

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

THE NEXT MORNING I am silly and light. Every time I push the smile from my face, it fights its way back. Eventually I stop suppressing it. I let my hair hang loose and abandon my uniform of loose shirts in favor of one that cuts across my shoulders, revealing my tattoos.

“What is it with you today?” says Christina on the way to breakfast. Her eyes are still swollen from sleep and her tangled hair forms a fuzzy halo around her face.

“Oh, you know,” I say. “Sun shining. Birds chirping.”

She raises an eyebrow at me, as if reminding me that we are in an underground tunnel.

“Let the girl be in a good mood,” Will says. “You may never see it again.”

I smack his arm and hurry toward the dining hall. My heart pounds because I know that at some point in the next half hour, I will see Tobias. I sit down in my usual place, next to Uriah, with Will and Christina across from us. The seat on my left stays empty. I wonder if Tobias will sit in it; if he’ll grin at me over breakfast; if he’ll look at me in that secret, stolen way that I imagine myself looking at him.

I grab a piece of toast from the plate in the middle of the table and start to butter it with a little too much enthusiasm. I feel myself acting like a lunatic, but I can’t stop. It would be like refusing to breathe.

Then he walks in. His hair is shorter, and it looks darker this way, almost black. It’s Abnegation short, I realize. I smile at him and lift my hand to wave him over, but he sits down next to Zeke without even glancing in my direction, so I let my hand drop.

I stare at my toast. It is easy not to smile now.

“Something wrong?” asks Uriah through a mouthful of toast.

I shake my head and take a bite. What did I expect? Just because we kissed doesn’t mean anything changes. Maybe he changed his mind about liking me. Maybe he thinks kissing me was a mistake.

“Today’s fear landscape day,” says Will. “You think we’ll get to see our own fear landscapes?”

“No.” Uriah shakes his head. “You go through one of the instructors’ landscapes. My brother told me.”

“Ooh, which instructor?” says Christina, suddenly perking up.

“You know, it really isn’t fair that you all get insider information and we don’t,” Will says, glaring at Uriah.

“Like you wouldn’t use an advantage if you had one,” retorts Uriah.

Christina ignores them. “I hope it’s Four’s landscape.”

“Why?” I ask. The question comes out too incredulous. I bite my lip and wish I could take it back.

“Looks like *someone* had a mood swing.” She rolls her eyes. “Like you don’t want to know what his fears are. He acts so tough that he’s probably afraid of marshmallows and

really bright sunrises or something. Overcompensating.”

I shake my head. “It won’t be him.”

“How would you know?”

“It’s just a prediction.”

I remember Tobias’s father in his fear landscape. He wouldn’t let everyone see that. I glance at him. For a second, his eyes shift to mine. His stare is unfeeling. Then he looks away.

Lauren, the instructor of the Dauntless-born initiates, stands with her hands on her hips outside the fear landscape room.

“Two years ago,” she says, “I was afraid of spiders, suffocation, walls that inch slowly inward and trap you between them, getting thrown out of Dauntless, uncontrollable bleeding, getting run over by a train, my father’s death, public humiliation, and kidnapping by men without faces.”

Everyone stares blankly at her.

“Most of you will have anywhere from ten to fifteen fears in your fear landscapes. That is the average number,” she says.

“What’s the lowest number someone has gotten?” asks Lynn.

“In recent years,” says Lauren, “four.”

I have not looked at Tobias since we were in the cafeteria, but I can’t help but look at him now. He keeps his eyes trained on the floor. I knew that four was a low number, low enough to merit a nickname, but I didn’t know it was less than half the average.

I glare at my feet. He’s exceptional. And now he won’t even look at me.

“You will not find out your number today,” says Lauren. “The simulation is set to my fear landscape program, so you will experience my fears instead of your own.”

I give Christina a pointed look. I was right; we won’t go through Four’s landscape.

“For the purposes of this exercise, though, each of you will only face *one* of my fears, to get a sense for how the simulation works.”

Lauren points to us at random and assigns us each a fear. I was standing in the back, so I will go close to last. The fear that she assigned to me was kidnapping.

Because I’m not hooked up to the computer as I wait, I can’t watch the simulation, only the person’s reaction to it. It is the perfect way to distract myself from my preoccupation with Tobias—clenching my hands into fists as Will brushes off spiders I can’t see and Uriah presses his hands against walls that are invisible to me, and smirking as Peter turns bright red during whatever he experiences in “public humiliation.” Then it’s my turn.

The obstacle won’t be comfortable for me, but because I have been able to manipulate every simulation, not just this one, and because I have already gone through Tobias’s landscape, I am not apprehensive as Lauren inserts the needle into my neck.

Then the scenery changes and the kidnapping begins. The ground turns into grass beneath my feet, and hands clamp around my arms, over my mouth. It is too dark to see.

I stand next to the chasm. I hear the roar of the water. I scream into the hand that covers my mouth and thrash to free myself, but the arms are too strong; my kidnappers are too strong.

The image of myself falling into darkness flashes into my mind, the same image that I now carry with me in my nightmares. I scream again; I scream until my throat hurts and I squeeze hot tears from my eyes.

I knew they would come back for me; I knew they would try again. The first time was not enough. I scream again—not for help, because no one will help me, but because that’s what you do when you’re about to die and you can’t stop it.

“Stop,” a stern voice says.

The hands disappear, and the lights come on. I stand on cement in the fear landscape room. My body shakes, and I drop to my knees, pressing my hands to my face. I just failed. I lost all logic, I lost all sense. Lauren’s fear transformed into one of my own.

And everyone saw me. Tobias saw me.

I hear footsteps. Tobias marches toward me and wrenches me to my feet.

“What the hell was that, Stiff?”

“I…” My breath comes in a hiccup. “I didn’t—”

“Get yourself together! This is pathetic.”

Something within me snaps. My tears stop. Heat races through my body, driving the weakness out of me, and I smack him so hard my knuckles burn with the impact. He stares at me, one side of his face bright with blush-blood, and I stare back.

“Shut up,” I say. I yank my arm from his grasp and walk out of the room.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

I PULL MY jacket tight around my shoulders. I haven't been outside in a long time. The sun shines pale against my face, and I watch my breaths form in the air.

At least I accomplished one thing: I convinced Peter and his friends that I'm no longer a threat. I just have to make sure that tomorrow, when I go through my own fear landscape, I prove them wrong. Yesterday failure seemed impossible. Today I'm not sure.

I slide my hands through my hair. The impulse to cry is gone. I braid my hair and tie it with the rubber band around my wrist. I feel more like myself. That is all I need: to remember who I am. And I am someone who does not let inconsequential things like boys and near-death experiences stop her.

I laugh, shaking my head. Am I?

I hear the train horn. The train tracks loop around the Dauntless compound and then continue farther than I can see. Where do they begin? Where do they end? What is the world like beyond them? I walk toward them.

I want to go home, but I can't. Eric warned us not to appear too attached to our parents on Visiting Day, so visiting home would be betraying the Dauntless, and I can't afford to do that. Eric did not tell us we couldn't visit people in factions other than the ones we came from, though, and my mother did tell me to visit Caleb.

I know I'm not allowed to leave without supervision, but I can't stop myself. I walk faster and faster, until I'm sprinting. Pumping my arms, I run alongside the last car until I can grab the handle and swing myself in, wincing as pain darts through my sore body.

Once in the car, I lie on my back next to the door and watch the Dauntless compound disappear behind me. I don't want to go back, but choosing to quit, to be factionless, would be the bravest thing I have ever done, and today I feel like a coward.

The air rushes over my body and twists around my fingers. I let my hand trail over the edge of the car so it presses against the wind. I can't go home, but I can find part of it. Caleb has a place in every memory of my childhood; he is part of my foundation.

The train slows as it reaches the heart of the city, and I sit up to watch the smaller buildings grow into larger buildings. The Erudite live in large stone buildings that overlook the marsh. I hold the handle and lean out just enough to see where the tracks go. They dip down to street level just before they bend to travel east. I breathe in the smell of wet pavement and marsh air.

The train dips and slows, and I jump. My legs shudder with the force of my landing, and I run a few steps to regain my balance. I walk down the middle of the street, heading south, toward the marsh. The empty land stretches as far as I can see, a brown plane colliding with the horizon.

I turn left. The Erudite buildings loom above me, dark and unfamiliar. How will I find Caleb here?

The Erudite keep records; it's in their nature. They must keep records of their initiates. Someone has access to those records; I just have to find them. I scan the buildings. Logically

speaking, the central building should be the most important one. I may as well start there.

The faction members are milling around everywhere. Erudite faction norms dictate that a faction member must wear at least one blue article of clothing at a time, because blue causes the body to release calming chemicals, and “a calm mind is a clear mind.” The color has also come to signify their faction. It seems impossibly bright to me now. I have grown used to dim lighting and dark clothing.

I expect to weave through the crowd, dodging elbows and muttering “excuse me” the way I always do, but there is no need. Becoming Dauntless has made me noticeable. The crowd parts for me, and their eyes cling to me as I pass. I pull the rubber band from my hair and shake it from its knot before I walk through the front doors.

I stand just inside the entrance and tilt my head back. The room is huge, silent, and smells like dust-covered pages. The wood-paneled floor creaks beneath my feet. Bookcases line the walls on either side of me, but they seem to be decorative more than anything, because computers occupy the tables in the center of the room, and no one is reading. They stare at screens with tense eyes, focused.

I should have known that the main Erudite building would be a library. A portrait on the opposite wall catches my attention. It is twice my height and four times my width and depicts an attractive woman with watery gray eyes and spectacles—Jeanine. Heat licks my throat at the sight of her. Because she is Erudite’s representative, she is the one who released that report about my father. I have disliked her since my father’s dinner-table rants began, but now I hate her.

Beneath her is a large plaque that reads KNOWLEDGE LEADS TO PROSPERITY.

Prosperity. To me the word has a negative connotation. Abnegation uses it to describe self-indulgence.

How could Caleb have chosen to be one of these people? The things they do, the things they want, it’s all wrong. But he probably thinks the same of the Dauntless.

I walk up to the desk just beneath Jeanine’s portrait. The young man sitting behind it doesn’t look up as he says, “How can I help you?”

“I am looking for someone,” I say. “His name is Caleb. Do you know where I can find him?”

“I am not permitted to give out personal information,” he replies blandly, as he jabs at the screen in front of him.

“He’s my brother.”

“I am not permi—”

I slam my palm on the desk in front of him, and he jerks out of his daze, staring at me over his spectacles. Heads turn in my direction.

“I said.” My voice is terse. “I am looking for someone. He’s an initiate. Can you at least tell me where I can find them?”

“Beatrice?” a voice behind me says.

I turn, and Caleb stands behind me, a book in hand. His hair has grown out so it flips at his ears, and he wears a blue T-shirt and a pair of rectangular glasses. Even though he looks

different and I'm not allowed to love him anymore, I run at him as fast as I can and throw my arms around his shoulders.

"You have a tattoo," he says, his voice muffled.

"You have glasses," I say. I pull back and narrow my eyes. "Your vision is perfect, Caleb, what are you doing?"

"Um..." He glances at the tables around us. "Come on. Let's get out of here."

We exit the building and cross the street. I have to jog to keep up with him. Across from Erudite headquarters is what used to be a park. Now we just call it "Millenium," and it is a stretch of bare land and several rusted metal sculptures—one an abstract, plated mammoth, another shaped like a lima bean that dwarfs me in size.

We stop on the concrete around the metal bean, where the Erudite sit in small groups with newspapers or books. He takes off his glasses and shoves them in his pocket, then runs a hand through his hair, his eyes skipping over mine nervously. Like he's ashamed. Maybe I should be too. I'm tattooed, loose-haired, and wearing tight clothes. But I'm just not.

"What are you doing here?" he says.

"I wanted to go home," I say, "and you were the closest thing I could think of."

He presses his lips together.

"Don't look so pleased to see me," I add.

"Hey," he says, setting his hands on my shoulders. "I'm thrilled to see you, okay? It's just that this isn't allowed. There are rules."

"I don't care," I say. "I don't care, okay?"

"Maybe you should." His voice is gentle; he wears his look of disapproval. "If it were me, I wouldn't want to get in trouble with your faction."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

I know exactly what it means. He sees my faction as the cruelest of the five, and nothing more.

"I just don't want you to get hurt. You don't have to be so angry with me," he says, tilting his head. "What *happened* to you in there?"

"Nothing. Nothing happened to me." I close my eyes and rub the back of my neck with one hand. Even if I could explain everything to him, I wouldn't want to. I can't even summon the will to think about it.

"You think..." He looks at his shoes. "You think you made the right choice?"

"I don't think there was one," I say. "How about you?"

He looks around. People stare at us as they walk past. His eyes skip over their faces. He's still nervous, but maybe it's not because of how he looks, or because of me. Maybe it's them. I grab his arm and pull him under the arch of the metal bean. We walk beneath its hollow underbelly. I see my reflection everywhere, warped by the curve of the walls, broken by patches of rust and grime.

"What's going on?" I say, folding my arms. I didn't notice the dark circles under his eyes before. "What's wrong?"

Caleb presses a palm to the metal wall. In his reflection, his head is small and pressed in on

one side, and his arm looks like it is bending backward. My reflection, however, looks small and squat.

“Something big is happening, Beatrice. Something is wrong.” His eyes are wide and glassy. “I don’t know what it is, but people keep rushing around, talking quietly, and Jeanine gives speeches about how corrupt Abnegation is all the time, almost every day.”

“Do you believe her?”

“No. Maybe. I don’t...” He shakes his head. “I don’t know what to believe.”

“Yes, you do,” I say sternly. “You know who our parents are. You know who our friends are. Susan’s dad, you think he’s corrupt?”

“How much do I know? How much did they allow me to know? We weren’t allowed to ask questions, Beatrice; we weren’t allowed to know things! And here...” He looks up, and in the flat circle of mirror right above us, I see our tiny figures, the size of fingernails. That, I think, is our true reflection; it is as small as we actually are. He continues, “Here, information is free, it’s always available.”

“This isn’t Candor. There are liars here, Caleb. There are people who are so smart they know how to manipulate you.”

“Don’t you think I would know if I was being manipulated?”

“If they’re as smart as you think, then no. I don’t think you would know.”

“You have no idea what you’re talking about,” he says, shaking his head.

“Yeah. How could I *possibly* know what a corrupt faction looks like? I’m just training to be *Dauntless*, for God’s sake,” I say. “At least I know what I’m a part of, Caleb. *You* are choosing to ignore what we’ve known all our lives—these people are arrogant and greedy and they will lead you nowhere.”

His voice hardens. “I think you should go, Beatrice.”

“With pleasure,” I say. “Oh, and not that it will matter to you, but Mom told me to tell you to research the simulation serum.”

“You saw her?” He looks hurt. “Why didn’t she—”

“Because,” I say. “The Erudite don’t let the Abnegation into their compound anymore. Wasn’t that information available to you?”

I push past him, walking away from the mirror cave and the sculpture, and start down the sidewalk. I should never have left. The *Dauntless* compound sounds like home now—at least there, I know exactly where I stand, which is on unstable ground.

The crowd on the sidewalk thins, and I look up to see why. Standing a few yards in front of me are two Erudite men with their arms folded.

“Excuse me,” one of them says. “You’ll have to come with us.”

One man walks so close behind me that I feel his breath against the back of my head. The other man leads me into the library and down three hallways to an elevator. Beyond the library the floors change from wood to white tile, and the walls glow like the ceiling of the aptitude test room. The glow bounces off the silver elevator doors, and I squint so I can see.

I try to stay calm. I ask myself questions from *Dauntless* training. *What do you do if*

someone attacks you from behind? I envision thrusting my elbow back into a stomach or a groin. I imagine running. I wish I had a gun. These are Dauntless thoughts, and they have become mine.

What do you do if you're attacked by two people at once? I follow the man down an empty, glowing corridor and into an office. The walls are made of glass—I guess I know which faction designed my school.

A woman sits behind a metal desk. I stare at her face. The same face dominates the Erudite library; it is plastered across every article Erudite releases. How long have I hated that face? I don't remember.

"Sit," Jeanine says. Her voice sounds familiar, especially when she is irritated. Her liquid gray eyes focus on mine.

"I'd rather not."

"*Sit,*" she says again. I have definitely heard her voice before.

I heard it in the hallway, talking to Eric, before I got attacked. I heard her mention Divergents. And once before—I heard it...

"It was your voice in the simulation," I say. "The aptitude test, I mean."

She is the danger Tori and my mother warned me about, the danger of being Divergent. Sitting right in front of me.

"Correct. The aptitude test is by far my greatest achievement as a scientist," she replies. "I looked up your test results, Beatrice. Apparently there was a problem with your test. It was never recorded, and your results had to be reported manually. Did you know that?"

"No."

"Did you know that you're one of two people ever to get an Abnegation result and switch to Dauntless?"

"No," I say, biting back my shock. Tobias and I are the only ones? But his result was genuine and mine was a lie. So it is really just him.

My stomach twinges at the thought of him. Right now I don't care how unique he is. He called me pathetic.

"What made you choose Dauntless?" she asks.

"What does this have to do with anything?" I try to soften my voice, but it doesn't work. "Aren't you going to reprimand me for abandoning my faction and seeking out my brother? 'Faction before blood,' right?" I pause. "Come to think of it, why am I in your office in the first place? Aren't you supposed to be important or something?"

Maybe that will take her down a few pegs.

Her mouth pinches for a second. "I will leave the reprimands to the Dauntless," she says, leaning back in her chair.

I set my hands on the back of the chair I refused to sit in and clench my fingers. Behind her is a window that overlooks the city. The train takes a lazy turn in the distance.

"As to the reason for your presence here...a quality of my faction is curiosity," she says, "and while perusing your records, I saw that there was another error with another one of your simulations. Again, it failed to be recorded. Did you know that?"

“How did you access my records? Only the Dauntless have access to those.”

“Because Erudite developed the simulations, we have an...*understanding* with the Dauntless, Beatrice.” She tilts her head and smiles at me. “I am merely concerned for the competence of our technology. If it fails while you are around, I have to ensure that it does not continue to do so, you understand?”

I understand only one thing: She is lying to me. She doesn't care about the technology—she suspects that something is awry with my test results. Just like the Dauntless leaders, she is sniffing around for the Divergent. And if my mother wants Caleb to research the simulation serum, it is probably because Jeanine developed it.

But what is so threatening about my ability to manipulate the simulations? Why would it matter to the representative of the Erudite, of all people?

I can't answer either question. But the look she gives me reminds me of the look in the attack dog's eyes in the aptitude test—a vicious, predatory stare. She wants to rip me to pieces. I can't lie down in submission now. I have become an attack dog too.

I feel my pulse in my throat.

“I don't know how they work,” I say, “but the liquid I was injected with made me sick to my stomach. Maybe my simulation administrator was distracted because he was worried I would throw up, and he forgot to record it. I got sick after the aptitude test too.”

“Do you habitually have a sensitive stomach, Beatrice?” Her voice is like a razor's edge. She taps her trimmed fingernails against the glass desk.

“Ever since I was young,” I reply as smoothly as I can. I release the chair back and sidestep it to sit down. I can't seem tense, even though I feel like my insides are writhing within me.

“You have been extremely successful with the simulations,” she says. “To what do you attribute the ease with which you complete them?”

“I'm brave,” I say, staring into her eyes. The other factions see the Dauntless a certain way. Brash, aggressive, impulsive. Cocky. I should be what she expects. I smirk at her. “I'm the best initiate they've got.”

I lean forward, balancing my elbows on my knees. I will have to go further with this to make it convincing.

“You want to know why I chose Dauntless?” I ask. “It's because I was bored.” Further, further. Lies require commitment. “I was tired of being a wussy little do-gooder and I wanted out.”

“So you don't miss your parents?” she asks delicately.

“Do I miss getting scolded for looking in the mirror? Do I miss being told to shut up at the dinner table?” I shake my head. “No. I don't miss them. They're not my family anymore.”

The lie burns my throat on the way out, or maybe that's the tears I'm fighting. I picture my mother standing behind me with a comb and a pair of scissors, faintly smiling as she trims my hair, and I want to scream rather than insult her like this.

“Can I take that to mean...” Jeanine purses her lips and pauses for a few seconds before finishing. “...that you agree with the reports that have been released about the political leaders of this city?”

The reports that label my family as corrupt, power-hungry, moralizing dictators? The reports that carry subtle threats and hint at revolution? They make me sick to my stomach. Knowing that she is the one who released them makes me want to strangle her.

I smile.

“Wholeheartedly,” I say.

One of Jeanine’s lackeys, a man in a blue collared shirt and sunglasses, drives me back to the Dauntless compound in a sleek silver car, the likes of which I have never seen before. The engine is almost silent. When I ask the man about it, he tells me it’s solar-powered and launches into a lengthy explanation of how the panels on the roof convert sunlight into energy. I stop listening after sixty seconds and stare out the window.

I don’t know what they’ll do to me when I get back. I suspect it will be bad. I imagine my feet dangling over the chasm and bite my lip.

When the driver pulls up to the glass building above the Dauntless compound, Eric is waiting for me by the door. He takes my arm and leads me into the building without thanking the driver. Eric’s fingers squeeze so hard I know I’ll have bruises.

He stands between me and the door that leads inside. He starts to crack his knuckles. Other than that, he is completely still.

I shudder involuntarily.

The faint *pop* of his knuckle-cracking is all I hear apart from my own breaths, which grow faster by the second. When he is finished, Eric laces his fingers together in front of him.

“Welcome back, Tris.”

“Eric.”

He walks toward me, carefully placing one foot in front of the other.

“What...” His first word is quiet. “*Exactly*,” he adds, louder this time, “were you thinking?”

“I...” He is so close I can see the holes his metal piercings fit into. “I don’t know.”

“I am tempted to call you a traitor, Tris,” he says. “Have you never heard the phrase ‘faction before blood’?”

I have seen Eric do terrible things. I have heard him say terrible things. But I have never seen him like this. He is not a maniac anymore; he is perfectly controlled, perfectly poised. Careful and quiet.

For the first time, I recognize Eric for what he is: an Erudite disguised as a Dauntless, a genius as well as a sadist, a hunter of the Divergent.

I want to run.

“Were you unsatisfied with the life you have found here? Do you perhaps regret your choice?” Both of Eric’s metal-ridden eyebrows lift, forcing creases into his forehead. “I would like to hear an explanation for why you betrayed Dauntless, yourself, and *me*...” He taps his chest. “...by venturing into another faction’s headquarters.”

“I...” I take a deep breath. He would kill me if he knew what I was, I can feel it. His hands curl into fists. I am alone here; if something happens to me, no one will know and no one will see it.

“If you cannot explain,” he says softly, “I may be forced to reconsider your rank. Or, because you seem to be so attached to your previous faction...perhaps I will be forced to reconsider your friends’ ranks. Perhaps the little Abnegation girl inside of you would take that more seriously.”

My first thought is that he couldn’t do that, it wouldn’t be fair. My second thought is that of course he would, he would not hesitate to do it for a second. And he is right—the thought that my reckless behavior could force someone else out of a faction makes my chest ache from fear.

I try again. “I...”

But it is hard to breathe.

And then the door opens. Tobias walks in.

“What are you doing?” he asks Eric.

“Leave the room,” Eric says, his voice louder and not as monotone. He sounds more like the Eric I am familiar with. His expression, too, changes, becomes more mobile and animated. I stare, amazed that he can turn it on and off so easily, and wonder what the strategy behind it is.

“No,” Tobias says. “She’s just a foolish girl. There’s no need to drag her here and interrogate her.”

“Just a foolish girl.” Eric snorts. “If she were just a foolish girl, she wouldn’t be ranked first, now would she?”

Tobias pinches the bridge of his nose and looks at me through the spaces between his fingers. He is trying to tell me something. I think quickly. What advice has Four given me recently?

The only thing I can think of is: *pretend some vulnerability*.

It’s worked for me before.

“I...I was just embarrassed and didn’t know what to do.” I put my hands in my pockets and look at the ground. Then I pinch my leg so hard that tears well up in my eyes, and I look up at Eric, sniffing. “I tried to...and...” I shake my head.

“You tried to what?” asks Eric.

“Kiss me,” says Tobias. “And I rejected her, and she went running off like a five-year-old. There’s really nothing to blame her for but stupidity.”

We both wait.

Eric looks from me to Tobias and laughs, too loudly and for too long—the sound is menacing and grates against me like sandpaper. “Isn’t he a little too old for you, Tris?” he says, smiling again.

I wipe my cheek like I’m wiping a tear. “Can I go now?”

“Fine,” Eric says, “but you are not allowed to leave the compound without supervision again, you hear me?” He turns toward Tobias. “And *you*... had better make sure none of the transfers leave this compound again. And that none of the others try to kiss you.”

Tobias rolls his eyes. “Fine.”

I leave the room and walk outside again, shaking my hands to get rid of the jitters. I sit

down on the pavement and wrap my arms around my knees.

I don't know how long I sit there, my head down and my eyes closed, before the door opens again. It might have been twenty minutes and it might have been an hour. Tobias walks toward me.

I stand and cross my arms, waiting for the scolding to start. I slapped him and then got myself into trouble with the Dauntless—there has to be scolding.

“What?” I say.

“Are you all right?” A crease appears between his eyebrows, and he touches my cheek gently. I bat his hand away.

“Well,” I say, “first I got reamed out in front of everyone, and then I had to chat with the woman who's trying to destroy my old faction, and then Eric almost tossed my friends out of Dauntless, so yeah, it's shaping up to be a pretty great day, *Four*.”

He shakes his head and looks at the dilapidated building to his right, which is made of brick and barely resembles the sleek glass spire behind me. It must be ancient. No one builds with brick anymore.

“Why do you care, anyway?” I say. “You can be either cruel instructor or concerned boyfriend.” I tense up at the word “boyfriend.” I didn't mean to use it so flippantly, but it's too late now. “You can't play both parts at the same time.”

“I am not cruel.” He scowls at me. “I was protecting you this morning. How do you think Peter and his idiot friends would have reacted if they discovered that you and I were...” He sighs. “You would never win. They would always call your ranking a result of my favoritism rather than your skill.”

I open my mouth to object, but I can't. A few smart remarks come to mind, but I dismiss them. He's right. My cheeks warm, and I cool them with my hands.

“You didn't have to insult me to prove something to them,” I say finally.

“And you didn't have to run off to your brother just because I hurt you,” he says. He rubs at the back of his neck. “Besides—it worked, didn't it?”

“At my expense.”

“I didn't think it would affect you this way.” Then he looks down and shrugs. “Sometimes I forget that I can hurt you. That you are capable of being hurt.”

I slide my hands into my pockets and rock back on my heels. A strange feeling goes through me—a sweet, aching weakness. He did what he did because he believed in my strength.

At home it was Caleb who was strong, because he could forget himself, because all the characteristics my parents valued came naturally to him. No one has ever been so convinced of my strength.

I stand on my tiptoes, lift my head, and kiss him. Only our lips touch.

“You're brilliant, you know that?” I shake my head. “You always know exactly what to do.”

“Only because I've been thinking about this for a long time,” he says, kissing me briefly. “How I would handle it, if you and I...” He pulls back and smiles. “Did I hear you call me

your boyfriend, Tris?"

"Not exactly." I shrug. "Why? Do you want me to?"

He slips his hands over my neck and presses his thumbs under my chin, tilting my head back so his forehead meets mine. For a moment he stands there, his eyes closed, breathing my air. I feel the pulse in his fingertips. I feel the quickness of his breath. He seems nervous.

"Yes," he finally says. Then his smile fades. "You think we convinced him you're just a silly girl?"

"I hope so," I say. "Sometimes it helps to be small. I'm not sure I convinced the Erudite, though."

The corners of his mouth tug down, and he gives me a grave look. "There's something I need to tell you."

"What is it?"

"Not now." He glances around. "Meet me back here at eleven thirty. Don't tell anyone where you're going."

I nod, and he turns away, leaving just as quickly as he came.

"Where have you *been* all day?" Christina asks when I walk back into the dormitory. The room is empty; everyone else must be at dinner. "I looked for you outside, but I couldn't find you. Is everything okay? Did you get in trouble for hitting Four?"

I shake my head. The thought of telling her the truth about where I was makes me feel exhausted. How can I explain the impulse to hop on a train and visit my brother? Or the eerie calm in Eric's voice as he questioned me? Or the reason that I exploded and hit Tobias to begin with?

"I just had to get away. I walked around for a long time," I say. "And no, I'm not in trouble. He yelled at me, I apologized...that's it."

As I speak, I'm careful to keep my eyes steady on hers and my hands still at my sides.

"Good," she says. "Because I have something to tell you."

She looks over my head at the door and then stands on her tiptoes to see all the bunks—checking if they're empty, probably. Then she sets her hands on my shoulders.

"Can you be a girl for a few seconds?"

"I'm always a girl." I frown.

"You know what I mean. Like a silly, annoying girl."

I twirl my hair around my finger. "Kay."

She grins so wide I can see her back row of teeth. "Will kissed me."

"What?" I demand. "When? How? What happened?"

"You *can* be a girl!" She straightens, taking her hands from my shoulders. "Well, right after your little episode, we ate lunch and then we walked around near the train tracks. We were just talking about...I don't even remember what we were talking about. And then he just stopped, and leaned in, and...kissed me."

"Did you know that he liked you?" I say. "I mean, you know. Like that."

“No!” She laughs. “The best part was, that was it. We just kept walking and talking like nothing happened. Well, until *I* kissed *him*.”

“How long have you known you liked him?”

“I don’t know. I guess I didn’t. But then little things...how he put his arm around me at the funeral, how he opens doors for me like I’m a girl instead of someone who could beat the crap out of him.”

I laugh. Suddenly I want to tell her about Tobias and everything that has happened between us. But the same reasons Tobias gave for pretending we aren’t together hold me back. I don’t want her to think that my rank has anything to do with my relationship with him.

So I just say, “I’m happy for you.”

“Thanks,” she says. “I’m happy too. And I thought it would be a while before I could feel that way...you know.”

She sits down on the edge of my bed and looks around the dormitory. Some of the initiates have already packed their things. Soon we’ll move into apartments on the other side of the compound. Those with government jobs will move to the glass building above the Pit. I won’t have to worry about Peter attacking me in my sleep. I won’t have to look at Al’s empty bed.

“I can’t believe it’s almost over,” she says. “It’s like we just got here. But it’s also like...like I haven’t seen home in forever.”

“You miss it?” I lean into the bed frame.

“Yeah.” She shrugs. “Some things are the same, though. I mean, everyone at home is just as loud as everyone here, so that’s good. But it’s easier there. You always know where you stand with everyone, because they tell you. There’s no...manipulation.”

I nod. Abnegation prepared me for that aspect of Dauntless life. The Abnegation aren’t manipulative, but they aren’t forthright, either.

“I don’t think I could have made it through Candor initiation, though.” She shakes her head. “There, instead of simulations, you get lie detector tests. All day, every day. And the final test...” She wrinkles her nose. “They give you this stuff they call truth serum and sit you in front of everyone and ask you a load of really personal questions. The theory is that if you spill all your secrets, you’ll have no desire to lie about anything, ever again. Like the worst about you is already in the open, so why not just be honest?”

I don’t know when I accumulated so many secrets. Being Divergent. Fears. How I really feel about my friends, my family, Al, Tobias. Candor initiation would reach things that even the simulations can’t touch; it would wreck me.

“Sounds awful,” I say.

“I always knew I couldn’t be Candor. I mean, I try to be honest, but some things you just don’t want people to know. Plus, I like to be in control of my own mind.”

Don’t we all.

“Anyway,” she says. She opens the cabinet to the left of our bunk beds. When she pulls the door open, a moth flutters out, its white wings carrying it toward her face. Christina shrieks so loud I almost jump out of my skin and slaps at her cheeks.

“Get it off! Get it off get it off get it off!” she screams.

The moth flutters away.

“It’s gone!” I say. Then I laugh. “You’re afraid of...moths?”

“They’re disgusting. Those papery wings and their stupid bug bodies...” She shudders.

I keep laughing. I laugh so hard I have to sit down and hold my stomach.

“It’s not funny!” she snaps. “Well...okay, maybe it is. A little.”

When I find Tobias late that night, he doesn’t say anything; he just grabs my hand and pulls me toward the train tracks.

He draws himself into a train car as it passes with bewildering ease and pulls me in after him. I fall against him, my cheek against his chest. His fingers slide down my arms, and he holds me by the elbows as the car bumps along the steel rails. I watch the glass building above the Dauntless compound shrink behind us.

“What is it you need to tell me?” I shout over the cry of the wind.

“Not yet,” he says.

He sinks to the floor and pulls me down with him, so he’s sitting with his back against the wall and I’m facing him, my legs trailing to the side on the dusty floor. The wind pushes strands of my hair loose and tosses them over my face. He presses his palms to my face, his index fingers sliding behind my ears, and pulls my mouth to his.

I hear the screech of the rails as the train slows, which means we must be nearing the middle of the city. The air is cold, but his lips are warm and so are his hands. He tilts his head and kisses the skin just beneath my jaw. I’m glad the air is so loud he can’t hear me sigh.

The train car wobbles, throwing off my balance, and I put my hand down to steady myself. A split second later I realize that my hand is on his hip. The bone presses into my palm. I should move it, but I don’t want to. He told me once to be brave, and though I have stood still while knives spun toward my face and jumped off a roof, I never thought I would need bravery in the small moments of my life. I do.

I shift, swinging a leg over him so I sit on top of him, and with my heartbeat in my throat, I kiss him. He sits up straighter and I feel his hands on my shoulders. His fingers slip down my spine and a shiver follows them down to the small of my back. He unzips my jacket a few inches, and I press my hands to my legs to stop them from shaking. I should not be nervous. This is Tobias.

Cold air slips across my bare skin. He pulls away and looks carefully at the tattoos just above my collarbone. His fingers brush over them, and he smiles.

“Birds,” he says. “Are they crows? I keep forgetting to ask.”

I try to return his smile. “Ravens. One for each member of my family,” I say. “You like them?”

He doesn’t answer. He tugs me closer, pressing his lips to each bird in turn. I close my eyes. His touch is light, sensitive. A heavy, warm feeling, like spilling honey, fills my body, slowing my thoughts. He touches my cheek.

“I hate to say this,” he says, “but we have to get up now.”

I nod and open my eyes. We both stand, and he tugs me with him to the open door of the

train car. The wind is not as strong now that the train has slowed. It's past midnight, so all the street lights are dark, and the buildings look like mammoths as they rise from the darkness and then sink into it again. Tobias lifts a hand and points at a cluster of buildings, so far away they are the size of a fingernail. They are the only bright spot in the dark sea around us. Erudite headquarters again.

"Apparently the city ordinances don't mean anything to them," he says, "because their lights will be on all night."

"No one else has noticed?" I say, frowning.

"I'm sure they have, but they haven't done anything to stop it. It may be because they don't want to cause a problem over something so small." Tobias shrugs, but the tension in his features worries me. "But it made me wonder what the Erudite are doing that requires night light."

He turns toward me, leaning against the wall.

"Two things you should know about me. The first is that I am deeply suspicious of people in general," he says. "It is my nature to expect the worst of them. And the second is that I am unexpectedly good with computers."

I nod. He said his other job was working with computers, but I still have trouble picturing him sitting in front of a screen all day.

"A few weeks ago, before training started, I was at work and I found a way into the Dauntless secure files. Apparently we are not as skilled as the Erudite are at security," he says, "and what I discovered was what looked like war plans. Thinly veiled commands, supply lists, maps. Things like that. And those files were sent by Erudite."

"War?" I brush my hair away from my face. Listening to my father insult Erudite all my life has made me wary of them, and my experiences in the Dauntless compound make me wary of authority and human beings in general, so I'm not shocked to hear that a faction could be planning a war.

And what Caleb said earlier. *Something big is happening, Beatrice.* I look up at Tobias.

"War on Abnegation?"

He takes my hands, lacing his fingers with mine, and says, "The faction that controls the government. Yes."

My stomach sinks.

"All those reports are supposed to stir up dissension against Abnegation," he says, his eyes focused on the city beyond the train car. "Evidently the Erudite now want to speed up the process. I have no idea what to do about it...or what could even be done."

"But," I say, "why would Erudite team up with Dauntless?"

And then something occurs to me, something that hits me in the gut and gnaws at my insides. Erudite doesn't have weapons, and they don't know how to fight—but the Dauntless do.

I stare wide-eyed at Tobias.

"They're going to use us," I say.

"I wonder," he says, "how they plan to get us to fight."

I told Caleb that the Erudite know how to manipulate people. They could coerce some of us into fighting with misinformation, or by appealing to greed—any number of ways. But the Erudite are as meticulous as they are manipulative, so they wouldn't leave it up to chance. They would need to make sure that all their weaknesses are shored up. But how?

The wind blows my hair across my face, cutting my vision into strips, and I leave it there.

“I don't know,” I say.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

I HAVE ATTENDED Abnegation's initiation ceremony every year except this one. It is a quiet affair. The initiates, who spend thirty days performing community service before they can become full members, sit side by side on a bench. One of the older members reads the Abnegation manifesto, which is a short paragraph about forgetting the self and the dangers of self-involvement. Then all the older members wash the initiates' feet. Then they all share a meal, each person serving food to the person on his left.

The Dauntless don't do that.

Initiation day plunges the Dauntless compound into insanity and chaos. There are people everywhere, and most of them are inebriated by noon. I fight my way through them to get a plate of food at lunch and carry it back to the dormitory with me. On the way I see someone fall off the path on the Pit wall and, judging by his screams and the way he grabs at his leg, he broke something.

The dormitory, at least, is quiet. I stare at my plate of food. I just grabbed what looked good to me at the time, and now that I take a closer look, I realize that I chose a plain chicken breast, a scoop of peas, and a piece of brown bread. Abnegation food.

I sigh. Abnegation is what I am. It is what I am when I'm not thinking about what I'm doing. It is what I am when I am put to the test. It is what I am even when I appear to be brave. Am I in the wrong faction?

The thought of my former faction sends a tremor through my hands. I have to warn my family about the war the Erudite are planning, but I don't know how. I will find a way, but not today. Today I have to focus on what awaits me. One thing at a time.

I eat like a robot, rotating from chicken to peas to bread and back again. It doesn't matter what faction I really belong in. In two hours I will walk to the fear landscape room with the other initiates, go through my fear landscape, and become Dauntless. It's too late to turn back.

When I finish, I bury my face in my pillow. I don't mean to fall asleep, but after a while, I do, and I wake up to Christina shaking my shoulder.

"Time to go," she says. She looks ashen.

I rub my eyes to press the sleep from them. I have my shoes on already. The other initiates are in the dormitory, tying shoelaces and buttoning jackets and throwing smiles around like they don't mean it. I pull my hair into a bun and put on my black jacket, zipping it up to my throat. The torture will be over soon, but can we forget the simulations? Will we ever sleep soundly again, with the memories of our fears in our heads? Or will we finally forget our fears today, like we're supposed to?

We walk to the Pit and up the path that leads to the glass building. I look up at the glass ceiling. I can't see daylight because the soles of shoes cover every inch of glass above us. For a second I think I hear the glass creak, but it is my imagination. I walk up the stairs with Christina, and the crowd chokes me.

I am too short to see above anyone's head, so I stare at Will's back and walk in his wake.

The heat of so many bodies around me makes it difficult to breathe. Beads of sweat gather on my forehead. A break in the crowd reveals what they are all clustered around: a series of screens on the wall to my left.

I hear a cheer and stop to look at the screens. The screen on the left shows a black-clothed girl in the fear landscape room—Marlene. I watch her move, her eyes wide, but I can't tell what obstacle she's facing. Thank God no one out here will see my fears either—just my reactions to them.

The middle screen shows her heart rate. It picks up for a second and then decreases. When it reaches a normal rate, the screen flashes green and the Dauntless cheer. The screen on the right shows her time.

I tear my eyes from the screen and jog to catch up to Christina and Will. Tobias stands just inside a door on the left side of the room that I barely noticed the last time I was here. It is next to the fear landscape room. I walk past him without looking at him.

The room is large and contains another screen, similar to the one outside. A line of people sit in chairs in front of it. Eric is one of them, and so is Max. The others are also older. Judging by the wires connected to their heads, and their blank eyes, they are observing the simulation.

Behind them is another line of chairs, all occupied now. I am the last to enter, so I don't get one.

“Hey, Tris!” Uriah calls out from across the room. He sits with the other Dauntless-born initiates. Only four of them are left; the rest have gone through their fear landscapes already. He pats his leg. “You can sit on my lap, if you want.”

“Tempting,” I call back, grinning. “It's fine. I like to stand.”

I also don't want Tobias to see me sitting on someone else's lap.

The lights lift in the fear landscape room, revealing Marlene in a crouch, her face streaked with tears. Max, Eric, and a few others shake off the simulation daze and walk out. A few seconds later I see them on the screen, congratulating her for finishing.

“Transfers, the order in which you go through the final test was taken from your rankings as they now stand,” Tobias says. “So Drew will go first, and Tris will go last.”

That means five people will go before I do.

I stand in the back of the room, a few feet away from Tobias. He and I exchange glances when Eric sticks Drew with the needle and sends him into the fear landscape room. By the time it's my turn, I will know how well the others did, and how well I will have to do to beat them.

The fear landscapes are not interesting to watch from the outside. I can see that Drew is moving, but I don't know what he is reacting to. After a few minutes, I close my eyes instead of watching and try to think of nothing. Speculating about which fears I will have to face, and how many there will be, is useless at this point. I just have to remember that I have the power to manipulate the simulations, and that I have practiced it before.

Molly goes next. It takes her half as long as it takes Drew, but even Molly has trouble. She spends too much time breathing heavily, trying to control her panic. At one point she even screams at the top of her lungs.

It amazes me how easy it is to tune out everything else—thoughts of war on Abnegation, Tobias, Caleb, my parents, my friends, my new faction fade away. All I can do now is get past this obstacle.

Christina is next. Then Will. Then Peter. I don't watch them. I know only how much time it takes them: twelve minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes. And then my name.

“Tris.”

I open my eyes and walk to the front of the observation room, where Eric stands with a syringe full of orange liquid. I barely feel the needle as it plunges into my neck, barely see Eric's pierced face as he presses the plunger down. I imagine that the serum is liquid adrenaline rushing through my veins, making me strong.

“Ready?” he asks.

CHAPTER THIRTY

I AM READY. I step into the room, armed not with a gun or a knife, but with the plan I made the night before. Tobias said that stage three is about mental preparation—coming up with strategies to overcome my fears.

I wish I knew what order the fears will come in. I bounce on the balls of my feet as I wait for the first fear to appear. I am already short of breath.

The ground beneath me changes. Grass rises from the concrete and sways in a wind I cannot feel. A green sky replaces the exposed pipes above me. I listen for the birds and feel my fear as a distant thing, a hammering heart and a squeezed chest, but not something that exists in my mind. Tobias told me to figure out what this simulation means. He was right; it isn't about the birds. It's about control.

Wings flap next to my ear, and the crow's talons dig into my shoulder.

This time, I do not hit the bird as hard as I can. I crouch, listening to the thunder of wings behind me, and run my hand through the grass, just above the ground. What combats powerlessness? Power. And the first time I felt powerful in the Dauntless compound was when I was holding a gun.

A lump forms in my throat and I want the talons *off*. The bird squawks and my stomach clenches, but then I feel something hard and metal in the grass. My gun.

I point the gun at the bird on my shoulder, and it detaches from my shirt in an explosion of blood and feathers. I spin on my heel, aiming the gun at the sky, and see the cloud of dark feathers descending. I squeeze the trigger, firing again and again into the sea of birds above me, watching their dark bodies drop to the grass.

As I aim and shoot, I feel the same rush of power I felt the first time I held a gun. My heart stops racing and the field, gun, and birds fade away. I stand in the dark again.

I shift my weight, and something squeaks beneath my foot. I crouch down and slide my hand along a cold, smooth panel—glass. I press my hands to glass on either side of my body. The tank again. I am not afraid of drowning. This is not about the water; it is about my inability to escape the tank. It is about weakness. I just have to convince myself that I am strong enough to break the glass.

The blue lights come on, and water slips over the floor, but I don't let the simulation get that far. I slam my palm against the wall in front of me, expecting the pane to break.

My hand bounces off, causing no damage.

My heartbeat speeds up. What if what worked in the first simulation doesn't work here? What if I can't break the glass unless I'm under duress? The water laps over my ankles, flowing faster by the second. I have to calm down. Calm down and focus. I lean against the wall behind me and kick as hard as I can. And again. My toes throb, but nothing happens.

I have another option. I can wait for water to fill the tank—and it's already at my knees—and try to calm down as I drown. I brace myself against the wall, shaking my head. No. I can't let myself drown. I can't.

I ball my hands up into fists and pound on the wall. I am stronger than the glass. The glass is as thin as newly frozen ice. My mind will make it so. I close my eyes. The glass is ice. The glass is ice. The glass is—

The glass shatters under my hand, and water spills onto the floor. And then the dark returns.

I shake out my hands. That should have been an easy obstacle to overcome. I've faced it before in simulations. I can't afford to lose time like that again.

What feels like a solid wall hits me from the side, forcing the air from my lungs, and I fall hard, gasping. I can't swim; I've only seen bodies of water this large, this powerful, in pictures. Beneath me is a rock with a jagged edge, slick with water. The water pulls at my legs, and I cling to the rock, tasting salt on my lips. Out of the corner of my eye, I see a dark sky and a blood-red moon.

Another wave hits, slamming against my back. I hit my chin against the stone and wince. The sea is cold, but my blood is hot, running down my neck. I stretch my arm and find the edge of the rock. The water pulls at my legs with irresistible force. I cling as hard as I can, but I am not strong enough—the water pulls me and the wave throws my body back. It flings my legs over my head and my arms to each side, and I collide with the stone, my back pressed against it, water gushing over my face. My lungs scream for air. I twist and grab the edge of the rock, pulling myself above the water. I gasp, and another wave hits me, this one harder than the first, but I have a better hold.

I must not really be afraid of the water. I must be afraid of being out of control. To face it, I have to regain control.

With a scream of frustration, I throw my hand forward and find a hole in the rock. My arms shake violently as I drag myself forward, and I pull my feet up under me before the wave can take me with it. Once my feet are free, I get up and throw my body into a run, into a sprint, my feet quick on the stone, the red moon in front of me, the ocean gone.

Then everything is gone, and my body is still. Too still.

I try to move my arms, but they are bound tightly to my sides. I look down and see rope wrapped around my chest, my arms, my legs. A stack of logs rises around my feet, and I see a pole behind me. I am high above the ground.

People creep out of the shadows, and their faces are familiar. They are the initiates, carrying torches, and Peter is at the front of the pack. His eyes look like black pits, and he wears a smirk that spreads too wide across his face, forcing wrinkles into his cheeks. A laugh starts somewhere in the center of the crowd and rises as voice after voice joins it. Cackling is all I hear.

As the cackling grows louder, Peter lowers his torch to the wood, and flames leap up near the ground. They flicker at the edges of each log and then creep over the bark. I don't struggle against the ropes, as I did the first time I faced this fear. Instead I close my eyes and gulp as much air as I can. This is a simulation. It can't hurt me. The heat from the flames rises around me. I shake my head.

"Smell that, Stiff?" Peter says, his voice louder than even the cackling.

"No," I say. The flames are getting higher.

He sniffs. “That’s the smell of your burning flesh.”

When I open my eyes, my vision is blurry with tears.

“Know what I smell?” My voice strains to be louder than the laughter all around me, the laughter that oppresses me as much as the heat. My arms twitch, and I want to fight against the ropes, but I won’t, I won’t struggle pointlessly, I won’t panic.

I stare through the flames at Peter, the heat bringing blood to the surface of my skin, flowing through me, melting the toes of my shoes.

“I smell rain,” I say.

Thunder roars above my head, and I scream as a flame touches my fingertips and pain shrieks over my skin. I tilt my head back and focus on the clouds gathering above my head, heavy with rain, dark with rain. A line of lightning sprawls over the sky and I feel the first drop on my forehead. *Faster, faster!* The drop rolls down the side of my nose, and the second drop hits my shoulder, so big it feels like it’s made of ice or rock instead of water.

Sheets of rain fall around me, and I hear sizzling over the laughter. I smile, relieved, as the rain puts out the fire and soothes the burns on my hands. The ropes fall away, and I push my hands through my hair.

I wish I was like Tobias and had only four fears to face, but I am not that fearless.

I smooth my shirt down, and when I look up, I stand in my bedroom in the Abnegation sector of the city. I have never faced this fear before. The lights are off, but the room is lit by the moonlight coming through the windows. One of my walls is covered with mirrors. I turn toward it, confused. That isn’t right. I am not allowed to have mirrors.

I look at the reflection in the mirror: my wide eyes, the bed with the gray sheets pulled taut, the dresser that holds my clothes, the bookcase, the bare walls. My eyes skip to the window behind me.

And to the man standing just outside.

Cold drops down my spine like a bead of sweat, and my body goes rigid. I recognize him. He is the man with the scarred face from the aptitude test. He wears black and he stands still as a statue. I blink, and two men appear at his left and right, just as still as he is, but their faces are featureless—skin-covered skulls.

I whip my body around, and they stand in my room. I press my shoulders to the mirror.

For a moment, the room is silent, and then fists pound against my window, not just two or four or six, but dozens of fists with dozens of fingers, slamming into the glass. The noise vibrates in my rib cage, it is so loud, and then the scarred man and his two companions begin to walk with slow, careful movements toward me.

They are here to take me, like Peter and Drew and Al; to kill me. I know it.

Simulation. This is a simulation. My heart hammering in my chest, I press my palm to the glass behind me and slide it to the left. It is not a mirror but a closet door. I tell myself where the weapon will be. It will be hanging against the right wall, just inches away from my hand. I don’t shift my eyes from the scarred man, but I find the gun with my fingertips and wrap my hand around the handle.

I bite my lip and fire at the scarred man. I don’t wait to see if the bullet hits him—I aim at

each featureless man in turn, as fast as I can. My lip aches from biting it so hard. The pounding on the window stops, but a screeching sound replaces it, and the fists turn into hands with bent fingers, scratching at the glass, fighting to get in. The glass creaks under the pressure of their hands, and then cracks, and then shatters.

I scream.

I don't have enough bullets in my gun.

Pale bodies—human bodies, but mangled, arms bent at odd angles, too-wide mouths with needle teeth, empty eye sockets—topple into my bedroom, one after the other, and scramble to their feet, scramble toward me. I pull back into the closet and shut the door in front of me. A solution. I need a solution. I sink into a crouch and press the side of the gun to my head. I can't fight them off. I can't fight them off, so I have to calm down. The fear landscape will register my slowing heartbeat and my even breath and it will move on to the next obstacle.

I sit down on the floor of the closet. The wall behind me creaks. I hear pounding—the fists are at it again, hitting the closet door—but I turn and peer through the dark at the panel behind me. It is not a wall but another door. I fumble to push it aside and reveal the upstairs hallway. Smiling, I crawl through the hole and stand. I smell something baking. I am at home.

Taking a deep breath, I watch my house fade. I forgot, for a second, that I was in Dauntless headquarters.

And then Tobias is standing in front of me.

But I'm not afraid of Tobias. I look over my shoulder. Maybe there's something behind me that I'm supposed to focus on. But no—behind me is just a four-poster bed.

A bed?

Tobias walks toward me, slowly.

What's going on?

I stare up at him, paralyzed. He smiles down at me. That smile looks kind. Familiar.

He presses his mouth to mine, and my lips part. I thought it would be impossible to forget I was in a simulation. I was wrong; he makes everything else disintegrate.

His fingers find my jacket zipper and pull it down in one slow swipe until the zipper detaches. He tugs the jacket from my shoulders.

Oh, is all I can think, as he kisses me again. *Oh*.

My fear is being with him. I have been wary of affection all my life, but I didn't know how deep that wariness went.

But this obstacle doesn't feel the same as the others. It is a different kind of fear—nervous panic rather than blind terror.

He slides his hands down my arms and then squeezes my hips, his fingers sliding over the skin just above my belt, and I shiver.

I gently push him back and press my hands to my forehead. I have been attacked by crows and men with grotesque faces; I have been set on fire by the boy who almost threw me off a ledge; I have almost drowned—*twice*—and *this* is what I can't cope with? *This* is the fear I have no solutions for—a boy I like, who wants to...have sex with me?

Simulation Tobias kisses my neck.

I try to think. I have to face the fear. I have to take control of the situation and find a way to make it less frightening.

I look Simulation Tobias in the eye and say sternly, “I am *not* going to sleep with you in a hallucination. Okay?”

Then I grab him by his shoulders and turn us around, pushing him against the bedpost. I feel something other than fear—a prickle in my stomach, a bubble of laughter. I press against him and kiss him, my hands wrapping around his arms. He feels strong. He feels... good.

And he’s gone.

I laugh into my hand until my face gets hot. I must be the only initiate with this fear.

A trigger clicks in my ear.

I almost forgot about this one. I feel the heft of a gun in my hand and curl my fingers around it, slipping my index finger over the trigger. A spotlight shines from the ceiling, its source unknown, and standing in the center of its circle of light are my mother, my father, and my brother.

“Do it,” hisses a voice next to me. It is female, but harsh, like it’s cluttered with rocks and broken glass. It sounds like Jeanine.

The barrel of a gun presses to my temple, a cold circle against my skin. The cold travels across my body, making the hair on the back of my neck stand on end. I wipe my sweaty palm on my pants and look at the woman through the corner of my eye. It is Jeanine. Her glasses are askew, and her eyes are empty of feeling.

My worst fear: that my family will die, and that I will be responsible.

“Do it,” she says again, more insistent this time. “Do it or I’ll kill you.”

I stare at Caleb. He nods, his eyebrows tugged in, sympathetic. “Go ahead, Tris,” he says softly. “I understand. It’s okay.”

My eyes burn. “No,” I say, my throat so tight it aches. I shake my head.

“I’ll give you ten seconds!” the woman shouts. “Ten! Nine!”

My eyes skip from my brother to my father. The last time I saw him, he gave me a look of contempt, but now his eyes are wide and soft. I have never seen him wear that expression in real life.

“Tris,” he says. “You have no other option.”

“Eight!”

“Tris,” my mother says. She smiles. She has a sweet smile. “We love you.”

“Seven!”

“Shut up!” I shout, holding up the gun. I can do it. I can shoot them. They understand. They’re asking me to. They wouldn’t want me to sacrifice myself for them. They aren’t even real. This is all a simulation.

“Six!”

It isn’t real. It doesn’t mean anything. My brother’s kind eyes feel like two drills boring a hole in my head. My sweat makes the gun slippery.

“Five!”

I have no other option. I close my eyes. Think. I have to think. The urgency making my heart race depends on one thing, and one thing only: the threat to my life.

“Four! Three!”

What did Tobias tell me? *Selflessness and bravery aren't that different.*

“Two!”

I release the trigger of my gun and drop it. Before I can lose my nerve, I turn and press my forehead to the barrel of the gun behind me.

Shoot me instead.

“One!”

I hear a click, and a bang.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

THE LIGHTS COME ON. I stand alone in the empty room with the concrete walls, shaking. I sink to my knees, wrapping my arms around my chest. It wasn't cold when I walked in, but it feels cold now. I rub my arms to get rid of the goose bumps.

I have never felt relief like this before. Every muscle in my body relaxes at once and I breathe freely again. I can't imagine going through my fear landscape in my spare time, like Tobias does. It seemed like bravery to me before, but now it seems more like masochism.

The door opens, and I stand. Max, Eric, Tobias, and a few people I don't know walk into the room in a line, standing in a small crowd in front of me. Tobias smiles at me.

"Congratulations, Tris," says Eric. "You have successfully completed your final evaluation."

I try to smile. It doesn't work. I can't shake the memory of the gun against my head. I can still feel the barrel between my eyebrows.

"Thanks," I say.

"There is one more thing before you can go and get ready for the welcoming banquet," he says. He beckons to one of the unfamiliar people behind him. A woman with blue hair hands him a small black case. He opens it and takes out a syringe and a long needle.

I tense up at the sight of it. The orange-brown liquid in the syringe reminds me of what they inject us with before simulations. And I am supposed to be finished with those.

"At least you aren't afraid of needles," he says. "This will inject you with a tracking device that will be activated only if you are reported missing. Just a precaution."

"How often do people go missing?" I ask, frowning.

"Not often." Eric smirks. "This is a new development, courtesy of the Erudite. We have been injecting every Dauntless throughout the day, and I assume all other factions will comply as soon as possible."

My stomach twists. I can't let him inject me with anything, especially not anything developed by Erudite—maybe even by Jeanine. But I also can't refuse. I can't refuse or he will doubt my loyalty again.

"All right," I say, my throat tight.

Eric approaches me with the needle and syringe in hand. I pull my hair away from my neck and tilt my head to the side. I look away as Eric wipes my neck with an antiseptic wipe and eases the needle into my skin. The deep ache spreads through my neck, painful but brief. He puts the needle back in its case and sticks an adhesive bandage on the injection site.

"The banquet is in two hours," he says. "Your ranking among the other initiates, Dauntless-born included, will be announced then. Good luck."

The small crowd files out of the room, but Tobias lingers. He pauses by the door and beckons for me to follow him, so I do. The glass room above the Pit is full of Dauntless, some of them walking the ropes above our heads, some talking and laughing in groups. He smiles at

me. He must not have been watching.

“I heard a rumor that you only had seven obstacles to face,” he says. “Practically unheard of.”

“You...you weren’t watching the simulation?”

“Only on the screens. The Dauntless leaders are the only ones who see the whole thing,” he says. “They seemed impressed.”

“Well, seven fears isn’t as impressive as four,” I reply, “but it will suffice.”

“I would be surprised if you weren’t ranked first,” he says.

We walk into the glass room. The crowd is still there, but it is thinner now that the last person—me—has gone.

People notice me after a few seconds. I stay close to Tobias’s side as they point, but I can’t walk fast enough to avoid some cheers, some claps on the shoulder, some congratulations. As I look at the people around me, I realize how strange they would look to my father and brother, and how normal they seem to me, despite all the metal rings in their faces and the tattoos on their arms and throats and chests. I smile back at them.

We descend the steps into the Pit and I say, “I have a question.” I bite my lip. “How much did they tell you about my fear landscape?”

“Nothing, really. Why?” he says.

“No reason.” I kick a pebble to the side of the path.

“Do you have to go back to the dormitory?” he asks. “Because if you want peace and quiet, you can stay with me until the banquet.”

My stomach twists.

“What is it?” he asks.

I don’t want to go back to the dormitory, and I don’t want to be afraid of him.

“Let’s go,” I say.

He closes the door behind us and slips off his shoes.

“Want some water?” he says.

“No thanks.” I hold my hands in front of me.

“You okay?” he says, touching my cheek. His hand cradles the side of my head, his long fingers slipping through my hair. He smiles and holds my head in place as he kisses me. Heat spreads through me slowly. And fear, buzzing like an alarm in my chest.

His lips still on mine, he pushes the jacket from my shoulders. I flinch when I hear it drop, and push him back, my eyes burning. I don’t know why I feel this way. I didn’t feel like this when he kissed me on the train. I press my palms to my face, covering my eyes.

“What? What’s wrong?”

I shake my head.

“Don’t tell me it’s nothing.” His voice is cold. He grabs my arm. “Hey. Look at me.”

I take my hands from my face and lift my eyes to his. The hurt in his eyes and the anger in his clenched jaw surprise me.

“Sometimes I wonder,” I say, as calmly as I can, “what’s in it for you. This...whatever it is.”

“What’s in it for me,” he repeats. He steps back, shaking his head. “You’re an idiot, Tris.”

“I am *not* an idiot,” I say. “Which is why I know that it’s a little weird that, of all the girls you could have chosen, you chose me. So if you’re just looking for...um, you know...*that*...”

“What? Sex?” He scowls at me. “You know, if that was all I wanted, you probably wouldn’t be the first person I would go to.”

I feel like he just punched me in the stomach. Of course I’m not the first person he would go to—not the first, not the prettiest, not desirable. I press my hands to my abdomen and look away, fighting off tears. I am not the crying type. Nor am I the yelling type. I blink a few times, lower my hands, and stare up at him.

“I’m going to leave now,” I say quietly. And I turn toward the door.

“No, Tris.” He grabs my wrist and wrenches me back. I push him away, hard, but he grabs my other wrist, holding our crossed arms between us.

“I’m sorry I said that,” he says. “What I *meant* was that you aren’t like that. Which I knew when I met you.”

“You were an obstacle in my fear landscape.” My lower lip wobbles. “Did you know that?”

“What?” He releases my wrists, and the hurt look is back. “You’re *afraid* of me?”

“Not you,” I say. I bite my lip to keep it still. “Being with you...with anyone. I’ve never been involved with someone before, and...you’re older, and I don’t know what your expectations are, and...”

“Tris,” he says sternly, “I don’t know what delusion you’re operating under, but this is all new to me, too.”

“Delusion?” I repeat. “You mean you haven’t...” I raise my eyebrows. “Oh. *Oh*. I just assumed...” That because I am so absorbed by him, everyone else must be too. “Um. You know.”

“Well, you assumed wrong.” He looks away. His cheeks are bright, like he’s embarrassed. “You can tell me anything, you know,” he says. He takes my face in his hands, his fingertips cold and his palms warm. “I am kinder than I seemed in training. I promise.”

I believe him. But this has nothing to do with his kindness.

He kisses me between the eyebrows, and on the tip of my nose, and then carefully fits his mouth to mine. I am on edge. I have electricity coursing through my veins instead of blood. I want him to kiss me, I want him to; I am afraid of where it might go.

His hands shift to my shoulders, and his fingers brush over the edge of my bandage. He pulls back with a puckered brow.

“Are you hurt?” he asks.

“No. It’s another tattoo. It’s healed, I just...wanted to keep it covered up.”

“Can I see?”

I nod, my throat tight. I pull my sleeve down and slip my shoulder out of it. He stares down at my shoulder for a second, and then runs his fingers over it. They rise and fall with my

bones, which stick out farther than I'd like. When he touches me, I feel like everywhere his skin meets mine is changed by the connection. It sends a thrill through my stomach. Not just fear. Something else, too. A wanting.

He peels the corner of the bandage away. His eyes roam over the symbol of Abnegation, and he smiles.

"I have the same one," he says, laughing. "On my back."

"Really? Can I see it?"

He presses the bandage over the tattoo and pulls my shirt back over my shoulder.

"Are you asking me to undress, Tris?"

A nervous laugh gurgles from my throat. "Only...partially."

He nods, his smile suddenly fading. He lifts his eyes to mine and unzips his sweatshirt. It slides from his shoulders, and he tosses it onto the desk chair. I don't feel like laughing now. All I can do is stare at him.

His eyebrows pull to the center of his forehead, and he grabs the hem of his T-shirt. In one swift motion, he pulls it over his head.

A patch of Dauntless flames covers his right side, but other than that, his chest is unmarked. He averts his eyes.

"What is it?" I ask, frowning. He looks...uncomfortable.

"I don't invite many people to look at me," he says. "Any people, actually."

"I can't imagine why," I say softly. "I mean, look at you."

I walk slowly around him. On his back is more ink than skin. The symbols of each faction are drawn there—Dauntless at the top of his spine, Abnegation just below it, and the other three, smaller, beneath them. For a few seconds I look at the scales that represent Candor, the eye that stands for Erudite, and the tree that symbolizes Amity. It makes sense that he would tattoo himself with the symbol of Dauntless, his refuge, and even the symbol of Abnegation, his place of origin, like I did. But the other three?

"I think we've made a mistake," he says softly. "We've all started to put down the virtues of the other factions in the process of bolstering our own. I don't want to do that. I want to be brave, and selfless, *and* smart, *and* kind, *and* honest." He clears his throat. "I continually struggle with kindness."

"No one's perfect," I whisper. "It doesn't work that way. One bad thing goes away, and another bad thing replaces it."

I traded cowardice for cruelty; I traded weakness for ferocity.

I brush over Abnegation's symbol with my fingertips. "We have to warn them, you know. Soon."

"I know," he says. "We will."

He turns toward me. I want to touch him, but I'm afraid of his bareness; afraid that he will make me bare too.

"Is this scaring you, Tris?"

"No," I croak. I clear my throat. "Not really. I'm only...afraid of what I want."

“What do you want?” Then his face tightens. “Me?”

Slowly I nod.

He nods too, and takes my hands in his gently. He guides my palms to his stomach. His eyes lowered, he pushes my hands up, over his abdomen and over his chest, and holds them against his neck. My palms tingle with the feel of his skin, smooth, warm. My face is hot, but I shiver anyway. He looks at me.

“Someday,” he says, “if you still want me, we can...” He pauses, clears his throat. “We can...”

I smile a little and wrap my arms around him before he finishes, pressing the side of my face to his chest. I feel his heartbeat against my cheek, as fast as my own.

“Are you afraid of me, too, Tobias?”

“Terrified,” he replies with a smile.

I turn my head and kiss the hollow beneath his throat.

“Maybe you won’t be in my fear landscape anymore,” I murmur.

He bends his head and kisses me slowly.

“Then everyone can call you Six.”

“Four and Six,” I say.

We kiss again, and this time, it feels familiar. I know exactly how we fit together, his arm around my waist, my hands on his chest, the pressure of his lips on mine. We have each other memorized.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

I WATCH TOBIAS'S face carefully as we walk to the dining hall, searching for any sign of disappointment. We spent the two hours lying on his bed, talking and kissing and eventually dozing until we heard shouts in the hallway—people on their way to the banquet.

If anything, he seems lighter now than he was before. He smiles more, anyway.

When we reach the entrance, we separate. I go in first, and run to the table I share with Will and Christina. He enters second, a minute later, and sits down next to Zeke, who hands him a dark bottle. He waves it away.

“Where did you go?” asks Christina. “Everyone else went back to the dormitory.”

“I just wandered around,” I say. “I was too nervous to talk to everyone else about it.”

“You have no reason to be nervous,” Christina says, shaking her head. “I turned around to talk to Will for one second, and you were already done.”

I detect a note of jealousy in her voice, and again, I wish I could explain that I was well prepared for the simulation, because of what I am. Instead I just shrug.

“What job are you going to pick?” I ask her.

“I’m thinking I might want a job like Four’s. Training initiates,” she says. “Scaring the living daylights out of them. You know, fun stuff. What about you?”

I was so focused on getting through initiation that I barely thought about it. I could work for the Dauntless leaders—but they would kill me if they discover what I am. What else is there?

“I guess...I could be an ambassador to the other factions,” I say. “I think being a transfer would help me.”

“I was so hoping you would say Dauntless-leader-in-training,” sighs Christina. “Because that’s what Peter wants. He couldn’t shut up about it in the dorm earlier.”

“And it’s what I want,” adds Will. “Hopefully I ranked higher than him...oh, and all the Dauntless-born initiates. Forgot about them.” He groans. “Oh God. This is going to be impossible.”

“No, it isn’t,” she says. Christina reaches for his hand and laces her fingers with his, like it’s the most natural thing in the world. Will squeezes her hand.

“Question,” says Christina, leaning forward. “The leaders who were watching your fear landscape...they were laughing about something.”

“Oh?” I bite my lip hard. “I’m glad my terror amuses them.”

“Any idea which obstacle it was?” she asks.

“No.”

“You’re *lying*,” she says. “You always bite the inside of your cheek when you lie. It’s your tell.”

I stop biting the inside of my cheek.

“Will’s is pinching his lips together, if it makes you feel better,” she adds.

Will covers his mouth immediately.

“Okay, fine. I was afraid of...intimacy,” I say.

“Intimacy,” repeats Christina. “Like...sex?”

I tense up. And force myself to nod. Even if it was just Christina, and no one else was around, I would still want to strangle her right now. I go over a few ways to inflict maximum injury with minimum force in my head. I try to throw flames from my eyes.

Will laughs.

“What was *that* like?” she says. “I mean, did someone just...try to do it with you? Who was it?”

“Oh, you know. Faceless...unidentifiable male,” I say. “How were your moths?”

“You promised you would never tell!” cries Christina, smacking my arm.

“Moths,” repeats Will. “You’re afraid of moths?”

“Not just a cloud of moths,” she says, “like...a *swarm* of them. Everywhere. All those wings and legs and...” She shudders and shakes her head.

“Terrifying,” Will says with mock seriousness. “That’s my girl. Tough as cotton balls.”

“Oh, shut up.”

A microphone squeals somewhere, so loud I clap my hands over my ears. I look across the room at Eric, who stands on one of the tables with the microphone in hand, tapping it with his fingertips. After the tapping is done and the crowd of Dauntless is quiet, Eric clears his throat and begins.

“We aren’t big on speeches here. Eloquence is for Erudite,” he says. The crowd laughs. I wonder if they know that he was an Erudite once; that under all the pretense of Dauntless recklessness and even brutality, he is more like an Erudite than anything else. If they did, I doubt they would laugh at him. “So I’m going to keep this short. It’s a new year, and we have a new pack of initiates. And a slightly smaller pack of new members. We offer them our congratulations.”

At the word “congratulations” the room erupts, not into applause, but into the pounding of fists on tabletops. The noise vibrates in my chest, and I grin.

“We believe in bravery. We believe in taking action. We believe in freedom from fear and in acquiring the skills to force the bad out of our world so that the good can prosper and thrive. If you also believe in those things, we welcome you.”

Even though I know Eric probably doesn’t believe in any of those things, I find myself smiling, because I believe in them. No matter how badly the leaders have warped the Dauntless ideals, those ideals can still belong to me.

More pounding fists, this time accompanied by whoops.

“Tomorrow, in their first act as members, our top ten initiates will choose their professions, in the order of how they are ranked,” Eric says. “The rankings, I know, are what everyone is really waiting for. They are determined by a combination of three scores—the first, from the combat stage of training; the second, from the simulation stage; and the third, from the final examination, the fear landscape. The rankings will appear on the screen behind me.”

As soon as the word “me” leaves his mouth, the names appear on the screen, which is almost as large as the wall itself. Next to the number one is my picture, and the name “Tris.”

A weight in my chest lifts. I didn't realize it was there until it was gone, and I didn't have to feel it anymore. I smile, and a tingling spreads through me. First. Divergent or not, this faction is where I belong.

I forget about war; I forget about death. Will's arms wrap around me and he gives me a bear hug. I hear cheering and laughing and shouting. Christina points at the screen, her eyes wide and filled with tears.

1. Tris
2. Uriah
3. Lynn
4. Marlene
5. Peter

Peter stays. I suppress a sigh. But then I read the rest of the names.

6. Will
7. Christina

I smile, and Christina reaches across the table to hug me. I am too distracted to protest against the affection. She laughs in my ear.

Someone grabs me from behind and shouts in my ear. It's Uriah. I can't turn around, so I reach back and squeeze his shoulder.

"Congratulations!" I shout.

"You beat them!" he shouts back. He releases me, laughing, and runs into a crowd of Dauntless-born initiates.

I crane my neck to look at the screen again. I follow the list down.

Eight, nine, and ten are Dauntless-borns whose names I barely recognize.

Eleven and twelve are Molly and Drew.

Molly and Drew are cut. Drew, who tried to run away while Peter held me by the throat over the chasm, and Molly, who fed the Erudite lies about my father, are factionless.

It isn't quite the victory I wanted, but it's a victory nonetheless.

Will and Christina kiss, a little too sloppily for my taste. All around me is the pounding of Dauntless fists. Then I feel a tap on my shoulder and turn to see Tobias standing behind me. I get up, beaming.

"You think giving you a hug would give away too much?" he says.

"You know," I say, "I really don't care."

I stand on my tiptoes and press my lips to his.

It is the best moment of my life.

A moment later, Tobias's thumb brushes over the injection site in my neck, and a few things come together at once. I don't know how I didn't figure this out before.

One: Colored serum contains transmitters.

Two: Transmitters connect the mind to a simulation program.

Three: Erudite developed the serum.

Four: Eric and Max are working with the Erudite.

I break away from the kiss and stare wide-eyed at Tobias.

“Tris?” he says, confused.

I shake my head. “Not now.” I meant to say *not here*. Not with Will and Christina standing a foot away from me—staring with open mouths, probably because I just kissed Tobias—and the clamor of the Dauntless surrounding us. But he has to know how important it is.

“Later,” I say. “Okay?”

He nods. I don’t even know how I’ll explain it later. I don’t even know how to think straight.

But I do know how Erudite will get us to fight.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

I TRY TO get Tobias alone after the rankings are announced, but the crowd of initiates and members is too thick, and the force of their congratulations pulls him away from me. I decide to sneak out of the dormitory after everyone is asleep and find him, but the fear landscape exhausted me more than I realized, so soon enough, I drift off too.

I wake to squeaking mattresses and shuffling feet. It's too dark for me to see clearly, but as my eyes adjust, I see that Christina is tying her shoelaces. I open my mouth to ask her what she's doing, but then I notice that across from me, Will is putting on a shirt. Everyone is awake, but everyone is silent.

"Christina," I hiss. She doesn't look at me, so I grab her shoulder and shake it. "Christina!" She just keeps tying her shoelaces.

My stomach squeezes when I see her face. Her eyes are open, but blank, and her facial muscles are slack. She moves without looking at what she's doing, her mouth half-open, not awake but seeming awake. And everyone else looks just like her.

"Will?" I ask, crossing the room. All the initiates fall into a line when they finish dressing. They start to file silently out of the dormitory. I grab Will's arm to keep him from leaving, but he moves forward with irrepressible force. I grit my teeth and hold on as hard as I can, digging my heels into the ground. He just drags me along with him.

They are sleepwalkers.

I fumble for my shoes. I can't stay here alone. I tie my shoes in a hurry, pull on a jacket, and sprint out of the room, catching up to the line of initiates quickly, conforming my pace to theirs. It takes me a few seconds to realize that they move in unison, the same foot forward as the same arm swings back. I mimic them as best I can, but the rhythm feels strange to me.

We march toward the Pit, but when we reach the entrance, the front of the line turns left. Max stands in the hallway, watching us. My heart hammers in my chest and I stare as vacantly as possible ahead of me, focusing on the rhythm of my feet. I tense as I pass him. He'll notice. He'll notice I'm not brain-dead like the rest of them and something bad will happen to me, I just know it.

Max's dark eyes pass right over me.

We climb a flight of stairs and travel at the same rhythm down four corridors. Then the hallway opens up to a huge cavern. Inside it is a crowd of Dauntless.

There are rows of tables with mounds of black on them. I can't see what the piles are until I am a foot away from them. Guns.

Of course. Eric said every Dauntless was injected yesterday. So now the entire faction is brain-dead, obedient, and trained to kill. Perfect soldiers.

I pick up a gun and a holster and a belt, copying Will, who is directly in front of me. I try to match his movements, but I can't predict what he's going to do, so I end up fumbling more than I'd like to. I grit my teeth. I just have to trust that no one is watching me.

Once I'm armed, I follow Will and the other initiates toward the exit.

I can't wage war against Abnegation, against my family. I would rather die. My fear landscape proved that. My list of options narrows, and I see the path I must take. I will pretend long enough to get to the Abnegation sector of the city. I will save my family. And whatever happens after that doesn't matter. A blanket of calm settles over me.

The line of initiates passes into a dark hallway. I can't see Will ahead of me, or anything ahead of him. My foot hits something hard, and I stumble, my hands outstretched. My knee hits something else—a step. I straighten, so tense my teeth are almost chattering. They didn't see that. It's too dark. Please let it be too dark.

As the staircase turns, light flows into the cavern, until I can finally see Will's shoulders in front of me again. I focus on matching my rhythm to his as I reach the top of the stairs, passing another Dauntless leader. Now I know who the Dauntless leaders are, because they are the only people who are awake.

Well, not the only people. I must be awake because I am Divergent. And if I am awake, that means Tobias is too, unless I am wrong about him.

I have to find him.

I stand next to the train tracks in a group that stretches as far as I can see with my peripheral vision. The train is stopped in front of us, every car open. One by one, my fellow initiates climb into the train car in front of us.

I can't turn my head to scan the crowd for Tobias, but I let my eyes skirt to the side. The faces on my left are unfamiliar, but I see a tall boy with short hair a few yards to my right. It might not be him, and I can't make sure, but it's the best chance I have. I don't know how to get to him without attracting attention. I have to get to him.

The car in front of me fills up, and Will turns toward the next one. I take my cues from him, but instead of stopping where he stops, I slip a few feet to the right. The people around me are all taller than I am; they will shield me. I step to the right again, clenching my teeth. Too much movement. They will catch me. *Please don't catch me.*

A blank-faced Dauntless in the next car offers a hand to the boy in front of me, and he takes it, his movements robotic. I take the next hand without looking at it, and climb as gracefully as I can into the car.

I stand facing the person who helped me. My eyes twitch up, just for a second, to see his face. Tobias, as blank-faced as the rest of them. Was I wrong? Is he not Divergent? Tears spark behind my eyes, and I blink them back as I turn away from him.

People crowd into the car around me, so we stand in four rows, shoulder-to-shoulder. And then something peculiar happens: fingers lace with mine, and a palm presses to my palm. Tobias, holding my hand.

My entire body is alive with energy. I squeeze his hand, and he squeezes back. He is awake. I was right.

I want to look at him, but I force myself to stand still and keep my eyes forward as the train starts to move. He moves his thumb in a slow circle over the back of my hand. It is meant to comfort me, but it frustrates me instead. I need to talk to him. I need to look at him.

I can't see where the train is going because the girl in front of me is so tall, so I stare at the back of her head and focus on Tobias's hand in mine until the rails squeal. I don't know how long I've been standing there, but my back aches, so it must have been a long time. The train screeches to a stop, and my heart pounds so hard it's difficult to breathe.

Right before we jump down from the car, I see Tobias turn his head in my periphery, and I glance back at him. His dark eyes are insistent as he says, "Run."

"My family," I say.

I look straight ahead again, and jump down from the train car when it's my turn. Tobias walks in front of me. I should focus on the back of his head, but the streets I walk now are familiar, and the line of Dauntless I follow fades from my attention. I pass the place I went every six months with my mother to pick up new clothes for our family; the bus stop where I once waited in the morning to get to school; the strip of sidewalk so cracked Caleb and I played a hopping, jumping game to get across it.

They are all different now. The buildings are dark and empty. The roads are packed with Dauntless soldiers, all marching at the same rhythm except the officers, who stand every few hundred yards, watching us walk by, or gathering in clusters to discuss something. No one seems to be doing anything. Are we really here for war?

I walk a half mile before I get an answer to that question.

I start to hear popping sounds. I can't look around to see where they're coming from, but the farther I walk, the louder and sharper they get, until I recognize them as gunshots. I clench my jaw. I must keep walking; I have to stare straight ahead.

Far ahead of us, I see a Dauntless soldier push a gray-clothed man to his knees. I recognize the man—he is a council member. The soldier takes her gun out of her holster and, with sightless eyes, fires a bullet into the back of the council member's skull.

The soldier has a gray streak in her hair. It's Tori. My steps almost falter.

Keep walking. My eyes burn. Keep walking.

We march past Tori and the fallen council member. When I step over his hand, I almost burst into tears.

Then the soldiers in front of me stop walking, and so do I. I stand as still as I can, but all I want to do is find Jeanine and Eric and Max and shoot them all. My hands are shaking and I can't do anything to stop it. I breathe quickly through my nose.

Another gunshot. From the corner of my left eye, I see a gray blur collapse to the pavement. All the Abnegation will die if this continues.

The Dauntless soldiers carry out unspoken orders without hesitation and without question. Some adult members of Abnegation are herded toward one of the nearby buildings, along with the Abnegation children. A sea of black-clothed soldiers guard the doors. The only people I do not see are the Abnegation leaders. Maybe they are already dead.

One by one, the Dauntless soldiers in front of me step away to perform one task or another. Soon the leaders will notice that whatever signals everyone else is getting, I'm not getting them. What will I do when that happens?

"This is insane," coos a male voice on my right. I see a lock of long, greasy hair, and a

silver earring. Eric. He pokes my cheek with his index finger, and I struggle against the impulse to slap his hand away.

“They really can’t see us? Or hear us?” a female voice asks.

“Oh, they can see and hear. They just aren’t processing what they see and hear the same way,” says Eric. “They receive commands from our computers in the transmitters we injected them with...” At this, he presses his fingers to the injection site to show the woman where it is. *Stay still*, I tell myself. *Still, still, still*. “...and carry them out seamlessly.”

Eric shifts a step to the side and leans close to Tobias’s face, grinning.

“Now, this is a happy sight,” he says. “The legendary Four. No one’s going to remember that I came in second now, are they? No one’s going to ask me, ‘What was it like to train with the guy who has only *four fears*?’” He draws his gun and points it at Tobias’s right temple. My heart pounds so hard I feel it in my skull. He can’t shoot; he wouldn’t. Eric tilts his head. “Think anyone would notice if he accidentally got shot?”

“Go ahead,” the woman says, sounding bored. She must be a Dauntless leader if she can give Eric permission. “He’s nothing now.”

“Too bad you didn’t just take Max up on his offer, Four. Well, too bad for *you*, anyway,” says Eric quietly, as he clicks the bullet into its chamber.

My lungs burn; I haven’t breathed in almost a minute. I see Tobias’s hand twitch in the corner of my eye, but my hand is already on my gun. I press the barrel to Eric’s forehead. His eyes widen, and his face goes slack, and for a second he looks like another sleeping Dauntless soldier.

My index finger hovers over the trigger.

“Get your gun away from his head,” I say.

“You won’t shoot me,” Eric replies.

“Interesting theory,” I say. But I can’t murder him; I can’t. I grit my teeth and shift my arm down, firing at Eric’s foot. He screams and grabs his foot with both hands. The moment his gun is no longer pointed at Tobias’s head, Tobias draws his gun and fires at Eric’s friend’s leg. I don’t wait to see if the bullet hits her. I grab Tobias’s arm and sprint.

If we can make it to the alley, we can disappear into the buildings and they won’t find us. There are two hundred yards to go. I hear footsteps behind us, but I don’t look back. Tobias grabs my hand and squeezes, pulling me forward, faster than I have ever run, faster than I can run. I stumble behind him. I hear a gunshot.

The pain is sharp and sudden, beginning in my shoulder and spreading outward with electric fingers. A scream stops in my throat, and I fall, my cheek scraping the pavement. I lift my head to see Tobias’s knees by my face, and yell, “Run!”

His voice is calm and quiet as he replies, “No.”

In seconds we are surrounded. Tobias helps me up, supporting my weight. I have trouble focusing through the pain. Dauntless soldiers surround us and point their guns.

“Divergent rebels,” Eric says, standing on one foot. His face is a sickly white. “Surrender your weapons.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

I LEAN HEAVILY on Tobias. A gun barrel pressed to my spine urges me forward, through the front doors of Abnegation headquarters, a plain gray building, two stories high. Blood trickles down my side. I'm not afraid of what's coming; I'm in too much pain to think about it.

The gun barrel pushes me toward a door guarded by two Dauntless soldiers. Tobias and I walk through it and enter a plain office that contains just a desk, a computer, and two empty chairs. Jeanine sits behind the desk, a phone against her ear.

"Well, send some of them *back* on the train, then," she says. "It needs to be well guarded, it's the most important part—I'm not talk—I have to go." She snaps the phone shut and focuses her gray eyes on me. They remind me of melted steel.

"Divergent rebels," one of the Dauntless says. He must be a Dauntless leader—or maybe a recruit who was removed from the simulation.

"Yes, I can see that." She takes her glasses off, folds them, and sets them on the desk. She probably wears the glasses out of vanity rather than necessity, because she thinks they make her look smarter—my father said so.

"*You*," she says, pointing at me, "I expected. All the trouble with your aptitude test results made me suspicious from the beginning. But *you*..."

She shakes her head as she shifts her eyes to Tobias.

"You, Tobias—or should I call you Four?—managed to elude me," she says quietly. "Everything about you checked out: test results, initiation simulations, everything. But here you are nonetheless." She folds her hands and sets her chin on top of them. "Perhaps you could explain to me how that is?"

"You're the genius," he says coolly. "Why don't you tell me?"

Her mouth curls into a smile. "My theory is that you really do belong in Abnegation. That your Divergence is weaker."

She smiles wider. Like she's amused. I grit my teeth and consider lunging across the table and strangling her. If I didn't have a bullet in my shoulder, I might.

"Your powers of deductive reasoning are stunning," spits Tobias. "Consider me awed."

I look sideways at him. I had almost forgotten about this side of him—the part that is more likely to explode than to lie down and die.

"Now that your intelligence has been verified, you might want to get on with killing us." Tobias closes his eyes. "You have a lot of Abnegation leaders to murder, after all."

If Tobias's comments bother Jeanine, she doesn't let on. She keeps smiling and stands smoothly. She wears a blue dress that hugs her body from shoulder to knee, revealing a layer of pudg around her middle. The room spins as I try to focus on her face, and I slump against Tobias for support. He slides his arm around me, supporting me from the waist.

"Don't be silly. There is no rush," she says lightly. "You are both here for an extremely important purpose. You see, it perplexed me that the Divergent were immune to the serum that

I developed, so I have been working to remedy that. I thought I might have, with the last batch, but as you know, I was wrong. Luckily I have another batch to test.”

“Why bother?” She and the Dauntless leaders had no problem killing the Divergent in the past. Why would it be any different now?

She smirks at me.

“I have had a question since I began the Dauntless project, and it is this.” She sidesteps her desk, skimming the surface with her finger. “Why are most of the Divergent weak-willed, God-fearing nobodies from *Abnegation*, of all factions?”

I didn’t know that most of the Divergent came from Abnegation, and I don’t know why that would be. And I probably won’t live long enough to figure it out.

“Weak-willed,” Tobias scoffs. “It requires a *strong* will to manipulate a simulation, last time I checked. Weak-willed is mind-controlling an army because it’s too hard for you to train one yourself.”

“I am not a fool,” says Jeanine. “A faction of intellectuals is no army. We are tired of being dominated by a bunch of self-righteous idiots who reject wealth and advancement, but we couldn’t do this on our own. And your Dauntless leaders were all too happy to oblige me if I guaranteed them a place in our new, improved government.”

“Improved,” Tobias says, snorting.

“Yes, improved,” Jeanine says. “Improved, and working toward a world in which people will live in wealth, comfort, and prosperity.”

“At whose expense?” I ask, my voice thick and sluggish. “All that wealth...doesn’t come from nowhere.”

“Currently, the factionless are a drain on our resources,” Jeanine replies. “As is Abnegation. I am sure that once the remains of your old faction are absorbed into the Dauntless army, Candor will cooperate and we will finally be able to get on with things.”

Absorbed into the Dauntless army. I know what that means—she wants to control them, too. She wants everyone to be pliable and easy to control.

“Get on with things,” Tobias repeats bitterly. He raises his voice. “Make no mistake. You will be dead before the day is out, you—”

“Perhaps if you could control your temper,” Jeanine says, her words cutting cleanly across Tobias’s, “you would not be in this situation to begin with, Tobias.”

“I’m in this situation because you put me here,” he snaps. “The second you orchestrated an attack against innocent people.”

“Innocent people.” Jeanine laughs. “I find that a little funny, coming from you. I would expect Marcus’s son to understand that not all those people are innocent.” She perches on the edge of the desk, her skirt pulling away from her knees, which are crossed with stretch marks. “Can you tell me honestly that you wouldn’t be happy to discover that your father was killed in the attack?”

“No,” says Tobias through gritted teeth. “But at least his evil didn’t involve the widespread manipulation of an entire faction and the systematic murder of every political leader we have.”

They stare at each other for a few seconds, long enough to make me feel tense to my core,

and then Jeanine clears her throat.

“What I was going to say,” she says, “is that soon, dozens of the Abnegation and their young children will be my responsibility to keep in order, and it does not bode well for me that a large number of them may be Divergent like yourselves, incapable of being controlled by the simulations.”

She stands and walks a few steps to the left, her hands clasped in front of her. Her nail beds, like mine, are bitten raw.

“Therefore, it was necessary that I develop a new form of simulation to which they are not immune. I have been forced to reassess my own assumptions. That is where you come in.” She paces a few steps to the right. “You are correct to say that you are strong-willed. I cannot control your will. But there are a few things I can control.”

She stops and turns to face us. I lean my temple into Tobias’s shoulder. Blood trails down my back. The pain has been so constant for the past few minutes that I have gotten used to it, like a person gets used to a siren’s wail if it remains consistent.

She presses her palms together. I see no vicious glee in her eyes, and not a hint of the sadism I expect. She is more machine than maniac. She sees problems and forms solutions based on the data she collects. Abnegation stood in the way of her desire for power, so she found a way to eliminate it. She didn’t have an army, so she found one in Dauntless. She knew that she would need to control large groups of people in order to stay secure, so she developed a way to do it with serums and transmitters. Divergence is just another problem for her to solve, and that is what makes her so terrifying—because she is smart enough to solve anything, even the problem of our existence.

“I can control what you see and hear,” she says. “So I created a new serum that will adjust your surroundings to manipulate your will. Those who refuse to accept our leadership must be closely monitored.”

Monitored—or robbed of free will. She has a gift with words.

“You will be the first test subject, Tobias. Beatrice, however...” She smiles. “You are too injured to be of much use to me, so your execution will occur at the conclusion of this meeting.”

I try to hide the shudder that goes through me at the word “execution,” my shoulder screaming with pain, and look up at Tobias. It’s hard to blink the tears back when I see the terror in Tobias’s wide, dark eyes.

“No,” says Tobias. His voice trembles, but his look is stern as he shakes his head. “I would rather die.”

“I’m afraid you don’t have much of a choice in the matter,” replies Jeanine lightly.

Tobias takes my face in his hands roughly and kisses me, the pressure of his lips pushing mine apart. I forget my pain and the terror of approaching death and for a moment, I am grateful that the memory of that kiss will be fresh in my mind as I meet my end.

Then he releases me and I have to lean against the wall for support. With no more warning than the tightening of his muscles, Tobias lunges across the desk and wraps his hands around Jeanine’s throat. Dauntless guards by the door leap at him, their guns held ready, and I scream.

It takes two Dauntless soldiers to pull Tobias away from Jeanine and shove him to the ground. One of the soldiers pins him, his knees on Tobias's shoulders and his hands on Tobias's head, pressing his face to the carpet. I lunge toward them, but another guard slams his hands against my shoulders, forcing me against the wall. I am weak from blood loss and too small.

Jeanine braces herself against the desk, spluttering and gasping. She rubs her throat, which is bright red with Tobias's fingerprints. No matter how mechanical she seems, she's still human; there are tears in her eyes as she takes a box from her desk drawer and opens it, revealing a needle and syringe.

Still breathing heavily, she carries it toward Tobias. Tobias grits his teeth and elbows one of the guards in the face. The guard slams the heel of his gun into the side of Tobias's head, and Jeanine sticks the needle into Tobias's neck. He goes limp.

A sound escapes my mouth, not a sob or a scream, but a croaking, scraping moan that sounds detached, like it is coming from someone else.

"Let him up," says Jeanine, her voice scratchy.

The guard gets up, and so does Tobias. He does not look like the sleepwalking Dauntless soldiers; his eyes are alert. He looks around for a few seconds as if confused by what he sees.

"Tobias," I say. "Tobias!"

"He doesn't know you," says Jeanine.

Tobias looks over his shoulder. His eyes narrow and he starts toward me, fast. Before the guards can stop him, he closes a hand around my throat, squeezing my trachea with his fingertips. I choke, my face hot with blood.

"The simulation manipulates him," says Jeanine. I can barely hear her over the pounding in my ears. "By altering what he sees—making him confuse enemy with friend."

One of the guards pulls Tobias off me. I gasp, drawing a rattling breath into my lungs.

He is gone. Controlled by the simulation, he will now murder the people he called innocent not three minutes ago. Jeanine killing him would have hurt less than this.

"The advantage to this version of the simulation," she says, her eyes alight, "is that he can act independently, and is therefore far more effective than a mindless soldier." She looks at the guards who hold Tobias back. He struggles against them, his muscles taut, his eyes focused on me, but not seeing me, not seeing me the way they used to. "Send him to the control room. We'll want a sentient being there to monitor things and, as I understand it, he used to work there."

Jeanine presses her palms together in front of her. "And take *her* to room B13," she says. She flaps her hand to dismiss me. That flapping hand commands my execution, but to her it is just crossing off an item from a list of tasks, the only logical progression of the particular path that she is on. She surveys me without feeling as two Dauntless soldiers pull me out of the room.

They drag me down the hallway. I feel numb inside, but outside I am a screaming, thrashing force of will. I bite a hand that belongs to the Dauntless man on my right and smile as I taste blood. Then he hits me, and there is nothing.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

I WAKE IN the dark, wedged in a hard corner. The floor beneath me is smooth and cold. I touch my throbbing head and liquid slips across my fingertips. Red—blood. When I bring my hand back down, my elbow hits a wall. Where am I?

A light flickers above me. The bulb is blue and dim when it's lit. I see the walls of a tank around me, and my shadowed reflection across from me. The room is small, with concrete walls and no windows, and I am alone in it. Well, almost—a small video camera is attached to one of the concrete walls.

I see a small opening near my feet. Connected to it is a tube, and connected to the tube, in the corner of the room, is a huge tank.

The trembling starts in my fingertips and spreads up my arms, and soon my body is shuddering.

I'm not in a simulation this time.

My right arm is numb. When I push myself out of the corner, I see a pool of blood where I was sitting. I can't panic now. I stand, leaning against a wall, and breathe. The worst thing that can happen to me now is that I drown in this tank. I press my forehead to the glass and laugh. That is the worst thing I can imagine. My laugh turns into a sob.

If I refuse to give up now, it will look brave to whoever watches me with that camera, but sometimes it isn't fighting that's brave, it's facing the death you know is coming. I sob into the glass. I'm not afraid of dying, but I want to die a different way, any other way.

It is better to scream than cry, so I scream and slam my heel into the wall behind me. My foot bounces off, and I kick again, so hard my heel throbs. I kick again and again and again, then pull back and throw my left shoulder into the wall. The impact makes the wound in my right shoulder burn like it got stuck with a hot poker.

Water trickles into the bottom of the tank.

The video camera means they're watching me—no, studying me, as only the Erudite would. To see if my reaction in reality matches my reaction in the simulation. To prove that I'm a coward.

I uncurl my fists and drop my hands. I am not a coward. I lift my head and stare at the camera across from me. If I focus on breathing, I can forget that I'm about to die. I stare at the camera until my vision narrows and it is all I see. Water tickles my ankles, then my calves, then my thighs. It rises over my fingertips. I breathe in; I breathe out. The water is soft and feels like silk.

I breathe in. The water will wash my wounds clean. I breathe out. My mother submerged me in water when I was a baby, to give me to God. It has been a long time since I thought about God, but I think about him now. It is only natural. I am glad, suddenly, that I shot Eric in the foot instead of the head.

My body rises with the water. Instead of kicking my feet to stay abreast of it, I push all the air from my lungs and sink to the bottom. The water muffles my ears. I feel its movement over

my face. I think about snorting the water into my lungs so it kills me faster, but I can't bring myself to do it. I blow bubbles from my mouth.

Relax. I close my eyes. My lungs burn.

I let my hands float up to the top of the tank. I let the water fold me in its silken arms.

When I was young, my father used to hold me over his head and run with me so I felt like I was flying. I remember how the air felt, gliding over my body, and I am not afraid. I open my eyes.

A dark figure stands in front of me. I must be close to death if I'm seeing things. Pain stabs my lungs. Suffocating is painful. A palm presses to the glass in front of my face, and for a moment as I stare through the water, I think I see my mother's blurry face.

I hear a bang, and the glass cracks. Water sprays out a hole near the top of the tank, and the pane cracks in half. I turn away as the glass shatters, and the force of the water throws my body at the ground. I gasp, swallowing water as well as air, and cough, and gasp again, and hands close around my arms, and I hear her voice.

"Beatrice," she says. "Beatrice, we have to run."

She pulls my arm across her shoulders and hauls me to my feet. She is dressed like my mother and she looks like my mother, but she is holding a gun, and the determined look in her eyes is unfamiliar to me. I stumble beside her over broken glass and through water and out an open doorway. Dauntless guards lie dead next to the door.

My feet slip and slide on the tile as we walk down the hallway, as fast as my weak legs can muster. When we turn the corner, she fires at the two guards standing by the door at the end. The bullets hit them both in the head, and they slump to the floor. She pushes me against the wall and takes off her gray jacket.

She wears a sleeveless shirt. When she lifts her arm, I see the corner of a tattoo under her armpit. No wonder she never changed clothes in front of me.

"Mom," I say, my voice strained. "You were Dauntless."

"Yes," she says, smiling. She makes her jacket into a sling for my arm, tying the sleeves around my neck. "And it has served me well today. Your father and Caleb and some others are hiding in a basement at the intersection of North and Fairfield. We have to go get them."

I stare at her. I sat next to her at the kitchen table, twice a day, for sixteen years, and never once did I consider the possibility that she could have been anything but Abnegation-born. How well did I actually know my mother?

"There will be time for questions," she says. She lifts her shirt and slips a gun from under the waistband of her pants, offering it to me. Then she touches my cheek. "Now we must go."

She runs to the end of the hallway, and I run after her.

We are in the basement of Abnegation headquarters. My mother has worked there for as long as I can remember, so I'm not surprised when she leads me down a few dark hallways, up a dank staircase, and into daylight again without interference. How many Dauntless guards did she shoot before she found me?

"How did you know to find me?" I say.

"I've been watching the trains since the attacks started," she replies, glancing over her

shoulder at me. "I didn't know what I would do when I found you. But it was always my intention to save you."

My throat feels tight. "But I betrayed you. I left you."

"You're my daughter. I don't care about the factions." She shakes her head. "Look where they got us. Human beings as a whole cannot be good for long before the bad creeps back in and poisons us again."

She stops where the alley intersects with the road.

I know now isn't the time for conversation. But there is something I need to know.

"Mom, how do you know about Divergence?" I ask. "What is it? Why..."

She pushes the bullet chamber open and peers inside. Seeing how many bullets she has left. Then takes a few out of her pocket and reloads. I recognize her expression as the one she wears when she threads a needle.

"I know about them because I am one," she says as she shoves a bullet in place. "I was only safe because my mother was a Dauntless leader. On Choosing Day, she told me to leave my faction and find a safer one. I chose Abnegation." She puts an extra bullet in her pocket and stands up straighter. "But I wanted you to make the choice on your own."

"I don't understand why we're such a threat to the leaders."

"Every faction conditions its members to think and act a certain way. And most people do it. For most people, it's not hard to learn, to find a pattern of thought that works and stay that way." She touches my uninjured shoulder and smiles. "But our minds move in a dozen different directions. We can't be confined to one way of thinking, and that terrifies our leaders. It means we can't be controlled. And it means that no matter what they do, we will always cause trouble for them."

I feel like someone breathed new air into my lungs. I am not Abnegation. I am not Dauntless.

I am Divergent.

And I can't be controlled.

"Here they come," she says, looking around the corner. I peek over her shoulder and see a few Dauntless with guns, moving to the same beat, heading toward us. My mother looks back. Far behind us, another group of Dauntless run down the alley, toward us, moving in time with one another.

She grabs my hands and looks me in the eyes. I watch her long eyelashes move as she blinks. I wish I had something of hers in my small, plain face. But at least I have something of hers in my brain.

"Go to your father and brother. The alley on the right, down to the basement. Knock twice, then three times, then six times." She cups my cheeks. Her hands are cold; her palms are rough. "I'm going to distract them. You have to run as fast as you can."

"No." I shake my head. "I'm not going anywhere without you."

She smiles. "Be brave, Beatrice. I love you."

I feel her lips on my forehead and then she runs into the middle of the street. She holds her gun above her head and fires three times into the air. The Dauntless start running.

I sprint across the street and into the alley. As I run, I look over my shoulder to see if any Dauntless follow me. But my mother fires into the crowd of guards, and they are too focused on her to notice me.

I whip my head over my shoulder when I hear them fire back. My feet falter and stop.

My mother stiffens, her back arching. Blood surges from a wound in her abdomen, dyeing her shirt crimson. A patch of blood spreads over her shoulder. I blink, and the violent red stains the inside of my eyelids. I blink again, and I see her smile as she sweeps my hair trimmings into a pile.

She falls, first to her knees, her hands limp at her sides, and then to the pavement, slumped to the side like a rag doll. She is motionless and without breath.

I clamp my hand over my mouth and scream into my palm. My cheeks are hot and wet with tears I didn't feel beginning. My blood cries out that it belongs to her, and struggles to return to her, and I hear her words in my mind as I run, telling me to be brave.

Pain stabs through me as everything I am made of collapses, my entire world dismantled in a moment. The pavement scrapes my knees. If I lie down now, this can all be done. Maybe Eric was right, and choosing death is like exploring an unknown, uncertain place.

I feel Tobias brushing my hair back before the first simulation. I hear him telling me to be brave. I hear my mother telling me to be brave.

The Dauntless soldiers turn as if moved by the same mind. Somehow I get up and start running.

I am brave.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

THREE DAUNTLESS SOLDIERS pursue me. They run in unison, their footsteps echoing in the alley. One of them fires, and I dive, scraping my palms on the ground. The bullet hits the brick wall to my right, and pieces of brick spray everywhere. I throw myself around the corner and click a bullet into the chamber of my gun.

They killed my mother. I point the gun into the alley and fire blindly. It wasn't really them, but it doesn't matter—can't matter, and just like death itself, can't be real right now.

Just one set of footsteps now. I hold the gun out with both hands and stand at the end of the alley, pointing at the Dauntless soldier. My finger squeezes the trigger, but not hard enough to fire. The man running toward me is not a man, he is a boy. A shaggy-haired boy with a crease between his eyebrows.

Will. Dull-eyed and mindless, but still Will. He stops running and mirrors me, his feet planted and his gun up. In an instant, I see his finger poised over the trigger and hear the bullet slide into the chamber, and I fire. My eyes squeezed shut. Can't breathe.

The bullet hit him in the head. I know because that's where I aimed it.

I turn around without opening my eyes and stumble away from the alley. North and Fairfield. I have to look at the street sign to see where I am, but I can't read it; my vision is blurred. I blink a few times. I stand just yards away from the building that contains what's left of my family.

I kneel next to the door. Tobias would call me unwise to make any noise. Noise might attract Dauntless soldiers.

I press my forehead to the wall and scream. After a few seconds I clamp my hand over my mouth to muffle the sound and scream again, a scream that turns into a sob. The gun clatters to the ground. I still see Will.

He smiles in my memory. A curled lip. Straight teeth. Light in his eyes. Laughing, teasing, more alive in memory than I am in reality. It was him or me. I chose me. But I feel dead too.

I pound on the door—twice, then three times, then six times, as my mother told me to.

I wipe the tears from my face. This is the first time I will see my father since I left him, and I don't want him to see me half-collapsed and sobbing.

The door opens, and Caleb stands in the doorway. The sight of him stuns me. He stares at me for a few seconds and then throws his arms around me, his hand pressing to the wound in my shoulder. I bite my lip to keep from crying out, but a groan escapes me anyway, and Caleb yanks back.

“Beatrice. Oh God, are you shot?”

“Let's go inside,” I say weakly.

He drags his thumb under his eyes, catching the moisture. The door falls shut behind us.

The room is dimly lit, but I see familiar faces, former neighbors and classmates and my

father's coworkers. My father, who stares at me like I've grown a second head. Marcus. The sight of him makes me ache—Tobias...

No. I will not do that; I will not think of him.

"How did you know about this place?" Caleb says. "Did Mom find you?"

I nod. I don't want to think about Mom, either.

"My shoulder," I say.

Now that I am safe, the adrenaline that propelled me here is fading, and the pain is getting worse. I sink to my knees. Water drips from my clothes onto the cement floor. A sob rises within me, desperate for release, and I choke it back.

A woman named Tessa who lived down the street from us rolls out a pallet. She was married to a council member, but I don't see him here. He is probably dead.

Someone else carries a lamp from one corner to the other so we have light. Caleb produces a first-aid kit, and Susan brings me a bottle of water. There is no better place to need help than a room full of members of Abnegation. I glance at Caleb. He's wearing gray again. Seeing him in the Erudite compound feels like a dream now.

My father comes to me, lifts my arm across his shoulders, and helps me across the room.

"Why are you wet?" Caleb says.

"They tried to drown me," I say. "Why are you here?"

"I did what you said—what Mom said. I researched the simulation serum and found out that Jeanine was working to develop long-range transmitters for the serum so its signal could stretch farther, which led me to information about Erudite and Dauntless... anyway, I dropped out of initiation when I figured out what was happening. I would have warned you, but it was too late," he says. "I'm factionless now."

"No, you aren't," my father says sternly. "You're with us."

I kneel on the pallet and Caleb cuts a piece of my shirt away from my shoulder with a pair of medical scissors. Caleb peels the square of fabric away, revealing first the Abnegation tattoo on my right shoulder and second, the three birds on my collarbone. Caleb and my father stare at both tattoos with the same look of fascination and shock but say nothing about them.

I lie on my stomach. Caleb squeezes my palm as my father gets the antiseptic from the first aid kit.

"Have you ever taken a bullet out of someone before?" I ask, a shaky laugh in my voice.

"The things I know how to do might surprise you," he replies.

A lot of things about my parents might surprise me. I think of Mom's tattoo and bite my lip.

"This will hurt," he says.

I don't see the knife go in, but I feel it. Pain spreads through my body and I scream through gritted teeth, crushing Caleb's hand. Over the screaming, I hear my father ask me to relax my back. Tears run from the corners of my eyes and I do as he tells me. The pain starts again, and I feel the knife moving under my skin, and I am still screaming.

"Got it," he says. He drops something on the floor with a *ding*.

Caleb looks at my father and then at me, and then he laughs. I haven't heard him laugh in so long that the sound makes me cry.

“What’s so funny?” I say, sniffing.

“I never thought I would see us together again,” he says.

My father cleans the skin around my wound with something cold. “Stitching time,” he says.

I nod. He threads the needle like he’s done it a thousand times.

“One,” he says, “two...*three*.”

I clench my jaw and stay quiet this time. Of all the pain I have suffered today—the pain of getting shot and almost drowning and taking the bullet out again, the pain of finding and losing my mother and Tobias, this is the easiest to bear.

My father finishes stitching my wound, ties off the thread, and covers the stitches with a bandage. Caleb helps me sit up and separates the hems of his two shirts, pulling the long-sleeved one over his head and offering it to me.

My father helps me guide my right arm through the shirt sleeve, and I pull the rest over my head. It is baggy and smells fresh, smells like Caleb.

“So,” my father says quietly. “Where is your mother?”

I look down. I don’t want to deliver this news. I don’t want to have this news to begin with.

“She’s gone,” I say. “She saved me.”

Caleb closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

My father looks momentarily stricken and then recovers himself, averting his glistening eyes and nodding.

“That is good,” he says, sounding strained. “A good death.”

If I speak right now, I will break down, and I can’t afford to do that. So I just nod.

Eric called Al’s suicide brave, and he was wrong. My mother’s death was brave. I remember how calm she was, how determined. It isn’t just brave that she died for me; it is brave that she did it without announcing it, without hesitation, and without appearing to consider another option.

He helps me to my feet. Time to face the rest of the room. My mother told me to save them. Because of that, and because I am Dauntless, it’s my duty to lead now. I have no idea how to bear that burden.

Marcus gets up. A vision of him whipping my arm with a belt rushes into my mind when I see him, and my chest squeezes.

“We are only safe here for so long,” Marcus says eventually. “We need to get out of the city. Our best option is to go to the Amity compound in the hope that they’ll take us in. Do you know anything about the Dauntless strategy, Beatrice? Will they stop fighting at night?”

“It’s not Dauntless strategy,” I say. “This whole thing is masterminded by the Erudite. And it’s not like they’re giving orders.”

“Not giving orders,” my father says. “What do you mean?”

“I mean,” I say, “ninety percent of the Dauntless are sleepwalking right now. They’re in a simulation and they don’t know what they’re doing. The only reason I’m not just like them is that I’m...” I hesitate on the word. “The mind control doesn’t affect me.”

“Mind control? So they don’t know that they’re killing people right now?” my father asks

me, his eyes wide.

“No.”

“That’s...awful.” Marcus shakes his head. His sympathetic tone sounds manufactured to me. “Waking up and realizing what you’ve done...”

The room goes quiet, probably as all the Abnegation imagine themselves in the place of the Dauntless soldiers, and that’s when it occurs to me.

“We have to wake them up,” I say.

“What?” Marcus says.

“If we wake the Dauntless up, they will probably revolt when they realize what’s going on,” I explain. “The Erudite won’t have an army. The Abnegation will stop dying. This will be over.”

“It won’t be that simple,” my father says. “Even without the Dauntless helping them, the Erudite will find another way to—”

“And how are we supposed to wake them up?” Marcus says.

“We find the computers that control the simulation and destroy the data,” I say. “The program. Everything.”

“Easier said than done,” Caleb says. “It could be anywhere. We can’t just appear at the Erudite compound and start poking around.”

“It’s...” I frown. Jeanine. Jeanine was talking about something important when Tobias and I came into her office, important enough to hang up on someone. *You can’t just leave it undefended.* And then, when she was sending Tobias away: *Send him to the control room.* The control room where Tobias used to work. With the Dauntless security monitors. And the Dauntless computers.

“It’s at Dauntless headquarters,” I say. “It makes sense. That’s where all the data about the Dauntless is stored, so why not control them from there?”

I faintly register that I said *them*. As of yesterday, I technically became Dauntless, but I don’t feel like one. And I am not Abnegation, either.

I guess I am what I’ve always been. Not Dauntless, not Abnegation, not factionless. Divergent.

“Are you sure?” my father asks.

“It’s an informed guess,” I say, “and it’s the best theory I have.”

“Then we’ll have to decide who goes and who continues on to Amity,” he says. “What kind of help do you need, Beatrice?”

The question stuns me, as does the expression he wears. He looks at me like I’m a peer. He speaks to me like I’m a peer. Either he has accepted that I am an adult now, or he has accepted that I am no longer his daughter. The latter is more likely, and more painful.

“Anyone who can and will fire a gun,” I say, “and isn’t afraid of heights.”

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

ERUDITE AND DAUNTLESS forces are concentrated in the Abnegation sector of the city, so as long as we run away from the Abnegation sector, we are less likely to encounter difficulty.

I didn't get to decide who is coming with me. Caleb was the obvious choice, since he knows the most about the Erudite plan. Marcus insisted that he go, despite my protests, because he is good with computers. And my father acted like his place was assumed from the beginning.

I watch the others run in the opposite direction—toward safety, toward Amity—for a few seconds, and then I turn away, toward the city, toward the war. We stand next to the railroad tracks, which will carry us into danger.

“What time is it?” I ask Caleb.

He checks his watch. “Three twelve.”

“Should be here any second,” I say.

“Will it stop?” he asks.

I shake my head. “It goes slowly through the city. We'll run next to the car for a few feet and then climb inside.”

Jumping on trains seems easy to me now, natural. It won't be as easy for the rest of them, but we can't stop now. I look over my left shoulder and see the headlights burning gold against the gray buildings and roads. I bounce on the balls of my feet as the lights grow larger and larger, and then the front of the train glides past me, and I start jogging. When I see an open car, I pick up my pace to keep stride with it and grab the handle on the left, swinging myself inside.

Caleb jumps, landing hard and rolling on his side to get in, and he helps Marcus. My father lands on his stomach, pulling his legs in behind him. They move away from the doorway, but I stand on the edge with one hand on a handle, watching the city pass.

If I were Jeanine, I would send the majority of Dauntless soldiers to the Dauntless entrance above the Pit, outside the glass building. It would be smarter to go in the back entrance, the one that requires jumping off a building.

“I assume you now regret choosing Dauntless,” Marcus says.

I am surprised my father didn't ask that question, but he, like me, is watching the city. The train passes the Erudite compound, which is dark now. It looks peaceful from a distance, and inside those walls, it probably is peaceful. Far removed from the conflict and the reality of what they have done.

I shake my head.

“Not even after your faction's leaders decided to join in a plot to overthrow the government?” Marcus spits.

“There were some things I needed to learn.”

“How to be brave?” my father says quietly.

“How to be selfless,” I say. “Often they’re the same thing.”

“Is that why you got Abnegation’s symbol tattooed on your shoulder?” Caleb asks. I am almost sure that I see a smile in my father’s eyes.

I smile faintly back and nod. “And Dauntless on the other.”

The glass building above the Pit reflects sunlight into my eyes. I stand, holding the handle next to the door for balance. Almost there.

“When I tell you to jump,” I say, “you jump, as far as you can.”

“Jump?” Caleb asks. “We’re seven stories up, Tris.”

“Onto a roof,” I add. Seeing the stunned look on his face, I say, “That’s why they call it a test of bravery.”

Half of bravery is perspective. The first time I did this, it was one of the hardest things I had ever done. Now, preparing to jump off a moving train is nothing, because I have done more difficult things in the past few weeks than most people will in a lifetime. And yet none of it compares to what I am about to do in the Dauntless compound. If I survive, I will undoubtedly go on to do far more difficult things than even that, like live without a faction, something I never imagined possible.

“Dad, you go,” I say, stepping back so he can stand by the edge. If he and Marcus go first, I can time it so they have to jump the shortest distance. Hopefully Caleb and I can jump far enough to make it, because we’re younger. It’s a chance I have to take.

The train tracks curve, and when they line up with the edge of the roof, I shout, “Jump!”

My father bends his knees and launches himself forward. I don’t wait to see if he makes it. I shove Marcus forward and shout, “Jump!”

My father lands on the roof, so close to the edge that I gasp. He sits down on the gravel, and I push Caleb in front of me. He stands at the edge of the train car and jumps without me having to tell him to. I take a few steps back to give myself a running start and leap out of the car just as the train reaches the end of the roof.

For an instant I am suspended in nothingness, and then my feet slam into cement and I stumble to the side, away from the roof’s edge. My knees ache, and the impact shudders through my body, making my shoulder throb. I sit down, breathing hard, and look across the rooftop. Caleb and my father stand at the edge of the roof, their hands around Marcus’s arms. He didn’t make it, but he hasn’t fallen yet.

Somewhere inside me, a vicious voice chants: *fall, fall, fall.*

But he doesn’t. My father and Caleb haul him onto the roof. I stand up, brushing gravel off my pants. The thought of what comes next has me preoccupied. It is one thing to ask people to jump off a train, but a roof?

“This next part is why I asked about fear of heights,” I say, walking to the edge of the roof. I hear their shuffling footsteps behind me and step onto the ledge. Wind rushes up the side of the building and lifts my shirt from my skin. I stare down at the hole in the ground, seven stories below me, and then close my eyes as the air blows over my face.

“There’s a net at the bottom,” I say, looking over my shoulder. They look confused. They

haven't figured out what I am asking them to do yet.

"Don't think," I say. "Just jump."

I turn, and as I turn, I lean back, compromising my balance. I drop like a stone, my eyes closed, one arm outstretched to feel the wind. I relax my muscles as much as I can before I hit the net, which feels like a slab of cement hitting my shoulder. I grit my teeth and roll to the edge, grabbing the pole that supports the net, and swing my leg over the side. I land on my knees on the platform, my eyes blurry with tears.

Caleb yelps as the net curls around his body and then straightens. I stand with some difficulty.

"Caleb!" I hiss. "Over here!"

Breathing heavily, Caleb crawls to the side of the net and drops over the edge, hitting the platform hard. Wincing, he pushes himself to his feet and stares at me, his mouth open.

"How many times...have you...done that?" he asks between breaths.

"Twice now," I say.

He shakes his head.

When my father hits the net, Caleb helps him across. When he stands on the platform, he leans and vomits over the side. I descend the stairs, and when I get to the bottom, I hear Marcus hit the net with a groan.

The cavern is empty and the hallways stretch into darkness.

Jeanine made it sound like there was no one left in the Dauntless compound except the soldiers she sent back to guard the computers. If we can find Dauntless soldiers, we can find the computers. I look over my shoulder. Marcus stands on the platform, white as a sheet but unharmed.

"So this is the Dauntless compound," says Marcus.

"Yes," I say. "And?"

"And I never thought I would get to see it," he replies, his hand skimming a wall. "No need to be so defensive, Beatrice."

I never noticed how cold his eyes were before.

"Do you have a plan, Beatrice?" my father says.

"Yes." And it's true. I do, though I'm not sure when I developed it.

I'm also not sure it will work. I can count on a few things: There aren't many Dauntless in the compound, the Dauntless aren't known for their subtlety, and I'll do anything to stop them.

We walk down the hallway that leads to the Pit, which is striped with light every ten feet. When we walk into the first patch of light, I hear a gunshot and drop to the ground. Someone must have seen us. I crawl into the next dark patch. The spark from the gun flashed across the room by the door that leads to the Pit.

"Everyone okay?" I ask.

"Yes," my father says.

"Stay here, then."

I run to the side of the room. The lights protrude from the wall, so directly beneath each one

is a slit of shadow. I am small enough to hide in it, if I turn to the side. I can creep along the edge of the room and surprise whatever guard is shooting at us before he gets the chance to fire a bullet into my brain. Maybe.

One of the things I thank Dauntless for is the preparedness that eliminates my fear.

“Whoever’s there,” a voice shouts, “surrender your weapons and put your hands up!”

I turn to the side and press my back to the stone wall. I shuffle quickly sideways, one foot crossing over the other, squinting to see through the semidarkness. Another gunshot fires into silence. I reach the last light and stand for a moment in shadow, letting my eyes adjust.

I can’t win a fight, but if I can move fast enough, I won’t have to fight. My footsteps light, I walk toward the guard who stands by the door. A few yards away, I realize that I *know* that dark hair that always gleams, even in relative darkness, and that long nose with a narrow bridge.

It’s Peter.

Cold slips over my skin and around my heart and into the pit of my stomach.

His face is tense—he isn’t a sleepwalker. He looks around, but his eyes search the air above me and beyond me. Judging by his silence, he does not intend to negotiate with us; he will kill us without question.

I lick my lips, sprint the last few steps, and thrust the heel of my hand up. The blow connects with his nose, and he shouts, bringing both hands up to cover his face. My body jolts with nervous energy and as his eyes squint, I kick him in the groin. He drops to his knees, his gun clattering to the ground. I grab it and press the barrel to the top of his head.

“How are you awake?” I demand.

He lifts his head, and I click the bullet into its chamber, raising an eyebrow at him.

“The Dauntless leaders...they evaluated my records and removed me from the simulation,” he says.

“Because they figured out that you already have murderous tendencies and wouldn’t mind killing a few hundred people while conscious,” I say. “Makes sense.”

“I’m not...murderous!”

“I never knew a Candor who was such a liar.” I tap the gun against his skull. “Where are the computers that control the simulation, Peter?”

“You won’t shoot me.”

“People tend to overestimate my character,” I say quietly. “They think that because I’m small, or a girl, or a Stiff, I can’t possibly be cruel. But they’re wrong.”

I shift the gun three inches to the left and fire at his arm.

His screams fill the hallway. Blood spurts from the wound, and he screams again, pressing his forehead to the ground. I shift the gun back to his head, ignoring the pang of guilt in my chest.

“Now that you realize your mistake,” I say, “I will give you another chance to tell me what I need to know before I shoot you somewhere worse.”

Another thing I can count on: Peter is not selfless.

He turns his head and focuses a bright eye on me. His teeth close over his lower lip, and his

breaths shake on the way out. And on the way in. And on the way out again.

“They’re listening,” he spits. “If you don’t kill me, they will. The only way I’ll tell you is if you get me out of here.”

“What?”

“Take me... *ahh*... with you,” he says, wincing.

“You want me to take *you*,” I say, “the person who tried to kill me... *with* me?”

“I do,” he groans. “If you expect to find out what you need to know.”

It feels like a choice, but it isn’t. Every minute that I waste staring at Peter, thinking about how he haunts my nightmares and the damage he did to me, another dozen Abnegation members die at the hands of the brain-dead Dauntless army.

“Fine,” I say, almost choking on the word. “Fine.”

I hear footsteps behind me. Holding the gun steady, I look over my shoulder. My father and the others walk toward us.

My father takes off his long-sleeved shirt. He wears a gray T-shirt beneath it. He crouches next to Peter and loops the fabric around his arm, tying it tightly. As he presses the fabric to the blood running down Peter’s arm, he looks up at me and says, “Was it really necessary to shoot him?”

I don’t answer.

“Sometimes pain is for the greater good,” says Marcus calmly.

In my head, I see him standing before Tobias with a belt in hand and hear his voice echo. *This is for your own good.* I look at him for a few seconds. Does he really believe that? It sounds like something the Dauntless would say.

“Let’s go,” I say. “Get up, Peter.”

“You want him to *walk*?” Caleb demands. “Are you insane?”

“Did I shoot him in the leg?” I say. “No. He walks. Where do we go, Peter?”

Caleb helps Peter to his feet.

“The glass building,” he says, wincing. “Eighth floor.”

He leads the way through the door.

I walk into the roar of the river and the blue glow of the Pit, which is emptier now than I have ever seen it before. I scan the walls, searching for signs of life, but I see no movement and no figures standing in darkness. I keep my gun in hand and start toward the path that leads to the glass ceiling. The emptiness makes me shiver. It reminds me of the endless field in my crow nightmares.

“What makes you think you have the right to shoot someone?” my father says as he follows me up the path. We pass the tattoo place. Where is Tori now? And Christina?

“Now isn’t the time for debates about ethics,” I say.

“Now is the perfect time,” he says, “because you will soon get the opportunity to shoot someone again, and if you don’t realize—”

“Realize what?” I say without turning around. “That every second I waste means another Abnegation dead and another Dauntless made into a murderer? I’ve realized that. Now it’s

your turn.”

“There is a right way to do things.”

“What makes you so sure that you know what it is?” I say.

“Please stop fighting,” Caleb interrupts, his voice chiding. “We have more important things to do right now.”

I keep climbing, my cheeks hot. A few months ago I would not have dared to snap at my father. A few hours ago I might not have done it either. But something changed when they shot my mother. When they took Tobias.

I hear my father huff and puff over the sound of rushing water. I forgot that he is older than I am, that his frame can no longer tolerate the weight of his body.

Before I ascend the metal stairs that will carry me above the glass ceiling, I wait in darkness and watch the light cast on the Pit walls by the sun. I watch until a shadow shifts over the sunlit wall and count until the next shadow appears. The guards make their rounds every minute and a half, stand for twenty seconds, and then move on.

“There are men with guns up there. When they see me, they will kill me, if they can,” I tell my father quietly. I search his eyes. “Should I let them?”

He stares at me for a few seconds.

“Go,” he says, “and God help you.”

I climb the stairs carefully, stopping just before my head emerges. I wait, watching the shadows move, and when one of them stops, I step up, point my gun, and shoot.

The bullet does not hit the guard. It shatters the window behind him. I fire again and duck as bullets hit the floor around me with a ding. Thank God the glass ceiling is bulletproof, or the glass would break and I would fall to my death.

One guard down. I breathe deeply and put just my hand over the ceiling, looking through the glass to see my target. I tilt the gun back and fire at the guard running toward me. The bullet hits him in the arm. Luckily it is his shooting arm, because he drops his gun and it skids across the floor.

My body shaking, I launch myself through the hole in the ceiling and snatch the fallen gun before he can get to it. A bullet whizzes past my head, so close to hitting me that it moves my hair. Eyes wide, I fling my right arm over my shoulder, forcing a searing pain through my body, and fire three times behind me. By some miracle, one of the bullets hits a guard, and my eyes water uncontrollably from the pain in my shoulder. I just ripped my stitches. I’m sure of it.

Another guard stands across from me. I lie flat on my stomach and point both guns at him, my arms resting on the floor. I stare into the black pinprick that is his gun barrel.

Then something surprising happens. He jerks his chin to the side. Telling me to go.

He must be Divergent.

“All clear!” I shout.

The guard ducks into the fear landscape room, and he’s gone.

Slowly I get to my feet, holding my right arm against my chest. I have tunnel vision. I am running along this path and I will not be able to stop, will not be able to think of anything,

until I reach the end.

I hand one gun to Caleb and slide the other one under my belt.

“I think you and Marcus should stay here with *him*,” I say, jerking my head toward Peter. “He’ll just slow us down. Make sure no one comes after us.”

I hope he doesn’t understand what I’m doing—keeping him here so he stays safe, even though he would gladly give his life for this. If I go up into the building, I probably won’t come back down. The best I can hope for is to destroy the simulation before someone kills me. When did I decide on this suicide mission? Why wasn’t it more difficult?

“I can’t stay here while you go up there and risk your life,” says Caleb.

“I need you to,” I say.

Peter sinks to his knees. His face glistens with sweat. For a second I almost feel bad for him, but then I remember Edward, and the itch of fabric over my eyes as my attackers blindfolded me, and my sympathy is lost to hatred. Caleb eventually nods.

I approach one of the fallen guards and take his gun, keeping my eyes away from the injury that killed him. My head pounds. I haven’t eaten; I haven’t slept; I haven’t sobbed or screamed or even paused for a moment. I bite my lip and push myself toward the elevators on the right side of the room. Level eight.

Once the elevator doors close, I lean the side of my head against the glass and listen to the beeps.

I glance at my father.

“Thank you. For protecting Caleb,” my father says. “Beatrice, I—”

The elevator reaches the eighth floor and the doors open. Two guards stand ready with guns in hand, their faces blank. My eyes widen, and I drop to my belly on the ground as the shots go off. I hear bullets strike glass. The guards slump to the ground, one alive and groaning, the other fading fast. My father stands above them, his gun still held out from his body.

I stumble to my feet. Guards run down the hallway on the left. Judging by the synchronicity of their footsteps, they are controlled by the simulation. I could run down the right hallway, but if the guards came from the left hallway, that’s where the computers are. I drop to the ground between the guards my father just shot and lie as still as I can.

My father jumps out of the elevator and sprints down the right hallway, drawing the Dauntless guards after him. I clap my hand over my mouth to keep from screaming at him. That hallway will end.

I try to bury my head so I don’t see it, but I can’t. I peer over the fallen guard’s back. My father fires over his shoulder at the guards pursuing him, but he is not fast enough. One of them fires at his stomach, and he groans so loud I can almost feel it in my chest.

He clutches his gut, his shoulders hitting the wall, and fires again. And again. The guards are under the simulation; they keep moving even when the bullets hit them, keep moving until their hearts stop, but they don’t reach my father. Blood spills over his hand and the color drains from his face. Another shot and the last guard is down.

“Dad,” I say. I mean for it to be a shout, but it is just a wheeze.

He slumps to the ground. Our eyes meet like the yards between us are nothing.

His mouth opens like he's about to say something, but then his chin drops to his chest and his body relaxes.

My eyes burn and I am too weak to rise; the scent of sweat and blood makes me feel sick. I want to rest my head on the ground and let that be the end of it. I want to sleep now and never wake.

But what I said to my father before was right—for every second that I waste, another Abnegation member dies. There is only one thing left for me in the world now, and it is to destroy the simulation.

I push myself up and run down the hallway, turning right at the end. There is only one door ahead. I open it.

The opposite wall is made up entirely of screens, each a foot tall and a foot wide. There are dozens of them, each one showing a different part of the city. The fence. The Hub. The streets in the Abnegation sector, now crawling with Dauntless soldiers. The ground level of the building below us, where Caleb, Marcus, and Peter wait for me to return. It is a wall of everything I have ever seen, everything I have ever known.

One of the screens has a line of code on it instead of an image. It breezes past faster than I can read. It is the simulation, the code already compiled, a complicated list of commands that anticipate and address a thousand different outcomes.

In front of the screen is a chair and a desk. Sitting in the chair is a Dauntless soldier.

“Tobias,” I say.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

TOBIAS'S HEAD TURNS, and his dark eyes shift to me. His eyebrows draw in. He stands. He looks confused. He raises his gun.

“Drop your weapon,” he says.

“Tobias,” I say, “you’re in a simulation.”

“Drop your weapon,” he repeats. “Or I’ll fire.”

Jeanine said he didn’t know me. Jeanine also said that the simulation made Tobias’s friends into enemies. He will shoot me if he has to.

I set my gun down at my feet.

“Drop your weapon!” shouts Tobias.

“I did,” I say. A little voice in my head sings that he can’t hear me, he can’t see me, he doesn’t know me. Tongues of flame press behind my eyes. I can’t just stand here and let him shoot me.

I run at him, grabbing his wrist. I feel his muscles shift as he pinches the trigger and duck my head just in time. The bullet hits the wall behind me. Gasping, I kick him in the ribs and twist his wrist to the side as hard as I can. He drops the gun.

I can’t beat Tobias in a fight. I know that already. But I have to destroy the computer. I dive for the gun, but before I can touch it, he grabs me and wrenches me to the side.

I stare into his dark, conflicted eyes for an instant before he punches me in the jaw. My head jerks to the side and I cringe away from him, flinging my hands up to protect my face. I can’t fall; I can’t fall or he’ll kick me, and that will be worse, that will be much worse. I kick the gun back with my heel so he can’t grab it and, ignoring the throbbing in my jaw, kick him in the stomach.

He catches my foot and pulls me down so I fall on my shoulder. The pain makes my vision go black at the edges. I stare up at him. He pulls his foot back like he’s about to kick me, and I roll onto my knees, stretching my arm out for the gun. I don’t know what I’ll do with it. I can’t shoot him, I can’t shoot him, I can’t. He is in there somewhere.

He grabs me by my hair and yanks me to the side. I reach back and grab his wrist, but he’s too strong and my forehead smacks into the wall.

He is in there somewhere.

“Tobias,” I say.

Did his grip falter? I twist and kick back, my heel hitting him in the leg. When my hair slips through his fingers, I dive at the gun and my fingertips close around the cool metal. I flip over onto my back and point the gun at him.

“Tobias,” I say. “I know you’re in there somewhere.”

But if he was, he probably wouldn’t start toward me like he’s about to kill me for certain this time.

My head throbs. I stand.

“Tobias, please.” I am begging. I am pathetic. Tears make my face hot. “Please. See me.” He walks toward me, his movements dangerous, fast, powerful. The gun shakes in my hands. “Please see me, Tobias, please!”

Even when he scowls, his eyes look thoughtful, and I remember how his mouth curled when he smiled.

I can’t kill him. I am not sure if I love him; not sure if that’s why. But I am sure of what he would do if our positions were reversed. I am sure that nothing is worth killing him for.

I have done this before—in my fear landscape, with the gun in my hand, a voice shouting at me to fire at the people I love. I volunteered to die instead, that time, but I can’t imagine how that would help me now. But I just know, I *know* what the right thing to do is.

My father says—used to say—that there is power in self-sacrifice.

I turn the gun in my hands and press it into Tobias’s palm.

He pushes the barrel into my forehead. My tears have stopped and the air feels cold as it touches my cheeks. I reach out and rest my hand on his chest so I can feel his heartbeat. At least his heartbeat is still him.

The bullet clicks into the chamber. Maybe it will be as easy to let him shoot me as it was in the fear landscape, as it is in my dreams. Maybe it will just be a bang, and the lights will lift, and I will find myself in another world. I stand still and wait.

Can I be forgiven for all I’ve done to get here?

I don’t know. I don’t know.

Please.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

THE SHOT DOESN'T come. He stares at me with the same ferocity but doesn't move. Why doesn't he shoot me? His heart pounds against my palm, and my own heart lifts. He is Divergent. He can fight this simulation. Any simulation.

"Tobias," I say. "It's me."

I step forward and wrap my arms around him. His body is stiff. His heart beats faster. I can feel it against my cheek. A thud against my cheek. A thud as the gun hits the floor. He grabs my shoulders—too hard, his fingers digging into my skin where the bullet was. I cry out as he pulls me back. Maybe he means to kill me in some crueler way.

"Tris," he says, and it's him again. His mouth collides with mine.

His arm wraps around me and he lifts me up, holding me against him, his hands clutching at my back. His face and the back of his neck are slick with sweat, his body is shaking, and my shoulder blazes with pain, but I don't care, I don't care, I don't care.

He sets me down and stares at me, his fingers brushing over my forehead, my eyebrows, my cheeks, my lips.

Something like a sob and a sigh and a moan escapes him, and he kisses me again. His eyes are bright with tears. I never thought I would see Tobias cry. It makes me hurt.

I pull myself to his chest and cry into his shirt. All the throbbing in my head comes back, and the ache in my shoulder, and I feel like my body weight doubles. I lean against him, and he supports me.

"How did you do it?" I say.

"I don't know," he says. "I just heard your voice."

After a few seconds, I remember why I'm here. I pull back and wipe my cheeks with the heels of my hands and turn toward the screens again. I see one that overlooks the drinking fountain. Tobias was so paranoid when I was railing against Dauntless there. He kept looking at the wall above the fountain. Now I know why.

Tobias and I stand there for a while, and I think I know what he's thinking, because I'm thinking it too: How can something so small control so many people?

"Was *I* running the simulation?" he says.

"I don't know if you were running it so much as monitoring it," I say. "It's already complete. I have no idea how, but Jeanine made it so it could work on its own."

He shakes his head. "It's...incredible. Terrible, evil...but incredible."

I see movement on one of the screens and see my brother, Marcus, and Peter standing on the first floor of the building. Surrounding them are Dauntless soldiers, all in black, all carrying weapons.

"Tobias," I say tersely. "Now!"

He runs to the computer screen and taps it a few times with his finger. I can't look at what

he's doing. All I can see is my brother. He holds the gun I gave him straight out from his body, like he's ready to use it. I bite my lip. *Don't shoot.* Tobias presses the screen a few more times, typing in letters that make no sense to me. *Don't shoot.*

I see a flash of light—a spark, from one of the guns—and gasp. My brother and Marcus and Peter crouch on the ground with their arms over their heads. After a moment they all stir, so I know they're still alive, and the Dauntless soldiers advance. A cluster of black around my brother.

“Tobias,” I say.

He presses the screen again, and everyone on the first floor goes still.

Their arms drop to their sides.

And then the Dauntless move. Their heads turn from side to side, and they drop their guns, and their mouths move like they're shouting, and they shove each other, and some of them sink to their knees, holding their heads and rocking back and forth, back and forth.

All the tension in my chest unravels, and I sit down, heaving a sigh.

Tobias crouches next to the computer and pulls the side of the case off.

“I have to get the data,” he says, “or they'll just start the simulation again.”

I watch the frenzy on the screen. It is the same frenzy that must be happening on the streets. I scan the screens, one by one, looking for one that shows the Abnegation sector of the city. There is only one—it's at the far end of the room, on the bottom. The Dauntless on that screen are firing at one another, shoving one another, screaming—chaos. Black-clothed men and women drop to the ground. People sprint in every direction.

“Got it,” says Tobias, holding up the computer's hard drive. It is a piece of metal about the size of his palm. He offers it to me, and I shove it in my back pocket.

“We have to leave,” I say, getting to my feet. I point at the screen on the right.

“Yes, we do.” He wraps his arm across my shoulders. “Come on.”

We walk together down the hallway and around the corner. The elevator reminds me of my father. I can't stop myself from looking for his body.

It is on the floor next to the elevator, surrounded by the bodies of several guards. A strangled scream escapes me. I turn away. Bile leaps into my throat and I throw up against the wall.

For a second I feel like everything inside me is breaking, and I crouch by a body, breathing through my mouth so I don't smell the blood. I clamp my hand over my mouth to contain a sob. Five more seconds. Five seconds of weakness and then I get up. One, two. Three, four.

Five.

I am not really aware of my surroundings. There is an elevator and a glass room and a rush of cold air. There is a shouting crowd of Dauntless soldiers dressed in black. I search for Caleb's face, but it is nowhere, nowhere until we leave the glass building and step out into sunlight.

Caleb runs to me when I walk through the doors, and I fall against him. He holds me tightly.

“Dad?” he says.

I just shake my head.

“Well,” he says, almost choking on the word, “he would have wanted it that way.”

Over Caleb’s shoulder, I see Tobias stop in the middle of a footstep. His entire body goes rigid as his eyes focus on Marcus. In the rush to destroy the simulation, I forgot to warn him.

Marcus walks up to Tobias and wraps his arms around his son. Tobias stays frozen, his arms at his sides and his face blank. I watch his Adam’s apple bob up and down and his eyes lift to the ceiling.

“Son,” sighs Marcus.

Tobias winces.

“Hey,” I say, pulling away from Caleb. I remember the belt stinging on my wrist in Tobias’s fear landscape and slip into the space between them, pushing Marcus back. “Hey. Get away from him.”

I feel Tobias’s breaths against my neck; they come in sharp bursts.

“Stay away,” I hiss.

“Beatrice, what are you doing?” asks Caleb.

“Tris,” Tobias says.

Marcus gives me a scandalized look that seems false to me—his eyes are too wide and his mouth is too open. If I could find a way to smack that look off his face, I would.

“Not all those Erudite articles were full of lies,” I say, narrowing my eyes at Marcus.

“What are you talking about?” Marcus says quietly. “I don’t know what you’ve been told, Beatrice, but—”

“The only reason I haven’t shot you yet is because he’s the one who should get to do it,” I say. “Stay away from him or I’ll decide I no longer care.”

Tobias’s hands slip around my arms and squeeze. Marcus’s eyes stay on mine for a few seconds, and I can’t help but see them as black pits, like they were in Tobias’s fear landscape. Then he looks away.

“We have to go,” Tobias says unsteadily. “The train should be here any second.”

We walk over unyielding ground toward the train tracks. Tobias’s jaw is clenched and he stares straight ahead. I feel a twinge of regret. Maybe I should have let him deal with his father on his own.

“Sorry,” I mutter.

“You have nothing to be sorry for,” he replies, taking my hand. His fingers are still shaking.

“If we take the train in the opposite direction, out of the city instead of in, we can get to Amity headquarters,” I say. “That’s where the others went.”

“What about Candor?” my brother asks. “What do you think they’ll do?”

I don’t know how Candor will respond to the attack. They wouldn’t side with the Erudite—they would never do something that underhanded. But they may not fight the Erudite either.

We stand next to the tracks for a few minutes before the train comes. Eventually Tobias picks me up, because I am dead on my feet, and I lean my head into his shoulder, taking deep breaths of his skin. Since he saved me from the attack, I have associated his smell with safety,

so as long as I focus on it, I feel safe now.

The truth is, I will not feel safe as long as Peter and Marcus are with us. I try not to look at them, but I feel their presence like I would feel a blanket over my face. The cruelty of fate is that I must travel with the people I hate when the people I love are dead behind me.

Dead, or waking as murderers. Where are Christina and Tori now? Wandering the streets, plagued with guilt for what they've done? Or turning guns on the people who forced them to do it? Or are they already dead too? I wish I knew.

At the same time, I hope I never find out. If she is still alive, Christina will find Will's body. And if she sees me again, her Candor-trained eyes will see that I am the one who killed him, I know it. I know it and the guilt strangles me and crushes me, so I have to forget it. I make myself forget it.

The train comes, and Tobias sets me down so I can jump on. I jog a few steps next to the car and then throw my body to the side, landing on my left arm. I wiggle my body inside and sit against the wall. Caleb sits across from me, and Tobias sits next to me, forming a barrier between my body and Marcus and Peter. My enemies. His enemies.

The train turns, and I see the city behind us. It will get smaller and smaller until we see where the tracks end, the forests and fields I last saw when I was too young to appreciate them. The kindness of Amity will comfort us for a while, though we can't stay there forever. Soon the Erudite and the corrupt Dauntless leaders will look for us, and we will have to move on.

Tobias pulls me against him. We bend our knees and our heads so that we are enclosed together in a room of our own making, unable to see those who trouble us, our breath mixing on the way in and on the way out.

"My parents," I say. "They died today."

Even though I said it, and even though I know it's true, it doesn't feel real.

"They died for *me*," I say. That feels important.

"They loved you," he replies. "To them there was no better way to show you."

I nod, and my eyes follow the line of his jaw.

"You nearly died today," he says. "I almost shot you. Why didn't you shoot me, Tris?"

"I couldn't do that," I say. "It would have been like shooting myself."

He looks pained and leans closer to me, so his lips brush mine when he speaks.

"I have something to tell you," he says.

I run my fingers along the tendons in his hand and look back at him.

"I might be in love with you." He smiles a little. "I'm waiting until I'm sure to tell you, though."

"That's sensible of you," I say, smiling too. "We should find some paper so you can make a list or a chart or something."

I feel his laughter against my side, his nose sliding along my jaw, his lips pressing behind my ear.

"Maybe I'm already sure," he says, "and I just don't want to frighten you."

I laugh a little. "Then you should know better."

“Fine,” he says. “Then I love you.”

I kiss him as the train slides into unlit, uncertain land. I kiss him for as long as I want, for longer than I should, given that my brother sits three feet away from me.

I reach into my pocket and take out the hard drive that contains the simulation data. I turn it in my hands, letting it catch the fading light and reflect it. Marcus’s eyes cling greedily to the movement. *Not safe*, I think. *Not quite*.

I clutch the hard drive to my chest, lean my head on Tobias’s shoulder, and try to sleep.

Abnegation and Dauntless are both broken, their members scattered. We are like the factionless now. I do not know what life will be like, separated from a faction—it feels disengaged, like a leaf divided from the tree that gives it sustenance. We are creatures of loss; we have left everything behind. I have no home, no path, and no certainty. I am no longer Tris, the selfless, or Tris, the brave.

I suppose that now, I must become more than either.

EXCERPT FROM INSURGENT

Read on for a sneak peek at *Insurgent*

CHAPTER ONE

I wake with his name in my mouth.

Will.

Before I open my eyes, I watch him crumple to the pavement again. Dead.

My doing.

Tobias crouches in front of me, his hand on my left shoulder. The train car bumps over the rails, and Marcus, Peter, and Caleb stand by the doorway. I take a deep breath and hold it in an attempt to relieve some of the pressure that is building in my chest.

An hour ago, nothing that happened felt real to me. Now it does.

I breathe out, and the pressure is still there.

“Tris, come on,” Tobias says, his eyes searching mine. “We have to jump.”

It is too dark to see where we are, but if we are getting off, we are probably close to the fence. Tobias helps me to my feet and guides me toward the doorway.

The others jump off one by one: Peter first, then Marcus, then Caleb. I take Tobias’s hand. The wind picks up as we stand at the edge of the car opening, like a hand pushing me back, toward safety.

But we launch ourselves into darkness and land hard on the ground. The impact hurts the bullet wound in my shoulder. I bite my lip to keep from crying out, and search for my brother.

“Okay?” I say when I see him sitting in the grass a few feet away, rubbing his knee.

He nods. I hear him sniff like he’s fending off tears, and I have to turn away.

We landed in the grass near the fence, several yards away from the worn path that the Amity trucks travel to deliver food to the city, and the gate that lets them out—the gate that is currently shut, locking us in. The fence towers over us, too high and flexible to climb over, too sturdy to knock down.

“There are supposed to be Dauntless guards here,” says Marcus. “Where are they?”

“They were probably under the simulation,” Tobias says, “and are now . . .” He pauses. “Who knows where, doing who knows what.”

We stopped the simulation—the weight of the hard drive in my back pocket reminds me—but we didn’t pause to see the aftermath. What happened to our friends, our peers, our leaders, our factions? There is no way to know.

Tobias approaches a small metal box on the right side of the gate and opens it, revealing a keypad.

“Let’s hope the Erudite didn’t think to change this combination,” he says as he types in a series of numbers. He stops at the eighth one, and the gate clicks open.

“How did you know that?” says Caleb. His voice sounds thick with emotion, so thick I am surprised it does not choke him on the way out.

“I worked in the Dauntless control room, monitoring the security system. We only change the codes twice a year,” Tobias says.

“How lucky,” says Caleb. He gives Tobias a wary look.

“Luck has nothing to do with it,” Tobias says. “I only worked there because I wanted to make sure I could get out.”

I shiver. The way he talks about getting out—it’s like he thinks we’re trapped. I never thought about it that way before, and now that seems foolish.

We walk in a small pack, Peter cradling his bloody arm to his chest—the arm that I shot—and Marcus with his hand on Peter’s shoulder, keeping him stable. Caleb wipes his cheeks every few seconds, and I know he’s crying but I don’t know how to comfort him, or why I am not crying myself.

Instead I take the lead, Tobias silent at my side, and though he does not touch me, he steadies me.

Pinpricks of light are the first sign that we are nearing Amity headquarters. Then squares of light that turn into glowing windows. A cluster of wooden and glass buildings.

Before we can reach them, we have to walk through an orchard. My feet sink into the ground, and above me, the branches grow into one another, forming a kind of tunnel. Dark fruit hangs among the leaves, ready to drop. The sharp, sweet smell of rotting apples mixes with the scent of wet earth in my nose.

When we get close, Marcus leaves Peter’s side and walks in front. “I know where to go,” he says.

He leads us past the first building to the second one on the left. All the buildings except the greenhouses are made of the same dark wood, unpainted, rough. I hear laughter through an open window. The contrast between the laughter and the stone stillness within me is jarring.

Marcus opens one of the doors. I would be shocked by the lack of security if we were not at Amity headquarters. They often straddle the line between trust and stupidity.

In this building the only sound is of our squeaking shoes. I don’t hear Caleb crying anymore, but then, he was quiet about it before.

Marcus stops before an open room, where Johanna Reyes, representative of Amity, sits, staring out the window. I recognize her because it is hard to forget Johanna’s face, whether you’ve seen her once or a thousand times. A scar stretches in a thick line from just above her right eyebrow to her lip, rendering her blind in one eye and giving her a lisp when she talks. I have only heard her speak once, but I remember. She would have been a beautiful woman if not for that scar.

“Oh, thank God,” she says when she sees Marcus. She walks toward him with her arms open. Instead of embracing him, she just touches his shoulders, like she remembers the Abnegation’s distaste for casual physical contact.

“The other members of your party got here a few hours ago, but they weren’t sure if you had made it,” she says. She is referring to the group of Abnegation who were with my father and Marcus in the safe house. I didn’t even think to worry about them.

She looks over Marcus’s shoulder, first at Tobias and Caleb, then at me, then at Peter.

“Oh my,” she says, her eyes lingering on the blood soaking Peter’s shirt. “I’ll send for a doctor. I can grant you all permission to stay the night, but tomorrow, our community must

decide together. And”—she eyes Tobias and me—“they will likely not be enthusiastic about a Dauntless presence in our compound. I of course ask you to turn over any weapons you might have.”

I wonder, suddenly, how she knows that I am Dauntless. I am still wearing a gray shirt. My father’s shirt.

At that moment, his smell, which is an even mixture of soap and sweat, wafts upward, and it fills my nose, fills my entire head with him. I clench my hands so hard into fists that my fingernails cut into my skin. *Not here. Not here.*

Tobias hands over his gun, but when I reach behind me to take out my own concealed weapon, he grabs my hand, guiding it away from my back. Then he laces his fingers with mine to cover up what he just did.

I know it’s smart to keep one of our guns. But it would have been a relief to hand it over.

“My name is Johanna Reyes,” she says, extending her hand to me, and then Tobias. A Dauntless greeting. I am impressed by her awareness of the customs of other factions. I always forget how considerate the Amity are until I see it for myself.

“This is T—” Marcus starts, but Tobias interrupts him.

“My name is Four,” he says. “This is Tris, Caleb, and Peter.”

A few days ago, “Tobias” was a name only I knew, among the Dauntless; it was the piece of himself that he gave me. Outside Dauntless headquarters, I remember why he hid that name from the world. It binds him to Marcus.

“Welcome to the Amity compound.” Johanna’s eyes fix on my face, and she smiles crookedly. “Let us take care of you.”

We do let them. An Amity nurse gives me a salve—developed by Erudite to speed healing—to put on my shoulder, and then escorts Peter to the hospital ward to mend his arm. Johanna takes us to the cafeteria, where we find some of the Abnegation who were in the safe house with Caleb and my father. Susan is there, and some of our old neighbors, and rows of wooden tables as long as the room itself. They greet us—especially Marcus—with held-in tears and suppressed smiles.

I cling to Tobias’s arm. I sag under the weight of the members of my parents’ faction, their lives, their tears.

One of the Abnegation puts a cup of steaming liquid under my nose and says, “Drink this. It will help you sleep as it helped some of the others sleep. No dreams.”

The liquid is pink-red, like strawberries. I grab the cup and drink it fast. For a few seconds the heat from the liquid makes me feel like I am full of something again. And as I drain the last drops from the cup, I feel myself relaxing. Someone leads me down the hallway, to a room with a bed in it. That is all.

CHAPTER TWO

I open my eyes, terrified, my hands clutching at the sheets. But I am not running through the streets of the city or the corridors of Dauntless headquarters. I am in a bed in Amity headquarters, and the smell of sawdust is in the air.

I shift, and wince as something digs into my back. I reach behind me, and my fingers wrap around the gun.

For a moment I see Will standing before me, both our guns between us—his hand, I could have shot his hand, why didn't I, why?—and I almost scream his name.

Then he's gone.

I get out of bed and lift the mattress with one hand, propping it up on my knee. Then I shove the gun beneath it and let the mattress bury it. Once it is out of sight and no longer pressed to my skin, my head feels clearer.

Now that the adrenaline rush of yesterday is gone, and whatever made me sleep has worn off, the deep ache and shooting pains of my shoulder are intense. I am wearing the same clothes I wore last night. The corner of the hard drive peeks out from under my pillow, where I shoved it right before I fell asleep. On it is the simulation data that controlled the Dauntless, and the record of what the Erudite did. It feels too important for me to even touch, but I can't leave it here, so I grab it and wedge it between the dresser and the wall. Part of me thinks it would be a good idea to destroy it, but I know it contains the only record of my parents' deaths, so I'll settle for keeping it hidden.

Someone knocks on my door. I sit on the edge of the bed and try to smooth my hair down.

"Come in," I say.

The door opens, and Tobias steps halfway in, the door dividing his body in half. He wears the same jeans as yesterday, but a dark red T-shirt instead of his black one, probably borrowed from one of the Amity. It's a strange color on him, too bright, but when he leans his head back against the doorframe, I see that it makes the blue in his eyes lighter.

"The Amity are meeting in a half hour." He quirks his eyebrows and adds, with a touch of melodrama, "*To decide our fate.*"

I shake my head. "Never thought my fate would be in the hands of a bunch of Amity."

"Me either. Oh, I brought you something." He unscrews the cap of a small bottle and holds out a dropper filled with clear liquid. "Pain medicine. Take a dropperful every six hours."

"Thanks." I squeeze the dropper into the back of my throat. The medicine tastes like old lemon.

He hooks a thumb in one of his belt loops and says, "How are you, Beatrice?"

"Did you just call me *Beatrice*?"

"Thought I would give it a try." He smiles. "Not good?"

"Maybe on special occasions only. Initiation days, Choosing Days . . ." I pause. I was about to rattle off a few more holidays, but only the Abnegation celebrate them. The Dauntless have holidays of their own, I assume, but I don't know what they are. And anyway, the idea that

we would

celebrate anything right now is so ludicrous I don't continue.

"It's a deal." His smile fades. "How are you, Tris?"

It's not a strange question, after what we've been through, but I tense up when he asks it, worried that he'll somehow see into my mind. I haven't told him about Will yet. I want to, but I don't know how. Just the thought of saying the words out loud makes me feel so heavy I could break through the floorboards.

"I'm . . ." I shake my head a few times. "I don't know, Four. I'm awake. I . . ." I am still shaking my head. He slides his hand over my cheek, one finger anchored behind my ear. Then he tilts his head down and kisses me, sending a warm ache through my body. I wrap my hands around his arm, holding him there as long as I can. When he touches me, the hollowed-out feeling in my chest and stomach is not as noticeable.

I don't have to tell him. I can just try to forget—he can help me forget.

"I know," he says. "Sorry. I shouldn't have asked."

For a moment all I can think is, *How could you possibly know?* But something about his expression reminds me that he does know something about loss. He lost his mother when he was young. I don't remember how she died, just that we attended her funeral.

Suddenly I remember him clutching the curtains in his living room, about nine years old, wearing gray, his dark eyes shut. The image is fleeting, and it could be my imagination, not a memory.

He releases me. "I'll let you get ready."

The women's bathroom is two doors down. The floor is dark brown tile, and each shower stall has wooden walls and a plastic curtain separating it from the central aisle. A sign on the back wall says remember: to conserve resources, showers run for only five minutes.

The stream of water is cold, so I wouldn't want the extra minutes even if I could have them. I wash quickly with my left hand, leaving my right hand hanging at my side. The pain medicine Tobias gave me worked fast—the pain in my shoulder has already faded to a dull throb.

When I get out of the shower, a stack of clothes waits on my bed. It contains some yellow and red, from the Amity, and some gray, from the Abnegation, colors I rarely see side by side. If I had to guess, I would say that one of the Abnegation put the stack there for me. It's something they would think to do.

I pull on a pair of dark red pants made of denim—so long I have to roll them up three times—and a gray Abnegation shirt that is too big for me. The sleeves come down to my fingertips, and I roll them up too. It hurts to move my right hand, so I keep the movements small and slow.

Someone knocks on the door. "Beatrice?" The soft voice is Susan's.

I open the door for her. She carries a tray of food, which she sets down on the bed. I search her face for a sign of what she has lost—her father, an Abnegation leader, didn't survive the attack—but I see only the placid determination characteristic of my old faction.

“I’m sorry the clothes don’t fit,” she says. “I’m sure we can find some better ones for you if the Amity allow us to stay.”

“They’re fine,” I say. “Thank you.”

“I heard you were shot. Do you need my help with your hair? Or your shoes?”

I am about to refuse, but I really do need help.

“Yes, thank you.”

I sit down on a stool in front of the mirror, and she stands behind me, her eyes dutifully trained on the task at hand rather than her reflection. They do not lift, not even for an instant, as she runs a comb through my hair. And she doesn’t ask about my shoulder, how I was shot, what happened when I left the Abnegation safe house to stop the simulation. I get the sense that if I were to whittle her down to her core, she would be Abnegation all the way through.

“Have you seen Robert yet?” I say. Her brother, Robert, chose Amity when I chose Dauntless, so he is somewhere in this compound. I wonder if their reunion will be anything like Caleb’s and mine.

“Briefly, last night,” she says. “I left him to grieve with his faction as I grieve with mine. It is nice to see him again, though.”

I hear a finality in her tone that tells me the subject is closed.

“It’s a shame this happened when it did,” Susan says. “Our leaders were about to do something wonderful.”

“Really? What?”

“I don’t know.” Susan blushes. “I just knew that something was happening. I didn’t mean to be curious; I just noticed things.”

“I wouldn’t blame you for being curious even if you had been.”

She nods and keeps combing. I wonder what the Abnegation leaders—including my father—were doing. And I can’t help but marvel at Susan’s assumption that whatever they were doing was wonderful. I wish I could believe that of people again.

If I ever did.

“The Dauntless wear their hair down, right?” she says.

“Sometimes,” I say. “Do you know how to braid?”

So her deft fingers tuck pieces of my hair into one braid that tickles the middle of my spine. I stare hard at my reflection until she finishes. I thank her when she’s done, and she leaves with a small smile, closing the door behind her.

I keep staring, but I don’t see myself. I can still feel her fingers brushing the back of my neck, so much like my mother’s fingers, the last morning I spent with her. My eyes wet with tears, I rock back and forth on the stool, trying to push the memory from my mind. I am afraid that if I start to sob, I will never stop until I shrivel up like a raisin.

I see a sewing kit on the dresser. In it are two colors of thread, red and yellow, and a pair of scissors.

I feel calm as I undo the braid in my hair and comb it again. I part my hair down the middle and make sure that it is straight and flat. I close the scissors over the hair by my chin.

How can I look the same, when she’s gone and everything is different? I can’t.

I cut in as straight a line as I can, using my jaw as a guide. The tricky part is the back, which I can't see very well, so I do the best I can by touch instead of sight. Locks of blond hair surround me on the floor in a semicircle.

I leave the room without looking at my reflection again.

When Tobias and Caleb come to get me later, they stare at me like I am not the person they knew yesterday.

"You cut your hair," says Caleb, his eyebrows high. Grabbing hold of facts in the midst of shock is very Erudite of him. His hair sticks up on one side from where he slept on it, and his eyes are bloodshot.

"Yeah," I say. "It's . . . too hot for long hair."

"Fair enough."

We walk down the hallway together. The floorboards creak beneath our feet. I miss the way my footsteps echoed in the Dauntless compound; I miss the cool underground air. But mostly I miss the fears of the past few weeks, rendered small by my fears now.

We exit the building. The outside air presses around me like a pillow meant to suffocate me. It smells green, the way a leaf does when you tear it in half.

"Does everyone know you're Marcus's son?" Caleb says. "The Abnegation, I mean?"

"Not to my knowledge," says Tobias, glancing at Caleb. "And I would appreciate it if you didn't mention it."

"I don't need to mention it. Anyone with eyes can see it for themselves." Caleb frowns at him. "How old are you, anyway?"

"Eighteen."

"And you don't think you're too old to be with my little sister?"

Tobias lets out a short laugh. "She isn't *your little* anything."

"Stop it. Both of you," I say. A crowd of people in yellow walks ahead of us, toward a wide, squat building made entirely of glass. The sunlight reflecting off the panes feels like a pinch to my eyes. I shield my face with my hand and keep walking.

The doors to the building are wide open. Around the edge of the circular greenhouse, plants and trees grow in troughs of water or small pools. Dozens of fans positioned around the room serve only to blow the hot air around, so I am already sweating. But that fades from my mind when the crowd before me thins and I see the rest of the room.

In its center grows a huge tree. Its branches are spread over most of the greenhouse, and its roots bubble up from the ground, forming a dense web of bark. In the spaces between the roots, I see not dirt but water, and metal rods holding the roots in place. I should not be surprised—the Amity spend their lives accomplishing feats of agriculture like this one, with the help of Erudite technology.

Standing on a cluster of roots is Johanna Reyes, her hair falling over the scarred half of her face. I learned in Faction History that the Amity recognize no official leader—they vote on everything, and the result is usually close to unanimous. They are like many parts of a single mind, and Johanna is their mouthpiece.

The Amity sit on the floor, most with their legs crossed, in knots and clusters that vaguely resemble the tree roots to me. The Abnegation sit in tight rows a few yards to my left. My eyes search the crowd for a few seconds before I realize what I'm looking for: my parents.

I swallow hard, and try to forget. Tobias touches the small of my back, guiding me to the edge of the meeting space, behind the Abnegation. Before we sit down, he puts his mouth next to my ear and says, "I like your hair that way."

I find a small smile to give him, and lean into him when I sit down, my arm against his.

Johanna lifts her hands and bows her head. All conversation in the room ceases before I can draw my next breath. All around me the Amity sit in silence, some with their eyes closed, some with their lips mouthing words I can't hear, some staring at a point far away.

Every second chafes. By the time Johanna lifts her head I am worn to the bone.

"We have before us today an urgent question," she says, "which is: How will we conduct ourselves in this time of conflict as people who pursue peace?"

Every Amity in the room turns to the person next to him or her and starts talking.

"How do they get anything done?" I say, as the minutes of chatter wear on.

"They don't care about efficiency," Tobias says. "They care about agreement. Watch."

Two women in yellow dresses a few feet away rise and join a trio of men. A young man shifts so that his small circle becomes a large one with the group next to him. All around the room, the smaller crowds grow and expand, and fewer and fewer voices fill the room, until there are only three or four. I can only hear pieces of what they say: "Peace—Dauntless—Erudite—safe house—involvement—"

"This is bizarre," I say.

"I think it's beautiful," he says.

I give him a look.

"What?" He laughs a little. "They each have an equal role in government; they each feel equally responsible. And it makes them care; it makes them kind. I think that's beautiful."

"I think it's unsustainable," I say. "Sure, it works for the Amity. But what happens when not everyone wants to strum banjos and grow crops? What happens when someone does something terrible and talking about it can't solve the problem?"

He shrugs. "I guess we'll find out."

Eventually someone from each of the big groups stands and approaches Johanna, picking their way carefully over the roots of the big tree. I expect them to address the rest of us, but instead they stand in a circle with Johanna and the other spokespeople and talk quietly. I begin to get the feeling that I will never know what they're saying.

"They're not going to let us argue with them, are they," I say.

"I doubt it," he says.

We are done for.

When everyone has said his or her piece, they sit down again, leaving Johanna alone in the center of the room. She angles her body toward us and folds her hands in front of her. Where will we go when they tell us to leave? Back into the city, where nothing is safe?

"Our faction has had a close relationship with Erudite for as long as any of us can

remember. We need each other to survive, and we have always cooperated with each other,” says Johanna. “But we have also had a strong relationship with Abnegation in the past, and we do not think it is right to revoke the hand of friendship when it has for so long been extended.”

Her voice is honey-sweet, and moves like honey too, slow and careful. I wipe the sweat from my hairline with the back of my hand.

“We feel that the only way to preserve our relationships with both factions is to remain impartial and uninvolved,” she continues. “Your presence here, though welcome, complicates that.”

Here it comes, I think.

“We have arrived at the conclusion that we will establish our faction headquarters as a safe house for members of all factions,” she says, “under a set of conditions. The first is that no weaponry of any kind is allowed on the compound. The second is that if any serious conflict arises, whether verbal or physical, all involved parties will be asked to leave. The third is that the conflict may not be discussed, even privately, within the confines of this compound. And the fourth is that everyone who stays here must contribute to the welfare of this environment by working. We will report this to Erudite, Candor, and Dauntless as soon as we can.”

Her stare drifts to Tobias and me, and stays there.

“You are welcome to stay here if and only if you can abide by our rules,” she says. “That is our decision.”

I think of the gun I hid under my mattress, and the tension between me and Peter, and Tobias and Marcus, and my mouth feels dry. I am not good at avoiding conflict.

“We won’t be able to stay long,” I say to Tobias under my breath.

A moment ago, he was still faintly smiling. Now the corners of his mouth have disappeared into a frown. “No, we won’t.”

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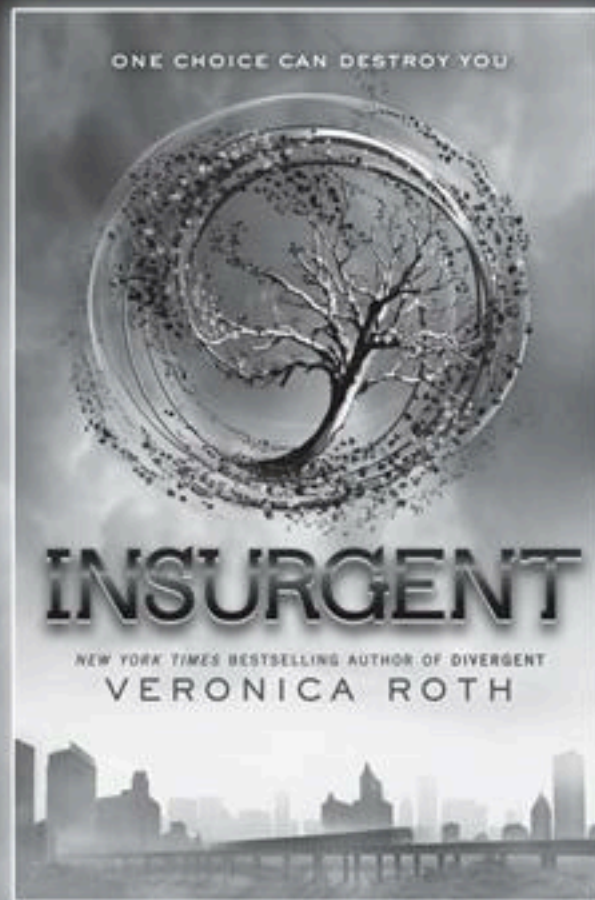
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