

Chapter III

Chapter III follows young Adeline during the summer of 1698, as she embarks on a significant journey away from her small village of Villon-sur-Sarthe, France, with her father. At only seven years old, Adeline is filled with wonder and anticipation, though a part of her feels the weight of the unknown. Accompanying her father, a skilled woodworker, to the bustling city of Le Mans for the first time, she experiences a whirlwind of emotions. While the journey stirs feelings of excitement, she is also filled with apprehension as she leaves behind the only world she has ever known. Her father, typically a man of few words who is deeply involved in his craft, reveals a more engaging and imaginative side of himself during the trip, filling their time together with captivating stories of far-off lands and dreams beyond their humble village. These tales stir something deep inside of Adeline, awakening a desire to capture these larger-than-life ideas in some way, though she lacks the means to do so yet.

As they travel through the countryside, the vastness of the world begins to reveal itself to Adeline, unfolding in endless stretches of fields, distant hills, and hidden beauty. The landscape is rich and full of new sights, sounds, and experiences, and it is through this journey that Adeline is given her first glimpse of a reality much larger than her own village. She marvels at the beauty around her, noticing the small things like the light filtering through the trees, the song of the wind, and the laughter that echoes in the distance. When they finally reach Le Mans, Adeline is overwhelmed by the sight of the city's towering stone walls and the bustling, vibrant marketplace that appears so vastly different from her quiet, familiar world. The crowd is lively and filled with strangers, and Adeline is struck by the sensory overload—the sounds of haggling, the foreign smells of food and spices, and the colors of fabrics and goods, making her realize just how expansive and diverse the world truly is.

While in the marketplace, Adeline's father engages with the crowd, skillfully carving figures from blocks of wood, his hands steady and precise as he works. His expertise in his craft draws the attention of many around him, but it is his creation for Adeline that leaves the deepest mark on her heart—a simple yet deeply meaningful wooden ring. This ring, made by her father at the time of her birth, symbolizes much more than just a piece of craftsmanship. It represents his deep love and his unspoken promise that she is cherished, that she holds a special place in his world despite the larger world that surrounds them. As Adeline gazes at the ring, she feels a surge of affection for her father, knowing that this small object is a manifestation of his care for her, a constant reminder of their bond.

This chapter highlights a pivotal moment in Adeline's life, marking her first venture beyond the confines of her village and opening her eyes to the possibilities and vastness of the world. The journey with her father allows her to see firsthand the complexity and richness of life beyond the familiar and sets her on a path of growth and self-discovery. The relationship between father and daughter is further developed through their shared experiences on this journey, and the meaningfulness of their bond is evident in the simple yet profound acts of love, like the gifting of the wooden ring. This chapter not only explores the themes of curiosity and growth but also touches on the universal themes of family, connection, and the treasures found in both the ordinary and the extraordinary. Through Adeline's eyes, we see a world of infinite possibility, where one moment—spent with a loved one—can shift the trajectory of a young life, setting the stage for all the adventures and experiences that lie ahead.