

# Chapter II

Chapter II opens with Addie LaRue, lost in thought as she strolls the vibrant streets of New York City on the evening of March 12, 2014. The city's heartbeat pulses around her as she immerses herself in the words of *The Odyssey*, her mind wandering through the ancient text while her body drifts along the modern world. Amidst the busy crowd, she heads toward the Baxter, a place that holds memories but also feels distant and fleeting, just like everything in her life. Her plans for a quiet night—one she has often enjoyed—are quickly derailed when she unexpectedly runs into James St. Clair, a familiar face that disrupts her solitude. Radiating a carefree energy from a day of filming, James unknowingly changes the course of her evening, pushing her towards the East Village and away from her intended path.

As the night continues to unfold, Addie encounters a food delivery cyclist and, driven by an ever-present hunger, steals a meal from him. This small yet significant act—born from her constant yearning for both sustenance and a semblance of normalcy—reminds her of the everyday compromises she has been forced to accept throughout her long life. Her theft, while minor, reflects the ongoing survival tactics Addie has learned in the centuries of her cursed existence. Each stolen moment, each fleeting connection, becomes a means of grounding herself in a world where she is perpetually erased from memory. Her actions, though seemingly insignificant, underscore the reality of living without the ability to make lasting impressions, a daily struggle to feel seen in a world that forgets her as soon as she leaves.

As Addie wanders through the familiar streets of the East Village, she arrives at a building with a green door—one she recognizes as a temporary shelter in her life of constant change. The key she retrieves from its hidden spot serves as a tangible reminder of a past relationship, one she shared with Sam, a lover who, like all others, would ultimately forget her. Their connection, filled with passion and intensity, exists only as a fleeting memory for Addie, an experience that will vanish the moment she steps away. Up on the rooftop, a secluded place that offers a moment of peace amidst the chaos of the city, Addie sits alone, contemplating her place in a world where nothing stays constant. The moment of solitude, however, is short-lived as Sam arrives unexpectedly with a group of friends, reigniting memories of their past intimacy.

Sam, vibrant and full of life, sparks a brief rekindling of their connection with nothing more than a glance. In the brief exchange that follows, Addie is reminded of the complicated and bittersweet nature of their relationship, one that can never truly be revisited. Despite the shared cigarette and the quiet understanding between them, Addie knows that this moment will fade, just as all the others have. Sam's remark, comparing Addie to the stars she once longed to see again, stirs a deep longing within Addie, a reminder of what she can never fully experience. But as quickly as their connection is reignited, Sam and her friends depart, leaving Addie to once again face the solitude that defines her existence.

As the chapter draws to a close, Addie reflects on the briefness of her encounters with others, and the loneliness that accompanies her cursed immortality. The emotional highs and lows she experiences—like the fleeting connection with Sam—are always followed by the crushing reality that she will soon be forgotten. The comparison Addie makes between this eternal solitude and madness underscores the depth of her despair, as she is caught in a never-ending cycle of longing for recognition while knowing that it can never be hers. This internal struggle is something she has grappled with for centuries, and the chapter leaves readers with a poignant understanding of Addie's existential plight, her quest for belonging, and the profound loneliness that accompanies living without a trace in a world that forgets you the moment you're out of sight.