

Chapter XVII

In the quiet embrace of an ordinary day in New York City on September 4, 2014, Henry and Addie linger in bed, wrapped in the intimacy of shared moments and whispered names. As morning turns to afternoon, they resist the forward march of time, basking in a cocoon of stories and memories, a treasure trove of experiences that Henry will never document. Each story Addie shares, from fairy pools on the Isle of Skye to swimming in crystal-clear waters, is a testament to a life lived beyond the ordinary, a narrative of unseen wonders and forgotten days.

Henry, consumed by a fear of the inevitable, grapples with the fragility of their time together. The act of getting up, the simple motion of continuing with the day, feels like a surrender to the relentless pace of time. Yet, there's a recognition of life's persistent march, an acknowledgment of the transient nature of their happiness. Despite his reluctance, Henry's physical hunger signals a return to the mundane, a reminder that even in the face of profound connection, life's basic needs persist.

Addie, ever the beacon of light against Henry's storm of anxiety, gently leads him back into the world. Her tales fill the air as she cooks, a final gesture of giving, a sharing of moments that Henry will carry with him. As they step outside, the reality of time's passage becomes palpable. The day's simplicity is overshadowed by a sense of urgency, a realization that time is always a step ahead, leaving them with moments that are always just shy of enough.

Yet, in the face of this relentless pursuit, Addie offers a perspective filled with both wisdom and resignation. Living three hundred years, she suggests, is not so different from living a single day; it is about embracing each second as it comes. This philosophy of presence, of living moment to moment, encapsulates the essence of their day together—a realization that life, whether measured in centuries or seconds, is about the continuous accumulation of nows, a series of present moments stitched together by memory and experience.