

Chapter XV

In the heart of a seemingly remote forest which turns out to be Central Park, Addie grapples with a prevailing fear of abandonment by Luc, only to find the city's skyline reassuringly close. Luc's ethereal presence and a formal exchange soon lead to a poignant request to dance, a moment filled with spectral music and shared memories, subtly highlighting their intricate and painful relationship. Luc, who once asked if he was a devil or darkness, monster or god, now appears not with triumph but with an unfamiliar sadness in his eyes.

The dance serves as a metaphor for their complex bond, filled with love, resentment, and unfulfilled desires, where the absence of actual music doesn't deter the vivid sensations of shared memories and places they seem to recall together. As the dance ends with Addie's realization of her longing for freedom, Luc's inability to release her exposes the roots of their conflict: possession and a misunderstanding of freedom and attachment.

Luc reveals his manipulation of Addie's life by orchestrating her relationship with Henry, illustrating the depth of his control and his perspective on love as something trivial compared to his connection with Addie. Despite his assertions, Addie's experience with Henry has shown her a different truth about love's worth, challenging Luc's disdain for human emotions and affirming her belief in love's enduring value.

The conversation between Addie and Luc intensifies as Luc's intentions—both to demonstrate his own necessity and to trivialize human connections—are revealed, along with the chilling realization that Henry's time was always limited by their deal. Addie's resolute denial of Luc's claim over her and her love illustrates her growth and independence, a resistance against centuries of manipulation.

The chapter concludes with a dramatic departure and a moment of solace for Addie, only to be shattered by the realization of lost time. This critical incident underscores the story's themes of control, freedom, love's complexity, and the inescapable nature of certain bonds. Luc's ominous promise lingers as a reminder of the inevitable confrontation that lies ahead, framing the narrative within a timeless struggle between desire, autonomy, and destiny, set against New York City's ever-watchful gaze.