

Chapter IV

Chapter IV takes place on a warm summer evening in Paris, on July 29, 1715, where Addie LaRue, the protagonist, finds herself grappling with the complex realities of her existence. Far removed from any romantic ideals or aspirations, she has learned to navigate the world not as an artist seeking beauty, but as a survivor who has been shaped by time and circumstance. On this particular night, Addie uses her wit and cunning to outmaneuver a man who has followed her into a rented room. To protect herself from his unwanted advances, she secretly laces his wine with a drug, which renders him unconscious, allowing her to escape the situation unscathed. As the man lies helplessly on the floor, Addie reflects on the year that has passed since she made the fateful decision to escape the confines of the life that was expected of her, choosing instead to trade her soul for a cursed freedom.

This freedom, however, comes with an undeniable cost. Addie is granted eternal life, but it is a life marred by an unrelenting curse—one that ensures she will never leave a mark on the world or the people she encounters. No matter how much she interacts with others, they will forget her as soon as she leaves their presence. Memories fade, objects remain untouched, and even the man who now lies unconscious in front of her will never remember the encounter. This paradox of immortality, where she is perpetually disconnected from the world and its people, becomes a constant source of torment for Addie. The isolation she endures is compounded by her awareness that she can never truly be seen or known, a cruel twist on the very freedom she sought.

As the chapter progresses, we see Addie grappling with the irony of her so-called freedom. She cannot die, cannot starve, and cannot fade into obscurity in a conventional sense, yet her existence is far from fulfilling. Her every moment is one of solitude, and though she may walk through the world unscathed, she is doomed to experience it in silence. Addie is left to maneuver through this endless loop, searching

for loopholes within her curse, finding small ways to subtly influence her surroundings without breaking the terms of the pact she made. This determination to live within the boundaries of her curse highlights her resilience and cleverness, even as the weight of her eternal existence bears down upon her.

The turning point in the chapter arrives with the appearance of a mysterious figure, a shadowy entity known only as "the darkness." This being is the very force that granted Addie her immortality, and it serves as both a reminder of the temptation she once faced and the consequences that followed. Their interaction is charged with an unsettling energy, with the darkness offering cryptic commentary on Addie's current predicament while adding a layer of tension to their already fraught relationship. As the entity reminds her of the exact words she spoke when she sealed her fate, Addie is forced to confront the cold reality of the choice she made, one that granted her freedom in a form that she had never anticipated.

In their exchange, Addie is forced to face the consequences of her desire for liberation, realizing that her wish for freedom has been granted in a way that leaves her feeling more trapped than ever. The conversation between the two probes deep philosophical themes of desire, consequence, and the ambiguous nature of true freedom. Through their dialogue, the narrative explores Addie's ongoing struggle to reclaim control over her life and find meaning in her existence, despite the limitations imposed by the curse. This chapter delves into Addie's complex internal world, shedding light on her desire to break free from the constraints of her immortality while also showcasing the strength and resolve she must summon to endure a life of endless isolation. The tension between her determination to find autonomy and the reality of her situation sets the stage for the next chapters of her journey, leaving readers eager to see how she will continue to navigate her eternal, unyielding curse.