

# Chapter X

Chapter X finds Addie attending a dinner party in New York City on a chilly March evening, where for the first time in a long while, she experiences a fleeting moment of normalcy. Surrounded by the laughter of her friends and the easy rhythm of casual conversation, she is caught between Henry and Elise, both of whom bring warmth and comfort to the gathering. For this brief evening, Addie finds herself almost able to believe that she could lead a life just like everyone else—uncomplicated, filled with simple pleasures, and free from the isolation that defines her existence. Her interactions with Bea, Josh, and Elise seem effortless, their discussions ranging from art to Paris and everything in between, each word flowing naturally as they enjoy the evening. The soft touch of Henry's hand under the table deepens the intimacy between them, grounding Addie in the present and offering her a temporary escape from the heaviness that has been her life for so long.

Yet, as the evening unfolds, the quiet joy is quickly overshadowed by a sense of discomfort that arises when Robbie, Henry's close friend, displays his dissatisfaction. Despite Josh's flirtatious gestures, Robbie's restless energy permeates the room, casting an invisible tension that Addie picks up on instantly. It all comes to a head when Elise briefly leaves the table, only to return with a shocking revelation—she has forgotten Addie's name. This simple yet painful moment starkly exposes the heart-wrenching truth of Addie's existence: no matter how hard she tries, she will always be forgotten by those she meets, a constant in her life that she can never escape. Addie's pain is hidden behind her practiced smile, but the reality of her curse hangs heavy in the air, reminding her of the distance between her and the world she so desperately wants to be part of.

As the group continues to banter about birthdays, Bea's mysterious birth date sparking an easy conversation, Addie is once again reminded of how easily she slips through

the cracks. Robbie's careless slip-up when he calls her "Andy" is an all-too-familiar moment of frustration for Addie, an accidental slip that only emphasizes her curse. She is never able to hold a place in people's memories, always a shadow in the minds of those who briefly cross her path. The incident exposes the cruel reality of her existence, as she is left to wonder if anyone will ever truly see her, if anyone will ever remember her for more than just the passing moment.

The evening's smooth veneer begins to crack when Robbie, perhaps overcome by emotions and jealousy, storms off for a cigarette, disrupting the fragile peace the group had maintained. Addie, sensing the unspoken tension and the inevitable end to the evening, decides to leave, but not before exchanging a brief, lingering kiss with Henry. As she steps into the cold New York night, the familiar ache of loneliness begins to settle back into her bones, reminding her of the emptiness that often accompanies the end of a brief connection. Yet, to her surprise, Henry follows her out, and they share a quiet, intimate conversation on the stoop, marking a subtle but significant shift in their relationship. Henry reveals to Addie that Robbie has long carried an unrequited love for him, a revelation that forces Addie to reflect on the complexities of love and the pain of being caught in the crossfire of someone else's emotions. In this candid moment, Addie is reminded of the fragility of human connection, the raw vulnerability that defines the pursuit of love, and the bittersweet beauty of fleeting moments where, even for a short while, she allows herself to believe in the possibility of true connection.

This chapter explores the layers of human emotion—love, jealousy, pain, and the deep yearning to be remembered. As Addie navigates the intricate relationships in her life, she is confronted with the inevitable nature of her curse, and yet, she finds solace in the brief moments of connection that she experiences with Henry and the others. It is a reflection on the delicate balance between human connection and isolation, the complexity of unspoken feelings, and the fleeting beauty of shared experiences, all woven together by Addie's longing for something permanent in a world where she is destined to be forgotten. The chapter captures the essence of what it means to love and lose, to be seen and then disappear, and the quiet resilience that pushes one to

continue seeking meaning even when it feels like nothing lasts.

