philosophical movements and flourished during the Enlightenment, a European movement that valued reason, logic, and the pursuit of knowledge. Women played central roles in salons and had the power to select guests and determine subjects of discussion. The salon was a place where women could share ideas and engage in intellectual debate. This was significant, given that society largely barred women from receiving formal educations at this point in history. In *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, Addie attends the salon of real-life salonnière Madame Geoffrin, one of the leading female figures of the French Enlightenment. In Madame Geoffrin's salon on the Rue Saint-Honoré, Geoffrin hosted many of the Enlightenment's most important artists and thinkers. Throughout Addie's 300-year experience with immortality, it's not only her deal with the devil that makes her invisible and forgettable to others, but also her status as a woman;

throughout history, women have been barred from participating in intellectual and artistic movements, and public life in general. Addie is drawn to Geoffrin and her salon because they display a degree of visibility and renown that Addie's deal with Luc and broader social constraints have made impossible for her and for women in general.

### RELATED LITERARY WORKS

V.E. Schwab has published several other works of fantasy in addition to *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*. *The Shades of Magic* trilogy is a fantasy series for adults. The series follows a young magician, Kell, who has the ability to travel between parallel realities of London, and he uses this power to deliver important news and messages between worlds. *Vicious*, Schwab's first novel for adults, is also a work of fantasy. The novel follows college roommates Victor and Eli who gain superhuman abilities after suffering near-death experiences. Addie LaRue gains immortality upon striking a deal with the devil, a cultural motif that's also called a Faustian bargain, so named for the German legend of Faust. (Johann Georg Faust was a Renaissance-era alchemist and magician the Church condemned for blasphemy and devil-worship.) Famous adaptations of the legend of Faust include Christopher Marlowe's drama, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (c. 1604) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's 19th-century drama *Faust*. *The Postmortal* (2019) by Drew Magary is a recent novel that explores similar themes to *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, notably the downside to immortality. The novel takes place in the dystopian near future, in which humanity's cure for aging has created a world where an increased human population leads to a new set of problems.

### KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue
- **When Written:** 2010s
- **When Published:** 2017
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary
- **Genre:** Fantasy
- **Setting:** New York City; France; various cities throughout the U.S. and Europe
- **Climax:** Addie promises her soul to Luc, thereby relieving Henry of his debt to Luc and saving Henry's life.
- **Antagonist:** Luc
- **Point of View:** Third Person

### EXTRA CREDIT

**Film.** In 2021, the production of a film adaptation of *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* was announced. Schwab was involved in preliminary drafts of the screenplay.

**Time Traveler, World Traveler.** In addition to researching the time periods during which Addie, the protagonist of *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, is alive, Schwab has stated that she also conducted “geographic research” in the process of writing the novel, traveling to every place that Addie visits.



## PLOT SUMMARY

July 29, 1714 is the day that 23-year-old Addie LaRue is supposed to marry Roger, a widower from her small French village of Villon-sur-Sarthe. But Addie has no desire to marry Roger and spend the rest of her life caring for his children and performing other domestic duties. She desires a life of freedom and adventure, so she runs to the surrounding woods and prays to “the old gods” to help her. Estele, an eccentric old woman from Addie’s village, taught Addie how to pray to the old gods. She stressed that Addie should be careful what she asks of them and, most importantly, “never pray to the gods that answer after dark.” But Addie fails to heed Estele’s warning and continues to pray, not realizing that darkness has fallen. Soon, a god that resembles the handsome stranger Addie has fantasized about since adolescence answers Addie’s prayers and agrees to grant Addie the “freedom” and “more time” that she desires—if she promises to surrender her soul to him once she grows bored or tired of her immortality. Addie agrees, then she sinks into the darkness.

When Addie comes to, it’s light outside; she no longer hears the wedding party calling after her. She returns to her house in Villon and is shocked when her mother and father don’t recognize her; they claim that they’ve never had a daughter. Addie wanders over to Estele’s cottage, but Estele, too, fails to recognize Addie. Addie realizes that her deal with the old god (whom Addie will later name Luc) has a cruel, unexpected caveat. Luc has given Addie the freedom and immortality she asked for, but the tradeoff is that she must live an “invisible” life in which everyone she meets (and even people she’s known her entire life) forget her immediately. Luc’s deal—which Addie will come to think of as a curse—also prohibits her from uttering her name or telling anyone her story.

Realizing that living as a stranger among people she’s known her whole life will be an impossibly painful experience, Addie decides to leave Villon. She heads to the nearby city of Le Mans, where she used to accompany her father, a woodworker, to sell his wares. But Addie’s invisibility makes it hard for her to find food and shelter, and she struggles. Nevertheless, Addie is determined not to give in to Luc, who is convinced from the start that Addie’s loneliness will eat away at her until she begs him to take her soul and put her out of her misery. And so,

Addie perseveres, learning as she goes. From Le Mans, she ventures to Paris, and from there, she travels throughout Europe, eventually crossing the ocean to the U.S. Years pass, and Addie lives through notable historical events and eras, such as the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. Luc often visits Addie on the “anniversary” of the day they arranged their deal to taunt her and try to get her to surrender to him. But Addie refuses to give in to loneliness and misery. She experiences pain, cold, hunger, and must resort to sex work to support herself. But despite these hardships, Addie maintains her open, curious attitude toward the world, and each day that she’s able to taste, learn, and experience something new reminds her that those hardships are worth it.

In time, Addie learns new ways to circumvent the rules of her curse. Though she can’t get people to remember her, she can model for and inspire various artists who then recreate the “idea” of her in their **paintings**, sculptures, and music. In this way, Addie leaves a lasting impression on people’s lives, even as the physical memory of her erodes.

Luc continues to visit Addie to try to manipulate her into giving in to him. Addie hates Luc. She resents that he twisted her words to turn her simple desire for freedom into a chaotic nightmare. At the same time, she’s attracted to him. And the fact that nobody remembers Addie means she’s incapable of developing meaningful, long-lasting relationships with any mortal. Luc, therefore, becomes the only constant in her life, and she comes to look forward to his visits and misses him when he’s not around. Luc eventually returns to Addie the **wooden ring** that her father made for her, a prized position that Addie originally tried to use as payment for her immortality. Luc rejected the ring in the woods that night, explaining that he needed something far more valuable—Addie’s soul—to seal the deal. But now he returns it to her, explaining that all she needs to do is slip the ring onto her finger, and Luc will come to her. Addie decides never to summon Luc, not wanting to give him the satisfaction of seeing her weak and desperate. She tries to lose the ring, but each time she does, it magically finds its way back to her.

In 1952, when Addie is living in the U.S., she and Luc begin a decades-long romance. Addie ultimately breaks off the relationship in 1984, believing that Luc’s “love” is merely another calculated effort to manipulate her into surrendering her soul to him. In retaliation, Luc burns down the house in New Orleans they’ve been living in together.

By 2014, Addie has endured her curse for nearly three centuries and is living in New York City. It’s March, which means there are only four months to go until Addie and Luc’s 300-year anniversary. She hasn’t seen Luc since their breakup in 1984. Everything changes when Addie meets Henry Strauss, a young bookstore employee who vaguely resembles Luc and seems irredeemably lost and sad. Addie enters *The Last Word*, the bookstore where Henry works, and tries to steal a book

(stealing is easy for her, since nobody recognizes her once a door shuts between them). Addie returns the next day with the stolen book and is shocked when Henry remembers her and calls her out for stealing. Addie is equally shocked and elated that finally, after all this time, somebody hasn't forgotten her. Not only this, but Addie can say her name in front of Henry and tell him her story. Addie and Henry fall in love, and they eventually learn that they've both made deals with Luc—this is why their curses don't work on each other as they do on the rest of the world.

Henry explains his curse to Addie: Luc confronts Henry late one night when Henry, beside himself after his girlfriend Tabitha rejected his marriage proposal and then broke up with him, climbed to the roof to a tall building and prepared himself to jump. Luc offered to give Henry what Henry wanted most: to be loved. At first, the deal was great. Everyone wants or loves Henry. His family used to be disappointed in him for being so sad, aimless, and confused, but now they're proud of him for no reason at all. Everyone wants to date him, and everyone thinks he's charming, smart, and funny. But Henry soon realized that none of this is real. People aren't really seeing him—just whatever version of him Luc's power has enchanted them to see. Like Addie, Henry realizes that his deal with Luc has never been anything but a curse. But Henry doesn't share with Addie the most troubling aspect of his curse: that it's only good for one year. After one year has passed, Luc will come for Henry, and Henry will die. Addie can sense that Henry isn't telling her everything, but she's so happy to finally have a real relationship with someone that she ignores her concerns. The more time Henry and Addie spend together, the deeper their feelings for each other become.

But as the 300-year anniversary of Addie's deal with Luc gets closer, Addie becomes increasingly terrified that he will reappear and ruin everything she's built with Henry. And this is exactly what happens. On July 29, 2014, Addie and Henry are at a bar when the bartender hands Addie a glass of Champagne with a rose petal floating in it—the drink that Luc always uses as a calling card when he reappears in Addie's life. Though Addie originally thought that Luc messed up when he allowed Addie and Henry to meet, each rendering the other's curse moot, Luc informs her that the opposite is true. He tells her that he intentionally allowed Henry and Addie to meet. He wanted Addie to fall in love with Henry—and then be forced to grieve him when he dies in a few weeks. Luc orchestrated this cruel plot to show Addie that mortal love is fragile, complicated, and not worth the pain it causes.

But Luc's plan backfires. Rather than write off mortal love and run back to Luc, as Luc expects her to do, Addie doubles down on her love for Henry. This enrages Luc. He takes Addie out for a romantic evening to try to win her back, but she's already made up her mind.

Henry and Addie try to make the most of Henry's last weeks of

life. They enjoy just being together, and they drive upstate to look at the stars. Henry accepts that his end is near and makes peace with how everything has turned out. Unbeknownst to Henry, Addie sneaks out to meet with Luc shortly before the day Henry is scheduled to die. She makes a new deal with Luc: she will be Luc's lover until he no longer wants her. In exchange, Luc will let Henry live.

The night that Henry is supposed to die, he and Addie go to the rooftop from which Henry nearly jumped exactly one year ago. There, Addie tells Henry about the new deal she made with Luc. The news devastates Henry, but Addie tells him she's lived enough life—now it's Henry's turn to make the most of his. She makes Henry promise to remember her, and then she vanishes.

Henry mourns Addie's loss but vows to honor his promise to remember her. He finds the notebooks in which he documented the stories Addie told him about her long, invisible life. He uses these stories to create his first novel, *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*. Later, Addie sees Henry's book at a shop in London and marvels at her story, visible after so many years of invisibility. She's with Luc now, honoring the new deal she made with him. Inwardly, she relishes the knowledge that she has tricked Luc the same way he tricked her all those years before: she didn't tell him she'd be his "forever"—she told him she'd be his *until he no longer wanted her*, and she will do everything she can to make him stop wanting her. For now, though, Addie says nothing and only smiles as Luc appears behind her and pulls her into an embrace.



## CHARACTERS

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**Adeline "Addie" LaRue** – Addie, the novel's 23-year-old protagonist, is fiercely independent—she longs for a life of adventure outside of Villon-sur-Sarthe, her small French village. Addie longs to be like Estele, an eccentric old woman who prays to "the old gods," loves nature, and eschews Villon's social norms. In 1714, Addie flees Villon to escape an undesirable marriage. She prays to Estele's old gods for "freedom" and "more time." Luc, a demonic entity, answers Addie's prayers and grants Addie immortality—but she must give him her soul once she tires of life. Addie immediately realizes that Luc's deal has a major caveat: it makes everyone she encounters—including her mother and beloved father—forget her immediately. Addie copes with her loneliness by becoming a muse to various artists, thus allowing the "idea" of her to live on in their **art**. She never fails to find meaning in life, even when things get tough. Luc is Addie's only constant, and this leads to a decades-long romance. Addie breaks things off, though, suspecting that Luc's supposed "love" is just another attempt to possess her soul. In 2014, Addie's world changes when she meets Henry, who remembers her. They fall

in love, and Addie learns that Henry remembers her because he, too, has made a deal with Luc. Luc later returns, explaining that he let Addie and Henry meet to teach Addie that mortal love isn't worth the pain it inevitably causes (Henry's deal only lasts for one year, at which time he will die). Unbeknownst to Henry, Addie agrees to be Luc's lover until he tires of her. In exchange, Luc will spare Henry's life. Addie's sacrifice devastates Henry, but he keeps his promise to remember her when she is gone, immortalizing her story in his first novel.

**Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger** – The novel's antagonist, Luc is the demonic entity who grants Addie her freedom and immortality—on the grounds that she surrenders her soul to him once she grows bored of life. He assumes the appearance of “the stranger” Addie imagined as an adolescent, a handsome man she'd fantasize about at night. Luc is one of “the gods who answer after dark” that Estele once warned Addie not to pray to. Luc is clever and scheming, and his deal, Addie realizes, comes with a serious caveat: Addie is immortal, but she's doomed to be immediately forgotten by everyone she meets. Luc includes these stipulations thinking they will incentivize Addie to surrender her soul to him immediately. He eventually returns Addie's prized **wooden ring** to her, explaining that she need only place it on her finger when she's ready to give up. At first, Addie resolves never to summon Luc. But Luc is the only constant in Addie's life, and so, centuries into their deal, he and Addie begin a decades-long romance. The affair ends once Addie suspects that Luc's feelings are yet another attempt to get her to surrender her soul; indeed, Luc's interest in Addie is born of his desire to possess her, and he repeatedly fails to understand her. Luc repeatedly uses his power to make Addie's life miserable, but his cruelest offense comes near the novel's end, when Addie learns that Luc intentionally made Addie and Henry (whose own deal with Luc means that Henry will soon die) meet to teach Addie that mortal love is not worth the pain and suffering it causes. Luc believes that Addie's grief over Henry will convince her to finally surrender. In the end, Addie promises to be Luc's lover until Luc tires of her. In exchange, Luc allows Henry to live.

**Henry Strauss** – Henry is in his late 20s and working at a bookshop when he meets Addie—and becomes the first person in 300 years to remember her. Having recently dropped out of graduate school, Henry feels aimless and insecure. He's terrified about wasting his life not knowing what he wants to do or who he wants to be—an anxiety that gains deeper significance once the reader learns that Henry's deal with Luc means his death is imminent. Henry suffers from “gray” periods of intense sadness that perplex his family. Henry feels especially miserable and unwanted since his girlfriend Tabitha recently rejected Henry's marriage proposal. After their breakup, Luc interferes with Henry's suicide attempt and convinces Henry to make a deal with him instead: for one year, Henry will be loved and desired by all. After that, Henry will

give Luc his soul and die. At first, Henry loves being loved and wanted. But he soon realizes that everyone's love is artificial and meaningless—people only love him because Luc's power forces them to. Soon, Henry realizes that his deal is really a curse. Everything changes when Henry meets and falls in love with Addie, whose own curse allows her to see Henry objectively. They eventually learn of the other's deal with Luc, though Henry initially doesn't tell Addie about his looming death. Eventually, Luc reveals that he purposefully arranged for Addie to fall in love with—and eventually grieve—Henry to teach her that mortal love isn't worth all the pain and heartbreak it causes. Addie secretly agrees to be Luc's lover for eternity in order to spare Henry's life. Losing Addie devastates Henry, but he fulfills his promise to remember her, ultimately immortalizing her story in his first novel, *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*.

**Estele** – Estele is an eccentric old woman who lives in Addie's hometown, the small French village of Villon-sur-Sarthe. Estele eschews social norms and does as she pleases. She is single and doesn't have children, and so she has always had only herself to answer to. Though the other villagers think that Estele is wicked or crazy, Addie admires Estele and longs to have a life like hers. Estele rejects “the new God” (the Christian God) that other villagers worship. Instead, she prays to “the old gods,” which are connected to nature. Estele teaches Addie how to pray to the old gods but warns her that they are “fickle,” and so Addie must be careful what she asks them for. Estele cautions Addie never to “pray to the gods who answer after dark”—advice that Addie ignores, ultimately leading to her deal with Luc. Years later, after Estele has died, Addie returns to Villon and is shocked to see that Estele has been buried in a Christian cemetery (it was Estele's wish that she be buried and a **tree** planted above her bones so that she could become a tree). So, Addie transplants a sapling onto Estele's grave, and it eventually grows into a giant tree. Years later, lightning strikes the tree, killing it. This compels Luc to remark that while the gods might be cruel, “nature can be crueler.”

**Toby Marsh** – Toby Marsh is musician with whom Addie has a romantic affair at the beginning of the novel, in 2014. It saddens Addie that each beautiful night they spend together must inevitably end in awkwardness when Toby, due to Addie's curse, fails to remember her the next morning. At the novel's beginning, Addie has been seeing Toby's gigs for several weeks. Afterward, they return to Toby's apartment and continue writing a song together. However, Toby's memory resets each time he sees Addie, so their song is little more than a ghostly memory for him, not something that becomes clearer in his mind the longer he and Addie work on it. Toward the end of the novel, after Addie has ended their affair, Toby unexpectedly plays a set at a bar Addie is at with Robbie, Henry, and Bea. Addie is alarmed and heartbroken when she hears Toby perform the song they wrote together—it reminds her of all the

human connection of which her curse has robbed her.

**Sam** – Sam is a painter who lives in New York. Addie and Sam were involved in a months-long passionate affair in the recent past, though it's not by Addie's choice that the affair remained passionate—she really likes Sam and would like for Sam to get to know her, but Addie's curse leaves Sam forgetful and embarrassed about forgetting Addie each morning they wake up together. Sam's most recent artistic endeavor involves painting portraits that depict people as the skies Sam thinks they most resemble. Before the novel's present, Sam painted Addie as a night sky, with seven stars to represent Addie's seven freckles. It's one of Sam's most special **artworks**, and it's all the more remarkable to her because she can't remember whom the painting depicts.

**Bea** – Bea is Henry's good friend. She's an **art** student who is in the process of writing her dissertation. Bea, like everyone besides Henry, forgets Addie each time they part ways, and so once Henry and Addie start dating, Henry has to re-introduce Addie to her every time they "meet." During her research, Bea stumbles upon three artworks that depict the same woman—the woman is Addie, though Bea doesn't know this—and is inspired to write her dissertation about this mystery muse. Bea only dates women, so Henry's curse (everyone wants him—but only because they project what they want onto him rather than seeing him as he really is) affects their friendship less significantly than it affects Henry's relationship with Robbie, whom Henry used to date. Before Henry's deal with Luc, Bea and Robbie sympathized with Henry's heartbreak but understood Tabitha's reasons for not wanting to be with the uncertain, aimless, and self-doubting Henry. After the deal, though, Bea is extremely supportive of Henry and insists that he's way out of Tabitha's league. When, at the novel's end, Henry publishes his first novel, *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, Bea jokes that Henry got the idea from her dissertation, not realizing that Henry actually knew and loved the woman depicted in the paintings she's studying.

**Robbie** – Robbie is one of Henry's closest friends. He's an actor who has an intense, theatrical personality that can be overdramatic and grating to those around him. Robbie and Henry dated some time before the novel's present day, but Robbie broke up with Henry due to Henry not knowing who he wanted to be or what he wanted out of his life. The breakup devastated Henry and only strengthened his self-doubt. Things become complicated when Henry's deal with Luc causes Robbie to fall back in love with Henry. Though there was once a time when Henry would have given anything to win back Robbie, he can't enjoy or accept the attention Robbie lavishes on him now, since he knows it's not real. The curse also causes Robbie to lash out at and be rude to Addie, whom he sees as a threat.

**Remy Laurent** – Remy Laurent is a young man Addie meets in Paris on July 29, 1724—the 10-year anniversary of Addie and

Luc's deal. Addie is dressed as a man, as this makes her feel safer walking alone, when Remy accidentally bumps into her. He sees that she's a woman but keeps her secret and takes her to a café, where they talk and get to know each other. France is in the midst of its era of Enlightenment, and Remy aspires to work his way into Paris's thriving intellectual scene. At the café, Remy introduces Addie to all the ideas that society has kept from her due to her gender. He tells her about novels, which will later inspire her to learn to read them. Addie's intelligence and bravery impresses Remy, and they form an instant connection. After spending the evening together, they return to Remy's rented room and have sex. It's a meaningful and positive experience for Addie, who up until now has only had sex as a sex worker. But Remy isn't immune to Addie's curse, and when he wakes a few hours later, he doesn't remember her, assumes that she is a sex worker, and pays her for the sex they just had. This wounds Addie deeply. Remy is one of the first people she's connected with since her curse began, and his unintended betrayal stings. She later encounters Remy at salons in Paris, but by then, he has grown old.

**Jean LaRue (Addie's Father)** – Addie's father is her favorite person in the world, and it devastates Addie when Luc's curse causes him to forget her. Addie is six when her father, a woodworker, takes her with him to the nearby city of Le Mans to sell his wares. The trip is a formative experience for Addie; it shows her how much lies beyond her small rural village of Villon-sur-Sarthe and leaves her longing for a larger, more adventurous life. Addie's father ignores the social norms of the day and teaches Addie to read and write. He also contributes to her lifelong love of **art** and artists; Addie's father is normally a quiet man, but he expresses himself beautifully through his art. One of Addie's most prized possessions is a **wooden ring** her father carved for her when she was born, though Luc later corrupts the positive associations Addie has with the ring.

**Marthe LaRue (Addie's Mother)** – Addie's mother loves but fails to understand Addie. She only calls Addie by her full name, Adeline, believing "Addie" to be unladylike. She adheres to the social norms that govern life in Villon, and so she disapproves of Addie's father teaching Addie to read and write—skills Addie's mother believes are a waste of time for women to learn. Instead, she believes that it's a woman's duty to assume the domestic responsibilities of running a household and carrying for one's husband and children. Addie's mother dislikes that Addie is a "dreamer," a trait she believes will only bring Addie trouble. She's overjoyed when Roger, a widower in their village, selects Addie to be his wife. When Addie first returns to Villon after making her deal with Luc, her mother's failure to recognize her is the first indication that something is very wrong. When Addie returns to Villon after spending many years away, she visits her house and glimpses her now-elderly mother through a crack in the front door. Though Addie has had decades to get used to people not remembering her, her

mother's failure to recognize her hurts as much as it did all those years before.

**Isabelle Therault** – Isabelle Therault is Addie's best friend in Villon-sur-Sarthe. Unlike Addie, Isabelle has no desire to venture beyond Villon, and so she doesn't understand Addie's adventurous spirit. After Addie starts praying to the old gods to discourage men's advances, George Caron, a man who was originally interested in Addie, shifts his sights to Isabelle instead. They soon marry and have children. Isabelle was never as adventurous or curious as Addie, but her new domestic responsibilities leave her too tired even to daydream. After Addie makes a deal with Luc and finds that her own parents don't recognize her, she returns to Isabelle's barn, not knowing where else to go, and is saddened when her best friend no longer recognizes her. Many years later, Addie returns to Villon and visits the cemetery where her family and friends, including Isabelle, are buried.

**Tabitha Masters** – Tabitha is Henry's ex-girlfriend. He proposed to her, and she said no, seemingly because Henry was too unsure of who he wanted to be or what he wanted out of life. Henry takes the breakup badly. To make matters worse, it's immediately clear to him that his close friends, Bea and Robbie, anticipated the breakup, apparently finding Tabitha's dissatisfaction with Henry's gloomy, searching personality warranted, or at least understandable. After Henry accepts his deal with Luc, he runs into Tabitha at a café and finds that Luc's enchantment has made her, like everyone else, suddenly want to be with him. But by this time, Henry knows that his deal with Luc is really a curse, and nobody's affection for him is real, so Tabitha's renewed feelings only make him sad.

**David Strauss** – David Strauss is Henry's older brother. He's a highly successful surgeon at the top of his field. Before Henry's deal with Luc, David was judgmental of Henry for being so forlorn, unambitious (he doesn't consider Henry's job at *The Last Word* legitimate work) and aimless. After Henry's deal with Luc enchants people to see Henry as "enough" just the way he is, David is suddenly loving and attentive toward Henry. Henry is initially happy that his family appreciates him as they never have before, but in time, he realizes that their feelings aren't voluntary or real—they're just the curse blinding them to reality.

**Muriel Strauss** – Muriel Strauss is Henry's younger sister. She's an **art** critic and, like David, is highly successful in her field. She's also exuberant and confident—in other words, the total opposite of Henry. Muriel loves Henry but doesn't understand why he's so forlorn, insecure, and confused about what he wants out of life. She frequently offers him small pink pills, which she calls her "little pink umbrellas," which are (presumably) some kind of prescription drug that she uses recreationally. Henry usually declines her offer, though. Once Henry's deal with Luc causes Muriel to see Henry through enchanted, unseeing eyes, she, like the rest of her family,

suddenly thinks the world of Henry. Henry initially appreciates Muriel's new affection for him, but it saddens him once he realizes that it's not voluntary or real.

**Henry's Mother** – Henry's mother lives upstate with Henry's father. She, like the rest of the Strauss family, is unhappy about Henry's aimlessness. Before Luc's curse enchants everyone to want, love, or appreciate Henry, Henry's mother's articulated worries dominate Henry's visits home. After Henry makes his deal with Luc, though, Henry's mother is suddenly proud and supportive of Henry.

**Henry's Father** – Henry's father lives upstate with Henry's mother. Before Luc's curse enchants everyone to want, love, or appreciate Henry, Henry's father often criticizes Henry for Henry's lack of a career and his general aimlessness. He also doesn't understand Henry's "gray" moods. But after Henry makes his deal with Luc, his father is suddenly overjoyed to see him and proud of him. Henry loves his family's new affection for him, but their attention only saddens him once he realizes that it's just Luc's power making them feel this way—it's not real.

**Dean Melrose** – Dean Melrose is the dean of the college where Henry attended graduate studies in theology before eventually dropping out. Back when Henry was a student, Melrose was disappointed in Henry for being so aimless and uncertain about what he wanted out of his professional life, and he effectively kicked Henry out of the program. But after Henry's deal with Luc, when Melrose encounters Henry at a café, he suddenly has nothing but good things to say about Henry and recommends Henry for a tenure-track position at his college. This is a ludicrous suggestion, given Henry's lacking credentials. Henry can't even be happy about Melrose's offer, though, since he's already realized that nobody's attention and praise means anything if they didn't choose it for themselves. In other words, Melrose isn't actually impressed by Henry—the curse has only enchanted him to feel this way.

**Madame Geoffrin** – Madame Geoffrin is a French *salonnière*. Addie repeatedly meets her in Paris and eventually learns just what to say to impress the woman and receive an invitation to her weekly salons, thus allowing Addie to enter France's thriving, Enlightenment-era intellectual culture. Addie's time at the salon comes to a halt when Luc crashes the gathering and convinces Geoffrin (who due to Addie's curse doesn't remember inviting Addie inside) that Addie is a thief, thereby getting Addie kicked out of the salon. Geoffrin, like other characters in the book, is a real historical figure. She was a famous *salonnière* and important figure of the French Enlightenment.

**James St. Clair** – James St. Clair is an actor whom Addie meets in New York some time before the novel's present day. Addie stays at his New York apartment when she knows he's out of town for a shoot. James is gay, but he and Addie have immediate chemistry as friends. They spend a whole day

together and then return to James's apartment, where they eventually fall asleep beside each other in bed. Addie leaves before James wakes the next morning, knowing she won't be able to handle the sadness and disappointment that will hit her once James—a person she thinks she could have been friends with, had she never been cursed—wakes up and fails to remember her or the nice time they shared together.

**Vanessa** – Vanessa is an attractive barista at a coffeeshop Henry frequents. Before Henry's deal with Luc, Vanessa hardly notices Henry. Afterward, though, she becomes obsessed with him. They briefly date, but when Henry asks Vanessa what she sees in him, her eyes grow misty, and she lists a bunch of generically positive adjectives that certainly don't describe Henry. It's then that Henry understands that his deal is in fact a curse: everyone wants him, but nobody really sees him for who he is. What's more, their wanting is coerced rather than voluntary, which makes it unreal. Henry breaks things off with Vanessa after he exits the shower to find her burning a box of Tabitha's things out of jealousy.

**The Marquis and His Wife** – The marquis and his wife travel frequently, and Addie often stays at their luxurious house when they are out of town. Addie happens to be at their house in 1719, on the anniversary of Addie and Luc's deal. Luc visits her there and enchants the servants to serve him and Addie dinner.

**Beethoven** – Ludwig von Beethoven was a Romantic-era composer of classical music. The book suggests that Beethoven made a deal with the devil—with Luc—in exchange for fame and success. In 1827, Luc transports himself and Addie to Beethoven's chamber and, ignoring Beethoven's pleading, transforms into a dark, monstrous creature and horrifically steals Beethoven's soul. Luc's ferocious act reminds Addie, who has recently grown bolder around Luc, that Luc is a fearsome, cruel god who can destroy her if he wants to.

**Max** – Max is an artist Addie meets and has a brief romance with in Los Angeles in 1952. He's a sculptor whose wealthy family pays his way. They're at a bar when Luc suddenly appears—notably not on his and Addie's anniversary—and forces Max to leave, seemingly jealous of the attention Max showers on Addie.

**Fred** – Fred is an old man who sells his late wife's books at a table he sets up on the sidewalk in Brooklyn. Addie passes by Fred often, though, of course, he doesn't remember her. Once, he confides in her that he sells the books outside because he fears dying inside his apartment and not being found.

**George Caron** – George Caron is a man from Addie's village, Villon-sur-Sarthe. He starts paying attention to Addie when she turns 16. Addie doesn't dislike George in particular, but she doesn't want to be anybody's wife, so she prays to the gods to help her. They apparently hear her prayers, since George shifts his focus from Addie to Addie's friend Isabelle, ultimately marrying and having children with her.

**Roger** – Roger is a widower from Addie's village, Villon-sur-Sarthe. He chooses Addie, then 23, to be his second wife and care for him and his children. Addie recoils at the idea of being anybody's wife, but she has no power to decline Roger's offer. Desperate for a way out, she escapes to the woods just before her wedding is supposed to take place and prays to the gods to help her. Luc answers her prayers, and this is how Addie enters into a deal with him.

**Michel** – Michel is a French baker who owns a French bakery in Brooklyn. Addie charms Michel by speaking French with him and pretending to be a friend of his daughter. Overjoyed to speak in his native tongue, Michel offers Addie the day's remaining pastries on the house; Addie gives Henry the sweets to take to Bea's dinner party, saving him from embarrassment, as Henry forgot he was supposed to bring dessert.

## MINOR CHARACTERS

**Meredith** – Meredith is the owner of The Last Word. She uses the life insurance payout she received after her husband's death to travel and is rarely in the shop, which makes Henry feel like the place is practically his.

**Matteo** – Matteo is a Venetian artist. Addie poses for him in 1806 and appears as a recurring subject in a number of his subsequent **artworks**.

**Josh** – Josh is Bea's roommate. Though Josh tries to flirt with Robbie and Bea's dinner party, Robbie is too fixated on Henry to pay any attention to Josh.

**Elise** – Elise is Bea's current girlfriend.

**Mathieu Caron** – Mathieu Caron is Isabelle's young son.

**Sara Caron** – Sara Caron is Isabelle's infant daughter.

**Book** – Book is the cat who lives at The Last Word. Addie eventually convinces Henry to take Book home with him.

**Maxine** – Maxine is Addie's family's mule.



## THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



## MEMORY AND MEANING

At the beginning of *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, Addie, the protagonist, sells her soul to Luc, a demonic entity, to escape an undesirable marriage and an unfulfilling life in her 18th-century rural French village. Addie believes that staying in Villon, the rural village where she grew up, will prevent her from living a full life and leaving her

mark on the world, and she agrees to sell her soul to Luc to become immortal and make that dream a reality. Too late, though, Addie learns that Luc has granted Addie's request but cruelly twisted her words to doom her to a life of invisibility: Addie told Luc she wanted to be free to live life on her own terms, so Luc ensures that she is immediately forgotten by everyone she meets and is incapable of leaving a physical mark on the world (people forget Addie the minute she leaves the room, she cannot be photographed, and she can't even say her name out loud). Addie's new inability to leave behind a personal legacy forces her to reevaluate what constitutes a meaningful life and find creative ways to circumvent the rules of a curse that seeks to erase her.

Though Addie cannot write by herself, she learns that she can place her hand over her romantic partner Henry's, guiding it to form the words and shapes that Addie can't write on her own. After Addie surrenders her soul to Luc to save Henry's life (Henry also made a deal with Luc and agreed to relinquish his soul to Luc after one year), Henry follows through with his promise not to forget Addie by retelling the story of her life—and their life together—in his novel, *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*. Though Addie cannot make Estele, the old woman from Villon whose nonconventional values and independence Addie admired as a child, remember Addie, she can still return to Villon and plant a **tree** over Estele's grave to pay homage to the nature Estele loved and the woman Addie admired. And over the years, Addie acts as a muse for various artists who transplant not Addie herself, but rather the ideas she inspires in them, into their **art**. What all these tricks have in common is that they don't focus on Addie exclusively, but rather on her interactions with others: how the things she has done or said stick with them, even if her physical presence has not. Addie's unconventional methods of getting around Luc's curse suggest that a person's individual status, appearance, and accomplishments aren't what make their life meaningful or memorable—rather, it's the way a person touches others' lives that matters most.



### LOVE AND VULNERABILITY

At the beginning of the novel, Addie LaRue, the novel's protagonist, sells her soul to Luc, a demonic entity, in exchange for immortality. However, Addie soon learns that her immortality dooms her to a life of invisibility: everyone she meets immediately forgets her, and so Addie is therefore incapable of leaving a mark on the world. For 300 years, Addie lives a lonely and loveless life. She has various sexual relationships and sometimes continues seeing the same person for months at a time, but there's never much intimacy or emotional investment in these relationships, as her partners believe that every night they spend with Addie is their first night with her. Everything changes in 2014, though, when Addie meets Henry Strauss. Henry, a bookstore employee in his

late 20s, has also sold his soul to Luc, allowing him to remember Addie while others cannot. Because of this, Addie and Henry form an instant connection that quickly develops into a romance. Toward the end of the novel, though, Luc informs Addie that her and Henry's meeting was no accident—in fact, Luc arranged for their paths to cross to show Addie, who has longed for love and human connection her entire life, that love isn't worth the suffering and heartache it creates. Indeed, it's not long after Addie becomes emotionally attached to Henry that she learns the full truth of Henry's pact with Luc: Henry's promised his soul to Luc in exchange for one year of being loved and desired by everyone he meets. After one year, Luc will collect Henry's soul, and Henry will die. By the time Addie learns of Henry's imminent doom, Henry has just over one month to live. The revelation devastates Addie, and she condemns Luc for orchestrating such a cruel plot. Yet Luc's plot does not have his desired outcome. Luc had anticipated that falling in love with Henry only to tragically lose him would turn Addie against love. Ultimately, though, Addie declares that she would put herself through all the heartache and anguish of losing Henry again if it meant she could experience the joy and meaningfulness of loving him again, too. The novel thus suggests that the joy and beauty of human connection are worth the risk of pain, suffering, and heartache that opening one's heart to others invites.



### FREEDOM

*The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* is about a 23-year-old French woman, Adeline (Addie) LaRue, who, in a moment of desperation, sells her soul to a demonic entity (Luc) to escape an undesirable marriage to a man she does not love, and an ordinary life in a small town that compromises her ability to live freely. Addie doesn't want to live for others: she wants to live for herself. When Luc first speaks to Addie in the forest on the evening of Addie's wedding, he asks Addie what she wants most. Addie replies, "I do not want to belong to anyone but myself. I want to be free. Free to live, and to find my own way, to love, or to be alone." Addie resents how being a woman in Villon, the rural French village where she grows up, denies her the freedom to pursue a future that doesn't center around motherhood and domestic labor. She comes to view marriage and domesticity as direct threats to personal freedom and would rather live like Estele, who worships the old gods, nature, and answers only to herself, than like Isabelle, who forsakes personal fulfillment for domestic responsibilities. At the beginning of the novel, Addie sees freedom as the key to personal fulfillment and happiness that marriage and life in Villon would otherwise deny her. If she has no one to answer to but herself, she believes, her opportunities for joy, ambition, success, and adventure are limitless.

But Addie's perspective on freedom changes after a major caveat in her deal with Luc shows what it really means to



answer to nobody but herself. In exchange for her immortality and total freedom, Luc dooms Addie to an “invisible” life in which nobody demands anything of her because nobody remembers her. Suddenly, Addie is free to do as she pleases, but only because what she does doesn’t matter to anyone—because she doesn’t matter to anyone. Cruelly, then, Luc gives Addie precisely what she asked for: “A life with no one to answer to.” But such a life soon proves to be just as lonely and meaningless as it is liberating, and Addie must reconsider what a person gives up when they sever their connections and obligations to others. Thus, the novel explores the complex and multifaceted nature of freedom. Freedom can be a positive, liberating force that leads to happiness and personal fulfillment. But taken to the extreme that Addie experiences, it can also be a destructive force that alienates a person from others and disconnects them from the broader world.



### ART, CREATIVITY, AND EXPRESSION

*The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* explores the intersection between creativity, expression, and meaning. Throughout the novel, Addie struggles to make her mark on the world when a Faustian bargain for immortality comes with one unexpected and exceedingly frustrating caveat: Addie will live an invisible life in which the people she encounters will immediately forget her the moment she leaves the room, and the words she writes will disappear the moment she puts pen to paper. Addie cannot tell the story of her life, nor can she speak her name aloud. Under these conditions, Addie’s life becomes inexpressible and meaningless. In time, Addie finds ways to circumvent her curse of invisibility: she becomes a muse to various artists throughout history, thus allowing some essence—some “idea”—of herself to come through in the **artworks** and songs she inspires. After 300 years of immortality, Addie meets Henry Strauss, whose own Faustian bargain enables him to remember Addie and absorb the facts of her past. Henry writes down the stories Addie shares with him, ultimately turning these collected stories into a coherent narrative that gives weight, meaning, and context to Addie’s otherwise invisible life. *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* explores how storytelling, expression, and creativity have the unique ability to make even a life like Addie’s invisible (and therefore, supposedly, meaningless) one meaningful.



### WONDER AND KNOWLEDGE

When Luc gives Addie immortality in exchange for her soul, he means to trick and trap her. Under their agreement, Addie only has to surrender her soul when she no longer finds immortal life fulfilling and enjoyable. Addie’s invisibility, an unintended price she must pay in exchange for her immortality, is meant to fill her daily existence with enough pain, suffering, and loneliness to expedite Addie’s decision to give up on life and surrender her soul to Luc.

Initially, Luc doubts that Addie will last one year before she is too overburdened by misery and meaninglessness to continue living. But Luc underestimates the degree to which Addie’s sense of wonder and curiosity about the world outweighs the negative consequences of her invisibility. Addie’s invisibility makes her life unbearable at times: it prevents her from developing meaningful relationships with others, denies her the right to her name and history, and forces her to watch her loved ones grow old and die. Yet, despite the misery that Addie endures as a consequence of her immortality, she never loses sight of all the good that she has gained through immortality, and she remains unwaveringly invested in life. Addie’s undying curiosity and thirst for knowledge, truth, and discovery propelled her to make a deal with Luc in the first place, and they also sustain her when her life gets tough. Her early days in Paris may be dominated by starvation, poverty, and loneliness, but it is also during these days that she first sees an elephant and sips fine Champagne. When Henry takes Addie to Grand Central Station in 2014 and shows her how the precise bends of an arch create a whispering gallery, she remarks to herself, “Three hundred years, and there are still new things to learn.” *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* suggests that a sense of wonder and curiosity about the world and a thirst for knowledge are essential to maintaining a life filled with meaning, direction, and purpose.



### SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



### ADDIE’S WOODEN RING

Addie’s wooden ring symbolizes Addie’s deal with Luc and everything the deal has forced her to give up. Running through the woods to escape her wedding to Roger, Addie prays to the gods to help her. Luc answers her prayer, and she offers him the wooden ring in exchange for his help. Luc laughs at Addie, explaining that he doesn’t “deal in trinkets” and will accept no less than Addie’s soul as payment for helping her. Addie at first believes that Luc has destroyed the ring he rejected. Addie associates the ring with her father, who made it for her when she was born. In light of this, Addie’s initial loss of the ring foreshadows the love and human connection that Addie will give up in exchange for her freedom. Nearly a century after Luc grants Addie her immortality, though, Luc returns the ring to Addie. Like Addie, the ring remains just as unmarked and unchanging as it was the day Addie made her deal with Luc. In this way, it represents the positive side of Addie’s curse: the way the curse has allowed her to avoid aging, death, and decay. But the ring’s supernatural immutability also torments Addie, reminding her of the

supernatural power that Luc has over the ring—and over her, too. Once more, then, the ring reflects the devastating cost of Addie's freedom. Indeed, upon returning the ring to Addie, Luc explains that if Addie wants to summon him—that is, if she's finally ready to surrender her soul to him—she need only put on the ring, and he'll be there. But Addie refuses to wear the ring, even when her situation becomes dire or when loneliness threatens to overwhelm her. There's nothing that Addie wants less than Luc's help—or to give Luc the satisfaction that she needs his help. And so, the ring that once represented the love and family that Addie gave up in exchange for her freedom now represents the new constraints that freedom has placed on her: being beholden to Luc. Centuries of immortality and being forgotten teach Addie that her freedom comes at a devastating cost—that total freedom means total loneliness, and that liberating herself from Villon's oppressive social norms has only freed her to become the victim of an even more monstrous oppressor in Luc. Her wooden ring underscores this difficult lesson.



## ART

Art represents the relationship between ideas, memory, and meaning. When Luc grants Addie immortality, it comes at a great cost: she will be impervious to time and decay, but she's doomed to be immediately forgotten by everyone she meets. She's also unable to write or speak her name, be photographed, or tell anybody her life story. In other words, no matter how much time Addie spends on earth, she'll never be able to touch anybody's life in a meaningful way or leave her mark on the world—she's immortal, but she's also invisible. Addie's invisibility forces her to ask herself difficult questions about how her life can be meaningful when her cursed invisibility makes it so that nobody knows that she existed. Addie finds a solution to this problem in art, which values subjective ideas over objective memories. Though Addie can't leave any physical, tangible trace of herself behind, she can inspire artists to project an "idea," an essence of her onto their art. Luc originally claims that "ideas are so much wilder than memories" to taunt Addie after he accuses her of thievery and gets her kicked out Madame Geoffrin's salon, insinuating that even if the partygoers don't remember Addie specifically, they'll subconsciously mistrust her because Luc has planted that idea in their heads.

With art, Addie upends Luc's taunt and uses it to her advantage: the artists she associates with through the centuries might not remember her specifically, but she can still engage meaningfully with them, inspire them with ideas for their work, and let these abstract ideas mark her place in history in lieu of concrete memory. Addie becomes a muse to artists throughout the centuries, posing for and inspiring numerous paintings and sculptures, including those of Sam, a New York painter with whom Addie has a passionate affair, and

Matteo, a Venetian artist. Sam immortalizes Addie through a painting of a night sky that captures Addie's essence (including seven stars to denote Addie's trademark freckles). Matteo sketches Addie lying in bed, and though he can't remember her specifically, his memory of the artistic ideas she inspired becomes the subject of some of his most important works. That Addie inspires artists to remember and immortalize the "idea" of her in their art (thereby undermining Luc's determination that she remain meaningless and invisible) underscores art's power to express the ideas that render life meaningful.



## TREES

Trees represent freedom. As a young girl, Addie associates trees with Estele and the free life that Estele lives—and which Addie longs to have for herself. Estele practices an unspecified polytheistic religion that emphasizes the power of nature. As such, she doesn't hold herself to the same expectations as people like Addie's parents and other villagers in Villon, who are mostly Catholic and worship "the new God." Estele doesn't believe in Heaven or Hell, and she isn't bound to conventional Christian morality. "Heaven is a nice spot in the shade, a broad tree over my bones," Estele tells Addie. The Catholicism that most of Villon practices and the social norms the religion inspires have only constricted Addie and stifled her freedom. In contrast, Estele's nonconventional lifestyle has afforded Estele a life of freedom: she's not beholden to the moral codes of Christianity, nor the demands of a husband or the tedium of domestic labor. Thus, when Estele suggests that heaven, to her, is "a broad tree over my bones," it suggests to Addie an implicit connection between Estele's freedom and trees.

Addie comes to associate Estele and the freedom her way of life affords her with trees and nature. When, years after her deal with Luc, Addie returns to Villon and finds that the villagers have disregarded Estele's wishes and buried her in a Christian cemetery, Addie plants a sapling over Estele's bones to pay homage to the independent woman she so admired. Over the course of decades, the sapling grows into a strong, thriving tree. Addie's memorial tree pays homage to the independent spirit and desire for freedom that Estele inspired in Addie so many years ago. Addie's memorial tree is also important because it, like **art**, illustrates Addie's ability to override the invisibility and meaninglessness Luc's curse has forced upon her. Luc tries to ensure that nobody remembers Addie and that Addie is incapable of leaving any trace of her existence behind. And yet, with this tree, Addie succeeds in leaving behind a trace of her devotion to Estele and the ideas that Estele valued. Thus, the tree symbolizes freedom in another way: Addie's power to circumvent and free herself from the constraints the Luc's deal (or curse) have imposed on her.



## QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Tor Books edition of *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* published in 2020.

## Part 1, Chapter 1 Quotes

☝ She hates this part. She shouldn't have lingered. Should have been out of sight as well as out of mind, but there's always that nagging hope that this time, it will be different, that this time, they will remember.

**Related Characters:** Adeline "Addie" LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger, Toby Marsh

**Related Themes:**    

**Page Number:** 19

## Explanation and Analysis

Addie tries to leave Toby Marsh's apartment the morning after spending the night with him. Toby, like all of Addie's lovers that came before him, doesn't recognize Addie. Three hundred years ago, Addie made a deal with a demonic entity named Luc; Luc gave her freedom and immortality—but in exchange, he cursed Addie with an invisible life in which everyone she encounters forgets her immediately. The reader doesn't yet know this, though, so Addie's thoughts in this passage build intrigue, presenting important clues that hint at the nature of Addie's life and curse.

This passage also outlines how Addie's invisibility affects her emotionally. It pains her to spend hours bonding meaningfully with a friend or lover, only to have them forget her entirely upon waking the next morning. It makes every human interaction she has—romantic or otherwise—fundamentally one-sided. The novel gradually shows that reciprocated communication and mutual vulnerability are fundamental parts of how people build and maintain lasting, meaningful relationships. This passage offers an early glimpse at the way Addie's inability to form meaningful relationships with others takes the greatest toll on her happiness and capacity to find meaning in life.

Another important issue this passage raises is Addie's perpetual willingness to submit herself to the pain of being forgotten, all because of her "nagging hope that this time, it will be different, that this time, they will remember." Addie's refusal to accept defeat and give in to misery and woe is a defining aspect of her character. Luc made "invisibility" a stipulation of Addie's curse, believing that, in time, the misery of invisibility would wear Addie down and compel

her to surrender her soul to him. In so doing, though, he underestimated Addie's determination and unwavering faith in the world's ability to surprise and amaze. Addie's optimism and openness allow her to weather the infinite miseries that Luc's curse throws her way, and the scene at Toby's illustrates this ability.

## Part 1, Chapter 3 Quotes

☝ And by the time they return home to Villon, she will already be a different version of herself. A room with the windows all thrown wide, eager to let in the fresh air, the sunlight, the spring.

**Related Characters:** Adeline "Addie" LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger, Jean LaRue (Addie's Father)

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 26

## Explanation and Analysis

It's 1698, and six-year-old Addie and her father are returning from their trip to Le Mans, a nearby city, to sell Addie's father's wooden wares. It's the first time that Addie has left Villon, her small, rural village, and she already understands how much the trip has changed her: "by the time they return home to Villon," she realizes, "she will already be a different version of herself." Addie's undying curiosity about the world and thirst for knowledge are two of her most defining features, and this trip to Villon plays a vital role in awakening these parts of her personality. Addie's deal with Luc won't happen for many years, but in a way, it's this trip that gives Addie her first taste of freedom, thus initiating the sequence of events that ultimately leaves Addie willing to sacrifice anything—even her mortal soul—to have the freedom and adventure that she so craves.

## Part 1, Chapter 4 Quotes

☝ Her mother wishes she was more like Isabelle Therault, sweet and kind and utterly incurious, content to keep her eyes down upon her knitting instead of looking up at clouds, instead of wondering what's around the bend, over the hills.

But Adeline does not know how to be like Isabelle.

She does not want to be like Isabelle.

She wants only to go to Le Mans, and once there, to watch the people and see the art all around, and taste the food, and discover things she hasn't heard of yet.

**Related Characters:** Adeline “Addie” LaRue, Jean LaRue (Addie’s Father), Marthe LaRue (Addie’s Mother), Isabelle Therault

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 28

### Explanation and Analysis

It’s 1703, and Addie is now 12 years old. For the past several years, she’s accompanied her father on his trips to Le Mans to sell his wares, an occasion she looks forward to, as it allows her to see what lies beyond her small, stifling hometown of Villon. But this year, Addie’s mother has forbidden Addie from going to Le Mans, arguing that it’s no longer appropriate, now that Addie is approaching womanhood. This passage lays out Addie’s mother’s reasons for not wanting Addie to leave Villon. Addie’s mother, unlike Addie’s father, sees Addie’s curiosity as a negative trait—as something that will leave Addie dissatisfied with the childrearing and domestic labor that, according to Addie’s society, is a woman’s primary purpose in life.

Addie’s mother wishes that Addie would be more like Isabelle, Addie’s best friend in Villon, whom this passage establishes as Addie’s polar opposite: Isabelle, unlike Addie, is content with life in Villon. She has no desire for an adventurous life, and she lacks Addie’s innate curiosity about the world around her. She’s perfectly happy sitting at home knitting. Isabelle’s contentedness, Addie’s mother seems to suggest, is that, having never ventured beyond the confines of Villon, Isabelle has no idea what she’s missing. Addie’s mother seems to believe that Addie’s first trip to Le Mans poisoned her mind, exposing her to the worldly temptations that girls and women aren’t supposed to know about or want, and so she puts an end to any future visits to Villon in an effort to undo the damage that first visit wrought on Addie.

But Addie’s mother doesn’t understand the intensity of Addie’s curiosity. Addie can’t “be like Isabelle” because “she does not know how.” With this, the novel suggests that Addie’s curiosity isn’t a learned thing—it’s in her bones, and ever since that first visit to Le Mans alerted her to its presence, she’s been powerless to suppress it.

☞ Estele’s face darkens. “The old gods may be great, but they are neither kind nor merciful. They are fickle, unsteady as moonlight on water, or shadows in a storm. If you insist on calling them, take heed: be careful what you ask for, be willing to pay the price.” She leans over Adeline, casting her in shadow. “And no matter how desperate or dire, never pray to the gods that answer after dark.”

**Related Characters:** Estele (speaker), Adeline “Addie” LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger, Jean LaRue (Addie’s Father), Marthe LaRue (Addie’s Mother)

**Related Themes:**    

**Page Number:** 30

### Explanation and Analysis

It’s 1703, and Addie is now 12 years old. For the first time since she was six years old, Addie’s mother has forbidden her from accompanying her father to Le Mans to sell his wares, and Addie is gutted to be confined to the small, stifling village of Villon, her hometown. Desperate to feed her curiosity and live the adventurous life she longs for, Addie turns to Estele, an eccentric, elderly village woman, demanding that Estele teach her how to pray to “the old gods,” deities that Estele worships that grant people’s wishes in exchange for offerings.

Estele, knowing the gods’ extreme power and propensity to taunt and trick mortals, is initially hesitant to teach Addie how to pray to the gods. She finally relents when Addie makes it clear that she has no intention of backing down, but she only does so with this grave warning to Addie to be careful when she prays to the gods, who are “neither kind nor merciful” and have no qualms about tricking and taunting any human foolish enough to pray to them without “be[ing] willing to pay the price.” Most crucially, Estele advises Addie to “never pray to the gods that answer after dark.” Addie, of course, will ultimately disregard this last bit of advice 11 years later when, desperate to escape an undesirable marriage to a village widower, she prays after dark to Luc, a demonic entity who dooms her to a life of being immediately forgotten by everyone she meets.



This passage is important because it establishes a context for the fatal error—Addie’s failure to heed Estele’s advice about not praying after dark—that sets in motion the events that comprise the remainder of the novel. In many ways, Addie’s curiosity and desire for freedom and independence are positive traits that allow her to live an exciting, enlightening, and meaningful life. But these traits can also get her into trouble, leading her to overestimate herself and bite off more than she can chew, as she demonstrates when she fails to heed Estele’s advice.

## Part 1, Chapter 5 Quotes

☞ There was no danger in it, no reproach, not when she was young. All girls are prone to dreaming. She will grow out of it, her parents say—but instead, Adeline feels herself growing in, holding tighter to the stubborn hope of something more.

The world should be getting larger. Instead, she feels it shrinking, tightening like chains around her limbs as the flat lines of her own body begin to curve out against it, and suddenly the charcoal beneath her nails is unbecoming, as is the idea that she would choose her own company over Arnaud's or George's, or any man who might have her.

**Related Characters:** Adeline “Addie” LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger, Jean LaRue (Addie’s Father), Marthe LaRue (Addie’s Mother), George Caron

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 33

**Explanation and Analysis**

Ever since Addie’s first trip to Le Mans, she’s been unable to contain her desire for a bigger life. It’s 1707 now, and Addie is 16 years old; it’s been four years since her mother last let her accompany her father to Le Mans. In place of seeing the world, Addie has taken to dreaming about it. She creates a handsome, imaginary stranger—an imaginary friend of sorts—who tempts her with stories of all that is waiting to be discovered, if only she could leave Villon and find it for herself. Years later, after Addie makes her deal with Luc, Luc will assume the stranger’s appearance. The novel even suggests (though it’s never made explicitly clear) that Luc always has been Addie’s stranger—that he inserted himself into Addie’s thoughts the day she started praying to the old gods and began to tempt her with stories of faraway places.


This passage lays out the tension that builds as Addie, contrary to her parents’ expectations, fails to “grow out of” her propensity to dream and her desire to leave Villon. Instead, she “grow[s] in” to her dreams, and in so doing, grows too large for Villon, a small and sheltered place that Addie knows will never be able to satisfy her desires or quench her thirst for knowledge and experience. Once Addie grows into her dream world instead of her real world, there’s no going back. In a certain sense, Addie was doomed well before she made her deal with Luc: she was doomed the moment she stepped foot outside of Villon and got a taste for all the wider world could offer her.

## Part 1, Chapter 8 Quotes

☞ Adeline had wanted to be a tree. To grow wild and deep, belong to no one but the ground beneath her feet, and the sky above, just like Estele. It would be an unconventional life, and perhaps a little lonely, but at least it would be hers. She would belong to no one but herself.

**Related Characters:** Adeline “Addie” LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger, Estele, Roger

**Related Themes:**   

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 39

**Explanation and Analysis**

This passage begins Part One Chapter VIII. It’s July 29, 1714, and Addie is 23 years old. Despite her mother’s disapproval, Addie has continued to dream of life beyond Villon and pray to Estele’s “old gods” for her freedom. But all this seems futile when Roger, a recent widower, selects Addie to be his second wife, care for his motherless children, and run his household. This passage lays out everything that Addie has wanted out of life—and everything that now seems impossibly beyond her reach, with her marriage slated to take place this very evening. Before learning of her impending marriage, Addie longed “to be a tree.” Trees are one of the novel’s most important symbols, and this passage lays out what they mean to the book and to Addie. Addie associates nature, and trees in particular, with Estele and the brand of personal freedom that Estele subscribes to. Like a tree, Estele “grow[s] wild and deep,” meaning she’s not constrained by the conventional, superficial roles that society allots to women.

Estele is her own person—she’s not defined by her role as someone’s wife or caregiver. Trees, like Estele, and unlike most of the women in Villon, have no one to answer to besides “the ground beneath [their] feet, and the sky above,” and this is the life that Addie longs to have. Such absolute freedom might make for an “unconventional” and “lonely” life, but Addie thinks this is worth it for all the experiences her tree-like freedom would allow her to have. Addie doesn’t know it now, but her acknowledgement that having total freedom can sometimes be “unconventional” and “lonely” turn out to be truer than she could ever have imagined: that evening, after she sells her soul to Luc in exchange for the freedom of immortality, Luc curses her to be immediately forgotten by everybody she meets, and as a result, the next 300 years are as lonely and difficult as they are adventurous.

## Part 1, Chapter 11 Quotes

☝☝ The rise isn't worth the fall.

**Related Characters:** Adeline "Addie" LaRue, Toby Marsh


**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 56

**Explanation and Analysis**

Addie stands outside the Alloway, the Brooklyn bar where Toby Marsh is slated to perform later that night. It's not the first time she's attended one of his shows there, and she knows how everything will play out if she decides to step inside—she'll order a drink, she'll speak with a man at a bar who will forget her instantly, Toby will perform, Addie will re-introduce herself to him, and then they'll go back to Toby's place together. Addie keeps coming back, clinging to the faintest hope that tonight will be the night that Toby finally remembers her, but tonight, she decides not to enter the bar: "The rise isn't worth the fall," she laments.

Addie's observation refers to how it's not worth getting her hopes up that tonight will be the night that she overcomes her curse and regains her ability to be recognized—she knows she'll only be hurt and disappointed all over again if she foolishly gets her hopes up. On a broader level, though, Addie's remark resonates with the novel's position on the role that vulnerability and suffering play in relationships. Mortal relationships—and romantic relationships in particular—are characterized by their capacity to hurt and wound those who participate in them. In other words, to love somebody is to risk being hurt by them. Addie's remark raises the question of whether love is worth the risk it carries.

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 68

**Explanation and Analysis**

It's 1714. The day after making her deal with Luc, Addie returns to Villon and discovers that Luc's deal comes with one major caveat: everyone she meets—including close family members she's known for years—forgets her immediately. Unable to remain in Villon and experience, over and over again, the pain of realizing that her own parents don't recognize her as their daughter, Addie resolves to leave for Le Mans, the nearby city. She stops by her father's woodshop on her way out to say goodbye to her father as she wants to remember him: not as the bewildered stranger with "the sad unknowing in his eyes," and not even as the silent man he was before Addie made her deal with Luc. Instead, she wants to remember him "by the things he loved. By the way he showed her how to hold a stick of charcoal, coaxing shapes and shades with the weight of her hand. The songs and stories, the sights from the five summers she went with him to market[.]" Addie's decision to remember her father by these positive associations makes sense in light of her recent curse.

Addie's choice to remember her father in this way also resonates with the book's broader ideas about art, expression, and meaning. Throughout the novel, Addie turns to art, literature, and creativity in general to make her life meaningful despite her inability to put down roots anywhere or develop authentic human connections (Luc's curse prohibits her from doing either of these things). This passage makes it clear that she learned to value art through her father, who showed her art's power to shape reality and inform human experience.

## Part 1, Chapter 13 Quotes

☝☝ This is how she would remember him. Not by the sad unknowing in his eyes, or the grim set of his jaw as he led her to church, but by the things he loved. By the way he showed her how to hold a stick of charcoal, coaxing shapes and shades with the weight of her hand. The songs and stories, the sights from the five summers she went with him to market, when Adeline was old enough to travel, but not old enough to cause a stir.

**Related Characters:** Adeline "Addie" LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger, Jean LaRue (Addie's Father)

**Related Themes:**   

## Part 2, Chapter 2 Quotes

☝☝ Being forgotten, she thinks, is a bit like going mad. You begin to wonder what is real, if you are real. After all, how can a thing be real if it cannot be remembered? It's like that Zen koan, the one about the tree falling in the woods. If no one heard it, did it happen? If a person cannot leave a mark, do they exist?

**Related Characters:** Adeline "Addie" LaRue, Sam

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 103

**Explanation and Analysis**

It's 2014 (the novel's present day). Addie is on the rooftop of Sam's apartment building in New York City—she plans to spend the night there. Sam is a painter with whom Addie has had a months-long passionate affair, though Sam (like all of Addie's partners, past and present) has no memory of the affair. Just then, Sam comes out onto the rooftop with some friends and approaches Addie, as she has done so many times before, but fails to recognize Addie.

After Sam leaves, Addie reflects on the nature of her cursed invisibility. She compares the experience to “going mad,” noting how both can make a person “begin to wonder what is real, if you are real.” She elaborates, likening her invisibility to “that Zen koan, the one about the tree falling in the woods. If no one heard it, did it happen?” With this comparison, Addie suggests that a major part of a person's identity comes from how others perceive them. If, like the fallen tree, nobody is there to witness Addie's existence, does it mean that she somehow exists less? That she matters less? This question of how a person makes their life meaningful, and how a person's interactions with others factor into notions of personal identity, become some of the book's central issues.

by. This is because, according to Luc, Addie's invisibility means that “[her] life is meaningless.” Because the curse he has placed on Addie enchants people into forgetting her immediately, she's incapable of forming connections with others, putting down roots, and leaving her mark on the world. In effect, she's doomed to live her entire life behind the scenes.

Implicit in Luc's taunting is the idea that life has to be memorable to be meaningful—that a life lived for its own sake has no value. While there's truth to Luc's assertion that Addie's quality of life suffers because she can't fully share it with others, the idea that this makes her life inherently “meaningless” is something that Addie will challenge and ultimately disprove. Addie's innate curiosity about the world means that she can always find value in new experiences, and she does this repeatedly as she travels the world, meets new people, and experiences new ways of life over the following centuries. Ultimately, it's Addie's curiosity and capacity for wonder that allow her to persist in spite of the cruel hardships that Luc thrusts upon her at every turn.

## Part 2, Chapter 7 Quotes

☝☝ “You think it will get easier,” he says. “It will not. You are as good as gone, and every year you live will feel a lifetime, and in every lifetime, you will be forgotten. Your pain is meaningless. Your life is meaningless. The years will be like weights around your ankles. They will crush you, bit by bit, and when you cannot stand it, you will beg me to put you from your misery.”

**Related Characters:** Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger (speaker), Adeline “Addie” LaRue

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 133

### Explanation and Analysis

It's July 29, 1716—the two-year anniversary of the day Addie made her deal with Luc. She's in Paris now. Life has been hard, but she's slowly grown accustomed to her cursed life of being immediately forgotten and figured out loopholes and tricks to get by. As becomes a tradition between them, Luc pays Addie a visit to taunt her and try to tempt her to give up and surrender her soul to him. Here, Luc gives his prediction for how Addie's future will play out, as well as the logic behind why he cursed Addie the way he did. Luc promises Addie that she's “as good as gone,” and that things will only get harder—not easier—as the years go

## Part 2, Chapter 10 Quotes

☝☝ The first shot may have been fired back in Villon, when he stole her life along with her soul, but this, this, is the beginning of the war.

**Related Characters:** Adeline “Addie” LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger

**Related Themes:**    

**Page Number:** 150

### Explanation and Analysis

It's July 29, 1719—exactly five years since Addie's deal with Luc gave her her immortality and her cursed invisibility. As has become tradition for them, Luc visits Addie, who is presently living in Paris, to taunt her and persuade her into surrendering her soul to him. On this visit, at Luc's request, Addie gives him his name, Luc (up until this point, she has referred to him interchangeably as “the stranger” or “the darkness”). The name is short for Lucifer. Afterward, Luc and Addie argue back and forth about the nature of her curse and Luc's power, and Addie makes it clear to Luc that she has no intentions of surrendering her soul to him—ever. After Luc leaves, Addie decides that this night “is the beginning of the war.” This is an important moment because it lays the groundwork for the conflict that will dominate much of the remainder of the novel: Addie and Luc's power struggle.

When Addie made her deal with Luc, she promised him her soul—but only after she tires of her immortality and grows bored with life. Given the cruel stipulations of the deal (Luc has cursed Addie to be immediately forgotten by everyone she encounters, thus forcing her to live out her immortality entirely alone), Luc assumes it's only a matter of time until she decides that the freedom and immortality Luc has given her aren't worth the suffering of loneliness and invisibility. But Addie has an innate sense of curiosity that propels her to continuously seek out new experiences, even when her loneliness wears her down.

And after tonight, she has another reason to persevere through her struggles: to prove Luc wrong. Throughout the book, Luc taunts Addie, calling her by her name ("My Adeline") to remind her that he owns her and that her fate is in his hands. Luc is the only person who can say Addie's name, thanks to Addie's curse (she can't speak or write her name, nor can anyone else), so in calling Addie by her name, Luc is very intentionally putting Addie in her place and reminding her of the hold he has over her. Now, in naming Luc, Addie symbolically declares herself a capable adversary: she's letting Luc know that she's willing to play his games and struggle to the bitter end.

### Part 3, Chapter 4 Quotes

☝☝ Remy nods thoughtfully. "Small places make for small lives. And some people are fine with that. They like knowing where to put their feet. But if you only walk in other people's steps, you cannot make your own way. You cannot leave a mark."

**Related Characters:** Remy Laurent (speaker), Adeline "Addie" LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 179

#### Explanation and Analysis

It's July 29, 1724—the 10-year anniversary of Addie's deal with Luc. That evening, Addie enjoys a picnic with Remy Laurent, an aspiring philosopher she encountered on the street that evening, and with whom she formed an instant connection. They have a deep conversation, and Remy sympathizes with Addie's desire to escape the confines of her small rural village (Addie's curse prevents her from speaking openly about her past, but she manages to outline the gist of her situation to Remy). Here, Remy laments how "Small places make for small lives." Especially if a person grows up in a small town, remaining incurious about the world and never venturing outside of their sheltered

existence, they will live a "small," unexamined, and ultimately meaningless life. Of course, there's a reason why some people are content with having a small life: "They like knowing where to put their feet." There's comfort and certainty in only sticking to well-trodden, conventional paths.


But if you never set out on your own, Remy muses, "you cannot make your own way. You cannot leave a mark." Remy's words are complicated for Addie. On the one hand, she totally understands what he means about small places making small lives—it was this sentiment that compelled her to flee Villon and make her deal with Luc in the first place. On the other hand, though, Remy's implication that a person's life is empty and meaningless if they "cannot leave a mark" doesn't sit so well with her, because—unbeknownst to Remy—it touches on one of her greatest anxieties: whether her cursed invisibility has rendered her life, adventurous as it may be, ultimately meaningless.

### Part 3, Chapter 9 Quotes

☝☝ Mischief glints in those green eyes. "I think you'll find my word won't fade as fast as yours." He shrugs. "They will not remember you, of course. But ideas are so much wilder than memories, so much faster to take root."

**Related Characters:** Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger (speaker), Adeline "Addie" LaRue, Madame Geoffrin

**Related Themes:**   

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 210

#### Explanation and Analysis

It's July 29, 1751, and Luc has just gotten Addie kicked out of Madame Geoffrin's Paris salon by accusing Addie of theft. When Addie insists that she'll just re-enter the salon since nobody will remember Addie or anything Luc said about her, Luc cautions her that though everyone's memory will fade, the "idea" that Luc planted in their heads—that Addie is a thief—will linger, arguing that "ideas are so much wilder than memories, so much faster to take root." Luc is suggesting that ideas—people's subjective interpretations—play a greater role in shaping reality than objective memory, which fades with time and makes less of an impact in the first place. Luc intends for his words to taunt Addie: he's suggesting that he's already poisoned the salon guests' view of her, whether they remember her or



not—they still won't trust or accept her.

But in time, Addie will come to see Luc's words in a more positive light. Addie's curse prohibits her from leaving her mark on the world. In addition to being immediately forgotten, this means she can't write her own name, tell others her story, or appear in photographs, for example. But Luc has just admitted to Addie that the curse applies only to memories—not ideas. Later, Addie will use this logic to find a loophole in the curse that allows her to leave her mark on the world: she can inspire artists to depict their idea of her through their work. The artworks that come of these ideas are always abstract and never photorealistic renderings of Addie, yet the essence—the idea of her—is there nonetheless. After years of complete invisibility, Addie's discovery that she can use art to leave her mark on the world is a major game changer, and one that further builds on the novel's position that art, creativity, and expression are instrumental in shaping reality and imbuing life with meaning.

## Part 4, Chapter 1 Quotes


☹️ His heart has a draft.

It lets in light.

It lets in storms.

It lets in everything.

**Related Characters:** Adeline "Addie" LaRue, Henry Strauss, Tabitha Masters

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 225

### Explanation and Analysis

At the end of Part Three, Henry reveals to Addie the reason that he—unlike everyone else—can remember her: he made a deal with Luc, too. Part Four picks up in late 2013 and provides background information about Henry's past, detailing how his breakup with Tabitha, and his general feelings of worthlessness and sadness, led him to make a deal with Luc that enables everyone Henry encounters to love or want him.

This passage occurs early in Part Four Chapter I and poetically lays out why Henry is so sad: "His heart has a draft. It lets in light. It lets in storms. It lets in everything." In other words, Henry's heart is too receptive to emotions of all kinds: he feels everything intensely. And even when that feeling is something "light," like happiness, it never serves



Henry all that well, for the intensity with which Henry feels that happiness makes the crushing sadness that his heart "lets in" when happiness has run its course all the more devastating. Henry sees his emotional vulnerability—his "draft[y] heart"—not as an asset, but as a liability. He doesn't think that his capacity to feel great happiness makes up for his equal capacity to feel crushing heartbreak and sorrow.

This passage is important because it establishes the mental state that compels Henry to make his deal with Luc. It also touches on one of the novel's central ideas: that in order to experience authentic, deep love and human connection, one necessarily risks feeling deep sorrow, too—but that meaningful human connection is worth this risk. Henry doesn't realize this when he makes his deal with Luc, but he learns his lesson after the curse forces him to confront the alternative: risk-free love that is shallow, meaningless, and inauthentic.

## Part 4, Chapter 8 Quotes

☹️☹️ That's the only unsettling part, really—their eyes. The fog that winds through them, thickening to frost, to ice. A constant reminder that this new life isn't exactly normal, isn't entirely real.

**Related Characters:** Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger, Henry Strauss, Tabitha Masters

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 256

### Explanation and Analysis

This passage takes place in September 2013 and follows Henry as he navigates the early days of his deal with Luc. Henry attempts suicide after his girlfriend Tabitha rejects his marriage proposal, but Luc interferes, offering Henry a deal: in exchange for Henry's mortal soul, Luc can make everyone like or want Henry, enchanting them to see in Henry the thing they most desire. Henry accepts Luc's deal but finds that it's not quite so perfect as he thought it would be. Everyone likes him, but their eyes are filled with a strange, thick fog that obscures Henry as he really is, replacing him with some idealized, false, alternate-Henry. The presence of this fog ensures Henry that the love, lust, and admiration he receives from everyone "isn't entirely real." At first, Henry is too enamored of finally feeling worthy and wanted to care about whether or not his new attractiveness is real, but in time, it wears at him. One of the novel's central ideas is that emotional vulnerability is a fundamental part of human connection—and that it's a risk a


person must incur if they want to develop authentic, meaningful connections with others. Henry ultimately learns this lesson once the novelty of being desirable wears off, and he comes to resent the unceasing, foggy-eyed admiration he receives from anyone who catches sight of him.

## Part 4, Chapter 11 Quotes

☞ “Three hundred years,” she whispers. “And you can still find something new.” When they step out the other side, blinking in the afternoon light, she is already pulling him on, out of the Sky and on to the next archway, the next set of doors, eager to discover whatever waits beyond.

**Related Characters:** Adeline “Addie” LaRue (speaker), Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger, Henry Strauss

**Related Themes:**   

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 268

### Explanation and Analysis


Addie and Henry are at the Artifact, a pop-up art exhibition set up along a stretch of decommissioned subway tracks. Addie marvels at the various exhibits, in awe that, even after being alive for so many years, she “can still find something new.” Addie’s observation neatly encapsulates the mindset that has allowed her to survive hundreds of years of Luc’s curse. Over the years, Luc has tried his best to make Addie’s life miserable, lonely, and difficult, believing that he can beat her down to the point that she surrenders her soul to him in order to end her suffering. But Luc underestimates Addie’s innate curiosity about the world around her. He fails to see that no matter how discouraged Addie might be, no disappointment is ever great enough that she abandons the sense of wonder and awe with which she regards the world. Even on her low days, she maintains a faith that “you can still find something new,” and it’s this attitude that convinces her, again and again, that it’s always worth it to wake up and experience a new day.

It’s also important to note that it’s an art exhibition that causes Addie to make this remark, a detail that highlights art’s thematic importance to the novel as a whole. The novel repeatedly shows how art, creativity, and expression have the capacity to shape reality and make life meaningful, and Addie’s positive experience at the Artifact reaffirms this idea.

## Part 4, Chapter 17 Quotes

☞ “You can’t make people love you, Hen. If it’s not a choice, it isn’t real.”

**Related Characters:** Bea (speaker), Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger, Henry Strauss

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 290

### Explanation and Analysis


It’s New Year’s Eve, 2013. Henry is only a few months into his deal with Luc, but the appeal has already worn off. In exchange for Henry’s soul, Luc has given Henry one year to be loved and admired by all, but the caveat is that nobody sees Henry for who he really is—their eyes fill with fog, and they project whatever traits they want to see onto him. Henry now realizes that this false, shallow admiration doesn’t actually bring him joy, and he feels foolish for accepting Luc’s deal. He escapes onto the fire escape at a New Year’s Eve party to dwell on this foolishness, and his friend Bea joins him. Henry asks Bea what she’d wish for if she could have anything in the world. He tells her he’d wish for love, and Bea responds, sadly and incredulously, “You can’t make people love you, Hen. If it’s not a choice, it isn’t real.” Bea’s words perfectly describe what Henry has unconsciously understood but failed to articulate for himself. It also drives at one of the novel’s ultimate points about the nature of love: that it requires a foundation of freedom and emotional vulnerability, or else it’s not real love.

## Part 5, Chapter 1 Quotes

☞ He glances over his shoulder, a coy grin playing over his lips. “For all her talk of freedom, she was so lonely in the end.” Addie shakes her head. “No.” “You should have been here with her,” he says. “Should have eased her pain when she was ill. Should have laid her down to rest. You owed her that.” Addie draws back as if struck. “You were so selfish, Adeline. And because of you, she died alone.”

**Related Characters:** Adeline “Addie” LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger (speaker), Estele

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 303

**Explanation and Analysis**

It's July 29, 1764, and Addie has returned to Villon. There, she finds the graves of her family and loved ones, including Estele. She's angry to see that Estele is buried in a Christian cemetery when all she wanted was to be buried beneath a tree. Addie plants a sapling on top of Estele's grave, and she feels happy about the way she's honored Estele—until Luc appears and ruins everything. Wanting to torture Addie, he details Estele's pitiful final days, noting how “she was so lonely in the end.” Luc claims that Addie “should have been there with her,” and that it was “selfish” of Addie to run off, leaving Estele to “die[] alone.” Luc's words are little more than a calculated effort to break Addie down emotionally, and Addie understands this intellectually. But Luc's cruel words contain a kernel of truth, too: in order to have the extreme degree of freedom that Addie has, a person has to be willing to sacrifice their human connections.

promising that, if Addie only surrenders, he will show her own soul, and more. “Surrender, and I promise, the last thing you see will be the truth.” It's an undeniably tempting offer, but Addie recognizes Luc's offers for what they are: enticing gifts “designed to cover poison.” Ultimately, she declines Luc's offer to show her “the truth,” declaring that she'd “rather live and wonder.”

This passage outlines a pattern of dialogue that repeatedly plays out between Addie and Luc as they meet throughout the centuries. Repeatedly, Luc taunts or tempts Addie to surrender to him, and repeatedly, Addie shows Luc that he has underestimated her ability to persevere and find meaning without his assistance. Addie's declaration that she'd “rather live and wonder” succinctly outlines the guiding principle that enables her to weather any cruelty Luc could possibly throw at her: that “wonder,” curiosity, and an appreciation for life's mysteries make life worth living, no matter how hopeless things may seem in the moment. Luc's mistake is in thinking that Addie would want to exchange human fallibility for his absolute, godly power. But the opposite is true: Addie finds the uncertainty and mystery that characterizes human life far more interesting and worthwhile. To Addie, being an all-knowing, all-powerful god like Luc would be sterile and boring.

**Part 5, Chapter 3 Quotes**

☝ “I can show you,” he purrs, letting the light settle in his palm. “Say the word, and I will lay your own soul bare before you. Surrender, and I promise, the last thing you see will be the truth.”


There it is again.

One time salt, and the next honey, and each designed to cover poison. Addie looks at the ring, lets herself linger on it one last time, and then forces her gaze up past the light to meet the dark.

“You know,” she says, “I think I'd rather live and wonder.”

**Related Characters:** Adeline “Addie” LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger (speaker)

**Related Themes:**    

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 313

**Explanation and Analysis**

It's July 29, 1778, and Addie is living in France. Per their longstanding tradition, Luc visits Addie on the anniversary of their deal to try to get her to surrender her soul to him. This time, though, Luc goes the extra mile: he manifests a small glowing orb—a soul, he explains. Then the orb turns into something Addie hasn't seen since she made her deal decades ago—her prized wooden ring. Addie is mesmerized, but Luc makes the ring disappear before she can touch it,


**Part 5, Chapter 7 Quotes**

☝ Memories are stiff, but thoughts are freer things. They throw out roots, they spread and tangle, and come untethered from their source. They are clever, and stubborn, and perhaps—perhaps—they are in reach.

Because two blocks away, in that small studio over the café, there is an artist, and on one of his pages, there is a drawing, and it is of her. And now Addie closes her eyes, and tips her head back, and smiles, hope swelling in her chest. A crack in the walls of this unyielding curse. She thought she'd studied every inch, but here, a door, ajar onto a new and undiscovered room.

**Related Characters:** Adeline “Addie” LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger, Madame Geoffrin, Matteo

**Related Themes:**   

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 327

**Explanation and Analysis**

It's 1806, and Addie is living in Venice. Matteo, an artist, has just sketched her image in charcoal. Though the image is a



rather abstract rendering of Addie, it's undeniably her, and remarkably, the drawing remains in existence—even after Addie leaves the room, and even after Matteo forgets her. Addie reflects on what the existence—and persistence—of the sketch means in terms of her ability to leave her mark on the world. In so doing, she recalls what Luc told her outside Madame Geoffrin's salon half a century ago about ideas being more powerful—and more memorable—than memories. Unlike memories, which are “stiff” and unchanging, thoughts “throw out roots, they spread and tangle, and come untethered from their source.” While memories are objective, ideas are open to interpretation. This is why Matteo was able to draw Addie: because his sketch depicted his subjective idea of her, not an objective, inarguable rendering.


This is a major turning point in Addie's story. From this point forward, she will flock to artists, modeling for them and inspiring them as they translate their “thoughts” about her into visual artworks and even musical compositions. Addie has long lamented how Luc's curse inhibits her from leaving her mark on the world, and now she's found a loophole that allows her to do what she'd previously thought was impossible. The closing thought of this passage, wherein Addie delights at having discovered “a new and undiscovered room” just when “[s]he thought she'd studied every inch,” reflects the personal philosophy that has allowed her to survive Luc's curse: no matter how hopeless things seem, the possibility of discovering something new means it's always worth it to push forward into the unknown.

## Part 6, Chapter 1 Quotes

☪ “Put it on, and I will come.” Luc leans back in his chair, the night breeze blowing through those raven curls. “There,” he says. “Now we are even.”

**Related Characters:** Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger (speaker), Adeline “Addie” LaRue, Jean LaRue (Addie's Father)

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 366

### Explanation and Analysis

It's July 29, 1914—the 200-year anniversary of Addie's deal with Luc—and Addie has returned to Villon. As usual, Luc

visits her and tries to get her to surrender. This time, he shocks Addie by giving her back the cherished wooden ring she offered to him 200 years ago as payment for her freedom. Back then, Luc destroyed the ring, scoffing that he doesn't “deal in trinkets.” Now, Luc explains to Addie, the ring will serve a different purpose: she can summon him simply by putting the ring on her finger. Luc claims that the gift makes the two of them “even,” but Addie sees through Luc's charade. Luc might pretend that the ring empowers Addie with a sort of personal agency, but really, it's just a reminder of all the power that Luc wields over her.

The ring isn't a gift but rather a curse in its own right. Up until now, Addie has only had to resist Luc's attempts to surrender on his annual visits to her. With this ring, though, Addie now need only place the ring on her finger in a moment of weakness, and Luc will relish the knowledge that the lonely, invisible life his curse has forced on Addie has finally worn her down. The ring is one of the book's key symbols, and it carries different associations as the plot unfolds. When Addie was a young girl, the ring carried only positive associations; it reminded her of her beloved father, who carved it for Addie when she was born. It devastated Addie when Luc destroyed the ring. Now that she has the ring back, though, it's impossible for her to be happy about it, because the ring only reminds her of all she foolishly gave up when she made her deal with Luc, and all the power he wields over her while she remains indebted to him.

## Part 6, Chapter 5 Quotes

☪ Whenever Addie feels herself forgetting, she presses her ear to his bare chest and listens for the drum of life, the drawing of breath, and hears only the woods at night, the quiet hush of summer. A reminder that he is a lie, that his face and his flesh are simply a disguise. That he is not human, and this is not love.

**Related Characters:** Adeline “Addie” LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 399

### Explanation and Analysis

Part Six Chapter X spans 1952-1968 and describes the long, passionate love affair that Addie and Luc had during that time. By 1952, Addie has known Luc for over two centuries—longer than she's known anyone in her life. And over those years, her hatred of him has morphed into something quite different—something that, for a time,

Addie believes might be love. Luc unabashedly declares his love for her, and Addie is tempted to believe him. But, as this passage demonstrates, she never quite lets her guard down. Lying beside Luc at night, when “she presses her ear to his bare chest and listens for the drum of life,” the absence of a heartbeat reminds Addie that Luc is not human, and because he is not human, what they have “is not love.”

Love, Addie realizes upon meeting and falling in love with Henry, requires vulnerability and selflessness—two things of which Luc, an immortal god, is demonstrably incapable. Luc’s immortality shields him against the uncertainties and misunderstandings that subject mortal humans to suffering and heartbreak. And besides this, his unceasing efforts to possess Addie’s soul, even as he declares that he loves her, show Addie that he’s incapable of the selflessness and sacrifice that love—and any kind of human connection, really—requires. Ultimately, it’s this logic that causes Addie to break things off with Luc in 1968, and it’s his anger at their breakup that propels him to send Henry Strauss into Addie’s life to teach her that the love he offered her is preferable to human love, which inevitably leads to pain and suffering.

Addie accused Luc of being incapable of love. They haven’t seen each other since (before they began their affair, Luc would normally visit Addie at least once a year, on the anniversary of the day they made their deal). Now, Luc returns to reveal the real reason that Addie has met Henry, with whom she’s currently falling in love, and whom she has just learned will die in just over a month as part of his own deal with Luc: Luc wanted to teach Addie that mortal love is fragile, uncertain, and not worth the pain it inevitably brings. He wants to show Addie that the love that he and she once had as immortal beings—and, Luc insists, can have again—is real and superior to fallible, mortal love.

But Addie undermines Luc’s plan by standing by what she told him when they broke up: their love was never real because Luc is too “selfish” to be “capable of love.” Luc’s love is rooted in selfishness, self-preservation, and control: he conflates love with “possession” and can’t understand that to love someone “is to care for someone else more than [one]self.” That Luc has yet to relinquish his hold on Addie’s soul and let her go back on their deal is evidence of this.

Luc’s and Addie’s opposite views on love lay out one of the novel’s central claims: that love (and human connection in general) is messy, imperfect, and always comes with the risk of being hurt and disappointed by the person one loves. Despite this, though, love is always worth the risk it carries, because genuine human connection is one of the most important ways a person can make their life meaningful. Besides this, Addie’s rebuttal highlights the essential role that personal freedom plays in love. Luc believes that there’s no real difference between love and possession, but Addie counters that love isn’t love unless it’s something one chooses.

## Part 6, Chapter 11 Quotes

☝ “What is real to you, Adeline? Since my love counts for nothing?”

“You are not capable of love.”

He scowls, his eyes flashing emerald. “Because I am not human? Because I do not wither and die?”

“No,” she says, drawing back her hand. “You are not capable of love because you cannot understand what it is to care for someone else more than yourself. If you loved me, you would have let me go by now.”

Luc flicks his fingers. “What nonsense,” he says. “It is because I love you that I won’t. Love is hungry. Love is selfish.”

“You are thinking of possession.” He shrugs. “Are they so different? I have seen what humans do to things they love.”

**Related Characters:** Adeline “Addie” LaRue, Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger (speaker), Henry Strauss

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 402

### Explanation and Analysis

Nearly half a century before the novel’s present (2014), Addie and Luc ended their long, passionate love affair after

## Part 6, Chapter 13 Quotes

☝ Addie shakes her head. “You see only flaws and faults, weaknesses to be exploited. But humans are messy, Luc. That is the wonder of them. They live and love and make mistakes, and they *feel* so much.

**Related Characters:** Adeline “Addie” LaRue (speaker), Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger, Henry Strauss

**Related Themes:**    

**Page Number:** 408

### Explanation and Analysis

It’s 2014, and Luc has just paid Addie a visit for the first time since their breakup in 1968. Luc reveals to Addie that

Henry will die in just over a month—the price Henry paid as part of his own deal with Luc—but agrees to consider letting Henry live if Addie goes on a date with him that night. Addie agrees and tries to convince Luc to spare Henry. Luc resists, arguing that Henry is hardly special enough for Addie to get so worked up over. In this passage, Addie responds to Luc’s question about what’s so special about Henry, explaining that Luc is completely wrong about Henry—and about mortal beings, in a broader sense.

Luc thinks that Henry’s emotional vulnerability and capacity for human error are signs of weakness when in fact the opposite is true: Henry’s imperfections are what make him so special and worth knowing. Where Luc looks at pitiful mortals asking him for help and sees “flaws and faults, weaknesses to be exploited,” Addie sees the beauty and “wonder” of the human experience. “They live and love and make mistakes, and they *feel* so much,” she explains. Addie is self-aware enough to know that, after 300 years of immortality, she can hardly count herself part of flawed, messy humanity. But she can still recognize the beauty in human vulnerability: for as devastating as it is that humans sometimes hurt and misunderstand each other, there is something equally riveting and beautiful in the moments when they come together, understand each other, and relish the joy of finding someone who loves them despite their flaws.

## Part 6, Chapter 16 Quotes

“Nothing is all good or all bad,” she says. “Life is so much messier than that.”

And there in the dark, he asks if it was really worth it.

Were the instants of joy worth the stretches of sorrow?

Were the moments of beauty worth the years of pain?

And she turns her head, and looks at him, and says, “Always.”

**Related Characters:** Adeline “Addie” LaRue (speaker), Luc/The Darkness/The Stranger, Henry Strauss

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 418

### Explanation and Analysis

It’s August 2014, and Henry will die within the month, per the stipulations of his deal with Luc. Addie will eventually go to Luc and surrender herself to him in exchange for Henry’s life, but Henry doesn’t know this, and in the meantime, he resolves to accept his fate and enjoy what few days he has left. One day, he and Addie travel upstate, lie on the grass, and stargaze. They contemplate whether either of them would opt out of their deal with Luc if they had the opportunity to go back in time.

Addie and Henry both decide that they wouldn’t have had things any other way, even though their deals have caused them much pain and suffering. “Nothing is all good or bad,” Addie explains to Henry. “Life is so much messier than that.” Addie is implying that it’s not even worth humoring the idea that a person can shield themselves from all pain and suffering, because pain and suffering are fundamental aspects of the human experience. It’s impossible to experience happiness without risking pain and disappointment. And the alternative—living a small, sheltered, emotionless life—is hardly a more appealing substitute. In the end, Addie and Henry learn to value the bad for the ways it has taught them to appreciate the good. Their deals with Luc have hurt them in a number of serious ways—Henry’s has drastically shortened the duration of his natural life, as far as he knows right now—but they wouldn’t have met and fallen in love if they’d never made their deals, and so to them, all the pain and setbacks are worth it.



## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

## VILLON-SUR-SARTHE, FRANCE. JULY 29, 1714.

Adeline sprints through the woods, “running for her life,” leaving the wedding party behind her. White flowers fall from her hair as she runs. Seven freckles dot her face; Estele says there’s one freckle “for every love she’d have,” “for every life she’d lead,” and “for every god watching over her.” But these are all lies: Addie has had no loves or lives, and the gods aren’t protecting her.

*That Adeline is “running for her life” suggests that she’s in danger. Weddings are typically celebratory events, so the fact that Addie is running away from one—presumably her own—suggests that she doesn’t want to be married. Finally, the novel underscores the danger of her situation with the detail that she has no “god watching over her.”*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 1

*New York City. March 10, 2014.* The girl wakes up, but she’s not in her bed. She wants the boy beside her to stay asleep—he’ll forget everything once he wakes up. It’s not his fault, though; it’s never anyone’s fault. The boy’s name is Toby. Last night, the girl told Toby her name was Jess. On other nights, she’s been Claire, Zoe, and Michelle. After a gig last month, Toby told her he was in love with a woman named Jess, though he hadn’t met her yet—and so now, the girl calls herself Jess.

*Given that the previous chapter takes place 300 years before this one, it’s unlikely that the unnamed girl here is Adeline. But if she is Adeline, it would suggest that there’s some fantastical element at play that has somehow allowed her to live 300 years. Another oddity is that the girl has been giving Toby inconsistent names for herself—and he doesn’t seem to have caught on to this.*



The girl looks at Toby’s dark curls, thick lashes, and fair skin and feels a familiar sadness. Once, as she walked along the Seine, the darkness told the girl that she must have a “type,” since everyone she likes has dark hair, sharp eyes, and chiseled facial features. This is only half-right, though: the darkness only looks like this because she’s made him so. Before her, he was “shadow and smoke.”

*This section presents further evidence that there’s some fantastical element at play in the world of the novel—the girl remembers talking to a disembodied “darkness” which isn’t something one would find in a work of realism. The odd remark about the girl somehow transforming the darkness from “shadow and smoke” into a dark-haired man also introduces the idea that creativity plays a major role in shaping reality and creating meaning.*



Toby will wake soon, and the girl will no longer be Jess. Not wanting to see his confused, empty expression, she leaves the bedroom. She pauses before the hallway mirror and sees her seven freckles. She breathes fog onto the mirror and starts to write her name with her finger, but the letters dissolve before she can finish, which always happens. She can’t say her name, Addie LaRue, either.

*If the detail of the seven freckles wasn’t enough of a giveaway, the girl herself confirms that she is indeed Adeline (Addie) LaRue, the woman who was fleeing her wedding in the previous chapter. Why and how she can still be alive (and youthful, no less) 300 years into the future remains a mystery. Another unanswered question is why Addie isn’t telling Toby her real name—could this be connected to whatever fantastical/supernatural force is allowing her to live so long? The detail of Addie no longer being Jess once Toby wakes is also odd and something worth paying attention to.*



Toby is a musician, and his apartment is full of instruments and scraps of paper containing notes and lyrics. It's cold in New York, and Addie grabs a blanket from the couch and wraps it around her body. Toby's cat has taken over the couch, so Addie sits before the piano instead and begins to play as quietly as possible. She hears Toby wake up and dreads what will happen next. She should've left when she had the chance.

Finally, Addie stops and looks at Toby. "Good morning," she says cheerfully, her country-French accent now barely perceptible. "Good morning," Toby says, confused—he doesn't remember her. "Jess," Addie offers. Toby apologizes; he's not normally like this, he explains. Addie starts to play a simple melody on the piano. He asks what she's playing—it sounds kind of familiar. Addie tells Toby he played it for her last night. Toby doesn't remember and assumes he must have been really drunk. He sits on the sofa and grabs a pad and paper to write down the notes. Addie continues to play; Toby doesn't know it, but they've spent weeks writing this song together.

Addie finishes playing and says she should go. Toby is suddenly alert. He'd like to get to know her, he says. Addie hates this part, though she's always hoping that this will be the time one of them remembers her. "*I remember*," the darkness whispers in her ear. Before Addie can leave, Toby tells her he has a gig tonight and would like her to come. Addie smiles, promising she'll be there. But as Addie closes the front door behind her, she knows Toby has already forgotten her.

*How Addie came to New York remains a mystery, but it's less of a mystery than how she's managed to live for 300 years. Addie's anxiety about what will happen once Toby wakes up seems oddly intense—she seems to be concerned about something more extreme than the usual amount of awkwardness that follows waking up in a strange apartment the morning after (what the reader may assume was) a romantic fling of sorts. What will happen when Toby wakes up, and why is Addie so upset about it? And why does she willingly put herself through an ordeal that she knows will make her so upset?*



*Again, Addie continues to use a false name, Jess, around Toby—why? Is she hiding something? Could this be connected to whatever she was running from on her wedding day so many years ago? It's also strange that Toby doesn't remember Addie/Jess, even though they've been writing music together for weeks. Has Toby been horribly intoxicated the entire time? This seems unlikely, but it's not impossible. Finally, Addie and Toby's songwriting introduces ideas that will become important in the novel: the power of creativity and self-expression, and the importance of human interaction and connection.*



*Is Addie being literal when she thinks that Toby has already forgotten her? This aligns with what the novel has already revealed about Toby not remembering the weeks that Addie and he have spent writing music together. Something curious or supernatural is going on here, and it seems connected to memory (or lack thereof) and the mysterious, personified "darkness" that haunts Addie's thoughts.*





## PART 1, CHAPTER 2

It's March 10—Addie's birthday. For 23 years, Addie hated the idea of birthdays and growing older. But then, as centuries passed, birthdays started to mean less. The night that really mattered was "the night she signed away her soul." Still, it's Addie's birthday, and she feels like celebrating. She walks inside a boutique and changes into a new outfit in the dressing room. As she removes her jacket, a **ring** made of ash-gray wood falls out her pocket and onto the floor. Addie leaves it there. She finishes dressing and removes the tags; the price doesn't matter.

Addie leaves everything but her jacket inside the dressing room. The jacket's black leather is old and faded. It's the only thing from New Orleans she saved from the fire—she just couldn't leave it there, even though it smelled like "him." The clerk waves goodbye to Addie as Addie exits the store. But the clerk is only being polite—she doesn't remember Addie.

*That birthdays stopped mattering so much to Addie after she turned 23 suggests that something happened that year—perhaps "the night she signed away her soul"—that has caused her not to age. This explains why she's still living 300 years later. It's unclear what Addie means by "signed away her soul." A Faustian bargain is a cultural motif (so named for the 15th-century German alchemist Faust) that refers to selling one's soul to the devil in exchange for some reward or power. Could this be what Addie is talking about? It would explain the mysterious "darkness" she's mentioned a few times now. Finally, the ring that falls from Addie's pocket seems unremarkable in the abstract, but the fact that the narrative makes a point to mention it suggests that it's worth paying attention to going forward.*



*It's not clear to whom Addie is referring when she mentions "him." Could it be the "darkness" she thinks about in the earlier section? Also note how Addie steals an entire outfit, reassured by the fact that the clerk doesn't recognize her. This section suggests that it's not just Toby who can't remember Addie: it's other people—maybe even all people.*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 3

*Villon-sur-Sarthe, France. Summer 1698.* Adeline sits next to her father in the cart. A pile of her father's woodwares rests beneath their feet; Maxine, their mule, carries them away from Adeline's village, Villon, to the city of Le Mans. Adeline begged to accompany her father, a woodworker, to the city to sell his wares, and Adeline's mother finally gave in. It's the first time Adeline has left home; up until now, Villon has been her entire world.

Adeline looks behind her at the disappearing village; it's so small now, like one of her father's figurines. It will take a day to get to Le Mans. Adeline's father is normally so quiet at home, but now, he tells Adeline stories. Adeline won't remember the stories later, and she wishes she could write them down now. Later, Adeline's father will teach her how to read and write. Adeline's mother will be furious when she finds out—she thinks it's a waste of time.

*This flashback to 1698, years before Addie "signed away her soul," hopefully will provide some additional context to help the reader understand what happened that has made Addie seemingly immortal. Addie's eagerness to accompany her father to Le Mans shows that she has an adventurous spirit: she's curious to see how things are outside of her small, probably pretty stifling, village.*



*Villon appears to be shrinking as the cart takes Adeline farther away from her village. But the shrinking village also speaks metaphorically to the idea that travel and adventure are showing Addie how small and sheltered her life has been up to now—that there's so much she has yet to experience in life. This section also shows how Addie's gender affects her life—Addie's mother takes issue with Addie learning to read and write, perhaps because these skills aren't useful to women of Addie's time, whose responsibilities would have been limited to domestic labor.*



Adeline and her father reach Le Mans. To Adeline, the city looks big enough for giants. They reach the city square, and Adeline's father orders Maxine to pull over. Adeline watches the bustling marketplace; she's never seen so many people. Adeline's father leans against their cart and carves into a block of wood as he waits for shoppers to purchase his wares. Adeline loves watching her father work; she grew up surrounded by the bowls, cups, and small wooden animal figurines he made. But Adeline's favorite trinket is a smooth **wooden ring**, which she wears on a leather cord around her neck.

*Addie's observation about Le Mans being big enough for giants shows how small and sheltered her life has been up to now. She's never seen a big city—or any city at all—and so Le Mans seems impossibly large and exciting to her. This section also introduces Addie's wooden ring, which is one of the book's major symbols. That Addie wears the ring tied around her neck shows that it's very important to Addie, to whom the ring symbolizes her father's love for her and his craft. To that end, this scene further develops the novel's theme of the power and importance of art and self-expression.*



By the end of the day, Adeline's father has sold all his wares. He gives Adeline a copper sol and tells her she can buy whatever she'd like. Adeline walks past stalls selling pastries and dresses and dolls and buys a journal made of parchment. The blank pages excite her; she can't wait to fill them with all her ideas. Her father buys her a bundle of charcoal sticks and draws a little bird on the corner of one page, and then he spells the word underneath. Addie and her father will spend the evening at a local inn. When they return to Villon, she'll be an entirely different person.

*That Addie walks past the stall selling dresses and dolls, opting instead for materials she can write and draw with, is further evidence of her adventurous, curious spirit. She has little interest in what her society believes young girls ought to care about, like dolls or pretty dresses, preferring instead to entertain herself with ideas and her imagination. The detail that this trip to the city has made Addie a new person is significant. It suggests that, now that Addie has a taste for the culture and excitement that exists beyond Villon, her life there will no longer be enough for her: it won't satisfy her craving for adventure and new, exciting experiences.*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 4

*Villon-sur-Sarthe, France. Fall 1703.* Villon is a Catholic community. There's a church in the center of the town, and Adeline's parents go there twice a week to pray to God. Adeline, now 12 years old, goes too, but she doesn't really believe in God. Estele, an eccentric old village woman, thinks of this God as "the new God," and she thinks He "belongs to the cities and kings," and "has no time for peasants[.]" Adeline's father thinks Estele is crazy, and Adeline's mother thinks Estele will go to Hell. When Adeline told Estele this, Estele just laughed. She said there's no such thing as Heaven and Hell—Heaven, according to Estele, is "a nice spot in the shade, a broad **tree** over my bones."

*Estele doesn't conform to the social and spiritual beliefs common among the other villagers—this is why Adeline's father thinks Estele is "crazy" and Adeline's mother thinks she's destined for Hell. Estele (and her religion) seems to prefer the natural world to the social norms of Villon—that she considers the patch of shade beneath a tree "Heaven" confirms this. Also note that trees are an important symbol in the book. This section shows how Addie comes to associate trees with Estele and the freedom she has since she's not bound to the tenets of Christianity. In addition, Estele seems skeptical of society and institutional power in general, a view she makes clear when she says that God "belongs to the cities and the kings." She's suggesting that the institution of the Christian church is corrupt, serving the interests of the rich as opposed to spreading Christian ideals.*



Adeline wonders which god to pray to to convince her father to let her accompany him to Le Mans. It's the first time in six years that she hasn't been allowed to come with him, as Adeline's mother has decided it's no longer appropriate for her to go to the market. Adeline's mother wishes Adeline would be more like Isabelle Therault, Addie's friend in the village. Isabelle keeps her eyes focused down on her knitting instead of up at the clouds, and she's never curious to know what's over the hills. Adeline doesn't want to be like Isabelle, though; she wants to see the world.

After Adeline's father leaves, Adeline looks for Estele. Estele worships "the old gods." Adeline was five or so the first time she saw the old woman drop her engraved stone cup into the river. When Adeline asked Estele what she was doing, Estele told Adeline that Marie's pregnancy wasn't going well, so she was praying to the river gods to help. Estele explained that she dropped her stone cup into the river because the gods are greedy. Estele calls Adeline Addie, a nickname Adeline's mother hates—she thinks it sounds boyish.

Now, Adeline finds Estele minding one of the blackberry bushes in her garden. Adeline asks Estele to teach her to talk to the gods. Estele sighs. Warily, Estele explains that there are rules for talking to the gods. You must give them a gift—something that's special to you, and it's important to "be careful what you wish for." Estele tells Adeline that the gods "are neither kind nor merciful," and they will try to trick you. If you must call them, you have to be very careful, and you must "be willing to pay the price." And most importantly, she tells Adeline, is that no matter how desperately you need their help, you must "never pray to the gods that answer after dark."

Adeline's father returns two days later; he has a new pad of parchment and a bundle of lead pencils for Adeline. Adeline takes the best pencil to the garden and sinks it into the ground, praying that she will be with her father the next time he leaves the village. If the gods hear her, they don't answer.

*As Addie grows older, her disinterest in practical skills like knitting and her preference for dreaming and adventure become more of an issue. Her mother likely wants her to settle down and get serious about the tasks their society expects women to do, but Addie shows no sign of wanting to live that kind of life, which she considers dull and restrictive. Finally, Addie's thought about which god to pray to seems important—it may be related to the comments Addie makes in the earlier chapter, set in 2014, about "sign[ing] away her soul." Could she have prayed to some god for an adventure and gotten her wish?*



*This section further illustrates how different Estele is from the other people in Adeline's life. She worships "the old gods" instead of the Christian God. In addition, that she gives Adeline her "boyish" nickname, Addie, suggests that she doesn't conform to the gender roles that the other villagers uphold. This is probably what draws Addie to Estele: Estele shows Addie that a different, more freeing way of life is possible. She also sees Addie for who she is, Addie, not the more feminine "Adeline" her mother wants her to be.*



*Estele's stern warnings to "be careful what you wish for," that the old gods "are neither kind nor merciful," and that Adeline should "be willing to pay the price" suggest that the old gods are powerful and have the potential to harm mortals like Adeline. This section seems to foreshadow whatever mistake Adeline makes later that will lead her to "sign away her soul," as she mentioned doing in a previous chapter. It seems increasingly clear that sometime after Adeline's 23rd birthday, she made a deal with the gods, didn't heed Estele's warning to be careful, and things went horribly awry after that. Maybe the gods had something to do with nobody remembering Addie.*



*That Adeline offers the gods her best pencil, something that has a high value to her, shows how serious she is about wanting to leave Villon. This might lead the reader to wonder where Addie draws the line—how much is she willing to give up to have the freedom and adventure she desires?*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 5

Villon-Sur-Sarthe, France. Spring 1701. Years pass, and Adeline is 16. Isabelle dreams about having a family, but Adeline dreams of freedom. Now, Adeline carries a hamper of laundry against her hip as she walks down to the riverbank. When she reaches it, she tips the clothes into the grass, and then she finds the secret sketchbook she hid in the hamper. She removes a page containing one of her favorite drawings and places it in the river as “[a]n offering.”

Adeline prays to the new God when her parents are around, but when they’re not, she prays to the old gods. So far, none of them have answered her prayers—though Adeline suspects that they *are* listening to her. When George Caron started to pay attention to her last spring, she prayed for him to stop—and then he started to look at Isabelle instead. Now, Isabelle is George’s wife, and she’s pregnant with their first child.

Now, Adeline sits beside the river, removes some bits of charcoal from her pocket, and begins to draw pictures of “a stranger,” filling every blank space in the sketchbook with his image. Addie knows he’s just her imagination—someone she’s created to pass the time. He has black curls, pale eyes, a sharp jaw, and a cupid’s bow mouth. He represents a life she’ll never have, and she thinks of him when she can’t sleep, lying awake and imagining the stranger beside her.

The stranger tells Adeline stories, but they’re different than the ones Adeline’s father used to tell her. These aren’t fairy tales: they’re about real places that lie beyond Villon. Adeline tells the stranger she’d “give anything” to see these places. When Adeline was a little girl, such dreaming was harmless, and her parents reasoned that she’d grow out of it. But she hasn’t grown out of it, and it makes her feel trapped.

*This passage suggests that Adeline’s dream of freedom and Isabelle’s dream of having a family are mutually exclusive: a person can have personal freedom, or they can have a family—but they can’t have both. This idea further suggests that Adeline is willing to give up close relationships with family to live the adventurous life she desires.*



*That Adeline hides her worship of the old gods from her parents suggests that they’d be upset if they found out about it. Whether this is simply because they want Adeline to conform to their religious beliefs or because there’s real danger in praying to the old gods remains to be seen. Isabelle’s pregnancy is further proof that freedom and family are mutually exclusive. Isabelle will soon have the family she’s long dreamed of, but the tradeoff is that she won’t have much time for anything else.*



*In an earlier chapter, Addie looks at Toby’s physical features and remembers how “the darkness” accused her of having “a type,” as “the darkness” has these same features, too. The “stranger” Addie draws in this scene also shares these physical features, which seems important—might the personified darkness and the stranger be the same person/entity?*



*Another thing to consider: is Adeline really having discussions with the stranger, or are they imaginary? Given that Adeline, at the novel’s present, has been alive for over 300 years, it’s clear that the world of the novel is one where supernatural or fantastical forces exist, so it’s not unreasonable to figure that Adeline really is talking to the stranger. Finally, this section underscores how determined Addie is to have a more exciting, independent life: she’d “give anything” to see the world—even, perhaps, her soul.*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 6

*New York City. March 10, 2014.* Addie walks around. In Flatbush, Addie finds Fred sitting at the green folding table where he sells books. As usual, Fred's eyes are glued to a thriller. Over the past two years, Addie has learned that Fred is a widower. The books on the table belonged to his late wife, Candace. Fred began to sell the books after Candace died, even though doing so feels like selling pieces of Candace. Once, Fred told Addie that he sits outside every day because he's terrified of dying and not being found. Today, Addie deftly scoops up a book in a single motion and keeps walking—she's had practice at this; Fred doesn't notice.

*Fred's fear of dying and not being found resonate with one of the book's central themes: the relationship between memory (or forgetting) and meaning. Fred's fear about not being found seems to stem from a broader fear of not being remembered by—or mattering to—others. Can a person's life have meaning if nobody thinks or cares about them?*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 7

*New York City. March 10, 2014.* Addie approaches Rise and Shine, a coffee and pastry stall run by two sisters who remind Addie of Estele. Mel greets Addie. Addie orders a coffee and two muffins, handing Maggie, the other sister, a 10-dollar bill she found on the ground. She scrounges through her pocket for some change, trying not to touch the **wooden ring**. She wants to take it and throw it as far as she can, but she knows it will always find its way back into her pocket.

*That Addie is still thinking of Estele 300 years later shows how much the woman meant—and still means—to her. Addie's negative reaction to the wooden ring—the ring her father made her, which she used to love and wear around her neck—is curious. Has something happened with the ring that Addie would rather not think about? And, given the fantastical elements of Addie's world, the reader can assume that Addie is being literal when she describes how the ring always returns to her pocket, as though by magic.*



Addie grabs her order and wanders through Prospect Park. She finds a sunny patch of grass. She sits down, sips her coffee, and examines the book she took from Fred's table: *Kinder und Hausmärchen*—Grimm's *Fairy Tales*. She loved fairy tales when she was a child, but things are different now. Now, she sees the stories in a darker light: they're about humans who make foolish decisions and only realize their error once it's too late to go back.

*Addie's ominous observation that fairy tales are about fools who make mistakes and must suffer the consequences seems to reference something that happened in her own life—likely when she “signed away her soul,” though the novel has yet to explain the exact circumstances of this event. Perhaps Addie's prayers to the gods—something she seemed to do more frequently as she grew older—led to some negative consequences for her.*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 8

*Villon-sur-Sarthe, France. July 29, 1714.* Adeline wants to be a **tree**. That way, she could “grow wild and deep, [and] belong to no one,” but this isn't what happens. When Adeline is 23, Pauline, the wife of a village man named Roger, dies suddenly, leaving Roger with three small children to care for on his own. Adeline is chosen to become Roger's wife even though she doesn't love or like him. Adeline's mother calls this Adeline's “duty.” Estele says nothing, but Adeline knows Estele thinks it's unfair. Adeline feels like a tree that's been chopped down with an ax. She prays to the gods all the time now, and she's dropped nearly everything she owns into the river as tribute. But so far, nobody has answered her prayers.

*Addie's reason for wanting to be a tree—so she could “grow wild and deep, [and] being to no one”—spells out what trees mean to Addie, as well as their broader symbolism throughout the book as a whole: trees symbolize freedom and personal growth. Addie would rather be a tree because, as a woman, society deprives her of both these things. With Addie's impending marriage to Roger, the possibility that Addie can have the adventurous life she craves becomes even slimmer.*



The next morning, Adeline rises before dawn and heads to the river. She presses her favorite pencil into the earth and begs the gods to help her. Back at the house, Adeline's mother scolds Adeline, whose fingernails are thick with grime. Then she tells Adeline that Adeline won't "be so restless" after she has Roger's children to take care of. Adeline thinks about Isabelle, who now has two boys to care for. Adeline and Isabelle "used to dream together," but now, Isabelle is too tired and busy to dream.

The day passes painfully slowly. Later, Adeline's mother braids her hair, weaving flowers into the braids. Adeline touches the **wooden ring** around her neck to calm herself. Adeline's mother notices and tells Adeline she must remove the ring before the ceremony. Adeline's father arrives. Adeline hears the church bell toll as the sun sets outside. Then, Adeline's father touches her arm: it's time to go.

Estele arrives, "dressed as if she is in mourning." And Estele is right to mourn—after Adeline is married, Adeline won't be able to visit the foreign lands she's dreamed of seeing. Her whole life will be here, in Villon. Suddenly, Adeline has an idea. She says that she's forgotten a gift she made for her new husband back at the house. Adeline's mother is pleased, but Adeline's father and Estele look suspicious. Adeline says she has to go back to get the gift. Reluctantly, Adeline's father lets her go but says to hurry.

Before Adeline can change her mind, she takes off running, clutching the **wooden ring** as she bounds through the field. When Adeline reaches the forest, she kneels into the earth and pleads with the gods to help her. She doesn't notice that the sun has set.

*Unlike Estele, who values freedom and nature, Adeline's mother feels that Adeline's "restless" attitude is a negative thing—a personality flaw she needs to fix or suppress, preferably through childrearing. But with Adeline's mournful reflection on Isabelle's constant state of exhaustion, it's clear that Adeline feels that the opposite is true: that her independence is something to cultivate and encourage, not suppress.*



*Adeline wears her ring because it reminds her of her father, whom she loves, as well as her pride in her father's artistry. But her mother's order that Adeline must remove the ring before her wedding sours this association: now, the wooden ring—and Adeline's eventual wedding ring—symbolize the men, past and present, who own her.*



*Typically, people who attend weddings dress festively, as weddings are usually celebratory occasions. But that Estele arrives "dressed as if she is in mourning" suggests that Adeline's wedding is not something worth celebrating. Instead, it's an occasion of "mourning" because it marks the end of what little freedom and independence Adeline has. Finally, Adeline's father and Estele are likely right to be suspicious of Adeline, who clearly is lying about the present. The reader doesn't yet know what Adeline really plans to do, but given the novel's opening scene (Adeline running into the woods, away from the wedding party), it's reasonable to guess that she's going to try to escape.*



*This is where the novel began—with Adeline "running for her life" into the woods. Note the detail that Adeline continues to pray to the gods—even after the sun sets. Estele warned Adeline to "never pray to the gods that answer after dark," so the reader can assume that danger lies ahead for Adeline.*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 9

Villon-sur-Sarthe, France. July 29, 1714. Adeline wakes to the sound of laughter. She opens her eyes and sees that the light has faded. “Hello?” she calls into the darkness. And then, before Adeline’s eyes, the darkness transforms into her stranger. The sight of him takes her breath away. The stranger tells Adeline that he’s ready to answer her prayers—but only if Adeline is ready to pay.

Adeline falls to her knees and offers the **wooden ring**. The stranger laughs at Adeline. He explains that he only accepts “souls.” Then he asks Adeline what she wants from him. Adeline explains that she wishes not to marry. She also wants “a chance to live” and “to be free.” Finally, she says she “want[s] more time.” Does Adeline want “time without limit,” he asks? She says she does, but the darkness rejects her wish. Desperate, Adeline tries again. This time, she offers the stranger her soul—but only once she’s done with it. Then the darkness smiles, pulls Adeline close to him, kisses her deeply on the lips, and accepts Adeline’s deal. And then, Adeline descends into darkness.

Adeline has referred to a personified “darkness” in several sections thus far, and this scene clarifies what, exactly, that darkness is: the old god who answered her prayers—after dark. It’s an ominous sign that the god has taken the form of Adeline’s fantasy stranger—it seems that he’s trying to tempt her, as the devil might. It’s increasingly clear that Adeline is dealing with dark forces that don’t have her best interest in mind. It’s also clear that Addie’s desire for freedom overrides her sense of caution.



This scene helps clarify how and why Adeline has managed to remain living for over 300 years: she sold her soul to the darkness/the stranger/the devil “to be free” and for “more time.” He seems to have given her the gift of immortality—but Estele warned Adeline to be careful what she asks of the gods, so it’s safe to assume that the darkness will twist Adeline’s wish in some negative, unforeseen way. Maybe this has something to do with the odd detail that everyone in the present, at least, can’t seem to remember Adeline.



## PART 1, CHAPTER 10

Villon-sur-Sarthe, France. July 29, 1714. When Adeline wakes, she’s still in the forest, and the stranger is gone. Adeline studies herself for signs of change but finds none. How is she supposed to know that the spell has worked? Regardless, she’s made up her mind: she’s not going to marry Roger. She’ll leave Villon if that’s what it takes. She gets up and heads back toward the village.

“Maman!” Adeline calls, greeting her mother as she steps inside the kitchen. Adeline starts to apologize for running away, but Adeline’s mother angrily asks who Adeline is and demands that she leave. Adeline tries to explain that she’s Adeline but finds that her name catches in her throat before she can speak it. Her father enters the room, and he tells Adeline he doesn’t have a daughter. Adeline pleads with her parents, but it’s no use: they think she’s either “mad” or “cursed.”

Adeline’s decision that she’ll leave Villon if her parents refuse to let her back out of marrying Roger shows just how much Adeline is willing to give up for her freedom: she’s willing to leave everyone she knows and loves behind to pursue a life of adventure.



Adeline’s parents, just like Toby many years later, are unable to recognize Adeline. With Toby, it was possible to guess that he simply may have had too much to drink, and that’s why he couldn’t remember Adeline. But Adeline’s parents have known her for her entire life, so the fact that they can’t seem to recognize her shows that something is truly wrong.



Adeline goes to Estele's cottage next. Estele comes to the door, but she doesn't recognize Adeline, either. She asks if Adeline is "a stranger or a spirit[.]" Adeline tries to explain herself, listing details that only someone who knows Estele would know, but Estele only thinks that Adeline is "a clever spirit." She, too, orders her to leave. Adeline pleads with Estele to tell her how to fix things if she prays to the wrong gods. Estele explains that the darkness "makes its own rules," and that Adeline "ha[s] lost." Then she shuts the door in Adeline's face.

Adeline beats against the closed door. Estele opens it again—and, once more, asks Adeline, "Are you a spirit? Or a stranger?" Adeline pleads with Estele to help her. Estele says to wait there: she'll be right back. Estele goes inside, shutting the door behind her. But when Estele returns, she doesn't recognize Adeline. Adeline realizes that it was a mistake to accept the darkness's help, but now it's too late.

*This extreme forgetfulness isn't limited to Adeline's parents: Estele, too, doesn't recognize her. Estele's remark that the darkness "makes its own rules" doesn't bode well for Adeline. It makes clear that she's likely bitten off more than she can chew, arranging a business deal with someone who doesn't play fair and has no reason to ensure that Adeline is satisfied with their business transaction.*



*This scene offers a clue into how, exactly, Adeline's apparent curse works: people forget her as soon as a door comes between them, or perhaps as soon as she leaves a room. This explains the thought Adeline had upon leaving Toby's apartment: as soon as he shut the door behind her, he forgot her.*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 11

*New York City. March 10, 2014.* Addie leaves the park and walks to a nearby theater, lying to a teenage employee that she's left her purse inside to get inside. Addie has seen many inventions emerge over the centuries, but movies are one of her favorites. With movies, "the world falls away[.]"

It's nearly 6:00 by the time Addie leaves the theater. The sun is setting. Addie heads toward the Alloway in Brooklyn. It's dark by the time she reaches the dive bar. She bums a cigarette off someone outside to avoid walking through another doorway. She imagines the scene that plays out every night she comes here: inside, a man will offer to buy her a drink. They'll chat until he excuses himself to take a call. He'll promise to return, but he won't.

Addie will wait for Toby to come onstage. He'll flash a shy smile at the audience. Then Toby will play, and his music will send Addie back to his place, where they wrote the song together. But now, the song has lyrics: "It is becoming his." The song will end, and later, Toby will order a drink at the bar. He'll see Addie and smile. Addie will let herself hope, for a moment, that this will be the time he remembers. But it won't be. Now, a man holding open the door for Addie interrupts her daydream. "You coming in?" he asks her. "Not tonight," Addie replies.

*That Addie enjoys movies above other modern inventions stresses the importance she—and the novel—places on art, creativity, and expression.*



*Now that the reader knows how the darkness has cursed Addie—by making other people forget her immediately upon meeting her—this scene makes more sense. Addie knows how everything will play out because she's experienced everything before; meanwhile, the rest of the world, enchanted by the darkness's power, doesn't remember her. This scene also hints at what's worst about Addie's curse: it's terribly lonely being someone whom others forget immediately.*



*This section reveals another negative consequence of Addie's curse: she can't leave a mark on the world. Whereas Toby can, through the notes he salvages of his and Addie's songwriting sessions, make their song "becom[e] his," Addie, who can't physically be remembered, can never lay claim to their song. Her inability to create and immortalize herself is another way in which her curse impacts her negatively. It renders her invisible—not only to other people, but to history and culture in a broader sense.*





## PART 1, CHAPTER 12

New York City. March 10, 2014. Addie walks back across the Brooklyn Bridge to the Baxter on Fifty-sixth and tells the man at the front desk that she's here for James. The elevator door closes behind her before the man can stop her. Addie types in the six-digit code for James St. Clair's apartment and steps inside. She pours a glass of merlot and assembles a plate of cheese and crackers. Then she puts on a record and curls up on the couch. Addie wishes she could have a place like this, but she can never keep anything for long. Eventually, everything disappears. The only thing that doesn't is the **ring**.

Later, Addie draws a bath. She settles into the tub and remembers how she and James met in a coffee shop. She noticed that lots of people were looking at him, and he revealed, bashfully, that he's an actor. James was an old soul; they instantly clicked and spent the rest of the day together. Later, James apologized to Addie. He told her she's beautiful and that he had a wonderful day with her—but he's gay. He told Addie she could leave if she wanted. Addie didn't go, though. She said that she was having a great day. James agreed. They returned to James's apartment for a drink, then they fell asleep. Addie left before James could wake up, too, and feel awkward about not remembering her. She thought they might have been friends if things were different. But thinking this way will only lead to "madness."

Back in the present, Addie gets out of the bath and wraps herself in one of James's robes. She opens the doors leading to the bedroom balcony and steps outside. She puts her hand in the robe's pocket and feels the **wooden ring** brush against her fingers. Addie resists the temptation to slip it on her finger. Instead, she drops the ring off the balcony. Then she goes inside, pours herself another glass of wine, and falls asleep wishing she'd gone to Toby's show.

Addie's comment about everything disappearing before long seems like something the reader should take literally. The reader already knows that Addie isn't capable of being remembered, and accumulating personal effects and putting down roots someplace would be a way others could remember her, so it makes sense that whatever dark forces have cursed her would inhibit her from keeping anything—aside from her ring, of course. At this point, it's unclear why Addie loathes the ring. It could be because she associates it with the day she inadvertently cursed herself, but there could be more negative thoughts Addie associates with the ring that the reader has yet to learn of.



That Addie and James connect because James is an "old soul" is played for comic effect—James might be an old soul metaphorically, but Addie, at 323 years old, is quite literally an old soul. That Addie leaves James before he can wake and not remember her shows that she's learned to cope with the sadness of her invisibility over the years. She's learned that it's easier to remove herself from a situation before she can experience the inevitable sadness of being forgotten all over again.



This section poses the question of why Addie resists the temptation to wear the ring—will something happen if she puts it on her finger? Regardless, this detail seems like something worth paying attention to. Finally, Addie's wish that she'd gone to Toby's show—something that would have made her feel just as lonely as she does now—shows how dire her situation can be: she's forced to choose between two different versions of loneliness, neither one more or less appealing than the other.



## PART 1, CHAPTER 13

Villon-sur-Sarthe, France. July 30, 1714. Someone shakes Adeline awake. Adeline opens her eyes and sees Isabelle. She realizes she's fallen asleep in Isabelle's barn. "Get up, you fool," Isabelle urges her; there is concern in her voice. Isabelle calls over her shoulder to Mathieu, her young son, to bring back a blanket. Isabelle asks Adeline who she is. Adeline says she's from Villon, but Isabelle doesn't believe her: she'd have met Adeline before. Isabelle helps Adeline to her feet and leads her inside. Then she fetches a basin of water and washes Adeline's hands. Adeline thanks her oldest friend—who doesn't recognize her—for her kindness.

Isabelle asks Adeline questions, but when Adeline tries to talk about her past, Isabelle's face goes blank and she seems not to hear. In time, Adeline will learn that lying now comes naturally to her—but she doesn't know this yet.

The women hear heavy footsteps coming from outside. Isabelle stands up straight: it's her husband, George. Addie is suddenly afraid. She knows that if Isabelle crosses over the threshold to greet George, she won't recognize Addie when she returns. Isabelle gets up to explain the situation to George, pressing baby Sara into Addie's arms, and telling her that she'll be right back.

Sara begins to fuss in Adeline's arms. Just as Adeline calms the infant, Isabelle returns—and thinks a stranger is holding her baby. Isabelle angrily orders Adeline to get away from Sara. Adeline tries to explain, but George is here now, too. He tells Adeline to leave. Adeline realizes she left her slippers beside Isabelle's hearth, but she has no choice but to leave the barn. She steals a pair of George's boots that lean against the house on her way out.

Adeline wanders back to her house. She hides behind a yew **tree** next to her father's woodshop and watches her mother do laundry. When Adeline thinks about being a stranger to everyone she knows, she realizes she must leave Villon: it hurts too much to be here.

*The juxtaposition between the past chapter, in which Addie feels loneliness over Toby and James, and this chapter, where Addie experiences Isabelle, her best friend, not remembering her for the first time, seems intentional: it's meant to underscore just how many years Addie has been dealing with the loneliness and alienation her curse has created for her—and that this loneliness is the cost of the freedom she asked the darkness for.*



*This seems to be another "rule" of Addie's curse: she can't tell people about her past, because she—past, present, and future—is incapable of being remembered. In place of this, the darkness seems to have enchanted Addie with a propensity to lie easily, though Addie has yet to learn this.*



*This scene builds tension: Isabelle won't remember Addie (or telling Addie to watch baby Sara while she leaves to speak with her husband). When Isabelle returns, then, she'll likely think a strange woman has taken her baby. Curiously, though Addie's cursed, lonely freedom isn't all it's cracked up to be, Isabelle's obvious fear of her husband shows Addie the life of servitude and submission to men that this cursed freedom has allowed her to bypass.*



*Just as the reader may have expected, Isabelle reacts poorly to an apparent stranger holding her baby—and once more, Addie has no choice but to depart on her own. This reinforces the harsh reality of Addie's deal with the darkness: he's given her personal freedom, but the cost of freedom is that she has nobody to rely on but herself.*



*In the novel, trees symbolize freedom. When Addie hides behind the yew tree and watches the parents who no longer know her, it's a cruel reminder of all she's given up for her freedom.*



When Adeline's mother goes back inside, Adeline sneaks into her father's woodshop. She looks at one of her father's works in progress, a group of wooden birds, captured mid-flight. Adeline realizes that she's come here to say goodbye to her father. This way, she can remember him by his art, not as the man with the "sad unknowing" expression on his face. She finds a piece of parchment and tries to write a letter to him, but the words disappear as soon she writes them. Shocked, Adeline jumps backward and accidentally steps on and breaks her favorite wooden bird. She kneels to pick up the bird, and by the time she stands, the bird is whole again.

Adeline pockets the bird. Then she leaves her father's woodshop and makes her way down the road, past the yew **tree**, and out of town. She looks back one last time, then she sets out on her new life beyond Villon.

*Addie has always seen her father's woodworking as an expression of his inner self—and his art is more important to Addie than ever before, now that her deal with the darkness has rendered her and her father virtual strangers to each other. This scene also reveals two important rules of Addie's new cursed/enchanted reality: she can't write (since writing would leave her mark on the world, and part of her deal is that she can't be remembered), and she's apparently incapable of breaking things, though this latter rule is a bit unclear at this point in the story.*



*Addie has always wanted to leave Villon, but now that the darkness's deal has given her the freedom she's always wanted, it's bittersweet, since she must give up everything and everyone she loves to have it.*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 14

*Villon-sur-Sarthe, France. July 30, 1714.* George's boots are far too big for Adeline's feet, and they rub her skin raw. She has decided to walk toward Le Mans, the farthest from home she's ever been. As she walks, she can hear the stranger's voice in her head: "You wanted to be free[.]" Adeline reaches an orchard, where she picks fruit from the trees and eats it greedily. When she reaches a riverbank, she sits down to see how badly the boots have injured her feet. But when she removes the boots, her feet are unmarred. It's dusk now. Adeline settles down in a nearby field to sleep. She removes the carved bird from her pocket. Adeline considers how she could take—but not break—the bird and wonders what other rules there are to learn.

Now, unable to tell her story to any living being, Adeline looks at the bird and tells it the story of her life. Adeline fears that if she doesn't tell her story to someone, she'll start to forget it herself. Eventually, dusk gives way to night. Later, she will experience weak nights and curse at the darkness, dare him to confront her. But not tonight. Instead, she thinks of home: of Estele, who used to stand outside in the rain and preferred her own company to the company of others. Estele could have handled this solitary life.

*Addie hears the stranger's voice inside her head almost as a taunt, reminding her that he's given her exactly what she's asked for—freedom—and so she has only her foolishness to blame for her current, miserable loneliness. Also note that Addie refers to the god with whom she made the deal interchangeably as "the darkness" and "the stranger," since the god assumed the appearance of her fantasy stranger. This section also reveals another cruel detail of Addie's curse: she can feel pain, yet her body will always heal from it.*



*That Addie feels compelled to tell her story to another living thing reinforces the important role that storytelling, creativity, and self-expression play in forming one's identity and making one's life meaningful. Addie's new inability to express herself to others might make her lonely, but if she can't even tell her story to herself, she might disappear altogether.*



Adeline curls herself into a ball and tries to sleep. When she wakes, the sun is shining down on her. She feels woozy with hunger and sets out to find food. She reaches a larger town and smells fresh bread. She follows the scent to the village square, where a group of women are gathered around a communal oven, baking bread. Adeline has no money, which means she'll have to steal. She kicks a nearby mule, who bucks and lurches in response. The ensuing chaos distracts the women long enough for Adeline to snatch a loaf of bread from the oven.

Adeline runs with her bread to a stable at the edge of town. The bread is underbaked and doughy, but she doesn't care. "My name is Adeline," she thinks to herself as she eats. Then she stops. She never liked the name Adeline, and now she can't even say it aloud. Addie, though, "was a gift" that Estele gave her. It was the name of the girl who dreamed of freedom. She decides to become Addie from this day forward.

*Addie's painful hunger seems to be another cruel stipulation of her deal with the darkness: she can't die of starvation, but she can feel the pain of it. That Addie cleverly distracts the village women in order to steal some of their bread shows her ingenuity as a character: even in her hopeless state, she keeps her wits about her in order to survive and thrive.*



*The reader may have noted that Addie is mostly "Adeline" in the pre-1714 sections and Addie in the modern sections, and here the novel reveals why: the name Addie "was a gift" from Estele that signified Addie's dream of freedom, whereas Adeline was the name her mother called her—the name that bound her to others. Now, though lonely and uncertain of her future, Addie decides to embrace Estele's name for her—and the freedom that name represents—and take on the world, as Estele would have wanted her to do.*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 15

*New York City. March 11, 2014.* When Addie wakes up in James's apartment the next morning, it's gray and rainy outside. Addie puts on records to fill the space, but it's not the same as James's company. She gets dressed, makes the bed, and heads out. "My name is Addie LaRue," she repeats in her head. It's been centuries, but she's still afraid of forgetting who she is.

Addie heads to the Met Museum to cheer herself up; she has always loved museums. Today, she walks inside and heads straight to her favorite sculpture, which features five wooden birds about to take flight. It's called "Renevir," or "To come back." The artist is Arlo Miret. Addie never knew the man, yet his work depicts "a piece of her story, her past."

*Addie has been repeating her personal mantra, "My name is Addie LaRue," for 300 years. This shows that while Addie's pursuit of freedom keeps her moving forward, so, too, does her fear of being forgotten.*



*Addie likes the bird carving because it reminds her of her father's work. This scene also shows the power of art to immortalize old ideas and keep alive memories of people who have long since passed. Unlike Addie, who is rendered invisible all over again with each new day, this art—and the associations it has with Addie's father—is visible for many centuries.*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 16

*Le Mans, France. July 31, 1714.* Addie finally reaches Le Mans; it's been 10 years since she was here, and she doesn't know where to go. Addie doesn't recognize anything and realizes it was foolish to think that things would remain unchanged. Then she spots a tavern at the edge of the village square. A man dismounts his horse outside the tavern and hands the reins to the stable hand before heading inside. Addie eyes the sacks of grain thrown across the horse's back and heads over.

*Little by little, Addie comes to terms with how poorly thought-out her deal with the darkness was. She hasn't even considered the smallest of details, like how Le Mans might have changed in the past 10 years since she was there with her father. Still, Addie gets over her disorientation almost immediately, seemingly making a plan to steal the sack of grain, and this shows that she's determined to make use of the new freedom her curse has given her, however imperfect or badly planned that freedom may be.*



In a stall toward the back of the barn, Addie finds a heavy riding coat and puts it on. The stable hand approaches her and demands to know what she's doing. She lies and says she's here for her father's horse, but she unwittingly claims that the stable hand's horse is her father's horse, and the stable hand catches her in her lie. Addie tries to flee, but the stable hand catches her before she can escape. A second man enters, and the stable hand says Addie is a thief. The second man draws his knife from his belt and points it at Addie. Then he pushes Addie into the other man's knife. Pain shoots through Addie's shoulder, and her mind goes blank. She jumps behind a barrel and hides there, watching as the men go from angry and bickering to calm and confused: they've forgotten her.

Addie flees the stable and decides to leave Le Mans. As she walks, the sharp pain in her shoulder fades, and the wound heals. Addie realizes that the stranger has held up his end of their deal: he has allowed her to live. She's simultaneously amazed and horrified at this. Addie starts to lose faith in herself, but then she remembers something Estele once told her: if you want to walk to the end of the earth, you must do it "One step at a time." So, this is what Addie will do. She will walk to Paris—one step at a time.

*Just as Addie seems to be getting the hang of her new, invisible life, a new obstacle gets in her way. Interestingly, a lot of the things that held Addie back in her old, non-cursed life were related to her gender, as her society grants women little power outside of the domestic sphere. Cruelly, though Addie now has the power of immortality on her side, she must first be subjected to the whims of men who mean her harm before their forgetting her lets her flee unscathed.*



*Addie's healed shoulder both amazes and horrifies her because it demonstrates the stranger's power—and the way he's willing to use it to hurt and toy with Addie. It shows her that though the stranger has given her the immortality she wanted, he has no qualms about letting her suffer physically for it. Yet, Addie's decision to look to Estele, someone who has always represented freedom to Addie, rather than give in to misery, shows that she's willing to endure the stranger's cruelty and show him that she is stronger than he thinks she is: even if she must do this "One step at a time."*



## PART 1, CHAPTER 17

*New York City. March 12, 2014.* Addie feels better today. It's sunny and much warmer. And New York is a great city, full of art, culture, and food. Addie loves how big it is. She could spend years in a place like New York and never see all there is to see. Now, Addie approaches a new bookstore called The Last Word, and she's thrilled to find a place she's never been before. The Last Word is a maze of bookcases with shelves stacked two and three books deep; Addie loves it immediately. As Addie browses, an orange cat knocks into Addie's elbow.

Addie hears a male voice from behind her note how the cat, Book, doesn't usually interact with people. Addie turns and sees a boy who, for a moment, she thinks is the stranger. But this boy's black curls are looser, and his eyes are gray, and he's rather fragile. Addie continues to browse. The bell jingles as a girl walks through the front door and approaches the boy. Addie watches the boy smile bashfully as the girl reaches out to touch his arm.

*Addie's life can be unbearably sad and lonely sometimes, but, even 300 years later, she has yet to lose hope entirely and still manages to pull herself together and live another new day in a series of endless days. This speaks to Addie's determination and strength as a character.*



*This boy is only the latest stranger-esque person Addie has encountered, and so one has to wonder if all these people are somehow connected to Addie's stranger—that is, the personified darkness appearing as the stranger. Still, this boy is also quite unlike the stranger in his human fragility, a quality Addie seems to find significant for one reason or another.*



Addie takes advantage of the boy's distraction to slip the book underneath her arm and exit the shop. But just as she steps outside, the boy calls out to her and says she must pay for the book. Addie is shocked: how does he remember her? She apologizes and hands the book back. The boy examines it: why would she even bother to steal a tattered copy of *The Odyssey*, and written in Greek, no less? "Silly me," Addie says. The boy nearly smiles, but then he stops and tells Addie to just take it.

*This is a huge moment for Addie: for 300 years, every single person Addie has encountered has forgotten her the minute she walks through a doorway. Now, this boy seems to remember her. What is it about him that makes him so special? In any case, it's safe to assume that this character will be someone important to Addie moving forward.*



## PART 2, CHAPTER 1

*New York City. March 12, 2014.* Henry Strauss returns to the bookstore. Emily (Henry *thinks* her name is Emily) asks Henry if he'd like to grab drinks sometime, but he politely declines. After Emily leaves, Henry's friend Bea asks Henry why he didn't at least get Emily's number. For the most part, though, Bea doesn't nag Henry about finding someone new anymore. And she's agreed not to mention Tabitha.

*Henry's refusal to accept Emily's offer to go out for drinks, combined with Bea's delicate agreement not to mention someone named Tabitha, suggests that Henry is suffering from heartache, presumably over someone named Tabitha.*



The Last Word closes at 6:00. Henry doesn't own the bookstore, but he might as well: Meredith, its owner, is always travelling. Henry started working at The Last Word five years ago, back when he was still a graduate student in theology. Henry knows he should get a second job (the bookstore doesn't pay much, and he can practically hear his older brother David complaining that the job doesn't "lead" anywhere), but Henry loves the store. Plus, he doesn't know what he wants to do with his life. Bea thinks people who work in bookstores really want to be writers. Though Henry likes writing, he can never settle on a story.

*This section introduces the reader to Henry's personality, as well as some of his struggles. He appears to be rather aimless, confused about what he wants out of life, and anxious about his family (and likely the broader world) feeling that he's a failure or underperforming in one way or another. Addie resented her lack of freedom, and Henry seems to have the opposite problem: he feels overwhelmed by all he can do with his life and doesn't want to waste his time doing the wrong thing.*



Henry and Bea close the shop and head to Robbie's off-off-Broadway show, which is a loose adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Henry and Bea meet Robbie and an actress wearing a bohemian dress in the lobby. The actress paints some gold dust onto Henry's cheeks and says he looks "perfect." The word bothers Henry. Henry asks Bea if she thinks he's perfect. Bea laughs and says, "God, no."

*It's strange that Henry reacts so adversely to the actress calling him "perfect." Recall, too, how Henry earlier declined the other woman's invitation to get drinks. It seems that he's put off by others' attention, or, perhaps, still grieving the still-mysterious Tabitha.*



Bea and Henry find their seats. There's an empty spot where Tabitha would have sat, which depresses Henry. The play begins. Robbie walks to the center of the stage to deliver the opening monologue, and it's easy to see how Henry fell in love with him when they were 19. The play ends with Robbie standing beneath a sheet of rain that rinses the gold glitter from his head, "erasing all traces of magic," and making him appear "vulnerable" and human. It disturbs Henry.

*This scene confirms that Henry is still reeling over Tabitha, though it's still unclear who she was to him and how she hurt him. The reader also learns a bit more about Henry's love life with his admission about falling in love with Robbie some years before—though clearly, they're not still together. These details suggest that heartbreak and rejection are a significant part of Henry's past and present. Finally, this scene also foregrounds the idea that "vulnerab[ility]" and magic are opposing forces, something the novel has previously explored through Addie's interactions with the darkness/the stranger.*



Robbie meets Bea and Henry in the lobby after the show. Henry tells Robbie he was great, and he means it. Then he runs his fingers through Robbie's hair, and when Robbie reciprocates Henry's touch, Henry must remind himself that "it is not real, not anymore."

It's almost midnight, and Henry and the others are in a dimly lit apartment in SoHo for the after-party. The place is packed. Bea and Henry don't care for raucous parties and hunker down in a corner until another actress takes Bea away. Later, a blond actress approaches Henry and asks him to dance with her. The girl is beautiful, with blonde hair, blue eyes, and red lips. Henry wants to enjoy spending time with the girl, but he "feel[s] a storm creeping in." He was 12 when clouds first formed above him, and it would be many years before he learned to see these clouds as storms. Henry's family tried to be there, but their advice that things would get better wasn't too helpful.

Henry is about to leave when the actress who painted his face in the lobby approaches him. She pleads with Henry not to leave, pulling him close. They kiss, but Henry can see "the pale clouds sweeping through her vision." Then the actress pulls Henry into the nearest bedroom. In the dark, Henry can't see her eyes, and he can almost believe that this is real.

## PART 2, CHAPTER 2

New York City. March 12, 2014. Addie heads uptown, reading [The Odyssey](#) as she walks. She's nearly at the Baxter when she sees James St. Clair emerge from a black sedan. She'll have to find somewhere else to stay the night. Addie heads toward the East Village instead. She approaches a building and smiles at a man who is exiting; he holds the door open for her, and she slips inside. Addie walks up four flights of stairs and finds a silver key above a steel door that opens onto the building's rooftop. Sam, one of Addie's former lovers, showed her this. Sam was acting on impulse that night, but Addie had been seeing Sam for two months by that point. It was a passionate affair—but then, passionate affairs are all Addie can have.

*Robbie's response to Henry's gesture of affection suggests that Robbie, too, has lingering feelings for Henry—it's strange, then, that Henry would think that these feelings are "not real, not anymore." Clearly, there's something strange going on with Henry's life—and his love life specifically—that the reader has yet to understand.*



*Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and it's what's on the inside that counts, of course, but Henry hardly seems like the irresistible hunk-type that many women (and men) would be so helplessly attracted to. Once more, the novel implies that something strange—and maybe even supernatural—is going on with Henry. Perhaps this strangeness might even explain why Henry (and nobody else) seems able to remember Addie. Finally, this section offers more insight into Henry's personality; the reader learns here that he has a history of deep sadness that nobody in his life can quite understand, and this aspect of his personality has made him feel vulnerable and alienated from the broader world.*



*It's very strange, and possibly even magical, that "pale clouds" appear in the actress's eyes the moment she and Henry kiss. Does Henry have some magical power over people? Is it even possible that he, like Addie, has made a deal with the darkness?*



*This scene helps to underscore just how difficult and unpredictable Addie's life is—the ease of existence she has given up for her immortality. Here, she has to suddenly find a new place to stay because James (who, due to Addie's curse, will not recognize her as his friend) will be at his apartment, where she planned to stay the night. Addie's recollection of her romance with Sam further underscores this point: Addie's curse has prohibited her from developing anything beyond a one-night, passionate affair with Sam, since Sam's memory resets each new night she and Addie spend together. In other words, Addie has given up both security and meaningful intimacy to have her freedom.*



Addie rests her back against the brick wall that encircles the rooftop. It's quiet up here. The door slams open, and two guys, two girls, and Sam appear on the rooftop. Sam's blond curls are darker than they were the last time Addie saw her. Sam's arms are dotted with paint, and Addie wonders what she's working on these days. Sam sees Addie and walks over. She greets Addie with the same lines she uses every time. Sam isn't cheesy, though—she “has an artist's eye, present, searching,” and considers Addie thoroughly each time they “meet.” Addie asks to bum a cigarette off Sam, just as she has done so many times before. Addie and Sam are standing close together now. When Sam touches Addie's freckles and says, “You have stars,” Addie thinks to herself, “*Déjà vu. Déjà su. Déjà vecu.*”

When one of the boys calls Sam over, Addie has to resist the urge to hold closely to Sam. But she lets go, and Sam returns to her friends, and then the group heads inside. Sam leaves last, making one final glance at Addie before the door shuts behind her. Addie thinks that being forgotten is like going crazy: “You begin to wonder what is real, if you are real.” It's like the Zen koan about whether a tree falling in the forest makes a sound if nobody is around to hear it.

## PART 2, CHAPTER 3

*Paris, France. August 9, 1714.* It's a hot summer day in Paris. The city smells of rotting food and human waste, and the city's poor lie in heaps along the sides of roads while the rich luxuriate in their private gardens. Addie is overwhelmed. All she has to her name are four copper sols. It's getting late, and it will rain soon. She approaches a lodging house, but the owner thinks she's a sex worker and turns her away. At a second, shabbier lodging house, the owner demands a week's pay in advance. Addie reluctantly hands the woman three copper coins. She asks the owner for a receipt, but the owner refuses, insulted. In the decades she's run this place, she promises Addie, she's never forgotten a customer.

But Addie has barely managed to fall asleep inside her room when a man unlocks her door, the owner beside him, and demands to know how Addie got inside. Addie insists that she has paid, but the owner has already forgotten Addie and accuses her of lying. Addie has no choice but to leave. It's late now, and the sky is cloudy and dark. Addie finds shelter underneath a wooden awning on the side of the street.

*Sam seems to be an artist, and that Addie is attracted to her further highlights art's importance in Addie's life and to the novel as a whole. Maybe Addie admires or gravitates toward Sam because Sam, through her art, can do what Addie cannot: make her mark on the world and leave behind creative, meaningful evidence of who she was as a person. Addie, by contrast, lacks the ability to immortalize herself, despite (ironically) being literally immortal. This poses the question: does a person's life matter if only they know what it meant? If nobody else cares or knows about their life?*



*This scene parallels many of the earlier scenes in which Addie voluntarily leaves a friend or lover. In these situations, Addie decides that she'd rather leave and cut her losses than stick around and experience the pain of being forgotten all over again. The novel continues to emphasize how Addie has given up meaningful, sustained human connection to have her freedom—and that this is something that continues to affect her, even as she continues to take advantage of her deal with the darkness and continue living.*



*That the owner of the lodging house turns Addie away after mistaking her for a sex worker shows how Addie's immortality fails to protect her against the sexism of her contemporary society—in other words, it limits what freedom she can achieve. By this point, Addie (and the reader) should expect that the woman, despite her supposedly impeccable track record, will almost immediately forget Addie, putting her in the position of being without shelter and down three sols.*



*As the reader may have suspected, Addie's curse makes the lodging house owner forget Addie, and Addie is once more without a place to spend the night. The direness of Addie's present situation underscores just how much Addie has given up for her freedom—in this passage, comfort, safety, and security.*





When Addie wakes, the rain has stopped, but the streets are still wet and filthy. Then Addie smells something sweet. She follows the scent to a bustling market. Addie hasn't eaten in days, but she has only one coin left in her pocket, and the merchants keep close watch over their goods. Addie has yet to master the art of thievery, and when she tries to swipe a roll from a baker's cart, the baker grabs her wrist and shouts, "Thief!" Fearing that she'll be locked up, she frantically hands the baker her last coin.

Addie flees the market and roams the unfamiliar streets. Someone pitches a bucket of dirty water from a balcony above Addie, and Addie retreats onto a nearby step to seek shelter. A woman yells at Addie to "sell [her] wares" by the docks. Addie insists she's not a sex worker, and the woman mocks her pride. Addie tries Notre-Dame next. She's never been religious, but she figures if she has been cursed by the old gods, she might as well try to seek help from the new ones. It's not long before a priest approaches Addie to say that she must leave, though: the cathedral is full for the night. The priest leads Addie outside and locks the door behind her.

Finally, Addie goes to the docks. A man approaches her. She tells him she costs 10 sols. When the man mocks her high price, she explains that she's a virgin. Addie recalls nights back home when she would imagine herself and the stranger having sex. Her mother always said that a woman's pleasure was sinful, but Addie relished her own desire and pleasure. The sex she has with this strange man now is nothing like her youthful fantasies. The man's grunts are gross and animalistic, and Addie feels pain, not pleasure.

When Addie thinks back to her early days in Paris, she will describe them as "a season of grief blurred into a fog." It's not long before summer and autumn give way to the bitterly cold winter. The city freezes over, and a sickness sweeps through the city, infecting much of the population. Carts drive through the streets carrying bodies. It's so cold that Addie thinks she'll never be warm again. One freezing day, Addie feels so exhausted and beaten down that she can't keep her eyes open. She collapses at the side of a narrow street.

*Addie continues to fail as she struggles to navigate the constraints of her new, invisible world. Many people would fall into despair, but Addie has thus far shown herself to be a highly determined and headstrong character, so even if she's begun to regret making her deal with the darkness, she may well persevere and try to succeed at her invisible life, if only to prove that the darkness was wrong to expect her to give up and surrender her soul to him so soon.*



*Addie once ventured with her father to the city to sell his woodworking wares, yet the only "ware" society seems to assume Addie has to sell is her body. Once more, Addie's deal with the darkness may have given her freedom, but, at least in 18th-century France, Addie's gender severely limits the degree to which Addie may exercise that freedom within society.*



*There's a tragic element to this scene. Addie, for years, fantasized about meaningful intimacy with her "stranger," and now, the darkness—disguised as her stranger—has cruelly robbed her of the opportunity to have a meaningful and positive association with her first real sexual experience. This scene further develops the idea that the cost of Addie's freedom is positive, meaningful intimacy and companionship.*



*To describe grief and sadness as "a fog" is hardly unique metaphorical language, but the novel invites a subtle parallel here between Addie's first, foggy season in Paris and the fog that casts a shadow over much of Henry's daily life. This makes it even more meaningful that these characters will come together and connect, since they have a shared history of hurt, sadness, and vulnerability.*



When Addie comes to, it's dark, she can't move, and everything smells of rotting flesh. At first, she thinks she has finally died, but then she realizes that her limbs aren't lifeless—they're being weighed down by corpses. One of the carts must have mistaken her for a corpse and picked her up with the other dead. Addie frantically claws her way to the top of the cart and emerges from the pile of corpses. The man driving the cart cracks his whip, and the cart jerks forward. It's only then that Addie reaches inside her pocket and realizes that the wooden bird is gone. Addie grieves this loss for many months. Later she is glad, though: it means she's no longer tied to her old life.

*This scene is like something out of a horror movie and drives home how wretched Addie's supposed freedom is. She's immortal, yes, but to the rest of the world, to whom she's invisible, she's as insignificant and worthless as a corpse. And with the loss of the wooden bird, which up to this point has been Addie's last remaining link to her parents and old life back in Villon, there's truly no limit to all that this unrewarding freedom has taken from her.*



## PART 2, CHAPTER 4

*Paris, France. July 29, 1715.* Addie is still a “dreamer,” but she's “sharper” now. She hands her client a bottle of wine and orders him to pour them drinks. The man pours one glass for Addie and one glass for himself. He gulps down the wine and starts to undress her. She asks him why he's in such a hurry; he rented the room for the night, after all. But it's not long until the drug Addie slipped into the wine renders her client unconscious. The man groans and falls to the floor. Addie removes her dress and lies down, grateful to have the bed to herself.

*The reader should take note of the exact date: July 29, exactly one year after Addie made her deal with the darkness. Will this date continue to be significant for Addie, in terms of her curse and relationship with the darkness? Also note how Addie has gained wisdom and experience since her first, traumatic experience with sex work nearly a year ago: she's learned how to swindle her clients and get the most out of them for the least amount of effort on her part. Once more, Addie makes the best of a dire situation to take advantage of her enchanted freedom, even if the cards might once have seemed stacked against her.*



Addie removes the bottle of laudanum she's kept concealed beneath her skirts. It's been a year since Addie ran away from her own life, and she's learned many rules about the new world she inhabits. For instance, she can't drug anyone's drink herself, but she can mix the medicine into the wine and let people pour a glass and drug themselves.

*That Addie's curse allowed her to coerce her client into poisoning himself—but not do the deed herself—further plays up the independence and solitude that characterizes her new, invisible life. Everything Addie—and the people she interacts with—does must be done independently, not as a group effort. This further develops the novel's central theme of human connection as one cost of freedom.*



“How disappointing,” calls a voice from behind Addie: it's the darkness disguised as her stranger. “Hello, Adeline,” he says, and Addie shudders at this name she longs to leave in the past. Addie is furious. How could the darkness leave her alone to suffer? He explains that he heard Addie's cries. He also reminds her that he gave her exactly what she wanted: freedom. Addie insists that he twisted her words, but the stranger says she's in this mess because of her own foolishness—not because of his deception. The stranger moves toward Addie and moves his hand up her arm. Addie wills herself to stay still, but the stranger is frightening. He's not even human—his face is simply a mask that hides his monstrosity.

*It's a clear power play for the stranger to continue to call Addie by “Adeline,” a name she associates with her past—and with the last time anyone was physically capable of uttering her name aloud. The stranger is effectively showing Addie that what freedom she does have, she only has because he allows her to have it. Just as men govern Addie's freedom in society, the stranger governs Addie's freedom in the metaphysical sphere. This scene also further emphasizes how inhuman the stranger is, despite the humanlike appearance he assumes; the novel repeatedly brings this up, so it seems to be something worth paying attention to as the plot progresses.*



The stranger repeats Addie's words back to her: "You can have my life when I am done with it. You can have my soul when I don't want it anymore." Wasn't it in the stranger's best interest, then, to make Addie's life as miserable as possible, so he could have his reward that much sooner? Now, he urges Addie to surrender her soul to him and end her suffering. Part of Addie longs to give in, but she refuses to be the stranger's victim. The stranger scowls, then he vanishes.

Addie makes one thing clear in this scene: she's not going to continue enduring her new, difficult life only because she desires freedom and adventure. She's also going to endure that hardship because she wants to prove to the stranger that he was wrong about her—that he knows her less well than he thinks he does, and thus has less control over her than he thinks he does.



## PART 2, CHAPTER 5

New York City. March 13, 2014. Henry's head is still pounding from last night's party as he rushes to meet his sister, Muriel, for coffee. Henry steps inside the cafe and scans the room. Muriel isn't here yet. Henry is grateful to have time to order a coffee, sit down, and try to clean himself up a bit. Not that it'll make much of a difference—Muriel always sees him the same way anyway.

Whether Muriel always sees Henry the same way because she's his sister or for possibly supernatural reasons (like the actress at the party with the cloudy eyes saw him) remains unknown, but it's increasingly clear that there's something mysterious going on with Henry and his interactions with others.



Muriel arrives. She's 24 and has been fully absorbed within New York's art scene since her first semester at Tisch. Henry loves Muriel, but she's a lot. Muriel greets Henry enthusiastically. "You look great," she says, even though it's not true. Muriel gets her order and joins Henry at the table. She tells Henry that David has been asking about him. "Why?" asks Henry; David never asks about Henry. Muriel scoffs at Henry then replies, "because he cares." Henry is doubtful. David, the youngest head surgeon at Sinai, cares about his career, his Jewish faith, and their parents. But David doesn't care about Henry. Henry looks at his watch, which "doesn't tell the time, or any time," and tells Muriel he must leave to open the store. Before he leaves, Muriel embraces him and makes him promise to keep in touch.

There's a major gap between the way Henry's family seems to regard Henry and the way Henry regards himself. Henry's family seems to treat Henry with love, affection, and concern; yet, meanwhile, Henry can't imagine how this is possible, perhaps a sign of his low self-esteem. Regardless, this scene further develops Henry's character, painting him as someone who feels dissatisfied with himself and disconnected from the world. There's something odd about Henry's watch, which "doesn't tell the time, or any time," and this seems to be something worth noting.



## PART 2, CHAPTER 6

New York City. March 13, 2014. Addie wakes up and feels someone touching her cheek. It's Sam, who has gone up on the roof to have a cigarette. She changes her mind when she sees Addie, though. It's freezing outside, and Sam orders Addie to follow her inside. Sam is a painter, and her apartment is full of art. Addie and Sam are in the kitchen now. Sam hands Addie a cup of coffee. "You have stars," Sam says, and Addie thinks, "Déjà vu."

Addie's response of "Déjà vu" to Sam's remark about her "stars" (freckles) is an attempt at wry humor: Addie feels that she's experienced this scene before because she has—though Sam, enchanted by the darkness's power, has no memory of Addie. It's also important to note that Sam is an artist, a characteristic that, given Addie's predilection for art and artists, seems to be what has drawn Addie to Sam.



Addie has never seen Sam like this. She's woken up beside her in the morning, but Sam is always apologetic, ashamed that she's forgotten the previous night. When Sam asks Addie her name, Addie responds, "Madeline," the closest she can get to speaking her name aloud. Sam looks intently at Addie and says she'd like to paint her sometime; Addie doesn't remind Sam that she already *has* painted her. Sam explains her portraits to Addie now, though Addie has heard Sam's explanation countless times before. It's said that people are like snowflakes—no two are the same—and Sam thinks the same is true of skies. So she paints people as the type of sky they are.

Once, when Addie asked Sam what kind of sky she (Addie) was, Sam beamed, grabbed her supplies, and began to paint Addie. Sam's **painting** depicted Addie as a night sky, in heavy layers of black and gray paints. On top of this, Sam added silver dots for Addie's freckles. Now, in the kitchen, Sam says she wishes she could show Addie her favorite painting, *One Forgotten Night*, but she sold it to a collector. The painting was hard to part with: it depicted a girl whose identity Sam can't seem to remember, no matter how hard she tries. Sam looks at Addie and says that Addie reminds her of the painting.

Addie tells Sam she should get going. Sam pleads with Addie to stay, and Addie wants to stay: she wants to shower with Sam, then sit in the living room and see how Sam will paint her today. But it's too painful to live this life that will have no future. "Sorry," Addie says to Sam, her heart breaking as she says it.

*So far, the novel has shown how Addie's curse prevents her from leaving her mark on the world—she cannot utter her name aloud, she cannot tell people about her past, and everything she writes dissolves immediately. So, if Sam really has painted Addie, this will complicate the reader's—and Addie's—understanding of how her curse works. Specifically, it would suggest that there's something different and special about the interpretative nature of art that allows it—but nothing else—to preserve something of Addie's essence.*



*Though Sam forgets who her portrait depicts, the painting itself remains in existence. This detail complicates what the reader knows about Addie's curse and poses an interesting question about what, exactly, art represents—reality, or a person's interpretation or idea of reality? Contrarily, is there an ideal, objective version of reality that exists outside of subjective interpretation?*



*Addie leaves Sam of her own accord, just as she left Toby earlier. It's as though choosing when she leaves—and when the people she cares about forget her—allows her to maintain a degree of choice and freedom regarding the curse that otherwise completely controls her life and relationships.*



## PART 2, CHAPTER 7

*Paris, France. July 29, 1716.* Addie waits across the street from the tailor's shop. She hopes that Bertin, the shop's owner, will assume she's a lady's maid. After the last customer leaves, Addie runs inside the shop. Monsieur Bertin regards her coolly; "I'm closing," he tells her. Addie pretends that she's Madame Lautrec's maid and has come to give Lautrec's measurements. Bertin leaves to get his measuring tape. By the time he fetches it, he'll have forgotten about Addie and will retire upstairs—and Addie will have the shop to herself.

*One year has passed since the narrative last flashed back to Addie's early years of immortality. Note that the date is July 29—the anniversary of Addie's deal with the darkness—which means she can likely expect the darkness to pay her another visit on this day. Also note how fluidly Addie navigates this situation with Bertin—it's clear that she's gotten a better hang of how to make sense of her invisibility in the two years since making her deal with the darkness.*



Addie listens for Bertin to go to bed, then she gets to work, admiring the shop's fine fabrics. She observes the men's clothing in another corner of the room. She considers, as she often does, how much easier it would be to be a man. Then she changes into the men's clothing; it feels like "armor" against her body. She picks up a pair of shears to try to cut her hair, but it grows back immediately. She looks at herself in the mirror. The disguise isn't terribly convincing. She sighs, then she changes into a dark sapphire dress.

Addie leaves Bertin's shop and steps outside into the night. A man dressed in black greets her from across the street: it's the stranger. He holds out his arm and offers to walk with her. Addie accepts, but only because it's dark out; only "women of a certain class" walk alone at night. After a while, Addie asks the stranger to change his appearance—he can take any shape he chooses, right? The stranger smiles and tells her he likes this shape—and he thinks Addie does, too. Addie says she did before, but he's ruined it for her. Then she immediately realizes her mistake: she has told him the truth, and now he will always appear as the stranger.

Addie and the stranger walk until they reach a small, disheveled house. When the stranger leaves, Addie will sneak inside through a gap in the wall. This building will burn down in a month, but for now, it's hers. But the stranger doesn't leave. Instead, he asks why Addie puts herself through more suffering when she could just give in to him. Calmly, Addie tells the stranger about the elephants she saw in the palace grounds the other day, and the Champagne she drank afterward. She's only been in Paris for two years, and there's so much more to see. Addie grins, relishing the small victory of proving the darkness wrong.

## PART 2, CHAPTER 8

*New York City. March 13, 2014.* The bookshop is busy today. Addie approaches the boy from yesterday (Henry), hands him the stolen copy of *The Odyssey*, and tries to exchange for something else. Henry assumes she's joking. He advises Addie against trying to return a book to the same person from whom she stole it. "I remember you," he says. Then he orders Addie to leave. Addie tries to leave but can't. This is the first time in 300 years that somebody has not forgotten her. She sits on the steps just outside the shop and repeats Henry's words to herself: "I remember you. I remember you."

*Addie might have the power of immortality on her side, but this doesn't leave her invulnerable to the forces of gender-based oppression that govern her society, a sentiment she acknowledges when she describes the men's clothing as like "armor" against her body. In other words, the social constraints of her world limit the freedom immortality allows her to achieve.*



*When the stranger suggests that only "women of a certain class" walk alone at night, he's referring to sex workers. Again, while Addie's immortality immunizes her against death, it doesn't spare her from experiencing gender-based oppression. Also note: Addie realizes that, now that she's told the darkness that he's ruined the stranger's looks for her, she knows that he'll never appear as anything other than the stranger. This builds tension in the ongoing power struggle between Addie and the stranger.*



*The stranger has underestimated Addie. He believed that the loneliness of the invisible life he's thrust upon her would overwhelm her and force her to give in to him, but in fact, Addie's zest for life and adventure counteracts her misery: the opportunity to see new places and experience new things makes up for whatever misery and loneliness she must endure.*



*Henry might not think his words to Addie, "I remember you," are all that special. But to Addie, who hasn't heard or felt anyone express this sentiment to her in 300 years, Henry's words are earth-shattering. This is a huge turning point in the novel and in Addie's journey—it's confirmation that Addie wasn't losing her mind yesterday when she thought that Henry recognized her after she tried to leave with the book. He really did remember her. The question that remains now, though, is how?*



Henry notices that Addie hasn't left and demands to know what she's doing. Addie pleads with Henry to let her treat him to coffee to apologize for stealing. Henry can sense that this is about more than the book, and eventually, he gives in.

*For the first time in 300 years, Addie has the opportunity to develop a relationship with another person. But whatever is going on between Addie and Henry seems too good to be true, so the reader (and Addie) should remain wary of what the catch might be here. Addie gave up intimacy for her freedom, so it follows that she must be giving up something else to develop a relationship with Henry.*



## PART 2, CHAPTER 9

*New York City. March 13, 2014.* Addie waits for an hour until Henry closes the shop, then she and Henry leave to get coffee. Henry lets Addie lead the way. Addie observes Henry as he walks. He's thinner and weaker than her stranger, but the resemblance is still there. They reach a coffee shop, and Addie grimaces when the total comes to \$3.80—she can't pay for two drinks, and she can't steal them, either, since Henry will know. She returns with only Henry's order, explaining that she doesn't have money for a second because she lost her wallet. Henry feels like a jerk drinking alone and, despite Addie's protests, buys her a drink.

*This isn't the first time that Addie has compared Henry to her stranger, so it's a detail worth noting moving forward. Is there some connection between the stranger and Henry? Might the stranger have placed Henry in Addie's path? All of this is mere conjecture at this point, but it's worth considering as the plot develops. Also note: Addie's freedom is already limited by Henry's appearance in her life, as she can no longer resort to stealing as she could when she could rest assured that nobody would remember her once she left the room.*



Henry returns to the table and asks Addie about the book. Had she really thought he wouldn't remember her? His shop doesn't get many customers, and Addie's attempted theft left quite "an impression" on him. Addie's ears perk up at this, as "[a]n impression is like a mark." A man accidentally bumps into Henry, nearly spilling Henry's coffee. He apologizes profusely. When the man leaves, Addie remarks on how intensely the man apologized. Henry shrugs it off. He asks Addie what she does, and Addie lies and says that she's a talent scout who mostly deals in art.

*Again, Henry's otherwise innocuous choice of words, in stating that Addie left quite "an impression on him," end up being highly significant to Addie, who has tried—and failed—to leave "an impression" on the world for the past 300 years. Another odd detail in this scene is the way the man overenthusiastically apologizes to Henry for bumping into him—Henry, for being such an unremarkable person, seems to have quite an effect on people, and it's not clear why this is so.*



They talk some more, and then Henry observes that Addie's "freckles look like stars." Addie says that everyone notices this about her. Henry asks what Addie sees when she looks at him. Addie says she sees "a boy with dark hair and kind eyes and an open face." Henry is disappointed; is that all? Addie pauses. Then she continues. In Henry, she sees someone who cares too much—someone who is lost and confused and feels that "they're wasting away in a world full of food, because they can't decide what they want." Henry stares at Addie. Then he smiles with his mouth—but his eyes remain serious. He invites Addie to grab food, and she accepts. They hold hands as they walk.

*It's interesting that, though Addie can't leave her mark on the world, various people—including Sam and Henry—end up making the same observation about Addie: that her "freckles look like stars." This suggests, perhaps, that ideas and interpretations are stronger than memory and beyond the darkness's ability to control. Also note that Henry seems quite taken with Addie's frank, not necessarily flattering observation of him. It seems as though most everyone in his life seems to do nothing but gush over him—something most people would want—and yet it's Addie's honesty that impresses Henry. It's not totally clear why this is so, but it's worth noting as the plot continues to unfold.*



## PART 2, CHAPTER 10

Paris, France. July 29, 1719. Addie is sprawled out on the marquis's wife's duvet eating stolen chocolate. The marquis and his wife are very social and are always out of town, so Addie frequently stays at their house. The servants have retreated to their rooms for the night, and Addie has the place to herself. She tries on some of the marquis's wife's dresses and then does up her hair in the mirror. She looks totally unlike herself, minus her freckles. Suddenly, the stranger is behind her. "Hello, Adeline," he says. Adeline briskly tells him to go away. He feigns offense—it's been a year since they last saw each other, after all.

The stranger tells Addie not to be so rude, especially on their "anniversary"—he is the only companion she will ever have, after all. Plus, he has planned to have dinner with her. Before Addie can stop him, the stranger pulls the bell, and the lady's maid comes running into the room. Addie realizes that the stranger has bewitched the woman. The stranger tells the maid they will dine in the salon, and the maid leaves to have dinner prepared. Addie at first refuses to dine with the stranger, but she relents and follows him into the salon. The bewitched servants have prepared an elaborate meal for them, complete with Champagne. Addie is wary of partaking of the elaborate meal—after all, everything the stranger offers comes at a price. But eventually she relents and eats. The stranger seems to appreciate her attention.

Addie asks the stranger if he has a name. Names have "power," she says—this is why the stranger took hers. The stranger asks what name Addie called him by when she created him in her journals—was he modeled after some real man? Addie says her stranger never had a name. She had tried for years to give him one, but no name stuck. Then she stumbled upon one that did: Luc—"As in Lucifer." "Luc," she tells him. The darkness—Luc—smiles, accepting his new name.

Addie watches Luc twirl his crystal glass in his hand. In the glass, she sees the life she might have had: the one where she was forced to marry Roger, care for his children, and grow old. She'd be too tired to draw or write. She's glad Luc hasn't asked her if she would go back to that life—because she knows she wouldn't.

*It's been three years since the last flashback to Addie's early years of the curse. Her lavish surroundings in this scene reflect how accustomed she's grown to her cursed invisibility: she's successfully found loopholes to make the most of her curse, as evidenced by the way she luxuriates on a duvet while eating sweets. Addie's order for the darkness to leave her alone further reflects how comfortable she's grown with her curse—perhaps, one has to worry, too comfortable.*



*The stranger's advice to Addie to remember that he is her only permanent companion further develops the importance of human companionship as one of the novel's central themes. To the reader, this advice should trigger warning bells, too: if the stranger is telling the truth, then present-day Addie should be more wary of whatever is going on that has allowed Henry to remember her—it's very possible that Henry could merely be a trick the stranger is playing on Addie. This scene also further develops the stranger and Addie's complicated, asymmetrical relationship. They are adversaries, yet here, they're engaged in what almost seems like a romantic dinner. Perhaps this foreshadows a future romance that will develop between them.*



*Addie's observation that names have "power" evokes one of the novel's central themes: that making one's presence known to the world through self-expression is a major way that people create meaning in their lives. As such, it seems important that Addie has just given Luc a name—he's still the more powerful of the two of them, but perhaps Addie has leveled the playing field, even just a little bit, by giving him a name that she can call him—by putting him in some kind of box.*



*Addie is happy that Luc hasn't asked her if she'd go back and choose again, if given the chance, because to do so would be to acknowledge, if only indirectly, her gratitude to him. This is something that Addie, who longs to be beholden to nobody—mortal or otherwise—wants to do.*



Addie shifts her attention to the bewitched servants standing frozen in the corner of the room. Luc snaps his fingers and tells the servants to take a bottle of Champagne for themselves. Addie scolds Luc—the servants will be punished when their masters return to find them drunk. Luc retorts that the servants will *also* be blamed for the chocolates and clothing that Addie has stolen from the marquis’s wife’s room. This upsets Addie. When Luc, once more, urges Addie to surrender her soul to him, Addie says it was a mistake to curse her. She vows never to give in to Luc. From now on, they are at “war.”

*Addie sees herself as different from Luc—as kinder and more empathetic toward others. Yet Luc, in pointing out that all of Addie’s cleverness has consequences, shows her that really, the two of them are not so different. Here, Luc suggests that Addie’s invisibility and immortality make her fundamentally less vulnerable than people like the servants, whom she unintentionally exploits and harms.*



## PART 2, CHAPTER 11

*New York City. March 13, 2014.* Henry leads Addie to a loud, crowded bar in Brooklyn. They share happy-hour fries and beers. Addie doesn’t want to leave Henry, fearing he will forget her at any moment. Henry asks Addie what she’d wish for if she could have anything. “This,” she wants to say.

*This scene’s placement immediately after the chapter where Luc cautions Addie that he is—and always will be—her only permanent companion should make the reader wary of what’s to come between Addie and Henry; surely, if what Luc said is true, whatever good thing Addie and Henry have going between them is too good to last.*



## PART 2, CHAPTER 12

Addie and Henry stay out all night, neither wanting to say goodbye. Eventually, they reach Henry’s subway stop and prepare to part ways. Henry takes out his phone to exchange numbers. Addie lies and says hers is broken. She offers to meet Henry at the store on Saturday. Before they part ways, Addie confesses to Henry that she lied about her name earlier (at the coffee shop, she called herself Eve). When Henry asks what Addie’s name is, Addie replies, “Addie.” And just like that, she can finally speak her name. They say goodnight, and Henry heads down to the subway.

*This is another huge turning point in the novel: for the first time in 300 years, Addie is able to tell her name—her real name—to another person. While the reader should be wary of whatever’s going on between Henry and Addie right now, it’s also seeming increasingly possible that things really are different with Henry—that something about him is allowing Addie to overcome the isolating invisibility of her deal with Luc.*



Alone, Addie feels hopeful for the first time in years. How has Henry managed to get around the curse? But she realizes that she doesn’t care. Tonight, “the sound of her name, her real name, on someone else’s tongue,” is all that matters.

*The hopefulness Addie feels once she’s finally able to speak her name aloud underscores the importance of a name and leaving one’s mark on others.*





## PART 2, CHAPTER 13

Paris, France. July 29, 1720. Addie has prepared for Luc's arrival this time. She's set the table, assembled a meal of fresh bread, cheese, and meat, and gotten a bottle of red wine. She has a home of her own now—a small, abandoned house that she spent weeks to make habitable. She is wearing a red silk dress and has done her hair. She wants to show him how capable she has become. She never wants Luc to come, but she has grown to expect his visits—and now, in refusing to come, he has intentionally let her down.

Now, all Addie's preparations seem stupid. She angrily tears at her dress and pulls down her hair. She throws the empty wine bottle (she's long since finished the wine) against the wall. She tears the place apart, and then she screams. She's angry at Luc—but also at herself. She falls to the floor and sleeps through the night and into tomorrow. Then she gets up, eats her now-spoilt feast, and decides to move on. This won't be the last bad night she has, but from this point forward, she vows to replace her sadness with anger.

*July 29 is here once more, and Addie seems determined to respond to Luc's romantic overtures with a lavish meal of her own—and now, in what is a clear power play on Luc's part, he has intentionally failed to show up in order to show her who holds all the cards in their relationship. Luc and Addie's relationship is fantastical, yet it also metaphorically illustrates the fundamental vulnerability a person subjects themselves to when they enter into an intimate relationship of any kind, whether it be platonic or romantic.*



*Addie is mad at herself because she's forgotten an essential characteristic of her and Luc's relationship: they are not mortals equally subjecting themselves to the possibility of heartbreak and disappointment that are part of any intimate relationship. Instead, Luc has all the power, and Addie is subject to whatever he wants to put her through.*



## PART 2, CHAPTER 14

New York City. March 13, 2014. Henry walks home after leaving Addie. He says her name over and over again inside his head. Finally, he has met someone who "s[ees] a boy with dark hair, kind eyes, an open face. Nothing more. And nothing else." He's so happy.

*The novel has hinted at the possibility that meeting Addie is as special—and unexpected—to Henry as meeting Henry has been to Addie, and this parallel scene of Henry repeating Addie's name to himself further supports this idea. It's as unusual that Henry has met someone who sees him for who he really is as it is for Addie to have met someone who remembers her.*



## PART 3, CHAPTER 1

Paris, France. July 29, 1724. It's nearly nighttime. Addie walks through the streets holding a stolen basket. She's wearing men's clothing, so nobody bothers her. Luc claimed he'd given her freedom, but in this world, only men have true freedom. It's now been four years since Luc has visited her, and tonight, Addie wants to celebrate her freedom. She has decided to climb to the top of Notre Dame to have a picnic. She's assembled a basket of luxuries for the occasion, including a jar of honey.

*Four years have passed since Luc stood up Addie. Given the date—July 29, their anniversary—it's reasonable to guess that Luc may now appear to explain—or gloat—about letting Addie down before; after all, it's his style to disrupt Addie's plans the minute she thinks she has everything under control, and her plans to have an elaborate picnic certainly exude a belief that she has control over her life, if only for this night.*



Just then, a young man walking with his friends runs into Addie. The collision sends Addie's precious jar of honey flying, and it shatters when it lands. "You fool," she snaps at the apologetic man—then she realizes that her high voice has blown her cover. The man isn't mad at being fooled, though, and he motions for his friends to continue without him as he stays behind with Addie. He leads Addie to a café.

In the café, the man orders coffees, and then he and Addie sit down at a corner seat. The man introduces himself as Remy Laurent. Addie decides to call herself Thomas. Then, Remy becomes distracted by a man seated across the room, Monsieur Voltaire, who is very well-known. Addie hasn't heard of Voltaire, so Remy produces a booklet from his coat. Addie admits she can't read well. Remy calls it "a crime" that society doesn't teach women as it teaches men. How can a person go through life without poetry, novels, or philosophy? Addie hasn't heard of novels before; Remy explains that a novel is a long fictional story about love or adventure.

Remy tells Addie that he comes from a family of printmakers. His father sent him to school, though, and now all Remy wants to do is live in Paris among the thinkers and dreamers. Addie observes aloud how ideal and easy life seems to be for men. Remy admits that this is true. Addie's stomach grumbles just then. She remembers her picnic and asks Remy to join her.

*Thus far, the novel has gone back and forth between Addie's past and present, implicitly drawing parallels between significant events that have occurred through Addie's life. Given that the previous chapter was about Addie's hopefulness that she may have a connection with Henry, it's reasonable to predict that this chapter will be about another time she dared to be so hopeful with another kind and interested soul—and when perhaps things didn't pan out as she wanted them to.*



*Voltaire was a real-life key figure of French Enlightenment culture. That Addie should learn about him now develops one of the novel's main themes: the importance of wonder and the pursuit of knowledge, and the way these things motivate Addie to continue living out her curse, even in moments of overwhelming sadness and suffering. Without realizing it, Remy is opening up a whole new way for Addie to quench her thirst for knowledge: the world of books.*



*In the present, Addie is overly cautious about letting herself grow attached to anyone, knowing all too well that doing so is only postponing the inevitable heartbreak she will feel once they forget her. Now, though, in 1724, she is not so jaded, and so she lets herself prolong her night with Remy.*



## PART 3, CHAPTER 2

*New York City. March 15, 2014.* Addie thought she'd long since made peace with time. But the hours between Thursday and 5:00 on Saturday, when she will next see Henry, seem to drag on and on. As she waits, she realizes how nervous she is. This is alien to her, since nervousness is for people with futures, and "all she's had are presents."

Addie finally arrives at The Last Word. Henry smiles when he sees Addie and introduces her to Bea. Bea says "déjà vu," remarking on how familiar Addie seems. Then Bea observes that Addie looks very Baroque or Neoclassical. Bea is an art post-grad, Henry explains, and she thinks that every face belongs to a different era. Henry's face is romantic, but Addie's is oddly "timeless." Then Henry and Addie leave for their date.

*Time and disappointment have hardened Addie, and yet something about Henry compels her to let her guard down and allow herself to be excited at the prospect of seeing him again. Addie allows herself to be vulnerable, and this detail suggests the importance—the necessity—of vulnerability in any real, meaningful relationship.*



*Bea's observation that Addie's face is "timeless" is accidentally funny: Bea has no way of knowing how spot-on her observation really is. That Bea is an art student further places art and creativity at the foreground of the narrative.*



Addie asks Henry where they're going. Henry says it's a surprise. They take the train to what looks like a laundromat, and Henry explains that it's actually a speakeasy. Addie is worried, remembering the darkened room she visited a century ago in Chicago, where "the darkness" danced with her. She holds her breath as Henry opens a door at the back of the laundromat. But the place they enter is hardly a speakeasy; it's just a room with neon lights, arcade games, and a wooden bar. Addie exhales, relieved. Henry procures a bag of coins for the arcade games.

*That Addie sees "the darkness," or Luc, at every turn shows how accustomed she's become to him appearing just when things are going well for her and ruining everything. In light of this, it's remarkable that Addie continues to take chances and experience new things, even when experience has shown her that Luc will find some way to spoil everything.*



## PART 3, CHAPTER 3

Addie and Henry have fun playing pinball. Addie makes a high score, and Henry enters her name (albeit misspelled as ADI) into the machine. Addie hopes that her name can stay there forever.

*Addie's sheer joy at seeing her name written on a screen for all to see underscores the important role that self-expression and memory play in making a person's life meaningful. With her name on the pinball machine's screen, she's metaphorically become more real.*



After the speakeasy, Henry says it's Addie's turn to choose what's next. Addie takes Henry to The Nitehawk, one of her favorite theaters in Brooklyn. She buys two tickets to *North by Northwest*. Addie senses that Henry isn't enjoying himself, and he admits that he finds the movie a bit slow. Addie tells him to just wait—it'll be worth it. Henry asks if Addie has seen the movie before, and when she says it's one of her favorites, Henry abruptly leaves the theater, claiming he needs some air.

*It's unlikely that Henry hates Hitchcock films vehemently enough to leave with no notice, so the reader may assume that something else is up. The earlier scene, which alluded to Henry's watch that doesn't tell time, implied that Henry has some kind of hang-up about time, and maybe that's what's going on here: he's uneasy at the prospect of wasting time on a slow film—particularly one that Addie has seen before. It's as though doing so makes Henry and Addie's time together less sacred or meaningful.*



Addie follows Henry outside, and a fight ensues. Henry is angry that Addie has taken him to a movie she's seen before. Then he apologizes; it's not Addie's fault. It's just that he always feels like life is passing him by, and he wants to use his time as wisely as possible. Addie grabs Henry's hand and tells him she's taking him "somewhere new."

*As a 20-something, Henry is quite young, and so it's rather unreasonable (though not unheard of) for him to be so anxious about wasting his life away. This section suggests that there's something causing Henry's time anxiety that he has yet to reveal to Addie. Still, his pathological need to experience "new" things while he has the time is something of a variation on Addie's wondrous outlook on the world: both characters are driven by a need to see all there is to see, though Henry's need, more so than Addie's, is driven by fear and anxiety.*



## PART 3, CHAPTER 4

Paris, France. July 29, 1724. Remy is the opposite of Luc: his hair is blond, his eyes are blue, and he's happy, open, and energetic. Plus, he's "real." They reach the cathedral, climb to the northern tower, and lay out their picnic. They sit close together, and Remy takes Addie's hand in his. He asks Addie for her real name, and Addie says Anna—it's close enough. Remy asks Addie about her life, and she tries to tell him as close to the truth as her curse will allow. She says she left everything behind to be free. Remy understands, noting that "Small places make for small lives."

Addie asks Remy if he thinks life has value if a person doesn't make any impression on the world. Remy thinks "there are many ways to matter." Some people, like Voltaire, matter through their words. But the people who typeset Voltaire's books mattered too—though their names aren't listed on the book's cover.

Later, Remy brings Addie to his rented room at the lodging house. They have sex, and it's nothing like the sex work Addie is used to. It's special, and Addie wishes she could erase the previous times from her memory. They fall asleep.

A few hours later, Remy wakes. He regards Addie awkwardly and confusedly; he doesn't remember her. His forced politeness is painful for Addie to watch. She turns to leave, but before she can, Remy hands Addie three coins as "payment." This hurts most of all. On her way out of Remy's room, she palms his Voltaire booklet.

*This distinction between who is and isn't "real" seems important. It's what makes Addie believe that what she and Remy have is more important than the relationship that she and Luc have built up over their years of knowing each other. Addie seems to think that Remy's energy and openness—the things that make him human—are what make him "real." This belief in Remy's humanity is what allows her to open up to him as well as she does.*



*Addie's question to Remy is a big one: she's essentially asking him whether her life has meaning despite there being no evidence that she's ever existed. Remy's answer, then, should come as a small comfort to Addie: he's saying that simply having some effect on history is enough to make a person meaningful, even if they—like the anonymous publishers who typeset Voltaire's works—don't get any recognition for their work.*



*Compared to Addie's earlier experiences being forced to engage in sex work, her intimate evening with Remy is happy and meaningful—it's more like the fantasies she had about the stranger when she was an adolescent daydreaming in Villon, in part because it's something she's chosen for herself—not something her dire circumstances have forced upon her.*



*Remy seems to be the first person Addie has really let herself open up to since becoming invisible. For this reason, it's especially hurtful and degrading that he should mistake her for a sex worker, given the intimacy and meaning she—but not he—recalls them sharing together only hours before.*



## PART 3, CHAPTER 5

*New York City. March 15, 2014.* Addie leads Henry to a steel door covered in old posters. “Jupiter,” she says to a seemingly loitering man, who opens the door, exposing a hidden set of stairs. Addie explains that they’re at the Fourth Rail, which is in one of the subway system’s abandoned tunnels. They descend many staircases until they hear music in the distance. Then they round the corner, and the whole tunnel shakes with the pulse of live electronic music. Bartenders pour drinks in another corner of the tunnel. Addie found this tunnel years ago and showed it to a musician looking to open a venue. They planned out the whole thing. Then six months later, she found the guy guarding the door, the logo she and the musician had designed, and realized that her plans had become reality.

Addie orders vodkas for Henry and herself. They drink and move to the music. Addie watches Henry. At first, he looks incredibly sad—the way he’d looked when he told her about losing time—but then the sadness passes, and Henry looks at Addie and smiles.

Henry and Addie return to the surface, and the crisp March air refreshes them. Addie hears Henry laugh for the first time. Then there’s a crack of thunder, and it begins to pour. Henry turns to Addie, and Addie sees how “Young” and “Human” he is—and in this moment, he couldn’t look less like Luc. Addie pulls Henry close, and they kiss.

Addie and Henry take a train back to his apartment and have sex. With Luc, she was always “His Adeline.” But now, she’s Addie. Addie pleads with Henry to say her name again, and he does. Henry’s body isn’t made for hers the way Luc’s is, but it’s better this way: Henry “is real, and kind, and human, and he remembers.”

## PART 3, CHAPTER 6

*Paris, France. July 29, 1724.* Addie wipes away tears as she walks through the empty street. Then Luc appears, dressed impeccably. Addie hates how relieved she is to see him. And this just makes her hate him more. Luc tells Addie he has come because he can sense when she’s vulnerable. Then, eyeing her men’s clothing, he notes that he liked her “in red.” Addie realizes that he was watching her four years ago.

*Addie’s past with the musician is part of a broader trend of Addie associating with musicians and artists. And just as her time with Toby (the rising musician whose gigs she recalls attending earlier in the novel) generates a song they’ve composed together, her time with this other musician has led to the creation of the Fourth Rail, another way in which she’s managed to leave her mark on the world, albeit indirectly. Once more, the novel suggests that there’s more to a person than their basic identity—a person’s life’s meaning is also a product of the ideas they create and share with others, and art (and music, and other creative pursuits) are some mediums through which people can transmit those ideas.*



*Henry is normally so anxious about wasting his life away, but this shared experience with Addie washes away that anxiety, suggesting the meaningful and even restorative qualities of human connection.*



*Addie describes Henry as “Young” and “Human,” especially as compared to Luc. She was attracted to Remy so many years before for similar reasons. She seems to find meaning in his human vulnerability, something that Luc, as a god, lacks.*



*As a vulnerable mortal, Henry no more possesses Addie than she possesses him, and though things aren’t perfect with them physically, there is something beautiful in this vulnerable imperfection; it’s what makes their connection so meaningful—and, by contrast, what makes Addie’s connection with Luc so devoid of meaning.*



*Luc comes to see Addie when she needs him to come to her—not when she wants him there of her own accord, as was the case years ago, when she dressed “in red” and prepared a feast for him that he willfully chose not to partake of. Once more, this is a power play on Luc’s part meant to disarm and put Addie in her place, showing her which of them holds the power and control in their relationship.*



Addie tries to appear strong; she hasn't missed Luc and doesn't need his visits, she tells him. Luc is unfazed. If that's the case, Luc suggests, maybe he will abandon their visits altogether. The thought of this terrifies Addie, but she tries not to show it. She tells Luc that he would never abandon her, for then he would never get her soul. Luc tries to get Addie to yield her soul to him now, but she refuses.

*Addie and Luc's odd, almost quasi-romantic relationship is founded not on mutual vulnerability and understanding, but on a battle over who has more power and control over the other. Their playing field is never level—Luc always has a godlike superiority over Addie, and Addie always wields her mortal soul over Luc—and so, the novel seems to suggest, this is why they will always fail to connect with each other.*



Darkness eventually breaks. Addie walks to the top of the Sacre Coeur and watches the sun rise over Paris. She almost forgot the Voltaire book she stole from Remy's room. She picks it up now and tries to read it. The word on its cover, *Henriade*, is unfamiliar. She closes her eyes and tries to remember the joy with which Remy spoke of reading, learning, and thinking. And then she begins her own educational journey.

*La Henriade is an epic poem by Voltaire. It was published in 1723 to honor the life of Henry IV of France. Not only does the book represent Addie's sense of wonder and quest for knowledge that drives her to continue living, but it also seems to foreshadow the relationship she will later develop with another Henry many centuries down the road.*



## PART 3, CHAPTER 7

March 16, 2014. Addie wakes up at Henry's apartment and finds him cooking breakfast in the kitchen. This morning is different than all the others: finally, somebody remembers her. Then Henry holds out Addie's **ring** to her—she must have dropped it last night, he says. Addie panics upon seeing the ring. Henry notices and asks if something is wrong. Addie tells a half-truth, explaining that the ring is important to her—but something she also wishes she could get rid of.

*Especially coming right after the chapter that recalls Addie's heartbreak over Remy, Addie's morning with Henry takes on a special significance. Also note the reappearance of Addie's ring—it's yet unclear why Addie attaches such a negative association to an object in which she took such pride, but the ring's regular reappearances suggest that whatever this association is will be important later on, so it's something worth paying attention to.*



Henry finishes cooking, and he and Addie eat breakfast together. Addie wolfs down her food; she's so happy to finally enjoy breakfast with someone who remembers her from the night before. She knows this can't last, but she's going to enjoy it while she can. They chat a bit, and then Henry realizes that he's late for work. Addie lies and says she should get home, too. They make plans to meet at a food truck rally later that day. Henry tells Addie she can take a shower and just let herself out whenever she's ready.

*Addie has been so devoid of genuine human connection over the past 300 years that even the simple act of sharing breakfast with someone who recognizes her takes on a special significance. She's been alone in people's homes before, but never because they explicitly, knowingly told her she could be there. Finally, she's able to shed one layer of her invisibility.*



After Henry leaves, Addie investigates the apartment, examining all the small things she missed last night. There are vintage cameras, and photographs cover every wall and surface. There's a photo of Bea in an art gallery, and one of Bea and Henry together. There's also a posed photograph of Henry with his family. In every photo, Henry looks so sad and lost.

*With the many photographs Henry displays around his apartment, the novel once more foregrounds art and creativity. The photos of himself with his family and friends that Henry displays around the apartment, in a way, are more telling of who Henry is than Henry himself.*



Addie turns her attention to Henry's laptop on the coffee table. She puts her thumb on the trackpad, but nothing happens. She expected this, though. The curse stays the same, even as technology advances. Why, then, Addie wonders, can Henry remember her? Addie moves to the bedroom and sees a photo of Henry and Robbie. Their faces are close together. Henry looks so comfortable and happy with Robbie. In the top drawer, Addie finds a handkerchief with spots of blood on it—wrapped around an engagement ring. Addie wonders who the ring was meant for, and how different Henry was before he met her.

*The novel has already shown how Addie is incapable of leaving her mark on the world, and her inability to use her thumbprint to unlock Henry's computer is further evidence of this. Addie's discovery of the engagement ring should make enough sense to the reader, who can logically assume that the ring was meant for Tabitha, the woman Henry is hung up over. But the presence of the bloody handkerchief wrapped around the ring adds a layer of tension and mystery to Henry's past—what is he keeping from Addie, and does it have something to do with why he can remember her?*



## PART 3, CHAPTER 8

Addie and Henry are at the food truck festival. Addie watches Henry order falafel from a middle-aged woman who leans forward to talk intently to Henry. It's a little odd. Henry eventually gets his order, and then he and Addie sit down on a slope of grass to eat. Addie asks Henry about the woman at the food truck. Henry says that the woman said he reminded her of her son. Addie can tell Henry isn't telling her the full truth, but she drops it.

*The middle-aged woman's enthusiasm to talk with Henry is the latest in a series of total strangers who seem to take an unnaturally keen interest in the altogether subdued and unremarkable-seeming Henry. Once more, the novel teases whatever is going on with Henry's character that he's keeping from Addie (and from the reader). Addie's decision not to press Henry on the subject, though, shows that she's willing to accept the degree of uncertainty and instability inherent in intimate, meaningful relationships.*



Henry's phone rings; it's Bea. Henry hangs up and explains that Bea is having a dinner party tonight—and Henry was supposed to bring dessert. He's worried it's too late to find something, but Addie has a plan. Addie brings Henry to a French bakery in Brooklyn that belongs to a man named Michel. The shop is closed when they arrive, but Addie speaks to Michel in French, pretending she's friends with Michel's daughter, Delphine, and Michel gives Addie the day's remaining pastries and refuses to accept payment. Henry is amazed and invites Addie to attend the dinner party. Addie doesn't know how to explain why she can't go, so she says yes.

*Though Addie can't make a lasting impression on people (other than Henry), she makes an effort to engage in fleeting moments of human connection where she can, as evidenced by her conversation with Michel, in which their use of the French language immerses Michel in a culture he seems homesick for. This scene also builds tension: the dinner party will likely create a lot of questions for Henry, as it'll put Addie in contact with a whole apartment full of people who will repeatedly fail to remember Addie each time they or she leave the room. Addie likely fears that this peculiarity will be the nail in the coffin for this brief respite of familiarity she's enjoyed with Henry.*



On the way there, Henry gives Addie the lowdown about the guests. Robbie is nice but "difficult." Henry also explains that he was dating a girl named Tabitha. He proposed to her, but she said no. Addie realizes that this is the story behind the ring she found earlier. She also senses that there's more to the story, and that Henry has a habit of "leaving truths half-told." She tells Henry it's okay—they all have baggage.

*Henry confides in Addie about Tabitha, but his omission of the bloody handkerchief from the story is evidence that he's "leaving truths half-told," though Addie seems fine to let Henry be. Thus far, she seems to value his human fragility above all else, as this sets him apart from Luc, so his discomfort with sharing something personal is almost a positive thing, as it's a reminder that he's human and imperfect.*



Addie and Henry arrive at the party. Bea greets them at the door. Then she turns to Addie and asks, “who’s this?” Henry is puzzled—he introduced Bea to Addie at the shop earlier. Bea thinks Henry is joking. Then she calls Addie’s face “timeless,” just like before. Henry frowns, confused. Before Addie can explain, Robbie arrives. He asks who Addie is and asks probing questions about her work as a supposed “talent scout.” Henry tells Robbie to stop being rude.

*From the start, Addie’s fears about the dinner party seem to be coming true—Bea fails to recognize her, and Henry responds to this with understandable confusion. But no unseen force causes Henry, too, to dissolve into unfamiliarity, so this is at least a positive sign for Addie.*



## PART 3, CHAPTER 9

*Paris, France. July 29, 1751.* Addie is sitting in the Tuileries reading a book. It’s “scandalous” for a woman to sit alone, but Addie no longer minds the looks and whispers. Addie prefers novels, but she’s reading a philosophy book today because she wants to catch the eye of Madame Geoffrin, who will pass by her soon. Madame Geoffrin appears, right on cue, and Addie strategically bumps into her. Geoffrin scolds Addie—but then notices the book Addie is reading, *Penses Philosophiques* by Diderot, and is impressed. After many failed attempts to impress Geoffrin, Addie finally says all the right things, and Madame Geoffrin invites Addie to attend her salon in an hour—Diderot himself will be there, she tells Addie.

*Madame Geoffrin was a real-life historical figure—a salonnière (salon host) known for hosting a weekly salon, or gathering, during France’s Enlightenment era. Salons were social gatherings where people met to discuss philosophical and artistic concerns of the day. Salons were unique in the central role that women (who were barred from receiving formal educations at the country’s most esteemed institutions) played in them. It makes sense that Addie, who has long been driven by an innate sense of wonder about the world and thirst for knowledge, should find her way into France’s intellectual society.*



Addie joins Geoffrin and her handmaid on their walk. They part ways at rue Saint-Honore so that the *salonnière* can prepare for her salon. Geoffrin’s maid shows Addie upstairs and gives her a nicer dress to change into. Addie wanders downstairs for the salon. The first time she attended one of Geoffrin’s salons, she saw Remy Laurent conversing with Voltaire and Rousseau. It had been years since she last saw him, and his presence shocked her. He’d grown older—he was 51 then, and he was only 23 when Addie first met him. But Addie doesn’t see Remy today. Addie walks about the room, talks, and listens. She’s having a great time, and she should have known that Luc would arrive to ruin everything.

*Addie’s curse puts her in the curious position of remaining invisible to others. Meanwhile, she’s able to watch people she’s known, like Remy Laurent, grow, age, and decay. Seeing Remy twice as old as he was the first time they met seems to have been a difficult experience for Addie. On the one hand, it reminds her of the blessing of her situation: it allows her to continue learning and growing well beyond what Remy, as a mortal, will manage to achieve. On the other hand, it reminds Addie of all her curse has forced her to lose out on: growing wiser, older, and more learned alongside others—that is, growing with them, as fellow humans, as opposed to growing past them, as an immortal entity.*



Luc arrives, introducing himself to Madame Geoffrin as Monsieur Lebois. Then he gestures toward Addie and asks if Geoffrin knows her. Geoffrin has forgotten Addie by this point. So, when Luc announces that Addie is a thief—she is currently wearing one of Geoffrin’s own gowns—Geoffrin believes him and kicks Addie out of the salon. Luc follows Addie out and admits that making her life more difficult amuses him. Addie tells Luc that he can embarrass her all he wants, but the curse has also given her infinite possibilities to reinvent herself; she could walk back inside the salon and be a whole new person, if she wanted. To this, Luc retorts, “my word won’t fade as fast as yours.” He explains that “ideas are so much wilder than memories, so much faster to take root.”

*This passage features an important quotation: Luc’s observation that “ideas are so much wilder than memories, so much faster to take root.” Luc means for this to antagonize Addie—he’s suggesting that though nobody at the salon will remember Addie, the “idea” that Luc planted in their minds (that she’s a thief) will linger, and they’ll unconsciously judge her because of it. Yet the importance of ideas—of intangible, inexpressible truths—seems to be something that Addie latches onto later in life. It shows up in the ways she forms relationships with artists, like Sam or Toby, to get some “idea” of herself to live on indefinitely through their art, even as their “memories” of her fade.*





## PART 3, CHAPTER 10

*New York City. March 16, 2014.* Addie thinks the evening is magical. At first, she's expecting something to go horribly wrong. But by the main course, she's having a great time. Only Robbie seems to be having a bad time. Josh tries to flirt with Robbie, but Robbie fixates on Henry and ignores all Josh's advances. Then Elise, Bea's girlfriend, leaves to use the bathroom. Addie is sure things will fall apart once Elise returns and doesn't recognize her. Elise returns and is confused when she sees Addie, but then Addie watches as Elise seems to decide that it's *she* who is confused—maybe she's had too much to drink—and drops it. Still, Robbie seems so annoyed by Addie. When Elise compliments the dessert Henry brought and Henry credits Addie for the pastries, Robbie grumbles about needing a smoke and storms out of the apartment.

Addie says she should go. Bea and Henry plead with her to stay, thinking Addie is just upset about Robbie. Addie leaves anyway; Luc can always tell when she's feeling low, and she's afraid he'll show up at the party and ruin everything.

Henry follows Addie downstairs and asks why she left in such a hurry. Referring to Robbie, Henry says that friends can be “messy sometimes,” and Addie mumbles her agreement. Then she pauses, remembering the photo she saw at Henry's apartment. She observes how Robbie is clearly still in love with Henry. Henry says he knows, but he can't return the feeling. Addie doesn't press him for more.

*Henry has established that Robbie is a dramatic person, but his fixation on Henry still seems rather extreme. This, combined with Henry's earlier thought (in the lobby after Robbie's play) that Robbie's affection for him isn't “real,” seems odd. What's going on with Robbie? Why is he so obsessed with Henry, and what reason would Henry have to believe that this affection isn't “real”? Robbie's behavior seems significant and is worth making note of moving forward.*



*Addie's urge to leave the party, fearing Luc's arrival, shows just how intensely he controls her life, even from afar; her fear that he'll show up and ruin everything impacts many of the decisions she makes in her daily life.*



*Henry's odd remark about not being able to return Robbie's love further develops the idea that there's something fishy going on with Henry and his seemingly endless stream of admirers. Once more, though, Addie demonstrates her appreciation for Henry's human vulnerability, and so she doesn't push him to reveal anything he's not yet comfortable revealing to her.*



## PART 3, CHAPTER 11

*New York City. March 17, 2014.* Henry is supposed to work the next morning, but he lies and says The Last Word is closed on Mondays. Addie pretends that she believes the lie. Addie and Henry go to a corner store to get breakfast. Then Robbie walks in. Addie knows this will create a problem, and she doesn't want to lose the good thing she has with Henry just yet. Robbie spots Henry and then Addie. He asks Henry who Addie is, and Henry thinks Robbie is being rude or drunk. Robbie, offended, claims he's never seen Addie before.

*Addie's anxieties about her relationship with Henry literally stem from her fear that her curse will take over and ruin everything. But metaphorically, her fears highlight the way that a person's relationships with others are inevitably beyond their ability to control—in other words, emotional vulnerability and uncertainty are the price one pays for meaningful, intimate relationships.*



Henry angrily reminds Robbie that he met Addie last night. Addie pleads with Henry to drop it and just leave the store with her. Henry finally agrees. Outside, he apologizes on Robbie's behalf. Addie tells Henry it's not Robbie's fault. Inwardly, she wonders if she can tell Henry the truth. With all the others, the words can't physically come. But Henry remembers her—so maybe she can tell him her story, too. Addie pauses, and then she tells the full truth, beginning in 1691, when she was born.

*This is a huge moment for Addie, since before Henry, she's been physically unable to tell her life story—including her deal with the darkness—to any living being. Metaphorically, her willingness to open up to Henry represents her openness to emotional vulnerability as well. In telling Henry her fantastical story, she risks experiencing the disappointment and heartbreak that would come from him not believing her—and that's apparently a risk she's willing to take if telling him the truth is what it takes to salvage their relationship.*



## PART 3, CHAPTER 12

*Villon-sur-Sarthe, France. July 29, 1764.* The driver offers to take Addie farther, but Addie says she can walk the rest of the way. As Addie walks the last mile to Villon, she wonders why she's returned—to cleanse herself of her past? As “a ritual of sorts,” perhaps?

*Though Addie now has the freedom of mobility she's long desired, she voluntarily returns to Villon again and again, suggesting that she's willing to give up some degree of freedom to prioritize the love and human connection that bind her to Villon.*



Addie reaches the village and realizes how much it has grown in her absence. She heads straight for her old house. The old yew tree is still at the end of her old street. Years have passed, but the tree looks the same. But as Addie gets closer to her house, the illusion of sameness falls apart. She opens the front door of her father's shop and finds that her father's old tools are rusted over, and the shop is filled with cobwebs.

*All that Addie has given up to have her freedom surges to the forefront in this scene, in which Addie sees how her home (and presumably her parents) have grown old and decayed in the years since she made her deal with Luc. The decay reinforces all the years with them that Addie has lost in order to have her freedom, and it's unsettling. Addie, in a sense, has become the unchanging yew tree she always longed to become—the tree that represented freedom to her.*



Addie sees smoke rise from the chimney of her old house; someone still lives there. Addie knows she should go, but she can't help herself. She walks toward the house. The door opens just a crack, and Addie sees her mother's wrinkled face. Addie's mother opens the door all the way. “Do I know you?” she asks Addie. Addie thought she'd already distanced herself emotionally from her mother, yet the hurt of her mother's failure to recognize her hurts just as much as it did before. She also realizes that her father is already dead. Addie apologizes to her mother. Then she walks away.

*Addie has experienced and learned so many things that would have been entirely beyond her grasp, had she remained in Villon and grown old alongside her loved ones. And yet, these experiences she's had are not meaningful enough to counteract the hurt and grief she feels at experiencing, once more, her own mother failing to recognize her. This section reinforces the reality that Addie's freedom isn't free: she has paid for it with the love and human connection she's missed out on cultivating over the years.*



## PART 3, CHAPTER 13

*New York City. March 17, 2014.* Addie has tried and failed to tell her story so many times. Finally, someone listens. Henry asks Addie if she made “a deal.” Addie assumes that Henry doesn't believe her, but then he laughs a wild laugh and tells Addie he believes her—he made a deal, too.

*Finally, it seems that the novel has supplied an answer to why everyone is so enamored by Henry: he, like Addie, has made a deal with the darkness, perhaps for love.*



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## PART 4, CHAPTER 1

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*New York City. September 4, 2013.* Henry is born with a bad heart. Doctors fix it and send him home, but he grows up convinced something is still broken. His heart works now, but something doesn't feel right. Some people say that he feels things too much. When Henry's first dog died, he cried for a week. He can't stand to hear his parents argue, and he took the breakup with Robbie badly. He's also afraid of time.

Tabitha Masters is dancing when Henry first sees her. Henry went to see Robbie perform, but his eyes are drawn to Tabitha. They officially meet at an after-party. Henry needs three drinks to find the courage to approach her, but then it's so easy to talk to her, and he falls in love by the end of that first night. They are together for two years. During that time, they never fight. So, when Henry proposes and Tabitha says no, Henry is shocked. Tabitha says Henry is "great," but he's just not the one.

After the breakup, Henry goes to a nearby liquor store and buys a bottle of vodka. His phone buzzes in his pocket as Bea and Robbie try to reach him, but he ignores it. Henry drops the bottle onto the sidewalk outside the store and it shatters. He tries to pick it up and cuts his hand on the broken glass, and he begins to bleed. He tries to clean himself up with the handkerchief, and the diamond engagement ring falls to the ground. Tabitha's words of rejection echo inside his head. Henry wants to leave the ring, but it was expensive and he can't afford to part with it, so he picks it up.

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## PART 4, CHAPTER 2

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Henry sits alone on a step outside. He's too drunk. He fishes around in his pocket for the pills Muriel gave him ("Little pink umbrellas," she called them) and swallows them dry. It's pouring now. He's soaking wet, but he doesn't care.

*Note that this chapter takes place in 2013, the year before the novel's present. Presumably this is a flashback to the time that Henry made his deal with the darkness. This section is also important because it offers additional insight into Henry's character, painting him as someone who is almost too attuned to his emotions, feeling everything too intensely and vulnerably.*



*The reader can assume that Henry's breakup with Tabitha happens before he makes his deal, since post-deal Henry is seemingly incapable of being rejected or unwanted by anyone. Also note that Henry's breakup with Tabitha further supports the novel's central theme that vulnerability and uncertainty are fundamental parts of any intimate relationship or friendship.*



*This scene clarifies that the ring that Addie found hidden away in Henry's apartment likely was the ring with which he tried (and failed) to propose to Tabitha. Also, Henry's cut hand explains the bloody handkerchief that Addie finds wrapped around the ring. Also, this scene suggests a parallel between Addie's wooden ring and Henry's engagement ring. Both rings at one time held positive associations for the respective characters, but then a negative event beyond either's ability to control caused those positive associations to sour.*



*The depth of Henry's despair reaffirms the novel's main idea that emotional vulnerability and the possibility of being hurt are a fundamental part of any meaningful, genuine human connection.*



A strange man (Luc) sits down beside Henry and says, “Bad night.” The man is dressed in a swanky suit and trench coat. He has black hair and a sharp jaw, and the rain doesn’t touch him—he’s completely dry. Henry wonders if the man is a ghost. The man asks Henry what he wants. Henry says he feels alone and confused; he doesn’t know what others want from him and wishes they would love him. The man says he can make people love Henry—in exchange for Henry’s soul. Not quite believing that any of this is even happening, Henry agrees and makes a deal with the man.

*As he did with Addie, the strange man/Luc offers to give Henry the one thing he thinks he wants—to be loved. But as with Addie, it’s clear that what Luc gives Henry is a distorted version of that wish. Present-day Henry has no shortage of admirers, yet his recurrent complaint is that none of their admiration is “real.” Another interesting detail to note is that Henry’s deal/curse is essentially the inverse of Addie’s: Addie gave up love and connection for freedom/immortality, while Henry gave up his freedom to live out his natural life for love.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 3

*New York City. March 17, 2014.* Henry finishes his story. At first, Addie says nothing. Then she cries tears of happiness. She finally realizes how Henry has been able to remember her when nobody else can: Luc made a mistake! Henry doesn’t understand. Is she saying that their “deals cancel out?” Not quite, Addie explains. Addie *does* “see exactly what [she] want[s]” in Henry, but she doesn’t want looks or ambition. Instead, she wants someone to *remember* her—this, for Addie, “will always be enough.” Then Addie turns to Henry and asks how long he made his deal for. “A lifetime,” Henry replies after a pause. Technically, it’s not a lie.

*Addie’s optimistic assessment that Luc made a mistake is misguided in at least one regard: unbeknownst to Addie, her time with Henry is severely limited, as Henry will owe Luc his soul exactly one year after they made their deal. It also seems rather imprudent to believe that Luc, an all-powerful god, would make a mistake and allow to people he has cursed to circumvent their doomed fates to find happiness with each other. It just doesn’t make sense, given all the documented ways that Luc has made Addie’s life miserable over the centuries. So, this scene builds tension, leading the reader to wonder what Luc has up his sleeve in letting Addie and Henry meet and connect with each other.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 4

*New York City. March 18, 2014.* Henry watches Addie restocking shelves at the store. She touches each book so carefully, as though they are her “friends,” which he supposes they are: they are part of her story. A woman comes to the register. When she talks to Henry, her eyes are clouded over and shining. Henry wonders what the woman sees.

*Addie’s tender love for the books she shelves reaffirms how important art, storytelling, and knowledge are to her. In place of human connection, she’s had to rely on books and art to make her life meaningful over the years.*



Between customers, Addie asks Henry about his photography; she tells him he’s very good. Henry explains that to him, photography is “a very convincing lie.” As an example, he cites a photo he and his family took when Henry was young. They’d all been fighting up until the photo was taken—the whole day was a mess—but in the photo, they all look so happy. Addie asks why Henry stopped taking photos. He doesn’t answer her question. Inwardly, he considers that he stopped “Because time doesn’t work like photos.” It’s always moving forward, but photos are frozen in time. Henry raises his cell phone camera to Addie, and she reminds him it won’t work—she only ever appears as a blur.

*This passage further develops the connection between art, memory, and meaning. Henry, citing a misleading family photo, argues that photography is merely “a very convincing lie.” By contrast, Addie has always found photography to create and enhance meaning, as with her father’s woodworking, which displayed the inner life of her otherwise silent, unassuming father. Finally, this passage also proposes a relationship between photography and time. Part of the reason that Henry finds photography deceptive is because it pretends that a person can freeze time, but in reality, time keeps barreling forward, beyond anyone’s ability to stop or control.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 5

New York City. September 5, 2013. Henry wakes up to the sound of morning traffic. His head is throbbing. He tries to remember last night. He remembers Tabitha's rejection, and he remembers his conversation with the stranger—but he assumes that he has imagined the latter. That's when he sees the elegant watch on his wrist. Henry doesn't wear a watch. Henry takes it off and examines it. "Live well" is engraved on its underside. He remembers the stranger's "deal." Could this have really happened?

Suddenly, there's a knock at the door; it's Muriel. Henry asks what Muriel is doing here, and she scoffs; does family need a reason to drop by? She tells Henry he's looking good, which Henry knows can't possibly be true. Muriel says she wanted to check on Henry; Bea texted her to give her the heads up about Tabitha last night. Muriel tells Henry not to worry about the breakup; he can do much better than Tabitha, anyway. Muriel tells Henry to hang in there and that she'll see him for Yom Kippur. Then she leaves.

His head still throbbing, Henry heads to Roast, a coffeeshop near his apartment. Vanessa, a beautiful blonde barista, is working there. Normally, she doesn't give Henry a second glance. But today, she can't take her eyes off him and even initiates small talk. And when Henry picks up his order, he finds that Vanessa has written her name and number on the cup.

Henry heads to The Last Word to open the shop. An older woman enters the store sometime later and asks Henry if he can help her remember the title of a book she has in mind. Vaguely, she describes it as being "about life and death, and history," and the cover had a rose on it. Henry randomly offers her [Wolf Hall](#), though he knows this can't be what the woman is talking about. Nevertheless, the woman ecstatically announces, "That's it!" and grins at Henry. Henry is puzzled. Then he realizes that the woman must actually be thinking of [Life After Life](#), by Atkinson. He grabs a copy and asks the woman if it's the right book. "Yes!" she cries, just as delighted as before.

*This scene reveals the origins of Henry's watch: it's from the stranger, intended to keep Henry mindful of how much time he has left before it's time to relinquish his soul. These flashbacks to Henry's past help contextualize his anxieties about wasting time and not knowing what he wants out of life; his freedom to explore all his options is bound by the constraint of time the deal with Luc has imposed on him.*



*Henry's surprise at Muriel's unplanned visit suggests that she doesn't often do this—or that, in general, Henry's family isn't all that affectionate or concerned about his wellbeing. Already, it seems that Luc's deal is working, forcing everyone in Henry's life to love and pay attention to him. But does this affection count if it's not voluntary? Can a person want to be with a person if they're forced to be with a person?*



*Knowing about Henry's curse allows the reader to view all of the attention that strangers lavish on Henry through more discerning, knowing eyes. People like Vanessa aren't drawn to Henry because of Henry himself—they're drawn to Henry because Luc's curse compels them to be drawn to Henry.*



*This scene with the woman who, due to Luc's enchantment, is seemingly willing to be excited about whatever book Henry gives her, even if it's not the one she asked for, helps to unpack what's so troubling about Henry's deal/curse with Luc. The issue is that this woman, like everyone else, isn't actually responding to Henry: she's simply acting out a part that Henry's deal/curse has forced her into: she's not acting of her own volition, nor in response to anything Henry has said or done—her positive view of Henry, in other words, is coerced.*



The rest of Henry's day is just as strange. It feels like April Fool's Day to Henry. Then Robbie comes in, throwing his arm around Henry. Henry notes an odd "shining" quality to Robbie's eyes. He's also overly affectionate and sympathetic about Henry's breakup. Bea trails in after Robbie.

Then Henry's friends bring up Henry's breakup. Robbie leaves to fetch the secret whisky that Meredith keeps in back, and Bea tells Henry how happy she is that Henry broke up with Tabitha. Henry tries to correct Bea, explaining that *Tabitha* broke up with *him*, but Bea won't listen. Henry hears the stranger's words in his head: "You want to be loved. You want to be enough." Robbie returns with the whisky and three mugs. Then he flips around the OPEN sign, sits down between Henry and Bea, and uncorks the bottle. "To new beginnings," says Robbie, his eyes still shining.

The "shining" quality to Robbie's eyes reaffirms the troubling reality that nobody in Henry's new, post-deal life genuinely wants or loves Henry: Luc's power has simply enchanted them to love and want Henry. At this point, Henry appears more perplexed by this new attention than disturbed, but the reader knows that, in time, the appeal wears off as Henry understands that forced love isn't the same as genuine love.



As Henry remembers the stranger's/Luc's words to him, his friends' over-eagerness to support Henry post-breakup clicks: he understands that he's gotten exactly what he's asked for. At this point, Henry takes in Bea and Robbie's affection rather gratefully. He's yet to understand that forcing a person to love and support him isn't the same as experiencing love and support that others give voluntarily—the coercion degrades and counteracts love and affection.



## PART 4, CHAPTER 6

New York City. March 18, 2014. Bea enters The Last Word. She tells Henry that Robbie wants to know why Henry is avoiding him. Henry feels bad, but he can't excuse Robbie's rudeness at the corner shop or the dinner party. Then Henry introduces Bea to Addie. Bea repeats her observation about Addie's face being "timeless." Henry comments on the neon paint on Bea's fingers, and Bea tells him about the Artifact, a cross between a carnival and an art exhibit. Bea describes her night, and Addie appears genuinely intrigued. Addie tells Henry they should go. Henry asks Bea to close the shop for him, and then Henry and Addie head out.

It's not totally fair of Henry to be mad at Robbie; after all, Robbie's emotions and actions are being manipulated by not one but two curses: Addie's curse prevents him from remembering her, while Henry's curse ensures Robbie's unnatural obsession with Henry. Also note how the name of the art exhibit, the Artifact, reflects the novel's central theme of art's ability to immortalize ideas and give meaning to life (an "artifact" is an object of cultural or historical significance, made by a human being).



## PART 4, CHAPTER 7

New York City. September 5, 2013. Henry returns to his apartment after drinking with Bea and Robbie. He takes a beer from the fridge and starts to box up Tabitha's belongings. He finishes the first beer and starts a second. Then he heads to the Merchant, which is busy as usual. Mark, a man in his 50s, is tending bar. Normally, it takes forever for Mark to get to Henry, but tonight, Mark walks right over. Then he pours Henry a shot of tequila on the house. Henry initially assumes that Mark has noticed how awful Henry looks and is pitying him, but Mark's eyes have a "strange and subtle light" to them. Henry is totally confused. He remembers how Vanessa acted that morning at the coffee shop. Then he looks down at the watch on his wrist. He realizes then that the watch—and the deal he made—are real.

Just as Addie did so many years before, Henry spends the early days of his deal/curse coming to understand the rules of his new, post-deal world. Unlike Addie, Henry appears to assess his surroundings more positively; he's perplexed by the attention that everyone pays him, but he's not put off by the "strange and subtle light" that fills the eyes of everyone who looks at him. It's yet to sink in that the coerced nature of everyone's attention degrades and devalues that attention.



A man interrupts Henry's musings to offer Henry a white powder. Henry was 12 the first time he got high on marijuana, and in the years since, he's tried various pills—anything to dull the pain of existing. Henry used to want to be happy, but with Tabitha gone now, all he wants is to feel good. So, Henry accepts the man's white powder. The man calls Henry "perfect," and then Henry feels dizzy and runs to sit against a wall to steady himself.

A girl named Lucia and a boy named Benji approach Henry. Henry notices that both have an intense longing in their eyes. Nobody has looked at Henry this way before—not on a first date, and not even during sex. Lucia and Benji laugh, and Henry realizes they are trying to ask him to participate in a threesome. He goes home with them.

## PART 4, CHAPTER 8

New York City. September 7, 2013. Henry waits in line at the Roast and thinks about how much he loves feeling wanted. The last few days have been a blur of various people gravitating toward him for various reasons. But they all have one thing in common: their eyes are filled with a thick, icy fog, which reminds Henry the attention "isn't entirely real."

Henry reaches the register. Vanessa is there. She smiles shyly and asks Henry why he never called her. Henry laughs and hands his phone to her so she can enter her number. He feels corny but promises to call her. Henry is about to leave when a voice calls his name. He turns and sees Dean Melrose sitting at a table. Melrose tells Henry that there's an open position in the theology school—and he think Henry would be perfect for the job. Henry assumes Melrose is kidding and reminds him that he hasn't even completed his PhD. Plus, Melrose failed him. But Melrose only hands Henry his card and tells Henry to come in to interview for the position.

Henry returns to The Last Word and Bea scolds him for being late. Henry apologizes. Then he asks Bea if he seems different or strange lately. Bea doesn't notice anything different about him. She asks Henry what's going on. Henry knows Bea won't believe him if he tells her about the deal, so he drops it.

*This scene helps contextualize Henry's inability to see past the superficial aspects of his new, post-deal life: he's still grieving from his recent breakup and is only interested in feeling good. Thus, he's unable to properly comprehend what's wrong with accepting strangers' affection toward him, even if that affection is coerced and insincere.*



*This scene reaffirms Henry's reasons for not being more initially skeptical of his curse/deal with Luc: he's tired of being vulnerable and doesn't care if other people's sudden desire for him is fake. He just wants to feel good. Like Addie, Henry's single-minded pursuit of what he wants most—love—blinds him to the reality that his deal with Luc is not without its tradeoffs.*



*Little by little, Henry is realizing that his new irresistibility isn't all it's cracked up to be: the misty eyes of everyone who desires him remind him that their interest is coerced, and therefore not "entirely real."*



*The irresistibility with which Luc's deal/curse has imbued Henry isn't limited to love and physical attraction: it extends to Henry's professional life as well. Suddenly, Dean Melrose, who previously failed Henry, thinks that Henry is the perfect candidate for a job for which Henry is hilariously underqualified. The ridiculousness of Melrose's offer seems to put things into perspective for Henry, showing him that everyone's sudden desire for him is phony and thus meaningless.*



*Bea doesn't seem quite as affected by Henry's deal with Luc as everyone else, but it's possible that her failure to see anything different in him is itself an effect of the curse: she's seeing Henry as unchanged because that's how she wants to see him.*



Bea tells Henry about a new idea she has for a thesis. She shows him three portraits, each depicting what looks to be the same young woman, though the portraits all come from different times and schools of art. Bea calls the woman “the ghost in the frame.” One portrait is a pencil sketch, depicting a woman lying tangled in sheets. She has freckles across her cheeks. The second portrait is French and done in an abstract style, but it depicts a woman with freckles, too. The third piece is a silhouette sculpture, consisting of a slab of cherry wood with “pinpoint tunnels” carved straight through it. Henry doubts the works all depict the same woman, but Bea points out that the woman’s freckles are the same. She excitedly wonders who the woman might have been.

*The woman in the paintings that Bea shows Henry is clearly Addie, though Henry hasn’t yet met Addie and has no way of knowing this. One curious detail is the role that Addie’s freckles play in each artwork. Part of Addie’s curse is that she can leave no mark on the world—thus, she can’t be photographed, as a photograph would immortalize her image in time. But these works, which foreground Addie’s freckles, are different. They’re less replicas of Addie than they are interpretations that depict the feature of Addie’s (her freckles) that was most striking to each artist. So, these paintings gesture toward the idea that Luc raised earlier: that ideas are separate—and stronger—than memories.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 9

*New York City. March 18, 2014.* Henry forgot all about Bea’s latest thesis proposal. But now, having met Addie, it all makes sense to him. He confronts Addie about it on their way to the Artifact, and Addie confirms that she was, indeed, the subject of all three works. Henry asks how this is possible—hasn’t the curse made it so she can’t leave a mark? Addie explains that though she can’t tell her story or make people remember her, she can’t control their ideas, and “art is about ideas.”

*Addie makes explicit that her ability to be the subject of artworks has to do with the fact that “art is about ideas.” She seems to suggest that the artists for whom she posed weren’t capturing her exactly as she was, but their impressions of her. There’s a difference between subjective interpretation and objective reality, and Addie has used this difference as a loophole to circumvent the constraints of her curse.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 10

*New York City. September 13, 2013.* Henry loves his family, but he doesn’t relate to them, and he doesn’t like who he is around them. Yet, he still finds himself driving north to see them. As Henry nears his parents’ home in Newburgh, his apprehension grows. Strauss family dinners are always stressful. Henry knows how dinner will go: Henry’s father and David will talk about medicine as Henry’s mother and Muriel will talk about art. Henry, meanwhile, will have nothing to contribute.

*Henry has never liked his family dinners because his family’s judgment, which is beyond his ability control, has always left him feeling emotionally vulnerable and inadequate. But given how virtually everyone else’s attitude toward Henry has changed after Henry made his deal with Luc, it’s likely that this family dinner will be quite different than past dinners.*



Henry is surprised when Henry’s father greets him with a smile, his eyes “threaded with fog.” David and Muriel greet Henry uncharacteristically warmly, too. Nobody criticizes his weight, clothing, or lack of career. Nobody mentions Tabitha. Henry feels like he’s in an alternate reality. Over dinner, everyone listens to everything he has to say with the utmost attention. Henry tells them about Dean Melrose’s proposition, and everyone agrees that Henry would be a great fit for the job. Later, when Henry retreats to the kitchen to help Henry’s mother with the dishes, she says she’s sorry that Henry “wasted so much time on [Tabitha].” Then she tells Henry to go fetch Muriel for dessert.

*Just as the reader may have guessed, Henry’s deal with Luc has caused Henry’s family to become suddenly—and involuntarily—overly supportive and admiring of Henry. But, still reeling from his recent breakup with Tabitha, Henry allows himself to disregard the fact that the affection his family is showing him now is not really genuine. He just wants to be loved and comforted, and he has yet to critically examine the reality that all human relationships are a two-way street: they rely on two people choosing to open themselves up to one another, and choosing to entertain the possibility that that openness leaves them vulnerable to heartbreak, misunderstanding, and disappointment.*





Henry finds Muriel smoking a joint on the porch swing out back. They share the joint and chat. Muriel asks why they don't hang out more often; she might be busy, she explains, but she'll always have time for her brother. Then they go back inside for dessert, and things are just as pleasant as they were before. When Henry gets up to leave, everyone hugs him goodbye and tells him again how proud they are.

*On the surface, Henry's deal with Luc seems only to have improved his life: it's giving him the opportunity to grow closer to his sister, whom, this scene implies, he rarely interacted with prior to the deal. But this surface-level examination of Henry's new reality assumes that a person can make others care about them—that a person's love can be meaningful if it's not something they voluntarily give.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 11

*New York City. March 18, 2014.* Henry and Addie are at the Artifact now. It's built in a park that runs along a defunct rail line. At the entrance, a volunteer gives them colored rubber wristbands. Each band grants them access to a different part of the exhibition. One exhibit is a giant kaleidoscope-like sculpture made of glass that turns and shifts with each step they take. It's called "Memory."

*The Artifact brings to life one of the book's main themes: art, expression, and memory—and the way these concepts relate and come together to make life meaningful.*



Another exhibit, "Sky," is set up inside a tunnel. It's made by a light artist and consists of a series of rooms. The last room is a black chamber filled with stars; it's meant to resemble the Milky Way. It's dark, but Henry can make out Addie's wide smile. She's overjoyed that she can still discover new things—even after so many years.

*Addie's delight at Artifact is part of the overarching perspective that has allowed her to persevere through 300 years: her invisibility might be lonely, but this loneliness is worth it, since it allows her the opportunity to discover new things. Addie's curiosity about the world was what compelled her to make a deal with Luc in the first place, and it's remained a vital part of her personality ever since.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 12

*New York City. September 19, 2013.* Henry meets Vanessa at a small taqueria. For once, Henry doesn't overthink everything he says. He feels natural and effortless, "because he is enough." They make small talk, and Henry asks Vanessa what she sees in him. She smiles, then shyly offers that Henry is "exactly what [she's] been looking for." She uses generic words like "outgoing, funny, [and] ambitious," and as she talks, the white mist grows thicker over her eyes. And then Henry finally understands: she can't see him at all.

*Henry's date with Vanessa allows him to see his deal with Luc for the curse it truly is. He finally understands that the cost of having everyone enchanted to want him is that nobody sees him for who he truly is. He realizes that the curse has freed him from experiencing emotional vulnerability—a fundamental part of all intimate human relationships—and so, none of his relationships is real.*



Later, Henry wakes to Vanessa running her hand down his back. Vanessa says they need to talk. Then she announces that she loves Henry. She assures him that he doesn't need to feel pressured to say it back, though. Henry looks at her, confused; is she sure? They've only been seeing each other for one week. Unsure of what to make of all this, Henry takes a shower to think things over.

*Suddenly, Henry begins to doubt and question the affection he earlier accepted with open arms. Vanessa's declaration of love seems too good to be true because it is: Vanessa doesn't love Henry, she only loves whatever version of Henry Luc's curse has caused her to project onto him.*



After his shower, Henry walks into the kitchen and finds Vanessa burning a box of Tabitha's old things in the sink. Henry angrily demands to know what she's doing. Vanessa explains that Henry is "holding on to the past." Henry is furious and tells Vanessa to go home. Vanessa starts to sob, and Henry assures her that he cares about her and promises to call her back later. After Henry shuts the door behind Vanessa, the smoke detector goes off behind him.

*It's ludicrous for Vanessa to accuse Henry of clinging to the past by keeping the belongings of the long-term girlfriend he broke up with just weeks ago—and Vanessa's irrational logic and behavior further proves to Henry that his deal with Luc has cost him far more than he bargained for.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 13

New York City. October 23, 2013. Henry, Bea, and Robbie settle down on Henry's sofa for movie night. Henry groans when Robbie announces that they're going to watch [The Shining](#)—Henry hates horror movies. Robbie turns off all the lights so they can feel extra scared. When the murdered twin girls appear on screen, Robbie places his hand on Henry's thigh—and he keeps it there long after the frightening moment passes. Henry gets up to make more popcorn, and Robbie follows him into the kitchen to help.

*It's one thing for Henry to contend with the enchanted affection of practical strangers like Vanessa, but things are different with Robbie, someone with whom Henry is close and shares a complicated, romantic history. Before, Henry might have welcomed Robbie's attempt at physical intimacy—but can he accept it now that he understands that it's not something that Robbie would want, were he not under a spell?*



Once in the kitchen, Robbie kisses Henry on the lips. Henry starts to return the kiss. This, Henry thinks, feels better than all the others' attention. But then Henry pulls away. What he and Robbie used to have was real—but then it ended. And what's happening now isn't real.

*Robbie's affection feels empty and wrong to Henry because Robbie isn't choosing to be affectionate, he's merely acting the part that Luc's power has thrust on him.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 14

New York City. November 14, 2013. Henry is grateful that Brooklyn has so many coffee shops; he hasn't been able to return to the Roast since his and Vanessa's breakup. Henry has just reached the front of the line when he hears Tabitha call his name; he hasn't seen her since their breakup. "I've missed you," she tells him. He gives a vague explanation about the box of her things being burnt, but she doesn't seem to mind—she's only concerned that Henry didn't get hurt in the fire. Tabitha leans into Henry. Henry wants her back, but then he remembers that none of this is real. He wants to ask Tabitha what she sees in him now, but he sees the fog in her eyes and already knows what she sees.

*If anything, Henry's deal with Luc does exactly the opposite of what Henry wanted it to. Henry wanted to feel loved and that he is "enough" for people, but the fog in Tabitha's eyes only confirms for Henry that Henry, unfiltered, is not "enough" for Tabitha, and that she would not love him, had no supernatural forces interfered to manipulate her feelings. In short, Henry is learning that love isn't real unless it's chosen.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 15

*New York City. March 18, 2014.* Addie and Henry are still at the Artifact. They trade one of their colorful wristbands for entry into each exhibit. The yellow wristband gets them into soundproof cubes that amplify or dampen noise. There are instructions for what they are to do written on the cubes' walls. One message tells them to WHISPER. Addie says, "I have a secret." The next message tells them to SHOUT, so Addie does. Henry follows her lead, screaming as loud as he can. He realizes that he feels happier than he's ever felt before. When he's with Addie, time speeds up—but he no longer worries about it.

*Up until now, Henry has spent his life so fixated on self-preservation—on minimizing hurt and disappointment and maximizing happiness and meaningfulness—that he's counterintuitively prevented himself from living the full life he longs to have. His carefree, joyous experience with Addie at the Artifact shows him that true joy requires a person to lower their guard and risk being hurt and disappointed. In other words, the greatest joys aren't possible without some degree of risk. With Addie, he stops being so protective of his time, and as a result, the time he yields to her becomes more meaningful—not less meaningful.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 16

*New York City. December 9, 2013.* Henry feels a sense of dread as he approaches Dean Melrose's office. The dean greets him enthusiastically before offering him a seat. Dean Melrose cuts straight to the chase, explaining that the position he has in mind for Henry is a tenure-track position. Henry nearly chokes. Dean Melrose asks Henry, "What do you want for yourself?" It's the same question he asked when he pressured Henry to leave in his third year of the PhD program. Henry had told him he wasn't sure what he wanted. And back then, that answer hadn't been good enough. Now, though, when Henry once more says he doesn't know, Dean Melrose applauds him for "be[ing] open." Henry reminds Dean Melrose that he's completely unqualified for a tenure-track position. But Melrose, his eyes foggy and gray, rebuts all of Henry's protestations. Henry says he'll think about it.

*Dean Melrose's enthusiasm for Henry's uncertainty—an uncertainty Melrose earlier condemned—is yet further evidence to Henry that his new, post-deal life is more of a curse than a blessing. It shows Henry that nothing he says matters, since the curse has enchanted Melrose to approve of anything that Henry says or does. And so, while Henry thought the curse would make him matter more, it has, in fact, made him matter less.*



Henry returns to work. By noon, he can't take it anymore. He uncorks Meredith's bottle of whisky and pours himself a drink. An off-duty police officer wanders into the shop as Henry is drinking. Henry doesn't try to hide the liquor, but the police officer only smiles and says, "Cheers," his eyes as misty as everyone else's have been.

*Increasingly, the novel suggests that Henry and Addie's curses aren't so different: both render them invisible to others, though in different ways.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 17

*New York City. December 31, 2013.* Henry is at a New Year's Eve party at Robbie's place. Henry holds a beer with one hand and a man who is kissing him with the other. The man is way out of Henry's league, and Henry has been drinking too much. When the man starts to unbuckle Henry's belt, Henry stops him and asks if he even wants Henry. The man acts like Henry has just asked the world's dumbest question; Henry, he reasons, is "gorgeous. Sexy. Smart." Henry asks the man how he could possibly know this—he and Henry have only just met—and the man can't explain it.

Henry leaves the man and wanders into Robbie's room. He opens the window and climbs out onto the fire escape, though it's freezing out. After a while, Bea opens the window and asks what's wrong. Henry explains that Robbie is in love with him. Bea says Robbie has always loved Henry. Henry argues that Robbie isn't in love with the person Henry really is—he's in love with the person he *wants* Henry to be. Bea says that Henry doesn't need to change—he's perfect as he is. Then she says that Henry is "an amazing listener" and "always there when [she] needs [him]," neither of which are true. Henry realizes that Bea sees Henry as the friend she wants him to be—not the friend he actually is.

Henry asks Bea what she'd ask for if she could have anything. "What's the cost?" Bea asks. Henry says the cost is her soul. Bea pauses, and then answers, "Happiness." When Henry answers that he'd like to be loved, Bea's eyes remain misty—but they grow deeply sad, too. "You can't make people love you," she tells him. It wouldn't be real. Henry suddenly feels like the biggest fool in the world.

## PART 4, CHAPTER 18

*New York City. Winter 2014.* Henry now sees his situation as a "curse" rather than a "deal." He resigns himself to acting as the better friend, brother, and son that the curse deludes people into thinking he already is. And then, he meets Addie. And when he looks into her eyes, he sees no mist. And then, over coffee, she says that she sees Henry for who he is, not someone who is perfect. And for the first time since he made his deal, Henry doesn't feel cursed—"he feels seen."

*Henry has only lived with Luc's curse for a few months now, but it's already gotten old for him. Before, still reeling from grief over his recent breakup, Henry would have pounced at the chance to have this attractive man swooning over him. Now, though, Henry sees the man as an empty vessel who is only interested in Henry because he lacks the agency not to be interested in Henry. Before, Henry thought that vulnerability was a curse, and now he sees that the opposite is true: vulnerability is a blessing, for it is what makes real intimacy possible.*



*This scene deepens Henry's despair. Up until now, it seemed that Bea was, inexplicably, the last person not to view Henry through enchanted, rose-tinted glasses. But now, with her remarks about what "an amazing listener" and reliable friend Henry is (both things Henry knows aren't exactly true), it's clear that Bea, too, can no longer see Henry for his true self.*



*Henry's sad conversation with Bea highlights two key ideas: that everything worthwhile has a cost, and the interconnectedness of love and freedom, both points that resonate with Addie's deal with Luc as well.*



*Henry's observation about "feel[ing] seen" for the first time implicitly draws a connection between Addie's curse and Henry's curse. In different ways, their deals with Luc have caused them to become invisible to others—and now, their feelings for each other are what make them feel seen. With this, the novel suggests the power of genuine human connection to create meaning and purpose in a person's life.*



## PART 4, CHAPTER 19

New York City. March 18, 2014. Henry and Addie have one more exhibit to see. This one is set up in a space made of plexiglass. Inside are shelves of clear glass. There's a sign mounted above them that reads "YOU ARE THE **ART**" and bowls of paint in every aisle. People who have visited the exhibit before them have painted signatures, handprints, and patterns on the walls. Addie places her finger in the bowl of green paint and draws a spiral on the wall—but it immediately disappears. But Henry has an idea. He dips his own hand into the paint and then tells Addie to place hers over his: they can draw together. And when they paint on the wall with Addie's hand over Henry's, the paint doesn't disappear this time. Addie laughs, overjoyed.

And then, for the first time in years, she draws: birds, trees, gardens, a workshop. Finally, she guides Henry's hand along the glass and spells out her name in cursive: Addie LaRue. Henry can tell that the curves that make up the letters are more important than any of the other images they've made. Afterward, Addie pulls Henry out of the exhibit, onto the subway, and back to Henry's apartment. There, she presses a pen into his hand, and he writes her name, repeatedly.

*Addie and Henry's communal artmaking experience foregrounds the importance of human interaction. It's not so much Addie's inability to be photographed or tell her story that makes her invisible, so much as her inability to connect and interact with others in meaningful, memorable ways. Her happiness here comes, in part, from her ability to create art for the first time in centuries, but more than this, it's the ability to experience something joyous with another person who sees, understands, and knows her. And the fact that this major turning point in Addie's life happens as she is creating art reaffirms the important role that expression and creativity play in creating meaning as well.*



*For so many years, Luc has been the only person to speak Addie's name, and he's used this power to control Addie and rob her of her personal identity. But now, she reclaims her name and frees herself. And the fact that she does so with the help of Henry—with someone she cares about—doesn't diminish her reclaimed individuality. To the contrary, it strengthens her individuality: she reclaims her identity as "Addie LaRue" in speaking that name to herself, and in letting another person know and call her by that name.*



## PART 5, CHAPTER 1

Villon-sur-Sarthe, France. July 29, 1764. Addie walks to the church in the center of Villon. She finds her father's grave almost immediately. His name, Jean LaRue, is there, but the gravestone makes no mention of his craft or what kind of person he was. Addie notices his year of death: 1714, the year she left. She tries to remember if there were any signs of illness, but she can't. But now, her memory of her parents is already escaping her. Seeing Estele's grave saddens her, for Estele so wanted to be buried underneath a **tree**, not "in the shadow of a house she did not worship." So, Addie walks to a small shed on the border of the churchyard, finds a trowel, and uses it to dig a sapling out of the soil. Then she replants the sapling over Estele's grave.

*Jean LaRue's impersonal gravestone foregrounds the idea that ideas are stronger than memories. Jean's gravestone memorializes him as a physical person who lived and died, but it can't do justice to the person he was, the things he believed in, or the art he created during his years on earth. By contrast, Addie's act of planting a sapling atop Estele's grave is more powerful and meaningful because it's an idea: it represents the beliefs Estele held in life, and her desire for freedom. The tree might not memorialize Estele's physical name, but it powerfully evokes the person that Estele truly was.*



Next, Addie visits Estele's abandoned hut at the edge of the woods. Estele's garden has become tangled and overgrown since her death. Addie walks through the front door. It's damp and dark inside—and empty. Addie assumes that Estele's belongings were distributed among the villagers after her death, "deemed public property simply because she did not wed." Addie goes into Estele's garden and takes what beans and carrots she can. She carries the vegetables back into the house and cooks them over the hearth.

Then, just as Addie has expected, Luc appears behind her. Luc mocks Estele, noting how she talked of freedom—but "was so lonely in the end." He says that Addie should have been here for Estele when Estele was ill. Luc's words feel like a slap. Enraged, Addie runs toward Luc and hits him in the face. She thinks she has hurt him—but then he begins to laugh. And then his face transforms from a man's to something frighteningly unhuman.

Luc claims that Addie has forgotten whom she's dealing with—that maybe he has been too easy on her. Suddenly, pain shoots up through Addie's body, and she feels achy and old. Her hands sprout wrinkles, and her skin becomes papery and fragile. Addie had only asked for life, not youth, but Luc has given her both—and Addie's youth has gone to her head. Luc tells Addie that he'll make her suffering stop—all she has to do is surrender. Addie refuses. For a moment, she thinks it's all over. But then, the ache goes away, and her youth returns. And then Luc is gone.

## PART 5, CHAPTER 2

*New York City. March 19, 2014.* Addie leans against the window, sips a cup of tea, and watches the sun rise. She returns to the bedroom, where Henry is sleeping peacefully. She picks up Henry's watch, which is resting on his bedside table, and sees the engraving on it: *Live well*. The words chill her. Henry wakes up just as she's about to pick up the watch. Addie says she should go. But when Henry finds out that she doesn't have a place of her own, he tells her she can stay at his place. He removes his things from the bottom drawer of his dresser and tells her she can store her things there. Henry leaves to shower. Addie wonders what would happen to any things she tried to store in the empty dresser drawer. Would they disappear over time?

*The novel repeatedly shows how Addie's gender, in particular, is one of the ways that society threatens her hold on freedom. This scene foregrounds this idea, with Addie's remark that Estele's wishes weren't honored, and her personal effects "deemed public property simply because she did not wed."*



*Luc's insulting remarks about Estele double as insulting remarks about Addie: Addie, like her mentor Estele, longed for freedom—and she has it now, but obtaining it required her to abandon the people she cared about. Luc's mocking enrages Addie because there's truth to it: Addie did abandon Estele. And while that abandonment allowed Addie to live an enriched, meaningful life that wouldn't have been possible if she'd stayed in Villon, Addie is left to wonder whether everything she has experienced in her travels was worth the regret she feels at having abandoned Estele in her hour of need.*



*This scene reinforces the power struggle between Luc and Addie that is one of the novel's central conflicts: Addie is not only continuing to live to experience the adventure she's longed for, but also to prove to Luc that he's underestimated her. Here, though, Luc reminds Addie that they are not fighting a fair fight, for his godly power far exceeds hers.*



*The watch's engraving chills Addie because it reaffirms her suspicion that there's something about Henry's deal with Luc that he's not telling her. Addie's apprehension about what would happen to any personal effects she were to place in the drawers Henry has set aside for her show that, unlike Henry, she hasn't fully accepted that Luc has made a mistake in allowing them to meet. She knows that she's still indebted to Luc and, as such, there is always a price to pay.*



Addie dresses in yesterday's outfit. Then she stumbles upon the notebook Henry was writing in last night, which has ended up on the floor. She expects it to crumple as soon as she touches it, but it doesn't. She reads what Henry wrote under her name: "This is how it starts." Addie reads the story of her life until there are no more words. The empty space below is waiting to be filled with the rest of her story.

*The permanence of Addie's words that Henry transcribed last night is an encouraging sign that at least something about her curse is changing—she's able to leave a mark on the world in a way that she hasn't been able to before. Addie's optimism about the blank page waiting to be filled with more stories is characteristic of the general optimism and curiosity that has allowed her to persevere for so many years already. The notebook also foregrounds the importance of creativity and self-expression and the role they play in creating meaning.*



## PART 5, CHAPTER 3

*Fécamp, France. July 29, 1778.* It's crazy that Addie might have gone her whole life without seeing the ocean. Now, though, Addie is walking along the cliffs, listening to the crash of waves, and smelling the salt of the ocean. Addie's world used to be Villon—but now, it's so much bigger. Addie has been in Fécamp for about a week now. The situation in Paris is growing increasingly dire: food shortages are at their worst, and political tensions are rising. Addie really should just sail across the ocean. But something always stops her. Today that something is the impending storm. Addie reads [The Tempest](#) as she considers the stormy weather.

*Addie's allusion to the brewing political tensions in Paris refers to the French Revolution, a period of societal change in France that was driven by principles of liberal democracy and born of dissatisfaction with France's rampant economic inequality and an out-of-touch ruling elite. Addie's ability to look in wonder out at the ocean despite the looming threat of chaos reinforces the optimism and zest for life that has driven Addie to persevere in the face of political instability and an uncertain future; she can see the calm before and after the storm, so to speak, and this motivates her to push forward.*



"Leave not a rack behind—" Addie reads—and then a voice behind her completes the line: "We are such stuff as dreams are made on." It's Luc. Addie is not happy to see him; she's still upset about what he did to her in Villon, though they've seen each other a handful of times since then. Luc tells Addie that he was there when Shakespeare wrote that verse—he wanted "a patron," and Luc made a deal with him.

*This line of [The Tempest](#), spoken by Prospero, gets at the unknowable, dreamlike nature of life. Within the context of the novel, the line foregrounds the notion that ideas (and by extension, art and creativity and self-expression) are more central to meaning than memory.*



Luc instructs Addie to walk with him, and she reluctantly obliges. They walk along the coast until they reach a church. Addie's clothes are soaked through from the pouring rain, so she walks through the door that Luc opens for her. Addie prayed in a church growing up, and she's never understood how being inside a church makes people feel closer to God. Now, she remarks aloud how easily her parents believed in God. She, however, was never able to believe in things she couldn't see with her own eyes.

*Addie's thoughts about religion resonate with the book's broader exploration of the difference between ideas and memories. She's asking if the physical presence of a church makes people feel closer to God—or if it's the more elusive idea of faith that creates this feeling.*



Luc wonders if Addie ever wishes she'd prayed to God instead of Luc. Addie has, but she doesn't tell Luc this. Luc explains that the main difference between himself and God is that he, unlike God, will always answer Addie's calls.

*Luc is essentially asking Addie if the certainty that he'll always answer her prayers has been worth the suffering that her deal with Luc has caused her. The risk of dealing with the Christian God, by contrast, is far less—but so is the reward.*



With this, a light emerges from Luc's open palm, and an orb—a soul—takes shape. Addie has always thought a soul would be a grand, substantial thing, but this orb is so small. Still, Addie can't take her eyes off the orb, and she tries to reach for it—but Luc pulls back his hand before she can touch it. Luc says that looks can be deceiving—and at this, the orb loses its light and turns into **Addie's wooden ring**. If Addie really wants to know "the truth," Luc says, he can show her—but she has to surrender herself to him. Addie can see that Luc is trying to tempt her to give up, and she tells him she'd prefer to wait and "wonder."

*With each time Addie turns down Luc's urgings to surrender to him, Luc develops new strategies to tempt Addie to give up and relinquish her soul. Here, he seems to have realized that no amount of suffering or loneliness will be enough to tempt Addie, so he appeals to her thirst for knowledge, offering the temptation of "the truth" if she gives in to him. But Addie, once more, shows Luc that he has underestimated and misunderstood her, suggesting that it's not knowledge that she prizes, but the quest for it: the experience of learning and understanding might necessitate uncertainty and error, but at least to Addie, this uncertainty—this sustained "wonder"—is what makes life worthwhile.*



## PART 5, CHAPTER 4

*New York City. March 23, 2014.* Addie sits in a corner of The Last Word as Henry works. Now that Henry has told her about his deal, Addie sees evidence of it everywhere: in the man who laughs at everything Henry says, or the teenage customer who stands as near to Henry as she can and blushes when he notices. Henry closes the shop for the day, and he and Addie step out into the cool evening. Henry says he wants to take Addie somewhere she's never been before.

*In light of the previous chapter, in which Addie praised "wonder" and devalued "the truth," Henry's curse/deal seems all the more tragic. Henry's love life is devoid of wonder and intrigue—he knows exactly what people see in him, and he also knows that what they see is superficial and unreal.*



Henry leads her to Grand Central. Addie is confused, at first—she, along with most people, has been to Grand Central—but Henry instructs her to place her ear against the tiled wall. Then he jogs to the opposite corner and does the same—and then he whispers her name, and she hears him. Addie is startled and whispers back, "How are you doing this?" Henry explains that the sound waves travel along the curve of the arch in the hall's ceiling; they're in what's called a "whispering gallery" right now. Addie is happy that after so many years, there are still new things to discover. Henry whispers to Addie to tell Henry a story, and she obliges.

*When Henry shows Addie the whispering gallery, it's further confirmation of the principle that has kept her going all these years, despite the loneliness and suffering she's incurred because of her invisible life: that there is always something new and interesting to discover, and this is what makes life worth living. Mystery and uncertainty might bring about hardship and suffering, but without mystery and uncertainty, life is dull and meaningless.*





## PART 5, CHAPTER 5

*Paris, France. July 29, 1789.* The air in Paris smells of smoke and gunfire. Soldiers shout orders, and people cry out, “Vive la France.” A revolutionary spirit fills the air, and the city streets have become a maze of confusing barriers and dead ends. So, Addie isn’t shocked when she turns a corner and finds a stack of crates blocking her from moving forward. Then she hears a gun go off behind her. She turns and finds a group of men blocking her in. They’re armed with muskets. Addie calls to them, “Vive la France!” and attempts to make her voice sound as gruff and masculine as possible. She tries to tell them she’s just lost, but some of the men suspect she may be a spy. One man orders Addie to lay down her weapon and remove her hat. Addie hopes that the darkness will disguise her feminine features.

As soon as Addie removes her hat, the mood shifts, and Addie can tell the men have figured her out. They draw nearer to her. Just then, the men stop in their tracks. Addie turns and sees Luc. He runs his hands along the blade of Addie’s sword. “My Adeline,” he says, and playfully scolds her for getting into trouble all the time.

Luc steps sideways into a wall. Addie follows him and expects to crash into solid brick, but instead, she falls into darkness, and then she’s in a new place altogether. Here, there are no burning barricades. Luc tells Addie that they’re in Florence. Addie is angry and demands that Luc take her back, but he refuses. She follows him into an open courtyard. The air is warm; it’s summer here. Luc sits down on a bench and produces a bottle of wine and two glasses.

Luc hands Addie a glass of wine and toasts, “To long life.” Addie is confused. Sometimes, she tells Luc, Luc seems to enjoy watching Addie suffer. But other times, he is merciful. She wishes he’d stop toying with her. Luc’s face grows dark. He urges Addie not to see anything he does for her as kindness—because it’s not that. It’s only that he “want[s] to be the one who breaks [her].” And with this, Luc vanishes.

*With the backdrop of smoke, gunfire, and revolutionary cries, it’s evident that the French Revolution is now fully underway. The precariousness of Addie’s situation in this scene reinforces the reality that her deal with Luc has not given her absolute freedom—she must still exist within a society where her gender limits what freedom is available to her and even puts her in physical danger.*



*Luc swoops in to save Addie, but this isn’t an act of grace—with his signature “My Adeline” address, he reminds her that he possesses her and that her freedom and wellbeing are his to control.*



*Luc saves Addie, but in the process, he totally upends her life, transporting her to a country she’s never been to, where people speak a foreign language she’s never encountered before. Just as his initial deal with her came at a significant cost, so too does every effort he makes to help her. But at this point, Addie is well aware that all her dealings with Luc are awash with manipulation and calculated power plays.*



*Luc’s ominous remark about “want[ing] to be the one who breaks [Addie]” reminds Addie—and the reader—to be skeptical of everything Luc does, for he does everything with the same end in mind: to get Addie to surrender her soul to him. The reader should bear this in mind with regard to Luc’s apparent “mistake” of allowing Henry and Addie to cross paths—was this really a mistake, or is it part of some bigger plan to finally convince Addie to give up?*



## PART 5, CHAPTER 6

*New York City. April 6, 2014.* Henry and Addie are sharing fries at a pub now. They finish their food just as their waiter returns to the kitchen. Addie gets up to leave. Henry insists that they pay, but Addie tells him that their waiter won't remember serving them and will just be confused. Henry won't budge, though. The waiter will remember Henry—he's "the exact opposite of invisible." The word "invisible" stings. Annoyed, Addie slams two twenties on the table. "Better?" she asks Henry. Henry asks Addie where she got the money. Addie doesn't tell him that she shoplifted from a high-end store and sold her wares to a pawn shop. Now, Addie is upset. She tells Henry that she doesn't need him to control and belittle her.

Addie ducks out of the pub. Before long, Henry is beside her. Addie asks if she ruined everything. Henry says it's okay—they just had a fight. Addie has wanted love for so many years. She always assumed it would be easy—the opposite of what she had with Luc—but it's not. Henry prompts Addie to continue her story. Did she ever return to Paris? Addie thinks about this first time she left France. She'd never thought to do it before Luc forced it on her. Now, she wonders if Luc "meant to cast her into chaos." Maybe he just wanted her to beg for his help.

*This scene marks a turning point in Addie and Henry's relationship: it's the first time they've had a fight. Addie's reason for getting upset—she feels that Henry is trying to control her—also resonates with the book's broader thesis that absolute love and freedom are mutually exclusive; that is, a person inevitably must be willing to give up some of their personal freedom and independence to experience genuine love with another person. Addie discovered this when she first made her deal with Luc, and she's experiencing it all over again in this squabble with Henry. Her own moral acceptance of stealing used to be all the validation she needed to steal, but now she has Henry's feelings and opinions to consider, too.*



*Addie has believed that genuine love is characterized by harmony and certainty—but what she learns from her fight and reconciliation with Henry is that love is really about trusting another person enough to be able to dwell in uncertainty and discord together. The "chaos" that she experienced with Luc was different because it wasn't rooted in mutual vulnerability—it was caused by Luc's selfish efforts to disarm and control her.*



## PART 5, CHAPTER 7

*Venice, Italy. July 29, 1806.* Addie wakes up wrapped in silk sheets. Venice is so much hotter than Paris, and the open window offers little relief from the oppressive heat. Matteo sits at the foot of the bed. Addie finds that he's just as beautiful now as he was last night. Mornings are usually awkward for her, but Matteo is calm. Addie realizes he's **sketching** her, but she doesn't cover herself. She's had years to grow comfortable in her skin.

Addie asks Matteo to see his work. He says he's not finished yet but hands her the pad anyway. The figure Matteo has drawn is her, but her face is abstract and imprecise. When she removes her hand from the page, she finds that she has not smeared the charcoal, though she has charcoal on her thumb. Addie wishes she could take the **sketch** with her. If Matteo keeps it, he will forget whom he drew, but not the physical drawing. Yet the image will remain—"It will be real."

*This scene explains the origins of one of the artworks that Sam's proposed thesis centered around. It also reinforces how centrally art and artists have figured in Addie's life and quest to reclaim some of visibility she lost when she made her deal with Luc.*



*Addie, in this section, reaffirms what Luc told her earlier in the novel about the power of idea over memory. Though Matteo will forget Addie the moment she leaves the room, his drawing of her—his visual rendering of the idea of her—will remain and "be real." That charcoal from the drawing has smeared onto Addie's hand—even as invisible Addie remains incapable of smudging the drawing itself—reaffirms the strength of ideas over memories.*



Later that night, after Addie has left Matteo, she stands on a bridge over the canal and thinks about what Luc said after he got her kicked out of Geoffrin's salon: "Ideas are wilder than memories." Luc had meant this to hurt her, but she finds the idea full of possibility now. Maybe ideas are a new way she can work around the constraints of her curse.

*That Addie has taken Luc's words of discouragement and repurposed them to create a loophole in her invisibility speaks to her driving sense of curiosity and determination, traits that will always allow her to make the best of whatever adversity he throws her way.*



## PART 5, CHAPTER 8

*New York City. April 25, 2014.* Addie and Henry are sitting in the grass in Prospect Park listening to a charity concert. As a new singer approaches the makeshift stage, Henry commends Addie for remembering so many years of experiences. Addie compares the sensation to *déjà vu*. Addie has been telling Henry all the stories of her past, and Henry writes down everything Addie tells him. Addie teases him for the urgency with which he writes. "We have time," she says. But how can she know for sure?

*Addie and Henry's ongoing project of putting her life's story in writing highlights the important role that art, creativity, and expression play in making life meaningful. At the same time, Addie's inner anxieties regarding her future with Henry build tension and hint that the good thing they have going is temporary—and perhaps will soon come to an end.*



## PART 5, CHAPTER 9

*London, England. March 26, 1827.* Addie loves the National Gallery. Though she hasn't found Matteo's original **sketch** of her, she sees its influence on *The Muse*, his masterpiece. Suddenly, Luc is behind her. "How clever you are," he observes, referring to the painting. Addie hasn't expected to see him—it's months before their anniversary. She hadn't thought that Luc could appear at whim—that his visits were a choice rather than a necessity. But she won't give in to him. She tells Luc that if he destroys any of her art, she'll just create more. Luc is unfazed; none of the art matters—because Addie doesn't matter. Hearing this stings, but Addie has learned not to entertain Luc when he's in a bad mood.

*This scene shows that Addie has had a lasting impact on Matteo. Though her identity has faded from his memory, the idea of her—the way she inspired him—has persisted through the years, clear proof that Luc was right when he claimed that "Ideas are wilder than memories." That Addie uses art as a vessel to prove this theory highlights art's power to convey ideas, shape reality, and create meaning. This scene also marks a major development in Addie and Luc's relationship: she's starting to entertain the possibility that Luc is choosing to visit her—that he enjoys spending time with her and isn't simply obligated to pay her visits as part of their deal. Could it be that their relationship has become personal as well as transactional?*



So now, Addie offers that maybe the reason Luc visits her is because he's lonely. Addie once thought that gods were fearsome, all-powerful creatures, but Luc has taught her that they are just as flawed and insecure as humans. With this, Luc decides to teach Addie a lesson. He drags her with him into the darkness.

*Luc's apparent vulnerability—not to mention his defensive response to Addie calling him out on it—further supports the theory that something romantic is developing between Luc and Addie. Still, Luc's action to drag Addie into the darkness to teach her a lesson reminds Addie that, however vulnerable, Luc's supernatural power far exceeds her own, and this uneven distribution of power complicates whatever romance may exist between them.*



Addie emerges to find herself and Luc in a stranger's bedroom. A man is on the floor, surrounded by sheet music. He is pleading with Luc in German. "Not yet. I need more time." But Luc ignores the man's—Beethoven's—pleas. Instead, Luc morphs into a fearsome monster. Black hair sprouts from his face, and he becomes "the night itself." Luc orders Beethoven to surrender. Beethoven cries for help, but it's too late: Luc plunges his hand into Beethoven's chest and rips out his soul. Beethoven collapses to the floor, dead. For the first time in a long time, Addie feels pure terror. Having taught Addie her lesson, Luc transforms back into a human. Then he pushes lightly at the wall behind Addie. The scene dissolves around them, and Addie is back in England.

*Ludwig von Beethoven was a composer of Western classical music. The novel is suggesting that he sold his soul to the devil/the darkness to be able to write his masterpieces. Notably, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, one of the most widely recognized pieces of classical music, begins with its famous Schicksals-Motiv (fate motif), a recurring four-note motif that symbolizes Fate knocking at one's door. Luc's visit to Beethoven to collect his soul seems to allude to this famous motif. Regarding the novel's thematic development, this scene underscores just how uneven the distribution of power is between Addie and Luc, and how Luc's superior power underlies every interaction they have with each other.*



## PART 5, CHAPTER 10

*New York City. May 15, 2014.* Addie decides to bring Book back to Henry's apartment. Book is immediately at home. That evening, Henry snaps a polaroid photo of Addie and Book curled up together on the couch. But when the film is developed, the girl in the frame has no face. Henry is determined to capture Addie, though, and wants to try something else. He tries again and again, from different angles, in different lights—but still, no photos develop correctly. Finally, Henry places the camera in Addie's hands. He crouches behind her and places his hands over hers to position the viewfinder in front of Addie's eye. Then they snap a photo of the developed photos lined up on the floor and Addie's feet at the bottom of the frame. This time, it works.

*This is a major turning point in the novel: it's the first time that Addie has managed to capture herself on film. What makes this time different, it seems, is that Addie and Henry have taken the photo together, with Henry's hands placed over Addie's. This suggests that there's something powerful and transformative about human connection—perhaps even powerful enough to override the stipulations of Addie's curse. This section also reinforces the novel's central argument that interpretive ideas are separate—and more powerful—than mere memories.*



## PART 5, CHAPTER 11

*Villon-sur-Sarthe, France. July 29, 1854.* The woods of Villon have been cleared to make room for new fields, and there are now more houses and roads. Addie can hardly recognize the place. When she finally finds the old yew **tree** that marks the path to her house, her heart lurches. A new family lives in her home now. Addie closes her eyes and tries to remember her home as it was, but she can't. One of the boys who lives there now sees her and asks if she's lost. Addie tells him she's a ghost.

*It's important to note that while everything about Addie's childhood home has changed, the old yew tree has remained the same. Given that trees represent freedom in the novel, one may speculate that the tree's unchanged state suggests that absolute freedom is unattainable outside of nature. The minute one enters into society (as represented by Villon), one's obligations to others take over, diminish one's personal freedom, and take one further away from the ideal, absolute freedom of nature. In a sense, Addie has become the tree she's always longed to become: she remains free and unchanged as Villon withers and grows old around her. But now, seeing how Villon has moved on without her, she seems to question whether this total freedom is really all it's cracked up to be.*



Next, Addie visits the cemetery. The **tree** Addie planted on Estele's grave years before has grown into an impressively large tree. It's a concrete measure of growth and time. Addie sits against Estele's grave and tells Estele about all the changes she has seen. Estele might not be here, but Addie knows what she'd say: "everything changes, foolish girl. It is the nature of the world." Addie realizes that Estele would believe that even cursed Addie is capable of change. Addie wanders through the woods surrounding Estele's house. As dusk falls, she hears a branch crack behind her, and when she turns, she sees Luc.

Luc asks Addie why she keeps returning to Villon. Addie thinks it's "nostalgia," but Luc thinks it's "weakness." Weak people "walk in circles," Luc says, while strong people find new paths to walk. Then he asks Addie if she's finally tired and ready to surrender. Luc could bury her next to Estele. It would be quick and easy. But even when Addie is low and dreams of death, she always wakes in the morning, sees the sunrise, and is grateful for what lies ahead. "Tired?" she asks Luc. "I am just waking up."

## PART 5, CHAPTER 12

*New York City. July 13, 2014.* It's Henry's birthday. Addie and Henry join Bea and Robbie at a music venue called the Knitting Factory to celebrate. Henry reintroduces Addie to Bea and Robbie. As usual, Robbie is sulky around Addie. His moodiness bothers Henry more than Addie, though. Henry goes to buy a round of drinks, leaving Addie alone with Bea and Robbie. Addie mentions that Henry talks about Robbie all the time. Robbie looks doubtful. Addie can tell that there's a distance between them, but she's more accustomed to navigating Robbie's moods now, so she presses on. She says that she'd love to see one of Robbie's performances—that Henry is always singing Robbie's praises—and this seems to make Robby happy.

*The size and strength of the tree Addie planted on Estele's grave is a testament to Addie's newly discovered ability to use ideas to make her mark. Addie can't document her existence in any conventional ways, but she can plant ideas—in the earth, or in others' imaginations—and watch them take root and form lives of their own. Also note: this section frames change—including death and decay—as a natural part of life. So far, Addie seems to believe that having power and control over her own life is essential to securing her freedom, but this scene suggests that the opposite is true: that there's something freeing about accepting one's inability to control one's destiny and finding beauty in nature running its course.*



*Luc is suggesting that it's a negative thing to be bound to a place and to others—that prioritizing oneself and one's personal freedom over all else is the only way to maximize power and live well. Addie might have agreed with him before—it was her single-minded desire for personal freedom that cursed her in the first place—but now, her perspective seems to have shifted, and she understands the importance of sharing one's life with others. Finally, Addie's retort that she is "just waking up" reaffirms a key aspect of her character: her curiosity about the world around her, and the way this curiosity inspires her to push forward in the face of adversity and uncertainty.*



*Addie's repeat efforts to win Robbie reinforce how much she's come to value human connection since making her deal with Luc. Being invisible has made her understand just how much one's interactions with others shape one's life, and this philosophy guides her to keep trying with Robbie, even as he makes every effort to discourage her from being friends with him.*



Henry returns to the table, and everyone toasts to Henry's 29th birthday. Just then, a man appears onstage and asks everyone to welcome the opening act: Toby Marsh. Addie freezes. Toby walks onstage. He sits before the piano and begins to play the song that he and Addie wrote together: "I'm in love with a girl I've never met," Toby croons. The music transports Addie back to her days and nights with Toby. She realizes that though she didn't give him lyrics to the song, "he found them anyway."

Addie runs outside. Henry calls out for her to wait, but she ignores him. Addie wants to feel happy to hear Toby's music, but she's not. She's seen herself depicted in art so many times before. But these pieces had no context. They were totally different from seeing her old mother standing in the doorway, or seeing Remy at the salon, or hearing Toby play the song they wrote together. Addie has learned that the only way to make her life bearable is to look forward.

Henry finds Addie outside. He asks if Addie knows Toby. She admits that she knew Toby once. When Henry asks if Addie still has feelings for Toby, she could be honest and say that yes, she does, because her life affords her no closure. But instead, she lies and says that she was just not expecting to see him.

*Addie's realization that Toby "found [the song's lyrics] anyway]" reflects the novel's broader argument that ideas are more powerful than memories. Though Toby can't remember Addie specifically, the experience—the idea—of writing with her stuck with him and inspired him to write these lyrics about "a girl [he's] never met."*



*These three experiences (seeing her aged mother in the doorway, Remy at the salon, and Toby at the music venue) affect Addie because they force her to confront the change and growth that go on all around her while she, alone, remains unchanged. They show her that she exists separately from the rest of the (mortal) world. She can bear seeing herself depicted in art because art exists outside of the context in which it was created—it, like Addie, is immortal in this way. But Addie can't separate Toby's song from the past songwriting sessions that created it, and ruminating on the past makes Addie understand that she experiences time differently than mortals, that she exists outside of their world, and that they'll continue to move forward without her, even as they incorporate the "idea" of her into their art.*



*Addie's grief over Toby underscores how meaningful human relationships rely on reciprocated communication and understanding. Addie never gets any closure because her cursed invisibility makes reciprocation impossible. She can't ever break things off with Toby because Toby doesn't understand that there's anything to break off in the first place.*



## PART 5, CHAPTER 13

*En Route to Berlin, Germany. July 29, 1872.* Addie sits in the dining car of a train passing through the German countryside. She spots Luc in the next car. Luc ushers Addie into his compartment. But when she steps inside, she's transported into a vast darkness. When the darkness dissipates, Addie finds that they are standing outside a grand opera house. Addie is suddenly wearing a fine gown, and Luc is wearing a gray scarf, suit, and silk top hat. They walk inside. Later, Addie will learn that the opera they see is Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, and that it is Wagner's masterpiece. Luc places his hand on Addie's back and guides her to their seats in a box at the front of the balcony. She remembers what he told her in Florence: "Do not mistake this for kindness. [...] I simply want to be the one who breaks you." Luc sends for Champagne and toasts to their anniversary.

*Before, Luc's visits to Addie had one purpose: to taunt and intimidate her into surrendering her soul to him. Now, the point of his visits is increasingly unclear. This visit, in which Luc and Addie don formal attire and visit an opera house, seems more akin to a date. Addie thinks as much, but her memory of Luc's words to her in Florence causes her some apprehension. This scene builds tension as the reader wonders whether Luc's treatment of Addie is ever genuine—or whether everything he does is merely another attempt at manipulation.*



The opera begins. It's beautiful and passionate, and the music brings Addie to tears. Addie notices that Luc is watching her—not the stage. After the first act, Luc laughs, pleased at how much Addie is enjoying the performance. Then he smiles as he asks her to guess which performers have sold their souls to him. Addie's mood darkens. But Luc reminds her that the performers made a deal, and now they, like everyone else, must pay. Addie wonders why anyone would trade a long, successful life for a few years at the top. Luc explains that "time is cruel to all," but it's most cruel to artists, because "vision weakens" over time.

*Sure enough, this scene shows that Luc hasn't brought Addie to the opera for her enjoyment: he's done so to remind her of his fearsome power, tarnishing her experience by revealing that he has in fact come to collect the souls of the performers whose music she has just enjoyed. Still, that Luc's eyes remain on Addie as she looks on the stage in wonder suggests that he's begun to doubt that his manipulation will ever break her. Can someone with so much wonder in their eyes ever feel that they've seen all there is to see in life—that they are ever ready to relinquish their soul?*



## PART 5, CHAPTER 14

*New York City. July 24, 2014.* Addie and Henry are on the rooftop of Robbie's building with some others to watch the fireworks. Addie watches Henry. He's been acting strangely all day. The bookstore was closed today, so they spent the afternoon at home. But she was too tired to tell him stories, and he was too tired to write.

*The reader will know that Henry is acting strangely because it's the fourth of the month—a significant day for Henry. Per his deal with Luc, he must surrender his soul on September 4, at which point he will die. But Addie doesn't know this, so she can't understand Henry's distant mood. Finally, the novel suggests that creativity and expression play a huge role in creating meaning and purpose in life, so the fact that Addie and Henry are too tired to write or tell stories to each other emphasizes their current lethargy.*



Robbie reappears, his arms full of half-melted popsicles. Addie decides that this is the time she'll finally win him over. She wraps her arms around him and says she's heard so much about him from Henry. Robbie steps back, skeptical. But when Addie asks about Robbie's current work, he blushes and gives in, telling Addie all about his latest project, a spin on Faust. Addie returns to Henry and proudly announces that she's finally gotten through to Robbie. Henry barely reacts. "What's wrong?" Addie asks him. When Henry says "Nothing," Addie knows it's a lie.

*Robbie's latest project, an adaptation of Goethe's drama [Faust](#), resonates with the novel's plot: Faust is about a mythic alchemist who makes a deal with the devil. That Robbie should perform this play specifically gestures toward the idea that art imitates life, and this reinforces the novel's overarching view that art plays an essential role in helping people understand the world and make their lives meaningful.*



Henry and Addie return to Henry's apartment. Henry asks Addie why she lied about her name when they first met. Addie explains that normally she can't say her name—people's faces go blank when she does. Henry asks Addie why telling the truth matters when she'll just be forgotten—why is that part of the curse? Addie thinks. Then she offers that a person doesn't know the importance of their name until they don't have one anymore. Also, before Henry, Luc was the only person who could say Addie's name. Henry asks Addie when the last time she saw Luc was. "Almost thirty years ago," she replies. She doesn't mention that their anniversary is fast approaching.

*One important detail Addie emphasizes in this section is that, before Henry, Luc was the only person who could speak Addie's name. With this stipulation, Luc symbolically retained control over Addie and severely limited the degree to which she could form connections with others. In this way, she implies that names are important not because they make a person identifiable, but because they invite human interaction. Also, this section builds tension with its reference to Addie's fast-approaching anniversary with Luc. This, combined with Henry's own anniversary, suggests that things will soon come to a head.*



## PART 5, CHAPTER 15

*The Cotswolds, England. December 31, 1899.* It's snowing outside. Addie sits inside her small cottage and reads a book. She's had so much excitement throughout the years, but now she just wants to sit and watch the world become blanketed in snow. And this cottage is practically hers. She found it abandoned years ago. And over time, she has tended a wild garden out back and gathered wood for the fire. The storm stops, and Addie gets up, wraps her cloak around her shoulders, and ventures outside.

Addie remembers a time it snowed heavily when she was a little girl in Villon. She ran happily through the neat blanket of snow, marking up "every inch of the canvas." Afterward, she mourned the sight of the once pristine—but now ruined—field. The next day, the snow melted. And after that, Addie never played in the snow again—until now.

Addie happily runs through the hills, but she leaves no footprints behind her in the freshly fallen snow. She sinks into the snow and lets it consume her. Luc appears and mocks Addie for being over 200 years old and still playing in the snow like a child. Luc looks back at Addie's decrepit cabin and mocks her for "still longing to grow up and become Estele." Addie looks at Luc. She realizes that she's never seen him in the winter before. The season suits him, and she wishes she could draw him with charcoal.

They move inside and Luc tries to get Addie to surrender, but she refuses. Addie thinks he'll leave, but he doesn't. Instead, he manifests cups of wine, and they sit before the fire together. He tells her stories of Paris at the end of the decade: of all the art and beauty that has emerged. Addie falls asleep. When she wakes, the fire is out and a blanket is draped over her shoulders.

## PART 6, CHAPTER 1

*Villon-sur-Sarthe. July 29, 1914.* It's raining hard. Villon has changed even more since the last time Addie was here, but some things have remained the same: there's still a church at the center of town, for instance. Addie stands in the doorway to the chapel. Then she thinks of Estele, who used to stand in the rain, and she abandons her shelter and walks into the rain toward the cemetery gate. She's instantly soaked through. Addie walks to Estele's grave and is shocked to find that the **tree** she planted is no longer there—only a jagged stump remains. Addie throws herself over the grave, suddenly awash with grief. What's the point of "planting seeds," she wonders, when "Everything dies" in the end anyway?

*Addie's zest for life isn't limited to overtly exciting, stimulating experiences. She finds value and meaning in simple pleasures like sitting inside on a snowy evening and reading a book before the fire as well. Luc originally believed that becoming bored of immortality would be Addie's downfall, but scenes like this one demonstrate that Addie's capacity to find meaning even in the mundane means that she'll never tire of life.*



*Since her deal with Luc, Addie has lamented her inability to make a mark on the world. This memory of her childhood sadness at having somehow degraded the snow with her footprints is a reversal of this position.*



*Addie's discovery that her curse allows her to run through the snow without tarnishing the pristine ground with her footprints is yet another way that Addie manages to put a positive spin on her curse. Luc believed that the stipulations of Addie's curse would wear her down, and yet Addie consistently figures out how to use her curse to experience the world in new, meaningful ways.*



*Luc and Addie's intimate evening together concludes with a notably tender gesture on Luc's part: he covers Addie with a blanket so she won't be cold when she wakes up. Increasingly, Luc's behavior suggests that he cares about Addie herself—not just about possessing her soul.*



*When Addie wonders what's the use of "planting seeds" when "Everything dies" anyway, she's asking why a person would choose to love or grow attached to anyone or anything when doing so opens a person up to grief, disappointment, and abandonment. She's asking if the love is worth the pain it inevitably causes. Her question resonates with Henry's struggles with feeling unwanted, too.*





Luc appears behind Addie. She angrily asks him if he has taken the **tree**. Luc looks offended—he “can be cruel,” he explains, “But nature can be crueler.” Then Luc orders Addie to come with him. Addie obliges. And then, they are sitting on a patio in Paris. Addie wears a summer dress, and there’s a bottle of port for them to share. Luc wishes Addie a happy anniversary. He reminds her of what she once said about him wanting company. Luc offers Addie back her **wooden ring**, explaining that she need only put it on to summon him to her.

*Luc’s cruelty is intentional and direct: he taunts and manipulates Addie with the express purpose of breaking her and collecting her soul. Nature’s cruelty, by contrast, lies in its indifference, unpredictability, and ultimate meaninglessness. This meditation on nature’s cruelty lends credence to the novel’s high regard for art: art, unlike nature, can be controlled and intentional. Through it, humans can organize and breathe meaning into elements of life that are otherwise beyond their ability to control and understand.*



Luc offers Addie back her **wooden ring**, explaining that she need only put it on to summon him to her. Addie realizes the **ring** is “a challenge.” Now, she need only put on the ring when she’s distressed, and Luc will see it as surrender. Luc changes the subject. He tells Addie that war is imminent. He offers to take Addie away from Europe before the war begins. Looking back, she should have accepted his offer. But she doesn’t. A week later, she gives in and travels to New York by boat. By then, the war has begun.

*This scene is important because it finally explains why Addie, in the novel’s present, has come to despise the wooden ring she once held in such high regard: it’s because the ring reminds her of the power Luc wields over her.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 2

*New York City. July 29, 2014.* Addie tells herself that today is just a normal day—but it’s not. It’s now 300 years since she was supposed to be married. Henry tells Addie that Bea is covering for him at the store so they can spend the whole day together. But Addie is suddenly concerned: she doesn’t think it’s a good idea for them to spend the day together—what if Luc comes? Henry thinks Addie shouldn’t let Luc ruin this day for them. Addie agrees to spend daylight hours together.

*That Addie describes today as the 300th anniversary of her would-be wedding reflects her fear of whatever Luc has in store for her: her apprehension is so great that she can’t even bear to reference her deal with Luc by name.*



Addie and Henry go to the beach and have a great time. When they pack up later, **Addie’s wooden ring** falls into the sand. She thinks it’s a bad omen but tries to ignore it. The day passes faster than Addie can handle. She’s exhausted and sinks into Henry’s shoulder on the train ride home. “I love you,” Henry tells her. Addie wonders if what they have really is love. She tells Henry she loves him, too, and “wants it to be true.”

*Addie’s uncertainty about how she feels about Henry hints at the vulnerability that loving relationships require of their participants. Faith and uncertainty are fundamental parts of love: part of loving somebody is trusting that they reciprocate one’s love, even if there’s no way to know this for sure. Sometimes things work out, and other times, they don’t, and people get hurt. But this, Addie is slowly learning, is the risk one must take if they want to experience fragile, mortal love.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 3

Chicago, Illinois. July 29, 1928. There's a stained-glass angel over the bar. But this is a speakeasy, not a church. Everybody here has heard about the place only through word of mouth. Addie loves it here. She dances alone to the jazz music that pulses through the space. It's nearly midnight now, and she touches the **wooden ring** that hangs from a silver cord around her neck. She often reaches for the ring, especially when she's lonely. But for 14 years, she's been too "stubborn" to put it on. She wants to win this battle against Luc.

Addie orders a gin fizz at the bar, but the bartender hands her a glass of Champagne instead. Addie smiles when she sees it, embarrassed to admit how relieved she is. "I win," she tells Luc: she didn't call him, but he came anyway. Luc objects—this bar actually belongs to him. So really, Addie came to him first. Addie looks around the room, and this is suddenly obvious to her: the stained-glass angel behind the bar doesn't have wings. She wonders why she was drawn to this place; perhaps she and Luc "are like magnets" to each other.

But Addie insists that Luc wouldn't have come if he didn't miss her. Luc denies this, reasoning that humans are mostly boring, and that Addie makes for "better company." Besides, Addie "ha[s] not been human since the night" they made their deal. Addie feels suddenly angry. She is human, she insists. But Luc tells her she moves through life as a ghost, not a human. Also, she "belong[s] to [Luc]." Addie snaps that she'd rather be a ghost than belong to Luc. At this, Luc's eyes grow shadowy and angry. He coldly tells Addie to go back to her humans. She does, but she feels so different from the others now.

## PART 6, CHAPTER 4

New York City. July 29, 2014. Addie and Henry return to Henry's apartment. The sun is still out, and Addie feels safe. At Henry's apartment, Henry pulls her into him and onto the bed. They fall asleep. When Addie wakes, it's dark outside, and she panics. She investigates the apartment. Luc is nowhere in sight, and Addie decides he's not coming. Addie returns to the bedroom; Henry has since woken up. Later, they go to the Merchant. Addie thinks this is the best ending to the best day. Addie asks Henry to dance with her, and he does.

*Juxtaposed with Addie's thoughts about the uncertainty and vulnerability that characterizes mortal love, this scene plays up how clear-cut and decisive her immortal relationship with Luc is. Nothing is left to chance or mystery: if she slips the ring onto her finger, Luc will know without question that she wants him there.*



*Over the years, Champagne has become Luc's calling card, so when Addie smiles when she sees it now, it's because she knows that Luc is here—and she's happy about it. Still, the exact reason for her happiness is rather ambiguous: she claims that she's happy because she has beat Luc, with Luc—not she—being the one to cave and visit the other first. But it's also possible that she's genuinely happy to see Luc—that she's missed him. Again, this scene builds tension, suggesting that a romance is developing between Luc and Addie who, increasingly, "like magnets," seem drawn to each other.*



*This section poses important questions about the relationship between power, control, and love. Luc responds defensively to Addie's accusation that he misses her, suggesting that Luc resents the possibility that his feelings for Addie leave him out of control or beholden to her on an emotional level. This section is also important because it raises the question of Addie's humanity. Luc suggests that her immortality makes her fundamentally unable to relate to human beings. This suggests that vulnerability and uncertainty are fundamental parts of the human experience, and that Addie, by virtue of her immortality, can no longer take part in that experience.*



*Tension builds as the anniversary of Addie's deal inches along and—so far—there's no sign of Luc. Though Addie is anxious about Luc making an appearance and ruining everything, she decides that it's worth it to take the risk and spend the day with Henry, who she loves, rather than playing it safe and spending time apart.*



After they dance, Henry approaches the bar and orders two beers. The bartender returns with one beer—and one glass of Champagne. Henry is about to complain, but Addie immediately knows what's up. The bartender gestures toward a gentleman at the end of the bar and says he ordered the drink. It's Luc. Suddenly, the bar is full of people but completely still. Addie angrily tells Luc to leave Henry alone.

Luc's smile disappears. Does Addie really think that she and Henry have met by accident? No, Luc corrects her; they have met because Luc *let* them meet. Then Luc turns to Henry and asks him if he's started to count down his life in hours yet. Addie turns to Henry, not understanding. This pleases Luc. With this, he disappears into the darkness. Addie turns to Henry, pleading with him to explain what's going on. She remembers what Henry said earlier, about Luc's deal lasting "a lifetime." She knew then that it wasn't the full truth. Finally, Henry tells the rest of the story.

## PART 6, CHAPTER 5

*New York City. September 4, 2013.* Henry is "sick of his broken heart" and "storm-filled brain." He drinks to oblivion, and then walks home in the pouring rain. His phone goes off, but he ignores it. Then he leans back on some stairs outside and looks up at a rooftop. At some point, he decides to jump. He walks upstairs and goes out onto the roof. He tries to tell himself that this "storm" will pass, "but he is tired of looking for shelter." Then a stranger approaches him, offers him happiness—not forever, but "for a single year." And Henry accepts.

## PART 6, CHAPTER 6

*New York City. July 29, 2014.* After Henry tells Addie his story, everything clicks into place: Henry's restlessness, his gray moods. Addie finally understands what Luc has done: he has built her up so he can watch her fall. Addie breaks away from Henry and runs out of the bar before Henry can stop her.

*Tension continues to build as Luc appears. Luc has visited Addie so many times before, but this time is different—this time, Addie has someone in her life whom she actually cares about—someone Luc could take away from. In developing feelings for Henry, Addie has made herself vulnerable to Luc in a way she hasn't done before.*



*Luc's bombshell—that he orchestrated Addie and Henry's meeting—suggests that Addie, in allowing herself to grow close to Henry, has inadvertently played into Luc's hands and made herself vulnerable to him in a way that will come back to bite her. Luc's inquiry about Henry counting down the hours seems related to the things about his curse and himself that Henry has withheld from Addie. He told her that his deal with Luc was good for "a lifetime," but it's now pretty clear that this isn't quite true.*



*This brief chapter lays out exactly what happened the night of Henry's deal: Luc gave Henry happiness and love, but only for one year. It's this latter, highly important detail that Henry has withheld from Addie—and that Luc has taken such pleasure in Addie finally discovering. Luc, it seems, has allowed for Addie and Henry's paths to cross to be cruel, not kind: he's given Addie someone to love, only to take that person away from her the minute she grows attached to him.*



*Addie finally realizes that it wasn't a mistake that she met Henry: it was a calculated act of manipulation by Luc, perhaps his greatest cruelty against her thus far. He has given her a taste of human connection—only to ensure that her invisibility and loneliness feel as fresh and unbearable as it did in the early days of her curse.*



Addie has endured 300 years of hardship, so she doesn't feel "broken, or hopeless" now: she's livid. Addie runs out into the empty street. She finds the **wooden ring** in her pocket and twists it onto her finger. "Show yourself!" she demands. At first, there is nothing. But then Luc is there. She pleads with him to undo Henry's deal. Luc refuses initially, but then he proposes a new deal to Addie: if Addie will spend tomorrow night with Luc, Luc will consider canceling Henry's deal. Addie assumes Luc is lying, but she has no other choice and accepts the deal.

Addie returns to the Merchant, but Henry is gone. She finds him at his apartment, sitting alone and in the dark. It hits Addie that she's going to lose him, and she can't take it. Addie asks why he lied to her. He remembers an uncle who died of cancer when Henry was in college. His diagnosis changed the way everyone treated him, and Henry didn't want that to happen with Addie. Addie and Henry move to Henry's bedroom and lie side by side in Henry's bed. She asks him how much longer he has. Henry replies, "Thirty-six days." But it's already past midnight, which makes it 35 days. They hold each other close, as if this were enough to keep Henry from disappearing.

## PART 6, CHAPTER 7

*Occupied France. November 23, 1944.* The German soldiers shove Addie against the stone wall of the prison cell, and she coughs up blood. Addie wills herself to rise and confront them. She tries in vain to pry open the cell door. She realizes how stupid it was to assume "that forgettable was the same as invisible," and she wishes she had just stayed back in Boston. There, the biggest hardship was rationing. Here, it is far worse. And yet, France will always be her home, and she had wanted to help. She had returned as a spy, and the one thing she had to do was avoid getting caught—and she failed.

When the soldiers captured Addie, they searched her and took anything she could possibly use as a weapon. They even took her **wooden ring**. Yet now, as she searches in her pocket, she feels the ring. She's managed not to use it for 29 years, but now she has no choice. She'd rather deal with Luc's gloating than remain here any longer. Addie twists the ring onto her finger. Nothing happens at first, but then, the men sitting across from her fall silent. They just stare into space. Then Luc is there, his fingers rapping against the bars. She hasn't since him since that night in Chicago. Luc laments her sorry state.

*Once more, though, Addie resolves to show Luc that he has misunderstood and underestimated her. She doesn't recoil and fall into despair at his cruelty—instead, it only emboldens her. The reader should be as skeptical of Luc's dinner invitation as Addie is, given Luc's track record with cruelty and manipulation. Once more, Luc seems determined to show Addie that he sets the terms of whatever deals—past, present, and future—they make together.*



*Despite the hard exterior Addie assumed when she confronted Luc, this scene shows that her 300 years of suffering and loneliness haven't hardened her: she's still capable of feeling hurt and heartbreak. While her emotional vulnerability hurts in the moment, it's been a positive attribute to her in other ways: it's this willingness to be hurt and suffer that allowed her to open up to Henry in the first place, and their relationship—however brief it seems it will be—has been deeply meaningful to her.*



*Addie's willingness to return to Europe to help with the war effort fits her character: she's not content to stand passively by, even if this passivity guarantees her safety. Instead, she delves into the adventurous and unknown. Sometimes her boldness and curiosity works out for her, but other times, as now, it backfires and lands her in hot water.*



*Addie's ring has held changing associations as the years pass. First, it held positive associations: it reminded her of her father, her favorite person, and his dedication to his craft. Now, she no longer cherishes the ring, for it only reminds her of her deal with Luc, all she gave up when she agreed to the deal, and how the deal has made her beholden to Luc. Addie thought that the deal would give her freedom, but it's only tied her to another person who relishes controlling and manipulating her.*



Luc asks Addie how she plans to get herself out of this bind. Addie realizes that Luc wants her to beg him for help, but she won't do it. Luc is about to leave, but Addie pleads with him to wait for her. He smiles and then offers her his hand. They leave the cell together, and the prison dissolves behind them. Suddenly, Addie is back in Boston. The **wooden ring** is still on her finger. She considers what just happened: she asked Luc for help, and he helped her. She knows he'll leverage this against her, but she doesn't care. She just doesn't want to be lonely anymore.

*Luc continues to emotionally manipulate Addie. He takes pleasure not simply in controlling her, but in watching her realize that her fate is in his hands. Still, this moment marks something of a turning point for Addie and Luc's relationship. Luc may be cruel to her, but he still comes when she calls for him—and he really has no reason to do this unless he wants to. One can hardly consider their relationship a romance, but this scene hints that there's a tenderness forming between them.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 8

*New York City. July 30, 2014.* Henry follows Addie around the apartment. How could she agree to meet with Luc? Addie tells Henry she doesn't want to lose him. Henry thinks it's too late and that they should just enjoy the time they still have together; he might have been stupid, but he made a choice. But Addie won't give up, even if Henry has accepted his fate. Then she slips the **ring** onto her finger. There's a knock at the door.

*Addie's determination to save Henry reflects her decision to prioritize love and commitment over individual freedom. She's willing to entertain Luc's demands if it means she can help someone she cares about. Recall how upset Addie was when, years before, Luc accused her of abandoning Estele in Estele's final days of sickness. With Henry, she has an opportunity to do the opposite: to give up her personal freedom to help someone she cares about.*



Addie greets Luc at the door. Luc is dressed all in black, in tailored pants, a silk tie, and a button-down shirt. He and Addie leave together. At first, Addie thinks she should have listened to Henry and just let this be, but it's too late for that now. Addie follows Luc downstairs, out of the building, and into the street. Luc summons a car for them. The driver drives without being told where to take them. When Addie asks where Luc is taking her, Luc doesn't say anything. They drive over the Manhattan Bridge in silence. The silence is strategic; Addie and Luc have been at war for years, and tonight, Addie has to win.

*Luc greets Addie as though dressed for a romantic evening on the town together. But Addie's description of the silence between them as strategic shows that she has no illusions about Luc's intentions with her—not anymore, at least. They are not in a relationship with each other: they are enemies embroiled in a war, and she must assume that all of Luc's actions are geared toward manipulating, controlling, and defeating her.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 9

*Los Angeles, California. April 7, 1952.* Max tells Addie she's beautiful, and Addie blushes behind her martini. They "met" outside the Wilshire that morning just after Addie had left from spending the night in his room. They've spent the rest of the day together. Addie lied and said it was her birthday. She's not sure why she lied; maybe she's tired of having the same day repeatedly. Then a server approaches them carrying a bottle of Champagne. Max says it's for Addie's birthday. Addie sips the Champagne, relishing its luxurious and authentic taste. Max is wealthy and can afford the real thing. He's a sculptor whose wealthy family foots the bills.

*Max is just the latest in the string of artists Addie has gravitated to in her many years on earth, reaffirming art, creativity, and expression's central role in the novel. Also note that Addie is sipping Champagne—the drink that Luc typically orders for her to announce his presence. Is Addie's choice of alcohol an attempt to taunt Luc—to make him jealous? The novel has hinted at a past romance between Luc and Addie, and Addie's actions in this scene support this theory.*



Max raises his glass to toast Addie's birthday. Just then, Luc approaches their table. Addie tells Max that Luc is "an old friend," and Luc rudely orders Max to leave so they can catch up. After Max leaves, Addie swears at Luc for interrupting her date. Luc asks how long Addie has been seeing Max. Two months, Addie says. And it's not so bad: he falls in love with her again every day. Plus, he "keeps [her] company." Luc pause and then says that he, too, would keep Addie company—if she's interested. Addie feels herself blush. She doesn't want Luc to know that she's missed him, though. She plays it cool, saying that they might as well spend the evening together since Luc ruined her existing plans.

Luc leads Addie to the Cicada Club. It's decorated in an art deco style and has a crushed red carpet and balcony seats. A brass band plays in the corner, and the place is packed. A new performer takes the stage; "Sinatra," Luc informs Addie. Addie invites Luc to dance with her. They move to the dance floor. Addie doesn't think they've ever been so physically close before. His body folds around her and feels "like a blanket," not at all like "shadow and smoke."

As they dance, Luc whispers in Addie's ear that even if people remembered her, he'd still know her best. Also, Addie is the only person who knows him. Then he tells Addie that he has always wanted her. But Addie accuses Luc of seeing her "as a prize" or "a meal" to be won and "consumed." Luc asks Addie if there's anything wrong with this. Their mouths hover close as Addie considers this. Looking back, she won't know who kissed whom first. But when Luc kisses her, he does so "like someone tasting poison," as though he fears her.

Suddenly, darkness is all around Addie, and the Cicada Club dissolves into nothing. She falls and lands in a hotel room. Luc's arms wrap around her like a cage. She could escape—but she doesn't. Luc kisses her again, and she realizes that it is like no other kiss: he is made for her as nobody else is. The first time they have sex, it's like a fight: two people not wanting to give in to the other. In the morning, Luc says he finally doesn't want to leave—but he must, for he's "a thing of darkness." Addie gets up and draws the curtains closed. Luc laughs and pulls her back into the bed.

*Addie's conflicted reaction to Luc's arrival—and the way she blushes when he tells her that he'd like to keep her company—further suggests that Addie harbors romantic feelings toward him. She seems to be letting her guard down around him, interpreting his actions not as calculated efforts to manipulate and control her, but as the actions of a vulnerable, lovesick equal.*



*Addie's romantic feelings for Luc come through in the way she now sees his body as comforting, "like a blanket," as opposed to the "shadow and smoke" that overtook her so many years ago in the woods outside Villon.*



*Luc's observation that he and Addie know each other best attempts to paint himself and Addie as companions rather than adversaries. He's suggesting that they are the same—that they are equals. Addie's observation that Luc kisses her "like someone tasting poison" suggests that Luc's apparent feelings for her have made him vulnerable—have given her a degree of power over him, or, at least, that his feelings have leveled the playing field. But is this really the case? Recall that it wasn't so long ago that Luc explicitly reminded Addie never to mistake any of his actions toward her as "merciful." Has Luc changed, or is he merely fooling Addie?*



*Addie's realization that Luc is made for her seems an admission of romance. And her action to draw the curtains closed so that Luc, "a thing of darkness," doesn't have to leave her side, is further proof that she's developed feelings for him. This is obviously a major turning point in their relationship: it's the first time they've been physically intimate, and this marks a major shift in Addie's willingness to show vulnerability around Luc. The question is whether Luc reciprocates Addie's feelings—or whether he is simply playing her, as he's done all along.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 10

*Everywhere, Nowhere. 1952-1968.* At first, it's just sex. Addie thinks it will only happen once. But then Luc comes for her two months later. Over time, it's only weeks until his next visit, and then days. When he leaves, Addie sets some conditions for herself: she will not fall asleep beside him. Their relationship will be purely physical. But she doesn't keep her promises. "Be with me," Luc finally says one night. One night, Addie wakes to Luc sketching patterns onto her skin, and she realizes how well he knows her: how he is the only person she's woken up next to who actually remembers her. She doesn't hate him the way she used to, and she's not sure when this change occurred. Addie realizes that she is happy. Still, she makes sure she doesn't forget the words Luc spoke so long ago: "But it is not love."

*Note that this chapter, unlike the others, spans nearly two decades as opposed to a single day. This suggests that what Luc and Addie had wasn't a fling, but a long, serious affair. And the offer that Luc extends to Addie, "Be with me," seems to suggest that for Luc as well as for Addie, the affair is more than a superficial physical attraction. Still, Addie's lingering doubts about Luc's feelings for her pose some important questions about the nature of love, namely whether genuine love can coexist without mutual vulnerability. In short, she doubts Luc's love for her because he holds her fate in his hands and thus retains a fundamental advantage over her—that is, he has everything to gain from their relationship, and she, everything to lose.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 11

*New York City. July 30, 2014.* The black car drives through Manhattan, and Luc and Addie sit in silence. He speaks first, recalling the opera in Munich—the complete "wonder" with which Addie looked at the performers on stage. It was then that he knew he'd never win. Addie wants to relish Luc's admission of defeat, but she doesn't trust him. Finally, the car pulls to a stop outside their destination: Le Coucou, a French restaurant in SoHo. They step inside, and a host leads them to their table. A server opens a bottle of merlot, and Luc toasts to Adeline. Plates begin to arrive at their table: rabbit terrine, and foie gras, and halibut. The food is amazing, but Addie feels guilty when she sees the glassy-eyed waitstaff standing helplessly to the side. She hates how unashamed Luc is about his power.

*Taken at face value, Luc's observation of Addie's sustained "wonder" about the world and zest for life is a gesture of loving admiration. On the other hand—and as Addie suspects—Luc's observation is little more than another calculated attempt to manipulate her—to trick her into letting her guard down so that he can control and defeat her. With this, Addie and Luc's quasi-romance continues to explore the relationship between love, power, and control.*



Luc asks Addie if she's missed him. She has: over the past 300 years, Luc has been the only stable thing in her life. At first, Addie thinks that Luc is just playing with her. But then his voice softens, and he tells Addie that he thought about her all the time. Addie asks if anything between them has been real—he himself has stated that he is "not capable of love." If Luc really loved her, she insists, he'd let her go. Luc argues that this doesn't make any sense—that "Love is selfish." Addie argues that Luc is mistaking love for "possession." Luc doesn't see the difference. Addie pleads with Luc to free Henry—for her. Luc gets angry at Addie for bringing Henry into their special evening together. He turns everything to ash, and then he dashes out of the restaurant.

*Luc and Addie's fundamentally different ideas about love raise big questions about the relationship between love, power, and vulnerability. Luc is suggesting that love is, at its core, a power struggle: a desire and challenge to possess another person completely. Addie, on the other hand, suggests that the opposite is true: that to love a person is to give up some of one's own power and control in order to be emotionally vulnerable with a lover—and to trust that that one's lover is reciprocating this act of vulnerability. Addie believes that Luc can't love her because his feelings for her are fundamentally "selfish" and rooted in a desire to control her rather than to be vulnerable with her.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 12

*New Orleans, Louisiana. July 29, 1970.* Luc and Addie are dining in a bar in the French Quarter in New Orleans. Luc says he loves her. Then he pulls a black box from his pocket and places it in front of her: a gift. Addie opens the box and finds a key inside. He has given her a home, Luc explains. Addie assumes that Luc is messing with her, but then he leads her through the streets to a yellow house at the end of Bourbon Street. The door opens on a room with high ceilings, furniture, and empty spaces waiting to be filled with her things. Addie knows that this home won't last, but for now, she's happy.

Luc and Addie stroll through the French Quarter. They're almost home when Luc excuses himself; he has something to attend to. Luc tells Addie to go home, but Addie stays behind to see what he's up to. Luc goes to a shop around the corner. An older woman is locking the door. She turns around and sees Luc. When Luc tells the woman her time is up, she doesn't plead. Instead, she tells Luc she understands—and she's tired. Luc wraps his arms around the woman and takes her soul. Somehow, to Addie, the woman's acceptance is more disturbing than if she were to have begged for her life. Because it makes sense to Addie: she's tired too.

That night, back at the yellow house, Luc wraps his arms around Addie's shoulders, and it reminds Addie of the way he wrapped his arm around the older woman earlier that night.

*This scene depicts Luc and Addie as a couple. Though Addie never quite lets her guard down—she doubts that Luc means it when he says he loves her—she allows herself to be happy anyway, reinforcing the novel's central claim that human connection is worth the suffering and heartbreak it can lead to.*



*This scene reminds Addie why it's prudent never to let her guard down around Luc: even if Luc does love her, he's still a powerful, supernatural entity who could easily do to her as he did to the woman outside the shop. Witnessing Luc take the woman's soul also forces Addie to consider the disturbing possibility that she's gone along with Luc's romantic overtures not because she loves him, but because she's finally ready to give up.*



*In seeing herself as the older woman, Addie reminds herself that the nature of her and Luc's relationship isn't romantic—it's professional. Luc might claim to love her, but, Addie fears, it's more likely that he's only saying this to get what he really wants from her: her soul.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 13

*New York City. July 30, 2014.* Luc and Addie walk through Manhattan after the disastrous dinner. It's pleasantly warm outside, and Luc's mood seems to have improved. Luc takes Addie to a bar at the top of a skyscraper called The Low Road. Inside, the floors are made of bronze. People sit on velvet sofas and gaze down at the city from balconies. The hostess, Renee, brings them a bottle of fine Champagne. Addie sips the Champagne as Luc points out famous people in the bar. Addie wonders which of them has sold their soul.

*The juxtaposition of this scene, in which Luc takes Addie out for a romantic evening on the town, with the previous chapter, in which Addie considered the possibility that Luc's romantic overtures have been manipulative all along, should make the reader skeptical of Luc's intentions with this evening. He's said he'll spare Henry if Addie spends the evening with him, but can Addie trust Luc to keep his word?*





Then Addie turns to Luc and asks him, once more, to let Henry go. Luc tells Addie to drop it. What does Addie see in Henry, anyway? And besides, Luc argues, Henry and Addie are completely different people: Addie wanted to live, while Henry wanted to die. Addie says that Henry is lost but will find himself if Luc only gives him the chance. Plus, Luc will never know whether Henry would have really jumped from the roof that night, since he interfered before Henry could decide for himself.

Luc tells Addie to choose a patron in the bar to damn in exchange for Henry's life. He reminds her that everything has "a cost," and that she must pay if she wants to save Henry. Addie doesn't think she can do it, but then her hand rises and selects a random man from the crowd. But Luc does nothing; he only laughs and says that Addie has changed. Addie realizes that he's messing with her. Luc promises to be serious from now on. Then he pulls her closer. Suddenly, the bar is gone, and she's surrounded by darkness. Then she's in the woods—all alone.

## PART 6, CHAPTER 14

*New Orleans, Louisiana. May 1, 1984.* Candles burn on the windowsill. Luc tells Addie they are made for each other, but Addie says she doesn't belong to him. They are in bed together in the yellow house, and Addie realizes that she's forgotten something important: none of this is real. Luc isn't human, and their life together isn't a life. She pleads with him to let her go. But Luc says a deal is a deal. Then he falters. Perhaps he could bend the rules a bit, he says—but only if Addie surrenders to him first. Addie refuses. "It's just a word," Luc says. But Addie knows better than this: Luc taught her, that night that they made their deal, that words make all the difference. How can she trust him now? Plus, Luc doesn't really love her: He's incapable of love.

Luc says that he's given Addie everything, but Addie says nothing he's given her is real. She refuses to cry, though: she won't let him see how he's hurt her. To this day, Addie can't remember how the fire began. Maybe it was the candles, or maybe it was Luc's spite. Either way, the house on Bourbon Street burned to the ground that night. And now, once again, Addie has nothing. She pulls the **wooden ring** from her pocket and throws it into the flames.

*Luc sees Henry's human fragility as a weakness. Addie, meanwhile, finds Henry's imperfections and complexities endearing—his flaws make knowing and loving him an interesting, unpredictable adventure. Addie can't know for certain any more than Luc can if Henry would've jumped from the roof, had Luc let him. But what she does know is that Luc's interference denied Henry the freedom to work through things on his own.*



*In manipulating Addie into selecting a random patron to sacrifice to save Henry, Luc has shown Addie that she's not as different from Luc as she thinks she is: she's just as willing to interfere with mortal affairs as Luc is, and she's lying to herself if she thinks otherwise. This scene further obscures Luc's true intentions with Addie. While he might be emphasizing their similarities to entice Addie to surrender her soul to him, the possibility remains that Luc's love for Addie is sincere and that he's trying to woo her in some twisted way.*



*With this scene, the reader finally glimpses the details of Addie and Luc's falling-out. Addie ends things with Luc, insisting that he can't love her because he's not human. As a god, Luc is fundamentally invulnerable, and so this inhibits him from experiencing genuine, human love—the only love that Addie is interested in. At the same time, Addie remains wary that Luc's supposed "love" is merely a ploy to get her to surrender to him. Increasingly, though, it matters less and less whether or not Luc truly loves Addie, because to Luc, there's little difference between love and possession.*



*Early in the novel, Addie briefly references an old leather coat—the only thing she saved from the fire in New Orleans—that she continues to carry around because it smells like "him." Now, the reader finally understands the full context of this allusion. Still, it remains unclear whether Addie keeps the jacket to remember her love of Luc—or to remind herself not to fall for his tricks.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 15

New York City. July 30, 2014. Addie is in Central Park. Luc is with her, though he's no longer dressed in his suit. Now, he's dressed in the plain tunic he wore when she first imagined him so many years before. He promises he'll give Addie what she wants—but she must dance with him first. Addie agrees, and they dance. As they dance, Addie can hear the sound of string instruments, then the opera in Munich, and then the brass band in L.A. Then the music stops. Addie looks at Luc. He's crying. All he had to do was let her go, she says—why couldn't he do that? Luc says he can't because Addie is his. Addie pulls away from him and says she was never his: this has been a game all along, just like Luc said.

Luc claims he was lying. This was never a game: their love was real. If Luc really loved her, Addie asks, why did he wait to see her until she found someone else? Luc reveals that Addie didn't meet Henry by chance—he arranged for them to meet. He explains that he gave her Henry because she was so fixated on love, and he wanted to show her that human love is fragile and not worth it—and it certainly won't be once Henry is gone. Addie counters that any amount of time with Henry would be worth the pain of losing him. Luc tells Addie to return to Henry if she loves him so much—he'll be gone soon, but Luc will still be here, and so will Addie. Then Luc disappears.

Addie returns to Brooklyn at sunrise. On her way to Henry's apartment, she eyes a paper at a newsstand and reads the date: August 6, 2014. Addie left Henry's apartment on July 30. She and Henry only have so many days left, and Luc has taken a whole week from them. Addie reaches Henry's apartment. She holds him close as she weeps and apologizes. He pleads with her to stay with him. She wants to fight Luc some more, but she owes it to Henry to stay. So that's what she does.

## PART 6, CHAPTER 16

New York City. August 2014. The next days are some of Henry's happiest. Knowing that he'll soon be dead is oddly freeing. He knows he should be scared, but he's not. He and Addie rent a car and go upstate. As they drive, Henry realizes that Addie hasn't met his parents—and that if he doesn't see his family now, he'll never have the chance to say goodbye. They miss the exit, though, and then it's too late. Instead, they go to a state park and spend the day wandering around the woods. They make a picnic. At night, they look at the stars.

*The montage of music that accompanies Luc and Addie's dance—music they danced to over the course of their romance—seems to reflect Luc's nostalgia for their romance. Luc's crying, too, reinforces the notion that he truly does love Addie. But as Addie points out here, Luc's idea of love is more akin to possession, and throughout their relationship, he has repeatedly denied her the right to choose when and in what capacity she wants to be with him. Their relationship was little more than a game—and one in which his rules were the only ones that mattered.*



*Luc's words and actions contradict each other. He insists that he's not playing games with Addie, all the while admitting that he intentionally arranged for Addie and Henry to meet in order to show Addie that mortal love is inferior to the kind of love that Luc can offer her. Even Luc's logic has a game-like quality to it: he's speaking about love as though it's something one can quantify, adding and subtracting costs and benefits to calculate its overall worth.*



*With her decision to stay with Henry—even though she would prefer to keep fighting Luc—Addie demonstrates one key aspect of love that Luc can't seem to grasp: that love is about selflessness, not possession. For Luc, love is something you covet, not something you reciprocate with the person you love.*



*In his final days, Henry realizes that he's been going about things the wrong way all along. He's long thought that control and certainty about what he wanted would bring him meaning and satisfaction. Now, he sees that dwelling in uncertainty and the vulnerability that comes with that is what has made his life meaningful.*



Late that night, lying on the blanket together, Henry asks Addie if she'd make the deal all over again. Addie says that her life has been long and lonely—but she wouldn't change a thing about it. "Nothing is all good or all bad," she tells Henry.

*Addie's response suggests that everything good and worthwhile in life comes at a cost—but for some things, like love, the cost is worth it. The same sentiment applies to the deal she made with Luc: the deal may have forced her to incur much loneliness and suffering, but it was worth it for all the freedom and adventure it allowed her to experience, too.*



Before long, Henry has only days to live. He says goodbye to Bea and Robbie at the Merchant. Addie sits at the bar to give them some space. Everything is normal; Bea talks about her thesis, and Robbie talks about his latest performance. Henry lies and tells them he's going out of town. He asks Bea to cover for him at the store. The goodbye is simple and perfect because his friends don't know it's a goodbye. When he starts to get sad, Addie is there. Henry's watch inches closer to midnight.

*Henry tried to control the way others felt about him when he made his deal with Luc, and now he's ultimately paying the price for his foolish inability to be vulnerable and live in uncertainty. Henry's decision not to tell his friends about his impending death shows that he's internalized this lesson and now sees the value of uncertainty and letting people respond as they will.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 17

*New York City. September 4, 2014.* It begins as an ordinary day. Addie and Henry wake up in bed together. Henry feels happy—or he tells himself to feel happy, anyway. They stay in bed, and Addie tells him stories when he starts to panic. And it's "the last gift he can give her, the listening."

*Note the date: it's September 4, the one-year anniversary of Henry's deal with Luc. If everything unfolds as Luc has promised that it will, Henry will be dead before the day is over. Henry's choice to spend his last hours giving Addie "the gift" of "listening" reflects his character development: when he made the deal with Luc, he was so selfishly concerned with making others like him. Now, he understands that relationships are about reciprocity and selflessness. He'd rather spend his final hours giving himself up to someone else than being wanted by someone else.*



Later, they get dressed and go out walking. Addie tells Henry that living for 300 years is no different than living for one: you just have to take things one second at a time. Eventually, they tire of walking and head to the Merchant. Henry feels a "storm brewing in his head," and then it turns into a physical storm. So Henry tilts his head back, feels the rain on his face, and remembers the night they went to the Fourth Rail. He feels so different from the person he was one year ago who climbed up onto the rooftop.

*Addie's advice to Henry about taking things one second at a time echoes the advice that Estele gave Addie so many years ago ("How do you walk to the end of the world? [...] One step at a time"). This, combined with Henry's realization that he's so different from how he was one year ago (before he met Addie), reflects the power that human connection has to shape a person's life.*



Now, the sun has set. And Henry will never see it again. Addie holds his hand. "Stay with me," she tells him. Without speaking, both of them know they'll stay together to the end.

*Addie's plea for Henry to stay with her echoes Henry's plea in the previous chapter. This highlights how their love is based on reciprocation and mutual support—this is the opposite of Luc's love for Addie, which is based on power and control.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 18

It's nearly time. Henry and Addie are on the roof—the same roof that Henry nearly jumped from one year ago. The storm grows more violent. Addie grips Henry's hand tightly. Henry wonders what it will feel like to lose his soul. Will it feel like a heart attack? Will something compel him to jump from the roof as he'd originally planned to do? He realizes that he doesn't need to know anything, though, because he's ready. And because Addie is by his side.

Henry's watch has stopped ticking. Addie is speaking to Henry, but he can't hear what she's saying. But then he listens. Addie is telling him to listen and write everything down. Henry nods. The journals are on the shelf, he tells Addie: he's written everything she's told him to write. But Addie shakes her head: she hasn't told Henry how the story ends.

*This section shows how much Henry's character has changed over the course of the novel. Before, he resented his flaws and insecurities and the way they made him emotionally vulnerable. He made his deal with Luc because he thought that being able to control the way others felt about him would improve his quality of life and shield him from pain and suffering. Now, Henry understands that there is balance and beauty in accepting life's uncertainties, even if that leaves him vulnerable to pain and confusion.*



*Suddenly, Henry's fate is less certain. On the surface, the "story" that Addie is talking about seems to be her own—the story that Henry translated into words and wrote in his notebooks. But when Addie shakes her head, it's clear that she's not talking about her story alone—she's talking about her and Henry's story: the one they've written together. Tension builds as the reader waits to see what final trick Addie has up her sleeve.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 19

*New York City. September 1, 2014 (3 nights until the end).* Three nights before Henry's last night, Addie sneaks out of bed and walks to the Merchant. She sits at the bar and orders a shot of tequila. Luc appears beside her. "Shouldn't you be with your love?" he asks. But he isn't mocking her. Instead, he strokes her hair and tells her the pain will pass. "All things do." Luc sits down next to Addie and asks if her human love was everything she thought it would be. "No," she replies truthfully. It was complicated, and "messy" and "wonderful" and "so fragile it hurt." All the same, she realizes, "it was worth every single moment."

*Here, Addie restates many of the points she made during her last meeting with Luc: that human love is "messy" and complicated, but that this is what makes it so "wonderful" and rewarding to experience. Addie's ideas about love align with her broader view of life: though both can be painful and plagued by uncertainty, "every single moment" is worth living because you never know what will happen next. By contrast, the certainty and control that characterize Luc's immortal life (and his views on love) might eliminate the possibility of pain, but this also makes life boring, predictable, and ultimately meaningless.*



Addie turns to Luc and tells him that Henry shouldn't die just to prove Luc's point. Luc tries to tell Addie that Henry made a deal, but Addie reminds Luc what he once told her about deals being "rewritten." Then she offers to surrender her soul to Luc in exchange for Henry's life. She tells Luc that he was right all along: she's not human and hasn't been for a long time. She's tired of losing all the humans in her life. But she and Luc are the same and will never lose each other. So, if Luc agrees to spare Henry, Addie will be Luc's "as long as you want me by your side." Luc pauses. Then he says, "I accept."

*Note Addie's language in this section: she speaks about deals being "rewritten," evoking the language of storytelling. With this, the cryptic advice Addie gave Henry on the rooftop becomes clear: she was trying to tell him that she has "rewritten" their story—their deal, surrendering herself to Luc so that Henry can live out his natural life. Here, Addie frames her proposed new deal as a surrender to Luc: she claims that she's thought about things and concluded that he's right: that mortal love is characterized by loss and pain, and that she's more like Luc than she is like humans, anyway. But given Addie's centuries-long battle to outwit and defeat Luc, it seems out of character for her to suddenly yield to him, so the reader may logically assume that Addie's deference is merely a front—and that she has one last trick up her sleeve. Regardless, with this "rewritten" deal, Addie demonstrates her selfless love for Henry by surrendering herself so he may live.*



## PART 6, CHAPTER 20

*New York City. September 4, 2013.* "No," Henry pleads as the rain beats down around him. But when Addie decides to do something, nobody can stop her. She tells Henry to think of it as a thank-you: for showing her what it feels like to be seen and loved. Now, Henry has a second chance to let people see him as he really is.

*Addie's first deal with Luc was inadvertently born of her selfish desire to live an exciting life, and she ultimately came to regret how that deal forced her to choose personal freedom over human connection. With this second deal, she is setting things right, sacrificing her personal freedom in order to selflessly help Henry.*



Henry won't back down. How can Addie go with Luc when she doesn't love him? Addie just gives Henry a sad smile. Through tears, she reminds Henry that life goes by fast, and he'd better make the most of his. Then she makes him promise to remember her when she is gone. And even as she says this, her face begins to blur. And then she is gone, and Henry is falling.

*Addie's last words to Henry underscore the selflessness that has inspired her to make her new deal with Luc. She's sacrificing herself so that Henry can have a second chance at life—and she has done so out of love for him.*



## PART 7, CHAPTER 1

*New York City. September 5, 2014.* Henry wakes up. It's sunny outside and he feels hungover. Book stares at him from the foot of the bed. He rolls over to wake Addie, but she's not there. Then Henry remembers last night. And then he remembers the journals. He runs to the narrow shelves where he stored them. Henry opens the journals, and Addie's story spills out, "shielded from the curse by the fact the words themselves are his, though the story is hers." Henry sits with the journals for hours, reliving every story Addie ever told him. Addie's gone, but Henry isn't, and "[h]e remembers everything."

*Henry's writings about Addie haven't disappeared because ideas (in this case, "words") are stronger than memories. The survival of Henry's writings reaffirms the novel's central thesis that art, creativity, and expression are instrumental in shaping reality and giving meaning to experience. Henry's journals aren't a documentation of Addie's life but of the way her life and the connection she and Henry shared have touched and inspired him. This connection, the novel suggests, is far more meaningful than the mere existence of Addie's or Henry's lives on their own.*



## PART 7, CHAPTER 2

Brooklyn, New York. March 13, 2015. Bea finishes reading Henry's manuscript for *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* and cries out in frustration: he can't end the story that way! Would Addie really go with Luc? Henry doesn't know how to answer Bea's question. He's written so many alternate endings. In some versions, Addie is happy. In others, she's not. Regardless, anything he writes after that final kiss they shared won't be her story. Henry is glad to have the manuscript finished because he's already starting to forget Addie. It's not part of her curse—it's just the way details always fade with time.

Henry will get an agent. And he'll insist that only one name is on the book's cover—and that name isn't his. The publishing world will agree to this, thinking it's part of a clever marketing scheme. But Henry will beam at the thought of so many people reading her name: "Addie, Addie, Addie." The advance Henry receives is large enough to pay off his student loans. Finally, he has enough stability to pause for a moment and think about what he wants to do next. He wants to do and see as much as he can.

*Henry's decision not to impose a more concrete, satisfying ending onto Addie's story reflects his genuine love for her: unlike Luc, Henry has no desire to control Addie and shape her life into something he can possess and control. Henry's decision also honors a key aspect of Addie's character: her appreciation for life's uncertainties and sustained sense of wonder about the world.*



*Henry's decision not to include his name on the book's cover is further proof of his genuine love for Addie. The novel isn't his selfish attempt to control Addie's image or take ownership of his life; rather, it's a selfless effort to make good on his promise never to forget her, and to help her make her mark on the world as she always wanted—but was never able—to do on her own.*



## PART 7, CHAPTER 3

London, England. February 3, 2016. The bookstore is about to close. Addie pauses near the New Fiction, listening to two teenage girls discuss a book. One assumes the author hasn't put his name on it as part of "a PR stunt." Addie waits until everyone clears out, and then she picks up the book. The title is written in a cursive script that resembles Henry's handwriting. Besides his script, there's no sign of Henry on the book. She opens the book to the dedication page and reads: "*I remember you.*"

Addie remembers her time with Henry, and a tear falls from her eye. She's gotten to say hello to so many people, but Henry was her last—and only—goodbye. She pages through the book—her story—which is now "Bigger than either of them, humans, or gods, or things without names." As she starts to read, she feels the air shift behind her. She turns and sees Luc.

*The absence of Henry's name from the published work also reflects the notion that ideas matter more than memories: Henry doesn't need his physical name on the book to make his history with Addie legitimate and meaningful—the ideas contained in his book speak for themselves.*



*With the publication of Henry's first novel, *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, Henry has simultaneously kept his promise not to forget Addie and helped her to leave her mark on the world. And most notably, the book shows that the meaningfulness of one's life doesn't come from their individual accolades, but from the way their life touched others'.*



“Adeline.” Luc holds Addie’s shoulders, and she sinks into him. They fit together, though Addie sometimes wonders if this is only because he is “smoke expanding to fill whatever space it is given.” He looks at her name on the book and calls her “clever,” but he doesn’t seem upset. The world can have Addie’s story, “So long as I have you.” Luc’s eyes are bright green, and Addie can tell he is basking in the glory of “being right” and “in control.” She’s learned to read him so well over the 300 years they have spent together. She’s surprised he hasn’t learned to read her, too. But maybe he only sees what he expects to see in her: an angry woman, or a lustful woman. He has never understood “her cunning, or her cleverness,” and this, Addie knows, is his “grand mistake.”

When Addie first prayed to Luc, he taught her that words matter. When she sold her soul to Luc, she didn’t say “forever, but as long as you want me by your side.” And there’s a big difference between the two. It might take time, but Addie knows that Luc can’t love, and she will study him until she can “prove it.” And then she will make him hate her again, force him to cast her off[,] and then “she will finally be free.” Addie wants to tell Luc of her plan, if only to see how it colors his eyes. But he’s taught her to be patient, so she keeps her thoughts to herself.

*Addie still acknowledges that she and Luc fit together perfectly, but she’s more skeptical than she was during the early days of their romance. Now, she sees their compatibility not as mutual attraction and commitment, but as Luc’s instinct as a cruel, power-hungry god to “expand[] to fill whatever space it is given.” In other words, she sees him as fundamentally selfish, calculating, and incapable of living with the vulnerability, uncertainty, and selflessness that genuine love requires.*

*This section lays out Addie’s final act of defiance against Luc: she resolves to show him that words matter, just as he did to her in their original deal. Addie has tricked Luc into believing that he has finally defeated her—that their new deal has promised her soul to him for eternity—when in reality, Addie’s new deal has reversed their roles. Before, the onus was on Addie to prove to Luc that she would not tire of immortality, no matter what suffering Luc threw her way, and Luc held the power to call her bluff and collect her soul. Now, it’s up to Luc to “prove” to Addie that his love is genuine and will never fade, and Addie holds the power to call his bluff and reclaim her soul. Thus, though the novel ends on a somewhat unresolved note, it hints at a final act of defiance and determination by its protagonist.*





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