

Epigraph

Epigraph: On July 29, 1714, in the quiet village of Villon-sur-Sarthe, France, Adeline embarks on an urgent journey that marks the beginning of her departure from the life she has always known. The sun dips below the horizon as the landscape of the countryside begins to fade into shadows, mirroring the shift in Adeline's own fate. Her hurried escape from a distant wedding celebration leads her into the depths of the woods, her steps propelled by fear and the need to escape something intangible, something beyond her understanding. Though the sound of her name reverberates through the air, calling her back to the village, it only drives her forward, into the unknown, where answers and dangers await.

This moment of frantic flight is laced with symbolism, as the falling white flowers from Adeline's hair transform into something far more meaningful than mere petals. These flowers, resembling scattered stars, echo the celestial map of her life, one that is no longer in her control. The freckles on her face, each representing lost loves and missed opportunities, serve as bitter reminders of the unfulfilled promises made by Estele Magritte, a figure from Adeline's past whose words about divine forces seem distant now. These marks, which were once symbolic of hope and desire, now mock her as she flees from a life that feels increasingly out of reach, leaving behind both the life she was born into and the potential she once imagined for herself.

Adeline's journey is both a physical escape and a metaphysical leap into the uncertain night. Estele's earlier teachings about the old gods and their fickle nature return to her mind as she runs, reminding her that these beings are not concerned with human desires or pleas. The gods of the past, with their mercurial temperaments, are indifferent to her cries for help. They do not offer the comfort or the answers that Adeline might have hoped for; instead, their silence and coldness add to the weight of her journey, making it clear that her flight is not just from the physical world, but also

from the deeper, more spiritual ties that once bound her. This realization intensifies her struggle, as the boundary between the earthly and divine grows increasingly blurry.

As she ventures deeper into the woods, the act of not looking back becomes a powerful and symbolic rejection of everything that has been preordained for her. Her refusal to acknowledge the village she's leaving behind represents her rejection of a life governed by external expectations. The woods, with their haunting quietness, offer her the illusion of freedom, but even here, as she steps away from the village and its traditions, she is reminded that some forces are not so easily escaped. The realm of shadows and gods into which she steps represents the vast unknown, where only fleeting moments of control can be grasped before they slip away again. This stark contrast between her desire for autonomy and the relentless pull of fate encapsulates the timeless struggle of trying to break free from the influences that seek to define our paths.

Her flight is a metaphor for the universal need to reclaim agency in a world that often seems intent on limiting our choices. The pursuit of independence, however, comes at a cost—a realization that true freedom may never be fully attainable. As Adeline moves through the forest, deeper into the darkness and solitude, she is confronted with the complexities of her own desires and limitations, her journey echoing the plight of many who seek to escape a destiny that does not fit them. Ultimately, Adeline's escape marks the beginning of an uncertain journey, where the pursuit of freedom and the search for meaning intersect, leaving her to grapple with the consequences of her own defiance against the inevitable pull of fate.