In The Hands of Fate

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His head snapped around to the girl sitting at a table in the corner of the coffee shop. Her short brown hair – dipped in red dye – fell in loose curls around her feminine shoulders. She was typing something into her computer intently, only stopping to adjust her glasses or take a sip from her drink. He knew straight away that it was her. He had waited almost a century to meet her again – or at least a future version of her.

"Hello…Rowan?" his sister, Sabrina, waved her hands in front of his face. "It's her, isn't it?"
 Rowan nodded.

"You're going to get yourself hurt one day. You've been chasing her for centuries and each time it doesn't work out and you are heartbroken. I'm not putting up with your sulking again."

"It'll be different this time…" he finally stopped staring at the girl, turning back to his perfect sister, who was grabbing the attention of just about every young boy in the room.

Wait 'till you find out she's over three thousand years old, Rowan thought to himself.

Being (close to) perfect was both a pro and a con that came with being immortal. Rowan had light brown curls that had turned golden in the late afternoon sun. His eyes matched his sister's – forest green. Sabrina was tall and slim, with defined cheekbones and tan skin decked out with dark freckles. Rowan too was tall, but with more pale skin and larger hands and feet.

He gave into the urge to look at her again. Her hair wasn't blond like it was last time, but she hadn't changed much. The woman must've sensed someone staring at her because she began to look around the room before meeting Rowan's gaze.

Unlike most of the other girls who drooled over Rowan, she remained unfazed but refused to break eye contact. Rowan saw his future in her eyes. He also saw his past…

"Claudine! CLAUDINE!" a man was bent over a young girl's dying body. She was bleeding out from the knife wound in her chest, some of the blood smudged on the man's jacket.

"I'm not losing you…again." he wept, tucking a chunk of blond hair behind her ear.

"It's…okay…Rowan." she rasped, lightly squeezing his hand.

"I'll find you again…" he promised to the girl. Rowan thought back to who had robbed him of his love. He loathed Diana with everything he had. He cursed himself for not noticing the jealousy sooner. But it was too little…too late. "I'll find you…" he repeated.

"I know…you…will…" Claudine closed her eyes and her chest rose and fell for the last time.

…He withdrew from the memory, but the pain lingered. Rowan thought of how incredible it was that he should find his love again in his favourite coffee shop. But was it coincidental? He assumed it must be fate, because they had been brought together so many times. It had started with Evelyn, then Marian, Delilah, Harriett, and most recently, Claudine. Well, if you count 92 years as recent.

He looked back and found her looking at him. He couldn't just let this opportunity go, so he got up and walked over to her table.

"Drink?" he offered. She smiled warmly at him. The same smile he'd seen for centuries. This was her.

"No thanks, I have a boyfriend." her voice was still the same, only this time without the French accent. It took Rowan a second to register what she'd said. And when he did, it felt like someone had torn his heart in two. But Rowan wasn't giving up that easily.

"Nothing romantic, I swear on the good coffee they serve here." He comically saluted off into the distance which made her laugh. That sweet, silky laugh he'd heard over and over again. It was like a drug to him. He never grew tired of it.

"Okay, fine. But shouldn't you get back to your *date*?" she nodded to his sister, who pretended like she wasn't eavesdropping on their conversation.

"Oh no no no…that's my sister…" he ran a hand through his hair, embarrassed.

"Oh…OH," her eyes widened, and she chuckled, now also embarrassed. To lessen the awkwardness, Rowan introduced himself.

"I'm Rowan."

"Adelia."

"Unique." Adelia blushed slightly and Rowan couldn't help but hope this would go well

He nodded to the door and headed out, Adelia in tow. Rowan and Adelia walked slowly in the evening light, through the streets, and to Rowan's best friend's bar. Adelia spent the stroll staring at the ground, while Rowan spent it admiring her. When the light hit her hair, you could see streaks of blond and not just the mousy brown and red. She'd taken off her glasses, behind which rested the most beautiful eyes Rowan had ever seen. Different from the past versions of Adelia. They were a mix of grey and blue, with flecks of gold blended into them. They were large and inquisitive, and when she didn't think Rowan was looking, those eyes would observe the setting around her. From the modern skyscrapers with their black glass windows to the families and couples passing by.

Adelia was dressed casually in black ripped jeans and a white, loose shirt with puffed flowy sleeves. Rowan decided to start some small talk.

"So, where do you live?"

"Oh, not far from here in an apartment by myself," she mumbled.

"I thought you had a boyfriend?" Rowan inquired, raising his eyebrows although she wasn't looking.

"Yeah I do," his heart sank once again, "but we aren't living together right now…" this time Adelia looked up at him sadly. She was short with small dainty hands and rosy cheeks. Sometimes the back of her hand would brush against his as they walked, each time setting off a spark.

They reached the bar's address and began to cross the road hurriedly, as it was now dark and there were cars left, right, and centre.

Rowan sped up when a car nearly hit him, striding across the wide street.

He heard it rather than saw it. A piercing scream filled the evening air. A car horn sounded. Rowan whipped around, rushing over without thinking about it, dread filling his entire being. The colour drained from his face when he saw Adelia laying on the ground, a pool of dark blood surrounding her. The driver jumped out of his car to come and see the damage. But Rowan was quicker. He swept Adelia up in his arms and took off, his speed aiding him in getting to where he could try to heal her.

He reached the meadow just in time. Adelia wasn't going to last any longer. He felt it was a terrible misfortune that every time he got close to his love, something would keep him from

it. Or rather…her. Rowan hadn't saved any of the others by turning them immortal, because he thought it selfish and knew that, when the time was right, they would be able to be together.

But he was sick of waiting, so he reached for the small vial in his coat pocket, undid the cap, and force-fed it to Adelia instantly. He breathed a sigh of relief when her skin turned smooth and the blood from her head dissipated into the ground. She didn't change much in Rowan's eyes, as he thought her beautiful and perfect as she was.

Adelia was sitting up in a few minutes and she rubbed her head.

"…Rowan…?" she asked, looking around at the meadow they were in.

"How do you feel…?"

"Stronger," she decided, resting her head in her hands. He winced, but smiled, knowing how much he'd have to explain in the next week or two.

All the waiting had been worth it. Rowan had found his love.