

Chapter VII

Chapter VII, In the turmoil of occupied France, on November 23, 1944, Addie, also known as Adeline, finds herself imprisoned by German soldiers in a cold, dark cell on the outskirts of Orleans. Despite her best efforts to remain unnoticed, the fact that she is a woman draws unwanted attention, leading to her brutal treatment. The weight of her past choices presses down on her as she sits in captivity, the decision to return to France from Boston, motivated by pride and a desire to reconnect with the legacy of the previous war, now feeling like a grave mistake. What started as an effort to assist the resistance by ferrying vital secrets through occupied France, hidden behind the false security of anonymity, ends in betrayal and capture.

As she sits alone in the cell, the reality of her situation sinks in, and she is forced to reflect on the decisions that led her to this point. The illusion of invisibility, once her shield, now feels like a fantasy, leaving her vulnerable to the very forces she hoped to elude. Addie's introspection grows as she grapples with the personal and collective losses of wartime France, alongside her internal battle: the desire to be remembered versus the haunting fear of becoming completely forgotten. Her return to France, once fueled by a sense of duty and the urge to make a difference, seems now like a reckless choice, one driven by emotions of nostalgia and pride, rather than strategic wisdom. She questions whether the risks she took to help the resistance were worth it and whether her contributions, though well-intentioned, will ever be recognized in the grand scheme of things.

As the days drag on, Addie's thoughts turn to an unusual object she's carried with her for nearly three decades: a mystical wooden ring. For the past 29 years, she had avoided using it, wary of its powers and the unknown consequences of invoking the being or entity connected to it—Luc. In the depths of her desperation, with the walls of her cell closing in, she finally decides to use the ring. It is as if she's come to a

breaking point, ready to face her deepest fears—the fear of being erased from memory, never to be remembered by anyone, a permanent casualty of war. The moment the ring is activated, Luc's presence fills the room, and with it, a strange stillness and suspended sense of time.

Luc's arrival marks a sudden shift in the atmosphere, and it feels as though the world outside their exchange ceases to exist. Their interaction is thick with tension, as the weight of their long, complex history becomes apparent. The conversation between them reveals the complicated nature of their bond, one that spans beyond human lifetimes, rooted in decisions that still affect Addie's present predicament. Luc expresses disdain for the wartime setting, condemning the brutality and suffering around them, yet he remains morally ambiguous, unable or unwilling to offer clear answers about his role in Addie's fate. His presence serves as both a temptation and a challenge, pressing Addie to reckon with her decisions, including the escape she is now planning. Despite the seeming advantage Luc holds over her, Addie refuses to capitulate, asserting her will to escape, demonstrating resilience in the face of overwhelming odds.

This chapter masterfully intertwines historical reality with the supernatural, showcasing the stark contrast between the brutal world of World War II and the mystical powers that connect Addie to Luc. The themes of resistance and personal identity emerge strongly, as Addie grapples with the ghosts of the past and the choices she made in pursuit of autonomy. Her inner conflict—her vulnerability against the fierce determination to maintain her freedom—is captured against the backdrop of war's harshness. Addie's fight for her own agency, coupled with the mysterious nature of her connection to Luc, creates a deeply layered narrative. This chapter not only explores the personal turmoil of an individual caught in history's sweeping currents but also delves into the intricate dance between power, freedom, and the supernatural forces that govern their lives. Addie's struggle for control and the looming presence of Luc raise critical questions about fate, choice, and the cost of autonomy in a world torn apart by war.