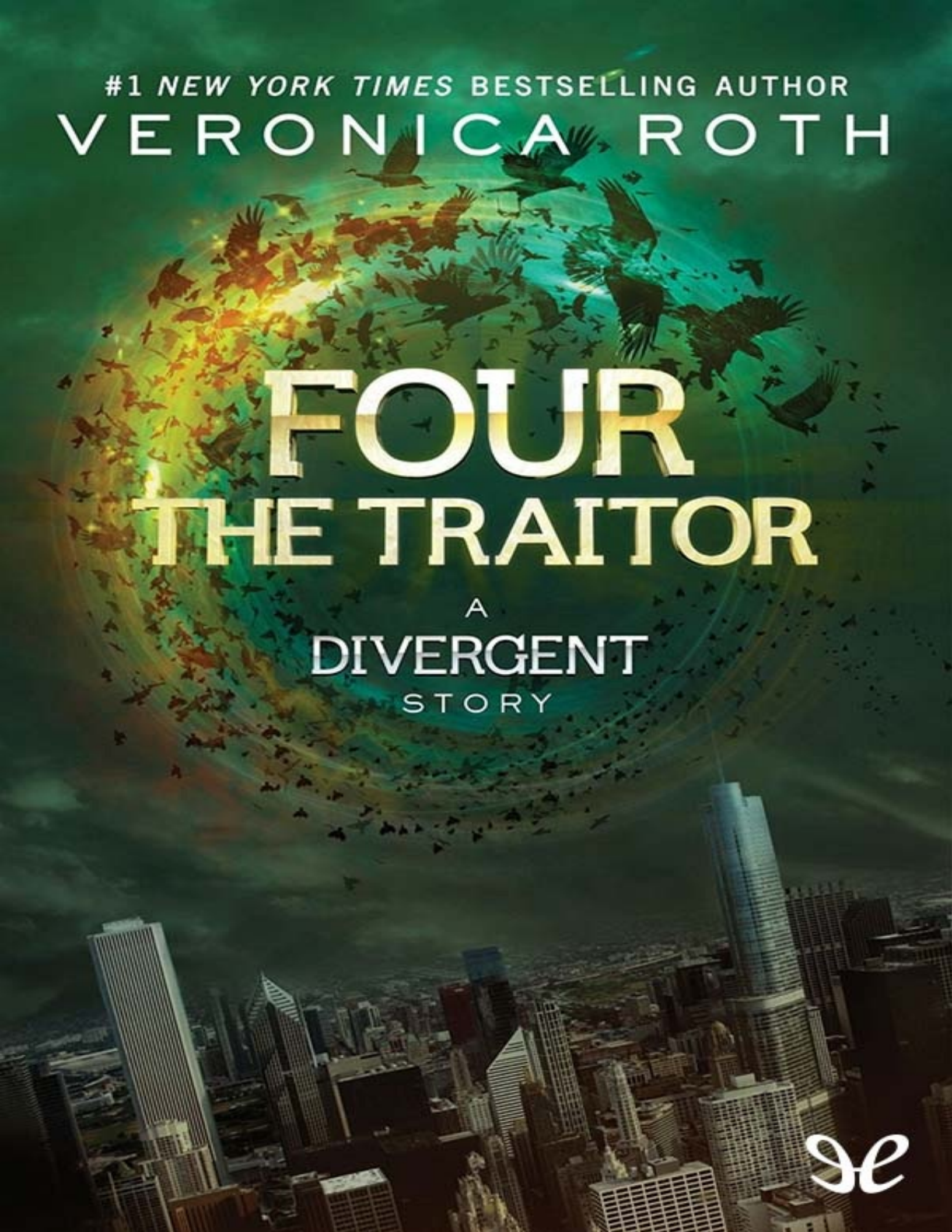

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
VERONICA ROTH
FOUR
THE TRAITOR
A
DIVERGENT
STORY

Fans of the Divergent series by #1 New York Times bestselling author Veronica Roth will be excited by “Four: The Traitor,” the fourth of four stories set in the world of Divergent and told from Tobias’s point of view.

“The Traitor” takes place two years after “The Son” and runs parallel with the early events in Divergent. In this robust story, readers follow Tobias as he uncovers the details of an Erudite plan that could threaten the faction system, and makes plans of his own to keep Abnegation safe. At the same time, Tobias is getting to know a new transfer initiate: Tris Prior.



Veronica Roth

Four: The Traitor

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ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER Visiting Day.

Two years ago, when I was an initiate, I pretended my own Visiting Day didn't exist, holed up in the training room with a punching bag. I was there for so long that I smelled the dust-sweat for days afterward. Last year, the first year I taught initiates, I did the same thing, though Zeke and Shauna both invited me to spend the day with their families instead.

This year I have more important things to do than punch a bag and mope about my family dysfunction. I'm going to the control room.

I walk through the Pit, dodging tearful reunions and shrieks of laughter. Families can always come together on Visiting Day, even if they're from different factions, but over time, they usually stop coming. "Faction before blood," after all. Most of the mixed clothing I see belongs to transfer families: Will's Erudite sister is dressed in light blue, Peter's Candor parents are in black and white. For a moment I watch his parents, and wonder if they made him into the person he is. But most of the time, people aren't that easy to explain, I guess.

I'm supposed to be on a mission, but I pause next to the chasm, pressing into the railing. Bits of paper float in the water. Now that I know where the steps cut into the stone in the opposite wall are, I can see them right away, and the hidden doorway that leads to them. I smile a little, thinking of the nights I've spent on those rocks with Zeke or Shauna, sometimes talking and sometimes just sitting and listening to the water move.

I hear footsteps approaching, and look over my shoulder. Tris is walking toward me, tucked under the gray-clad arm of an Abnegation woman. Natalie Prior. I stiffen, suddenly desperate to escape—what if Natalie knows who I am, where I came from? What if she lets it slip, here, surrounded by all these people?

She can't possibly recognize me. I don't look anything like the boy she

knew, lanky and slouched and buried in fabric.

When she's close enough, she extends her hand. "Hello, my name is Natalie. I'm Beatrice's mother."

Beatrice. That name is so wrong for her.

I clasp Natalie's hand and shake it. I've never been fond of Dauntless hand-shaking. It's too unpredictable—you never know how tightly to squeeze, how many times to shake.

"Four," I say. "It's nice to meet you."

"Four," Natalie says, and she smiles. "Is that a nickname?"

"Yes," I say. I change the subject. "Your daughter is doing well here. I've been overseeing her training."

"That's good to hear," she says. "I know a few things about Dauntless initiation, and I was worried about her."

I glance at Tris. There's color in her cheeks—she looks happy, like seeing her mother is doing her some good. For the first time I fully appreciate how much she's changed since I first saw her, tumbling onto the wooden platform, fragile-looking, like the impact with the net should have shattered her. She doesn't look fragile anymore, with the shadows of bruises on her face and a new stability in the way she stands, like she's ready for anything.

"You shouldn't worry," I say to Natalie.

Tris looks away. I think she's still angry with me for the way I nicked her ear with that knife. I guess I don't really blame her.

"You look familiar for some reason, Four," Natalie says. I would think her comment was lighthearted if not for the way she's looking at me, like she's pinning me down.

"I can't imagine why," I say, as coldly as I can manage. "I don't make a habit of associating with the Abnegation."

She doesn't react the way I expect her to, with surprise or fear or anger. She just laughs. "Few people do, these days. I don't take it personally."

If she does recognize me, she doesn't seem eager to say so. I try to relax.

"Well, I'll leave you to your reunion," I say.

On my screen, the security footage switches from the lobby of the Pire to the

hole hemmed in by four buildings, the initiate entrance to Dauntless. A crowd is gathered around the hole, climbing in and out of it, I assume to test the net.

"Not into Visiting Day?" My supervisor, Gus, stands at my shoulder, sipping from a mug of coffee. He's not that old, but there's a bald spot at the crown of his head. He keeps the rest of his hair short, even shorter than mine. His earlobes are stretched around wide discs. "I didn't think I'd see you again until initiation was over."

"Figured I might as well do something productive."

On my screen, everyone crawls out of the hole and stands aside, their backs against one of the buildings. A dark figure inches toward the edge of the roof high above the hole, runs a few steps, and jumps off. My stomach drops like I'm the one falling, and the figure disappears beneath the pavement. I'll never get used to seeing that.

"They seem to be having a good time," Gus says, sipping his coffee again. "Well, you're always welcome to work when you're not scheduled to, but it's not a crime to go have some mindless fun, Four."

He walks away, and I mumble, "So I'm told."

I look over the control room. It's almost empty—on Visiting Day, only a few people are required to work, and it's usually the oldest ones. Gus is hunched over his screen. Two others flank him, scanning through footage with their headphones half on, half off. And then there's me.

I type in a command, calling up the footage I saved last week. It shows Max in his office, sitting at his computer. He pokes at the keys with an index finger, hunting for the right ones for several seconds between jabs. Not many of the Dauntless know how to type properly, especially Max, who I'm told spent most of his Dauntless time patrolling the factionless sector with a gun at his side—he must not have anticipated that he would ever need to use a computer. I lean close to the screen to make sure that the numbers I took down earlier are accurate. If they are, I have Max's account password written on a piece of paper in my pocket.

Ever since I realized that Max was working closely with Jeanine Matthews, and began to suspect that they had something to do with Amar's death, I've been looking for a way to investigate further. When I saw him type in his password the other day, I found one.

084628. Yes, the numbers look right. I call up the live security footage again, and cycle through the camera feeds until I find the ones that show Max's office and the hallway beyond it. Then I type the command to take the footage of Max's office out of the rotation, so Gus and the others won't see it; it will only play on my screen. The footage from the whole city is always divided by however many people are in the control room, so we aren't all looking at the same feeds. We're only supposed to pull footage from the general rotation like that for a few seconds at a time, if we need a closer look at something, but hopefully this won't take me long. I slip out of the room and walk toward the elevators.

This level of the Pire is almost empty—everyone is gone. That will make it easier for me to do what I have to do. I ride the elevator up to the tenth floor, and walk purposefully toward Max's office. I've found that when you're sneaking around, it's best not to look like you're sneaking around. I tap the flash drive in my pocket as I walk, and turn the corner toward Max's office.

I nudge the door open with my shoe—earlier today, after I was sure he had gone to the Pit to start Visiting Day preparations, I'd crept up here and taped the lock. I close the door quietly behind me, not turning on the lights, and crouch next to his desk. I don't want to move the chair to sit in it; I don't want him to see that anything about this room has changed when he gets back.

The screen prompts me for a password. My mouth feels dry. I take the paper from my pocket and press it flat to the desk top while I type it in. 084628.

The screen shifts. I can't believe it worked.

Hurry. If Gus discovers that I'm gone, that I'm in here, I don't know what I'll say, what excuse I could possibly give that would sound reasonable. I insert the flash drive and transfer the program I put there earlier. I asked Lauren, one of the Dauntless technical staff and my fellow initiation instructor, for a program that would make one computer mirror another, under the pretense that I wanted to prank Zeke when we're at work. She was happy to help—another thing I've discovered is that the Dauntless are always up for a prank, and rarely looking for a lie.

With a few simple keystrokes, the program is installed and buried somewhere in Max's computer that I'm sure he would never bother to access. I put the flash drive back in my pocket, along with the piece of paper with his

password on it, and leave the office without getting my fingerprints on the glass part of the door.

That was easy, I think, as I walk toward the elevators again. According to my watch, it only took me five minutes. I can claim that I was on a bathroom break if anyone asks.

But when I get back to the control room, Gus is standing at my computer, staring at my screen.

I freeze. How long has he been there? Did he see me break into Max's office?

"Four," Gus says, sounding grave. "Why did you isolate this footage? You're not supposed to take feeds out of rotation, you know that."

"I…" *Lie! Lie now!* "I thought I saw something," I finish lamely. "We're allowed to isolate footage if we see something out of the ordinary."

Gus moves toward me.

"So," he says, "then why did I just see you on this screen coming out of that same hallway?"

He points to the hallway on my screen. My throat tightens.

"I thought I saw something, and I went upstairs to investigate it," I say. "I'm sorry, I just wanted to move around."

He stares at me, chewing the inside of his cheek. I don't move. I don't look away.

"If you ever see something out of the ordinary again, you follow the protocol. You report it to your supervisor, who is… who, again?"

"You," I say, sighing a little. I don't like to be patronized.

"Correct. I see you *can* keep up," he says. "Honestly, Four, after over a year of working here there shouldn't be so many irregularities in your job performance. We have very clear rules, and all you have to do is follow them. This is your last warning. Okay?"

"Okay," I say. I've been chastised a few times for pulling feeds out of rotation to watch meetings with Jeanine Matthews and Max, or with Max and Eric. It never gave me any useful information, and I almost always got caught.

"Good." His voice lightens up a little. "Good luck with the initiates. You got transfers again this year?"

"Yeah," I say. "Lauren gets the Dauntless-borns."

“Ah, too bad. I was hoping you would get to know my little sister,” Gus says. “If I were you, I’d go do something to wind down. We’re fine in here. Just let that footage loose before you go.”

He walks back to his computer, and I unclench my jaw. I wasn’t even aware that I was doing it. My face throbbing, I shut down my computer and leave the control room. I can’t believe I got away with it.

Now, with this program installed on Max’s computer, I can go through every single one of his files from the relative privacy of the control room. I can find out exactly what he and Jeanine Matthews are up to.

That night I dream that I’m walking through the hallways of the Pire, and I’m alone, but the corridors don’t end, and the view from the windows doesn’t change, lofted train tracks curving into tall buildings, the sun buried in clouds. I feel like I’m walking for hours, and when I wake with a start, it’s like I never slept at all.

Then I hear a knock, and a voice shouting, “Open up!”

This feels more like a nightmare than the tedium I just escaped—I’m sure it’s Dauntless soldiers coming to my door because they found out I’m Divergent, or that I’m spying on Max, or that I’ve been in touch with my factionless mother in the past year. All things that say “faction traitor.”

Dauntless soldiers coming to kill me—but as I walk to the door, I realize that if they were going to do that, they wouldn’t make so much noise in the hallway. And besides, that’s Zeke’s voice.

“Zeke,” I say when I open the door. “What’s your problem? It’s the middle of the night.”

There’s a line of sweat on his forehead, and he’s out of breath. He must have run here.

“I was working the night shift in the control room,” Zeke says. “Something happened in the transfer dorm.”

For some reason, my first thought is *her*, her wide eyes staring at me from the recesses of my memory.

“What?” I say. “To who?”

“Walk and talk,” Zeke says.

I put on my shoes and pull on my jacket and follow him down the hall.

"The Erudite guy. Blond," Zeke says.

I have to suppress a sigh of relief. It's not her. Nothing happened to her. "Will?"

"No, the other one."

"Edward."

"Yeah, Edward. He was attacked. Stabbed."

"Dead?"

"Alive. Got hit in the eye."

I stop. "In the *eye*?"

Zeke nods.

"Who did you tell?"

"Night supervisor. He went to tell Eric, Eric said he would handle it."

"Sure he will." I veer to the right, away from the transfer dormitory.

"Where are you going?" Zeke says.

"Edward's already in the infirmary?" I walk backward as I talk.

Zeke nods.

I say, "Then I'm going to see Max."

The Dauntless compound isn't so large that I don't know where people live. Max's apartment is buried deep in the underground corridors of the compound, near a back door that opens up right next to the train tracks outside. I march toward it, following the blue emergency lamps run by our solar generator.

I pound on the metal door with my fist, waking Max the same way Zeke woke me. He yanks the door open a few seconds later, his feet bare and his eyes wild.

"What happened?" he says.

"One of my initiates was stabbed in the eye," I say.

"And you came here? Didn't someone inform Eric?"

"Yeah. That's what I want to talk to you about. Mind if I come in?"

I don't wait for an answer—I brush past him and walk into his living room. He flips on the lights, displaying the messiest living space I've ever seen, used cups and plates strewn across the coffee table, all the couch cushions in disarray,

the floor gray with dust.

“I want initiation to go back to what it was before Eric made it more competitive,” I say, “and I want him out of my training room.”

“You don’t really think it’s Eric’s fault that an initiate got hurt,” Max says, crossing his arms. “Or that you’re in any position to make demands.”

“Yes, it’s his fault, of course it’s his fault!” I say, louder than I mean to be. “If they weren’t all fighting for one of ten slots, they wouldn’t be so desperate they’re ready to attack each other! He has them wound up so tight, of course they’re bound to explode eventually!”

Max is quiet. He looks annoyed, but he isn’t calling me ridiculous, which is a start.

“You don’t think the initiate who did the attacking should be held responsible?” Max says. “You don’t think he or she is the one to blame, instead of Eric?”

“Of course he—she—whoever—should be held responsible,” I say. “But this never would have happened if Eric—”

“You can’t say that with any certainty,” Max says.

“I can say it with the certainty of a reasonable person.”

“I’m not reasonable?” His voice is low, dangerous, and suddenly I remember that Max is not just the Dauntless leader who likes me for some inexplicable reason—he’s the Dauntless leader who’s working closely with Jeanine Matthews, the one who appointed Eric, the one who probably had something to do with Amar’s death.

“That’s not what I meant,” I say, trying to stay calm.

“You should be careful to communicate exactly what you mean,” Max says, moving closer to me. “Or someone will start to think you’re insulting your superiors.”

I don’t respond. He moves still closer.

“Or questioning the values of your faction,” he says, and his bloodshot eyes drift to my shoulder, where the Dauntless flames of my tattoo stick out over the collar of my shirt. I have hidden the five faction symbols that cover my spine since I got them, but for some reason, at this moment, I am terrified that Max knows about them. Knows what they mean, which is that I am not a perfect Dauntless member; I am someone who believes that more than one virtue should

be prized; I am Divergent.

"You had your shot to become a Dauntless leader," Max says. "Maybe you could have avoided this incident had you not backed out like a coward. But you did. So now you have to deal with the consequences."

His face is showing his age. It has lines it didn't have last year, or the year before, and his skin is grayish brown, like it was dusted with ash.

"Eric is as involved in initiation as he is because you refused to follow orders last year—" Last year, in the training room, I stopped all the fights before the injuries became too severe, against Eric's command that the fighting only stop when one person was unable to continue. I nearly lost my position as initiation instructor as a result; I would have, if Max hadn't gotten involved.

"—and I wanted to give you another chance to make it right, with closer monitoring," Max says. "You're failing to do so. You've gone too far."

The sweat I worked up on my way here has turned cold. He steps back and opens his door again.

"Get out of my apartment and deal with your initiates," Max says. "Don't let me see you step out of line again."

"Yes, sir," I say quietly, and I leave.

I go to see Edward in the infirmary early in the morning, when the sun is rising, shining through the glass ceiling of the Pit. His head is wrapped in white bandages, and he's not moving, not speaking. I don't say anything to him, just sit by his head and watch the minutes tick by on the wall clock.

I've been an idiot. I thought I was invincible, that Max's desire to have me as a fellow leader would never waver, that on some level he trusted me. I should have known better. All Max ever wanted was a pawn—that's what my mother said.

I can't be a pawn. But I'm not sure what I should be instead.

The setting Tris Prior invents is eerie and almost beautiful, the sky yellow-green, yellow grass stretching for miles in every direction.

Watching someone else's fear simulation is strange. Intimate. I don't feel

right about forcing other people to be vulnerable, even if I don't like them. Every human being is entitled to her secrets. Watching my initiates' fears, one after another, makes me feel like my skin has been scraped raw with sandpaper.

In Tris's simulation, the yellow grass is perfectly still. If the air wasn't stagnant, I would say this was a dream, not a nightmare—but still air means only one thing to me, and that is a coming storm.

A shadow moves across the grass, and a large black bird lands on her shoulder, curling its talons into her shirt. My fingertips prickle, remembering how I touched her shoulder when she walked into the simulation room, how I brushed her hair away from her neck to inject her. Stupid. Careless.

She hits the black bird, hard, and then everything happens at once. Thunder rumbles; the sky darkens, not with storm clouds, but with *birds*, an impossibly huge swarm of them, moving in unison like many parts of the same mind.

The sound of her scream is the worst sound in the world, desperate—she's desperate for help and I am desperate to help her, though I know what I'm seeing isn't real, I know it. The crows keep coming, relentless, surrounding her, burying her alive in dark feathers. She screams for help and I can't help her and I don't want to watch this, I don't want to watch another second.

But then, she starts to move, shifting so she's lying in the grass, relenting, relaxing. If she's in pain now she doesn't show it; she just closes her eyes and surrenders, and that is worse than her screaming for help, somehow.

Then it's over.

She lurches forward in the metal chair, smacking at her body to get the birds off, though they're gone. Then she curls into a ball and hides her face.

I reach out to touch her shoulder, to reassure her, and she hits my arm, hard. "Don't touch me!"

"It's over," I say, wincing—she punches harder than she realizes. I ignore the pain and run a hand over her hair, because I'm stupid, and inappropriate, and stupid…

"Tris."

She just shifts back and forth, soothing herself.

"Tris, I'm going to take you back to the dorms, okay?"

"No! They can't see me… not like this…"

This is what Eric's new system creates: A brave human being has just

defeated one of her worst fears in less than five minutes, an ordeal that takes most people at least twice that time, but she's terrified to go back into the hallway, to be seen as weak or vulnerable in any way. Tris is Dauntless, plain and simple, but this faction isn't really Dauntless anymore.

"Oh, calm down," I say, more irritable than I mean to be. "I'll take you out the back door."

"I don't need you to…" I can see her hands trembling even as she shrugs off my offer.

"Nonsense," I say. I take her arm and help her to her feet. She wipes her eyes as I move toward the back door. Amar once took me through this door, tried to walk me back to the dormitory even when I didn't want him to, the way she probably doesn't want me to now. How is it possible to live the same story twice, from different vantage points?

She yanks her arm from mine, and turns on me. "Why did you do that to me? What was the point of that, huh? I wasn't aware that when I chose Dauntless, I was signing up for weeks of torture!"

If she was anyone else, any of the other initiates, I would have yelled at her for insubordination a dozen times by now. I would have felt threatened by her constant assaults against my character, and tried to squelch her uprisings with cruelty, the way I did to Christina on the first day of initiation. But Tris earned my respect when she jumped first, into the net; when she challenged me at her first meal; when she wasn't deterred by my unpleasant responses to questions; when she spoke up for Al and stared me right in the eye as I threw knives at her. She's not my subordinate, couldn't possibly be.

"Did you think overcoming cowardice would be easy?" I say.

"That isn't overcoming cowardice! Cowardice is how you decide to be in real life, and in real life, I am not getting pecked to death by crows, Four!"

She starts to cry, but I'm too struck by what she just said to feel uncomfortable with her tears. She's not learning the lessons Eric wants her to learn. She's learning different things, wiser ones.

"I want to go home," she says.

I know where the cameras are in this hallway. I hope none of them have picked up on what she just said.

"Learning how to think in the midst of fear is a lesson that everyone, even

your Stiff family, needs to learn," I say. I doubt a lot of things about Dauntless initiation, but the fear simulations aren't one of them; they are the most straightforward way for a person to engage their own fears and conquer them, far more straightforward than the knife throwing or the fighting. "That's what we're trying to teach you. If you can't learn it, you'll need to get the hell out of here, because we won't want you."

I'm hard on her because I know she can handle it. And also because I don't know any other way to be.

"I'm trying. But I failed. I'm failing."

I almost feel like laughing. "How long do you think you spent in that hallucination, Tris?"

"I don't know. A half hour?"

"Three minutes," I say. "You got out three times faster than any of the other initiates. Whatever you are, you're not a failure."

You might be Divergent, I think. But she didn't do anything to change the simulation, so maybe she's not. Maybe she's just that brave.

I smile at her. "Tomorrow you'll be better at this. You'll see."

"Tomorrow?"

She's calmer now. I touch her back, right beneath her shoulders.

"What was your first hallucination?" she asks me.

"It wasn't a 'what' so much as a 'who.'" As I'm saying it, I think I should have just told her the first obstacle in my fear landscape, fear of heights, though it's not exactly what she's asking about. When I'm around her I can't control what I say the way I do around other people. I say vague things because that's as close as I can get to stopping myself from saying anything, my mind addled by the feeling of her body through her shirt. "It's not important."

"And are you over that fear now?"

"Not yet." We're at the dormitory door. The walk has never gone by so quickly. I put my hands in my pockets so I don't do anything stupid with them again. "I may never be."

"So they don't go away?"

"Sometimes they do. And sometimes new fears replace them. But becoming fearless isn't the point. That's impossible. It's learning how to control your fear, and how to be free from it, *that's* the point."

She nods. I don’t know what she came here for, but if I had to guess, it would be that she chose Dauntless for its freedom. Abnegation would have stifled the spark in her until it died out. Dauntless, for all its faults, has kindled the spark into a flame.

“Anyway,” I say. “Your fears are rarely what they appear to be in the simulation.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, are you really afraid of crows?” I grin. “When you see one, do you run away screaming?”

“No, I guess not.”

She moves closer to me. I felt safer when there was more space between us. Even closer, and I think about touching her, and my mouth goes dry. I almost never think about people that way, about girls that way.

“So what am I really afraid of?” she says.

“I don’t know,” I say. “Only you can know.”

“I didn’t know Dauntless would be this difficult.”

I’m glad to have something else to think about, other than how easy it would be to fit my hand to the arch of her back.

“It wasn’t always like this, I’m told. Being Dauntless, I mean.”

“What changed?”

“The leadership. The person who controls training sets the standard of Dauntless behavior. Six years ago Max and the other leaders changed the training methods to make them more competitive and more brutal.” Six years ago, the combat portion of training was brief and didn’t include bare-knuckled sparring. Initiates wore padding. The emphasis was on being strong and capable, and on developing camaraderie with the other initiates. And even when I was an initiate, it was better than this—an unlimited potential for initiates to become members, fights that stopped when one person conceded. “Said it was to test people’s strength. And that changed the priorities of Dauntless as a whole. Bet you can’t guess who the leaders’ new protégé is.”

Of course, she does immediately. “So if you were ranked first in your initiate class, what was Eric’s rank?”

“Second.”

“So he was their second choice for leadership. And you were their first.”

Perceptive. I don’t know that I was the first choice, but I was certainly a better option than Eric. “What makes you say that?”

“The way Eric was acting at dinner the first night. Jealous, even though he has what he wants.”

I’ve never thought of Eric that way. Jealous? Of what? I’ve never taken anything from him, never posed a real threat to him. He’s the one who came after Amar, who came after me. But maybe she’s right—maybe I never saw how frustrated he was to be second to a transfer from Abnegation, after all his hard work, or that I was favored by Max for leadership even when he was positioned here specifically to take the leadership role.

She wipes her face.

“Do I look like I’ve been crying?”

The question seems almost funny to me. Her tears vanished almost as quickly as they came, and now her face is fair again, her eyes dry, her hair smooth. Like nothing ever happened—like she didn’t just spend three minutes overwhelmed by terror. She’s stronger than I was.

“Hmm.” I lean in closer, making a joke of examining her, but then it’s not a joke, and I’m just close, and we’re sharing a breath.

“No, Tris,” I say. “You look…” I try a Dauntless expression. “Tough as nails.”

She smiles a little. So do I.

“Hey,” Zeke says sleepily, leaning his head into his fist. “Want to take over for me? I practically need to tape my eyes open.”

“Sorry,” I say. “I just need to use a computer. You do know it’s only nine o’clock, right?”

He yawns. “I get tired when I’m bored out of my mind. Shift’s almost over, though.”

I love the control room at night. There are only three people monitoring the footage, so the room is silent except for the hum of computers. Through the windows I see only a sliver of the moon; everything else is dark. It’s hard to find peace in the Dauntless compound, and this is the place where I find it most often.

Zeke turns back to his screen. I sit at a computer a few seats over from him, and angle the screen away from the room. Then I log in, using the fake account name I set up several months ago, so no one would be able to track this back to me.

Once I'm logged in, I open the mirroring program that lets me use Max's computer remotely. It takes a second to kick in, but when it does, it's like I'm sitting in Max's office, using the same machine he uses.

I work quickly, systematically. He labels his folders with numbers, so I don't know what each one will contain. Most are benign, lists of Dauntless members or schedules of events. I open them and close them in seconds.

I go deeper into the files, folder after folder, and then I find something strange. A list of supplies, but the supplies don't involve food or fabric or anything else I would expect for mundane Dauntless life—the list is for weapons. Syringes. And something marked *Serum* D_2.

I can imagine only one thing that would require the Dauntless to have so many weapons: an attack. But on who?

I check the control room again, my heartbeat pounding in my head. Zeke is playing a computer game that he wrote himself. The second control-room operator is slumped to one side, her eyes half-closed. The third is stirring his glass of water idly with his straw, staring out the windows. No one is paying attention to me.

I open more files. After a few wasted efforts, I find a map. It's marked mostly with letters and numbers, so at first I don't know what it's showing.

Then I open a map of the city on the Dauntless database to compare them, and sit back in my chair as I realize what streets Max's map is focusing on.

The Abnegation sector.

The attack will be against Abnegation.

It should have been obvious, of course. Who else would Max and Jeanine bother to attack? Max and Jeanine's vendetta is against Abnegation, and it always has been. I should have realized that when the Erudite released that story about my father, the monstrous husband and father. The only true thing they've written, as far as I can tell.

Zeke nudges my leg with his foot. “Shift’s over. Bedtime?”

“No,” I say. “I need a drink.”

He perks up noticeably. It’s not every night I decide I want to abandon my sterile, withdrawn existence for an evening of Dauntless indulgence.

“I’m your man,” he says.

I close down the program, my account, everything. I try to leave the information about the Abnegation attack behind, too, until I can figure out what to do about it, but it chases me all the way into the elevator, through the lobby, and down the paths to the bottom of the Pit.

I surface from the simulation with a heavy feeling in the pit of my stomach. I detach from the wires and get up. She’s still recovering from the sensation of almost drowning, shaking her hands and taking deep breaths. I watch her for a moment, not sure how to say what I need to say.

“What?” she says.

“How did you do that?”

“Do what?”

“Crack the glass.”

“I don’t know.”

I nod, and offer her my hand. She gets up without any trouble, but she avoids my eyes. I check the corners of the room for cameras. There is one, just where I thought it would be, right across from us. I take her elbow and lead her out of the room, to a place where I know we won’t be observed, in the blind spot between two surveillance points.

“What?” she says irritably.

“You’re Divergent,” I say. I haven’t been very nice to her today. Last night I saw her and her friends by the chasm, and a lapse in judgment—or sobriety—led me to lean in too close, to tell her she looked good. I’m worried that I went too far. Now I’m even more worried, but for different reasons.

She cracked the glass. She’s Divergent. She’s in danger.

She stares.

Then she sinks against the wall, adopting an almost-convincing aura of casualness. “What’s Divergent?”

“Don’t play stupid,” I say. “I suspected it last time, but this time it’s obvious. You manipulated the simulation; you’re Divergent. I’ll delete the footage, but unless you want to wind up dead at the bottom of the chasm, you’ll figure out how to hide it during the simulations! Now, if you’ll excuse me.”

I walk back to the simulation room, pulling the door closed behind me. It’s easy to delete the footage—just a few keystrokes and it’s done, the record clean. I double-check her file, making sure the only thing that’s in there is the data from the first simulation. I’ll have to come up with a way to explain where the data from this session went. A good lie, one that Eric and Max will actually believe.

In a hurry, I take out my pocketknife and wedge it between the panels covering the motherboard of the computer, prying them apart. Then I go into the hallway, to the drinking fountain, and fill my mouth with water.

When I return to the simulation room, I spit some of the water into the gap between the panels. I put my knife away and wait.

A minute or so later, the screen goes dark. Dauntless headquarters is basically a leaky cave—water damage happens all the time.

I was desperate.

I sent a message through the same factionless man I used as a messenger last time I wanted to get in touch with my mother. I arranged to meet her inside the last car of the ten-fifteen train from Dauntless headquarters. I assume she’ll know how to find me.

I sit with my back against the wall, an arm curled around one of my knees, and watch the city pass. Night trains don’t move as fast as day trains between stops. It’s easier to observe how the buildings change as the train draws closer to the center of the city, how they grow taller but narrower, how pillars of glass stand next to smaller, older stone structures. Like one city layered on top of another on top of another.

Someone runs alongside the train when it reaches the north side of the city. I stand up, holding one of the railings along the wall, and Evelyn stumbles into the car wearing Amity boots, an Erudite dress, and a Dauntless jacket. Her hair is pulled back, making her already-severe face even harsher.

“Hello,” she says.

“Hi,” I say.

“Every time I see you, you’re bigger,” she says. “I guess there’s no point in worrying that you’re eating well.”

“Could say the same to you,” I say, “but for different reasons.”

I know she’s not eating well. She’s factionless, and the Abnegation haven’t been providing as much aid as they usually do, with the Erudite bearing down on them the way they are.

I reach behind me and grab the backpack I brought with cans from the Dauntless storeroom.

“It’s just bland soup and vegetables, but it’s better than nothing,” I say when I offer it to her.

“Who says I need your help?” Evelyn says carefully. “I’m doing just fine, you know.”

“Yeah, that’s not for you,” I say. “It’s for all your skinny friends. If I were you, I wouldn’t turn down food.”

“I’m not,” she says, taking the backpack. “I’m just not used to you caring. It’s a little disarming.”

“I’m familiar with the feeling,” I say coldly. “How long was it before you checked in on my life? Seven years?”

Evelyn sighs. “If you asked me to come here just to start this argument again, I’m afraid I can’t stay long.”

“No,” I say. “No, that’s not why I asked you to come here.”

I didn’t want to contact her at all, but I knew I couldn’t tell any of the Dauntless what I had learned about the Abnegation attack—I don’t know how loyal to the faction and its policies they are—and I had to tell someone. The last time I spoke to Evelyn, she seemed to know things about the city that I didn’t. I assumed she might know how to help me with this, before it’s too late.

It’s a risk, but I’m not sure where else to turn.

“I’ve been keeping an eye on Max,” I say. “You said the Erudite were involved with the Dauntless, and you were right. They’re planning something together, Max and Jeanine and who knows who else.”

I tell her what I saw on Max’s computer, the supply lists and the maps. I tell her what I’ve observed about the Erudite’s attitude toward Abnegation, the reports, how they’re poisoning even Dauntless minds against our former faction.

When I finish, Evelyn doesn't look surprised, or even grave. In fact, I have no idea how to read her expression. She's quiet for a few seconds, and then she says, "Did you see any indication of when this might happen?"

"No," I say.

"How about numbers? How large a force do Dauntless and Erudite intend to use? Where do they intend to summon it from?"

"I don't know," I say, frustrated. "I don't really care, either. No matter how many recruits they get, they'll mow down the Abnegation in seconds. It's not like they're trained to defend themselves—not like they would even if they knew how, either."

"I knew something was going on," Evelyn says, furrowing her brow. "The lights are on at Erudite headquarters all the time now. Which means that they're not afraid of getting in trouble with the council leaders anymore, which… suggests something about their growing dissent."

"Okay," I say. "How do we warn them?"

"Warn who?"

"The Abnegation!" I say hotly. "How do we warn the Abnegation that they're going to be killed, how do we warn the Dauntless that their leaders are conspiring against the council, how—"

I pause. Evelyn is standing with her hands loose at her sides, her face relaxed and passive. *Our city is changing, Tobias*. That's what she said to me when we first saw each other again. *Sometime soon, everyone will have to choose a side, and I know which one you would rather be on.*

"You already knew," I say slowly, struggling to process the truth. "You knew they were planning something like this, and have been for a while. You're waiting for it. Counting on it."

"I have no lingering affection for my former faction. I don't want them, or any faction, to continue to control this city and the people in it," Evelyn says. "If someone wants to take out my enemies for me, I'm going to let them."

"I can't believe you," I say. "They're not all Marcus, Evelyn. They're *defenseless*."

"You think they're so innocent," she says. "You don't know them. I know them, I've *seen* them for who they really are."

Her voice is low, throaty.

“How do you think your father managed to lie to you about me all those years? You think the other Abnegation leaders didn’t help him, didn’t perpetuate the lie? *They* knew I wasn’t pregnant, that no one had called a doctor, that there *was no body*. But they still told you I was dead, didn’t they?”

It hadn’t occurred to me before. There was no body. No body, but still all the men and women sitting in my father’s house on that awful morning and at the funeral the following evening played the game of pretend for me, and for the rest of the Abnegation community, saying even in their silence, *No one would ever leave us. Who would want to?*

I shouldn’t be so surprised to find that a faction is full of liars, but I guess there are parts of me that are still naive, still like a child.

Not anymore.

“Think about it,” Evelyn said. “Are those people—the kind of people who would tell a child that his mother was dead just to save face—are they the ones you want to help? Or do you want to help remove them from power?”

I thought I knew. Those innocent Abnegation, with their constant acts of service and their deferent head-bobbing, they needed to be saved.

But those *liars*, who forced me into grief, who left me alone with the man who caused me pain—should they be saved?

I can’t look at her, can’t answer her. I wait for the train to pass a platform, and then jump off without looking back.

“Don’t take this the wrong way, but you look awful.”

Shauna sinks into the chair next to mine, setting her tray down. I feel like yesterday’s conversation with my mother was a sudden, earsplitting noise, and now every other sound is muffled. I’ve always known that my father was cruel. But I always thought the other Abnegation were innocent; deep down, I’ve always thought of myself as weak for leaving them, as a kind of traitor to my own values.

Now it seems like no matter what I decide, I’ll be betraying someone. If I warn the Abnegation about the attack plans I found on Max’s computer, I’ll be betraying Dauntless. If I don’t warn them, I betray my former faction again, in a much greater way than I did before. I have no choice but to decide, and the

thought of deciding makes me feel sick.

I went through today the only way I knew how: I got up and went to work. I posted the rankings—which were a source of some contention, with me advocating for giving heavier weight to improvement, and Eric advocating for consistency. I went to eat. I put myself through the motions as if by muscle memory alone.

"You going to eat any of that?" Shauna says, nodding to my plate full of food.

I shrug. "Maybe."

I can tell she's about to ask what's wrong, so I introduce a new topic. "How's Lynn doing?"

"You would know better than I do," she says. "Getting to see her fears and all that."

I cut a piece from my hunk of meat and chew it.

"What's that like?" she asks cautiously, raising an eyebrow at me. "Seeing all their fears, I mean."

"Can't talk to you about her fears," I say. "You know that."

"Is that your rule, or Dauntless's rule?"

"Does it matter?"

Shauna sighs. "Sometimes I feel like I don't even know her, that's all."

We eat the rest of our meals without speaking. That's what I like most about Shauna: she doesn't feel the need to fill the empty spaces. When we're done, we leave the dining hall together, and Zeke calls out to us from across the Pit.

"Hey!" he says. He's spinning a roll of tape around his finger. "Want to go punch something?"

"Yes," Shauna and I say in unison.

We walk toward the training room, Shauna updating Zeke on her week at the fence—"Two days ago the idiot I was on patrol with started freaking out, swearing he saw something out there… Turns out it was a *plastic bag*"— and Zeke sliding his arm across her shoulders. I run my fingers over my knuckles and try not to get in their way.

When we get closer to the training room, I think I hear voices inside. Frowning, I push the door open with my foot. Standing inside are Lynn, Uriah, Marlene, and… Tris. The collision of worlds startles me a little.

“I thought I heard something in here,” I say.

Uriah is firing at a target with one of the plastic pellet guns the Dauntless keep around for fun—I know for a fact that he doesn’t own it, so this one must be Zeke’s—and Marlene is chewing on something. She grins at me and waves when I walk in.

“Turns out it’s my idiot brother,” says Zeke. “You’re not supposed to be here after hours. Careful, or Four will tell Eric, and then you’ll be as good as scalped.”

Uriah tucks the gun under his waistband, against the small of his back, without turning on the safety. He’ll probably end up with a welt on his butt later from the gun firing into his pants. I don’t mention it to him.

I hold the door open to usher them through it. As she passes me, Lynn says, “You wouldn’t tell Eric.”

“No, I wouldn’t,” I say. When Tris passes me I put out a hand, and it fits automatically in the space between her shoulder blades. I don’t even know if that was intentional or not. And I don’t really care.

The others start down the hallway, our original plan of spending time in the training room forgotten once Uriah and Zeke start bickering and Shauna and Marlene share the rest of a muffin.

“Wait a second,” I say to Tris. She turns to me, looking worried, so I try to smile, but it’s hard to feel like smiling right now.

I noticed tension in the training room when I posted the rankings earlier this evening—I never thought, when I was tallying up the points for the rankings, that maybe I should mark her down for her protection. It would have been an insult to her skill in the simulations to put her any lower on the list, but maybe she would have preferred the insult to the growing rift between her and her fellow transfers.

Even though she’s pale and exhausted, and there are little cuts around each of her nail beds, and a wavering look in her eyes, I know that’s not the case. This girl would never want to be tucked safely in the middle of the pack, never.

“You belong here, you know that?” I say. “You belong with us. It’ll be over soon, so… just hold on, okay?”

The back of my neck suddenly feels hot, and I scratch at it with one hand, unable to meet her eyes, though I can *feel* them on me as the silence stretches.

Then she slips her fingers between mine, and I stare at her, startled. I squeeze her hand, lightly, and it registers through my turmoil and my exhaustion that though I've touched her half a dozen times—each one a lapse in judgment—this is the first time she's ever done it back.

Then she turns and runs to catch up with her friends.

And I stand in the hallway, alone, grinning like an idiot.

I try to sleep for the better part of an hour, twisting under the covers to find a comfortable position. But it seems like someone has replaced my mattress with a bag of rocks. Or maybe it's just that my mind is too busy for sleep.

Eventually I give up, putting on my shoes and jacket and walking to the Pire, the way I do every time I can't sleep. I think about running the fear landscape program again, but I didn't think to replenish my supply of simulation serum this afternoon, and it would be a hassle to get some now. Instead I walk to the control room, where Gus greets me with a grunt and the other two on staff don't even notice me come in.

I don't try to go through Max's files again—I feel like I know everything I need to know, which is that something bad is coming and I have no idea whether I'll try to stop it.

I need to tell *someone*, I need *someone* to share in this with me, to tell me what to do. But there's no one that I would trust with something like this. Even my friends here were born and raised in Dauntless; how can I know that they wouldn't trust their leaders implicitly? I can't know.

For some reason, Tris's face comes to mind, open but stern as she clasps my hand in the hallway.

I scroll through the footage, looking over the city streets and then returning to the Dauntless compound. Most of the hallways are so dark, I couldn't see anything even if it was there. In my headphones, I hear only the rush of water in the chasm or the whistle of wind through the alleys. I sigh, leaning my head into my hand, and watch the changing images, one after another, and let them lull me into something like sleep.

"Go to bed, Four," Gus says from across the room.

I jerk awake, and nod. If I'm not actually looking at the footage it's not a

good idea for me to be in the control room. I log out of my account and walk down the hallway to the elevator, blinking myself awake.

As I walk across the lobby, I hear a scream coming from below, coming from the Pit. It's not a good-natured Dauntless shout, or the shriek of someone who is scared but delighted, or anything but the particular tone, the particular pitch of terror.

Small rocks scatter behind me as I run down to the bottom of the Pit, my breathing fast and heavy, but even.

Three tall, dark-clothed people stand near the railing below. They are crowded around a fourth, smaller target, and even though I can't see much about them, I know a fight when I see one. Or, I would call it a fight, if it wasn't three against one.

One of the attackers wheels around, sees me, and sprints in the other direction. When I get closer I see one of the remaining attackers holding the target up, over the chasm, and I shout, "Hey!"

I see her hair, blond, and I can hardly see anything else. I collide with one of the attackers—Drew, I can tell by the color of his hair, orange-red—and slam him into the chasm barrier. I hit him once, twice, three times in the face, and he collapses to the ground, and then I'm kicking him and I can't think, can't think at all.

"Four." Her voice is quiet, ragged, and it's the only thing that could possibly reach me in this place. She's hanging from the railing, dangling over the chasm like a piece of bait from a fishing hook. The other one, the last attacker, is gone.

I run toward her, grabbing her under her shoulders, and pull her over the edge of the railing. I hold her against me. She presses her face to my shoulder, twisting her fingers into my shirt.

Drew is on the ground, collapsed. I hear him groan as I carry her away—not to the infirmary, where the others who went after her would think to look for her, but to my apartment, in its lonely, removed corridor. I shove my way through the apartment door and lay her down on my bed. I run my fingers over her nose and cheekbones to check for breaks, then I feel for her pulse, and lean in close to listen to her breathing. Everything seems normal, steady. Even the bump on the back of her head, though swollen and scraped, doesn't seem serious. She isn't badly injured, but she could have been.

My hands shake when I pull away from her. *She* isn't badly injured, but Drew might be. I don't even know how many times I hit him before she finally said my name and woke me up. The rest of my body starts to shake, too, and I make sure there's a pillow supporting her head, then leave the apartment to go back to the railing next to the Pit. On the way, I try to replay the last few minutes in my mind, try to recall what I punched and when and how hard, but the whole thing is lost to a dizzy fit of anger.

I wonder if this is what it was like for him, I think, remembering the wild, frantic look in Marcus's eyes every time he got angry.

When I reach the railing, Drew is still there, lying in a strange, crumpled position on the ground. I pull his arm across my shoulders and half lift, half drag him to the infirmary.

When I make it back to my apartment, I immediately walk to the bathroom to wash the blood from my hands—a few of my knuckles are split, cut from the impact with Drew's face. If Drew was there, the other attacker had to be Peter, but who was the third? Not Molly—the shape was too tall, too big. In fact, there's only one initiate that size.

Al.

I check my reflection, like I'm going to see little pieces of Marcus staring back at me there. There's a cut at the corner of my mouth—did Drew hit me back at some point? It doesn't matter. My lapse in memory doesn't matter. What matters is that Tris is breathing.

I keep my hands under the cool water until it runs clear, then dry them on the towel and go to the freezer for an ice pack. As I carry it toward her, I realize she's awake.

"Your hands," she says, and it's a ridiculous thing to say, so stupid, to be worried about my *hands* when she was just dangled over the chasm by her throat.

"My hands," I say irritably, "are none of your concern."

I lean over her, slipping the ice pack under her head, where I felt a bump earlier. She lifts her hand and touches her fingertips lightly to my mouth.

I never thought you could feel a touch this way, like a jolt of energy. Her

fingers are soft, curious.

"Tris," I say. "I'm all right."

"Why were you there?"

"I was coming back from the control room. I heard a scream."

"What did you do to them?"

"I deposited Drew at the infirmary a half hour ago. Peter and Al ran. Drew claimed they were just trying to scare you. At least, I think that's what he was trying to say."

"He's in bad shape?"

"He'll live. In what condition, I can't say," I spit.

I shouldn't let her see this side of me, the side that derives savage pleasure from Drew's pain. I shouldn't *have* this side.

She reaches for my arm, squeezes it. "Good," she says.

I look down at her. She has that side, too, she must have it. I saw the way she looked when she beat Molly, like she was going to keep going whether her opponent was unconscious or not. Maybe she and I are the same.

Her face contorts, twists, and she starts to cry. Most of the time, when someone has cried in front of me, I've felt squeezed, like I needed to escape their company in order to breathe. I don't feel that way with her. I don't worry, with her, that she expects too much from me, or that she needs anything from me at all. I sink down to the floor so we're on the same plane, and watch her carefully for a moment. Then I touch my hand to her cheek, careful not to press against any of her still-forming bruises. I run my thumb over her cheekbone. Her skin is warm.

I don't have the right word for how she looks, but even now, with parts of her face swollen and discolored, there's something striking about her, something I haven't seen before.

In that moment I'm able to accept the inevitability of how I feel, though not with joy. I need to talk to someone. I need to trust someone. And for whatever reason, I know, I *know* it's her.

I'll have to start by telling her my name.

I approach Eric in the breakfast line, standing behind him with my tray as he

uses a long-handled spoon to scoop scrambled eggs onto his plate.

“If I told you that one of the initiates was attacked last night by a few of the other initiates,” I say, “would you even care?”

He pushes the eggs to one side of his plate, and lifts a shoulder. “I might care that their instructor doesn’t seem to be able to control his initiates,” Eric says as I pick up a bowl of cereal for myself. He eyes my split knuckles. “I might care that this hypothetical attack would be the *second* under that instructor’s watch… whereas the Dauntless-borns don’t seem to have this problem.”

“Tensions between the transfers are naturally higher—they don’t know each other, or this faction, and their backgrounds are wildly different,” I say. “And you’re their leader, shouldn’t you be responsible for keeping them ‘under control’?”

He sets a piece of toast next to his eggs with some tongs. Then he leans in close to my ear and says, “You’re on thin ice, *Tobias*,” he hisses. “Arguing with me in front of the others. ‘Lost’ simulation results. Your obvious bias toward the weaker initiates in the rankings. Even Max agrees now. If there *was* an attack, I don’t think he would be too happy with you, and he might not object when I suggest that you be removed from your post.”

“Then you’d be out an initiation instructor a week before the end of initiation.”

“I can finish it out myself.”

“I can only *imagine* what it would be like under your watch,” I say, narrowing my eyes. “We wouldn’t even need to make any cuts. They would all die or defect on their own.”

“If you’re not careful you won’t have to imagine anything.” He reaches the end of the food line and turns to me. “Competitive environments create tension, Four. It’s natural for that tension to be released somehow.” He smiles a little, stretching the skin between his piercings. “An attack would certainly show us, in a real-world situation, who the strong ones and the weak ones are, don’t you think? We wouldn’t have to rely on the test results at all, that way. We could make a more informed decision about who doesn’t belong here. That is… if an attack were to happen.”

The implication is clear: As the survivor of the attack, Tris would be viewed as weaker than the other initiates, and fodder for elimination. Eric wouldn’t rush

to the aid of the victim, but would rather advocate for her expulsion from Dauntless, as he did before Edward left of his own accord. I don't want Tris to be forced into factionlessness.

"Right," I say lightly. "Well, it's a good thing no attacks have happened recently, then."

I dump some milk on top of my cereal and walk to my table. Eric won't do anything to Peter, Drew, or Al, and I can't do anything without stepping out of line and suffering the repercussions. But maybe—maybe I don't have to do this alone. I put my tray down between Zeke and Shauna and say, "I need your help with something."

After the fear landscape explanation is over and the initiates are dismissed for lunch, I pull Peter aside into the observation room next to the bare simulation room. It contains rows of chairs, ready for the initiates to sit in as they wait to take their final test. It also contains Zeke and Shauna.

"We need to have a chat," I say.

Zeke lurches toward Peter, slamming him against the concrete wall with alarming force. Peter cracks the back of his head, and winces.

"Hey there," Zeke says, and Shauna moves toward them, spinning a knife on her palm.

"What is this?" Peter says. He doesn't even look a little afraid, even when Shauna catches the blade by the handle and touches the point to his cheek, creating a dimple. "Trying to *scare* me?" he sneers.

"No," I say. "Trying to make a point. You're not the only one with friends who are willing to do some harm."

"I don't think initiation instructors are supposed to threaten initiates, do you?" Peter gives me a wide-eyed look, one I might mistake for innocence if I didn't know what he was really like. "I'll have to ask Eric, though, just to be sure."

"I didn't threaten you," I say. "I'm not even touching you. And according to the footage of this room that's stored on the control room computers, we're not even in here right now."

Zeke grins like he can't help it. That was his idea.

“I’m the one who’s threatening you,” Shauna says, almost in a growl. “One more violent outburst and I’m going to teach you a lesson about justice.” She holds the knife point over his eye, and brings it down slowly, pressing the point to his eyelid. Peter freezes, barely moving even to breathe. “An eye for an eye. A bruise for a bruise.”

“Eric may not care if you go after your peers,” Zeke says, “but we do, and there are a lot of Dauntless like us. People who don’t think you should lay a hand on your fellow faction members. People who listen to gossip, and spread it like wildfire. It won’t take long for us to tell them what kind of worm you are, or for them to make your life very, very difficult. You see, in Dauntless, reputations tend to stick.”

“We’ll start with all your potential employers,” Shauna says. “The supervisors in the control room—Zeke can take them; the leaders out by the fence—I’ll get those. Tori knows everyone in the Pit—Four, you’re friends with Tori, right?”

“Yes I am,” I say. I move closer to Peter, and tilt my head. “You may be able to cause pain, initiate… but we can cause you lifelong misery.”

Shauna takes the knife away from Peter’s eye. “Think about it.”

Zeke lets go of Peter’s shirt and smooths it down, still smiling. Somehow the combination of Shauna’s ferocity and Zeke’s cheerfulness is just strange enough to be threatening. Zeke waves at Peter, and we all leave together.

“You want us to talk to people anyway, right?” Zeke asks me.

“Oh yeah,” I say. “Definitely. Not just about Peter. Drew and Al, too.”

“Maybe if he survives initiation, I’ll accidentally trip him and he’ll fall right into the chasm,” Zeke says hopefully, making a plummeting gesture with his hand.

The next morning, there’s a crowd gathered by the chasm, all quiet and still, though the smell of breakfast beckons us all toward the cafeteria. I don’t have to ask what they’re gathered for.

This happens almost every year, I’m told. A death. Like Amar’s, sudden and awful and wasteful. A body pulled out of the chasm like a fish on a hook. Usually someone young—an accident, because of a daredevil stunt gone wrong,

or maybe not an accident, a wounded mind further injured by the darkness, pressure, pain of Dauntless.

I don't know how to feel about those deaths. Guilty, maybe, for not seeing the pain myself. Sad, that some people can't find another way to escape.

I hear the name of the deceased spoken up ahead, and both emotions strike me hard.

Al. Al. Al.

My initiate—my *responsibility*, and I failed, because I've been so obsessed with catching Max and Jeanine, or with blaming everything on Eric, or with my indecision about warning the Abnegation. No—none of those things so much as this: that I distanced myself from them for my own protection, when I should have been drawing them out of the dark places here and into the lighter ones. Laughing with friends on the chasm rocks. Late-night tattoos after a game of Dare. A sea of embraces after the rankings are announced. Those are the things I could have shown him—even if it wouldn't have helped him, I should have tried.

I know one thing: after this year's initiation is done, Eric won't need to try so hard to oust me from this position. I'm already gone.

Al. Al. Al.

Why do all dead people become heroes in Dauntless? Why do we need them to? Maybe they're the only ones we can find in a faction of corrupt leaders, competitive peers, and cynical instructors. Dead people can be our heroes because they can't disappoint us later; they only improve over time, as we forget more and more about them.

Al was unsure and sensitive, and then jealous and violent, and then gone. Softer men than Al have lived and harder men than Al have died and there's no explanation for any of it.

But Tris wants one, craves one, I can see it in her face, a kind of hunger. Or anger. Or both. I can't imagine it's easy to like someone, hate them, and then lose them before any of those feelings are resolved. I follow her away from the chanting Dauntless because I'm arrogant enough to believe I can make her feel better.

Right. Sure. Or maybe I follow her because I'm tired of being so removed

from everyone, and I'm no longer sure it's the best way to be.

"Tris," I say.

"What are you doing here?" she says bitterly. "Shouldn't you be paying your respects?"

"Shouldn't you?" I move toward her.

"Can't pay respect when you don't have any." I'm surprised, for a moment, that she can manage to be so cold—Tris isn't always nice, but she's rarely cavalier about anything. It only takes her a second to shake her head. "I didn't mean that."

"Ah."

"This is ridiculous," she says, flushing. "He throws himself off a ledge and Eric's calling it brave? Eric, who tried to have you throw knives at Al's head?" Her face contorts. "He wasn't brave! He was depressed and a coward and he almost killed me! Is that the kind of thing we respect here?"

"What do you want them to do?" I say as gently as I can—which isn't saying much. "Condemn him? Al's already dead. He can't hear it, and it's too late."

"It's not *about* Al," she says. "It's about everyone watching! Everyone who now sees hurling themselves into the chasm as a viable option. I mean, why *not* do it if everyone calls you a hero afterward? Why not do it if everyone will remember your name?" But of course, it is about Al, and she knows that. "It's…" She's struggling, fighting with herself. "I can't… This would *never* have happened in Abnegation! None of it! Never. This place warped him and ruined him, and I don't care if saying that makes me a Stiff, I don't care, I don't *care*!"

My paranoia is so deeply ingrained, I look automatically at the camera buried in the wall above the drinking fountain, disguised by the blue lamp fixed there. The people in the control room can see us, and if we're unlucky, they could choose this moment to hear us, too. I can see it now, Eric calling Tris a faction traitor, Tris's body on the pavement near the railroad tracks…

"Careful, Tris," I say.

"Is that all you can say?" She frowns at me. "That I should be *careful*? That's *it*?"

I understand that my response wasn't exactly what she was expecting, but for someone who just railed against Dauntless recklessness, she's definitely acting like one of them.

“You’re as bad as the Candor, you know that?” I say. The Candor are always running their mouths, never thinking about the consequences. I pull her away from the drinking fountain, and then I’m close to her face and I can see her dead eyes floating in the water of the underground river and I can’t stand it, not when she was just attacked and who knows what would have happened if I hadn’t heard her scream.

“I’m not going to say this again, so listen carefully.” I put my hands on her shoulders. “They are watching you. *You*, in particular.”

I remember Eric’s eyes on her after the knife throwing. His questions about her deleted simulation data. I claimed water damage. He thought it was interesting that the water damage occurred not five minutes after Tris’s simulation ended. *Interesting*.

“Let go of me,” she says.

I do, immediately. I don’t like hearing her voice that way.

“Are they watching you, too?”

Always have been, always will be. “I keep trying to help you, but you refuse to be helped.”

“Oh, right. Your help,” she says. “Stabbing my ear with a knife and taunting me and yelling at me more than you yell at anyone else, it sure is helpful.”

“Taunting you? You mean when I threw the knives? I wasn’t taunting you!” I shake my head. “I was reminding you that if you failed, someone else would have to take your place.”

To me, at the time, it almost seemed obvious. I thought, since she seemed to understand me better than most people, she might understand that, too. But of course she didn’t. She’s not a mind reader.

“Why?” she says.

“Because… you’re from Abnegation,” I say. “And… it’s when you’re acting selflessly that you are at your bravest. And if I were you, I would do a better job of pretending that selfless impulse is going away, because if the wrong people discover it… well, it won’t be good for you.”

“Why? Why do they care about my intentions?”

“Intentions are the only thing they care about. They try to make you think they care about what you do, but they don’t. They don’t want you to act a certain way, they want you to *think* a certain way. So you’re easy to understand. So you

won’t pose a threat to them.”

I put my hand on the wall near her face and lean into it, thinking of the tattoos forming a line on my back. It wasn’t getting the tattoos that made me a faction traitor. It was what they meant to me—an escape from the narrow thinking of any one faction, the thinking that slices away at all the different parts of me, paring me down to just one version of myself.

“I don’t understand why they care what I think, as long as I’m acting how they want me to,” she says.

“You’re acting how they want you to now, but what happens when your Abnegation-wired brain tells you to do something else, something they don’t want?”

Much as I like him, Zeke is the perfect example. Dauntless-born, Dauntless-raised, Dauntless-chosen. I can count on him to approach everything the same way. He was trained to from birth. To him, there are no other options.

“I might not need you to help me. Ever think about that?” she says. I want to laugh at the question. Of course she doesn’t need me. When was it ever about that? “I’m not weak, you know. I can do this on my own.”

“You think my first instinct is to protect you.” I shift so I’m a little closer to her. “Because you’re small, or a girl, or a Stiff. But you’re wrong.”

Even closer. I touch her chin, and for a moment I think about closing this gap completely.

“My first instinct is to push you until you break, just to see how hard I have to press,” I say, and it’s a strange admission, and a dangerous one. I don’t mean her any harm, and never have, and I hope she knows that’s not what I mean. “But I resist it.”

“Why is that your first instinct?” she says.

“Fear doesn’t shut you down,” I say. “It wakes you up. I’ve seen it. It’s fascinating.” Her eyes in every fear simulation, ice and steel and blue flame. The short, slight girl with the wire-taut arms. A walking contradiction. My hand slips over her jaw, touches her neck. “Sometimes I just want to see it again. Want to see you awake.”

Her hands touch my waist, and she pulls herself against me, or pulls me against her, I can’t tell which. Her hands move over my back, and I *want* her, in a way I haven’t felt before, not just some kind of mindless physical drive but a

real, specific desire. Not for “someone,” just for *her*.

I touch her back, her hair. It’s enough, for now.

“Should I be crying?” she asks, and it takes me a second to realize she’s talking about Al again. Good, because if this embrace made her want to cry, I would have to admit to knowing absolutely nothing about romance. Which might be true anyway. “Is there something wrong with me?”

“You think I know anything about tears?” Mine come without prompting and disappear a few seconds later.

“If I had forgiven him… do you think he would be alive now?”

“I don’t know.” I set my hand on her cheek, my fingers stretching back to her ear. She really is small. I don’t mind it.

“I feel like it’s my fault,” she says.

So do I.

“It isn’t your fault.” I bring my forehead to hers. Her breaths are warm against my face. I was right, this is better than keeping my distance, this is much better.

“But I should have. I should have forgiven him.”

“Maybe. Maybe there’s more we all could have done,” I say, and then I spit out an Abnegation platitude without thinking. “But we just have to let the guilt remind us to do better next time.”

She pulls away immediately, and I feel that familiar impulse, to be mean to her so she forgets what I said, so she doesn’t ask me any questions.

“What faction did you come from, Four?”

I think you know. “It doesn’t matter. This is where I am now. Something you would do well to remember for yourself.”

I don’t want to be close to her anymore; it’s all I want to do.

I want to kiss her; now is not the time.

I touch my lips to her forehead, and neither of us moves. No turning back now, not for me.

Something she said sticks with me all day. *This would never have happened in Abnegation*.

At first I find myself thinking, *She just doesn’t know what they’re really like*.

But I’m wrong, and she’s right. Al would not have died in Abnegation, and he would not have attacked her there, either. They may not be as purely good as I once believed—or wanted to believe—but they certainly aren’t evil, either.

I see the map of the Abnegation sector, the one I found on Max’s computer, printed on my eyelids when I close my eyes. If I warn them, if I don’t, I’m a traitor either way, to one thing or another. So if loyalty is impossible, what do I strive for instead?

It takes me a while to figure out a plan, how to go about this. If she was a normal Dauntless girl and I was a normal Dauntless boy, I would ask her on a date and we would make out by the chasm and I might show off my knowledge of Dauntless headquarters. But that feels too ordinary, after the things we’ve said to each other, after I’ve seen into the darkest parts of her mind.

Maybe that’s the problem—it’s all one-sided right now, because I know her, I know what she’s afraid of and what she loves and what she hates, but all she knows about me is what I’ve told her. And what I’ve told her is so vague as to be negligible, because I have a problem with specificity.

After that I know what to do, it’s just the doing it that’s the problem.

I turn on the computer in the fear landscape room and set it to follow my program. I get two syringes of simulation serum from the storeroom, and put them in the little black box I have for this purpose. Then I set out for the transfer dormitory, not sure how I’ll get her alone long enough to ask her to come with me.

But then I see her with Will and Christina, standing by the railing, and I should call her name and ask her, but I can’t do it. Am I crazy, thinking of letting her into my head? Letting her see Marcus, learn my name, know everything I’ve tried so hard to keep hidden?

I start up the paths of the Pit again, my stomach churning. I reach the lobby, and the city lights are starting to go out all around us. I hear her footsteps on the stairs. She came after me.

I turn the black box in my hand.

“Since you’re here,” I say, like it’s casual, which is ridiculous, “you might as well go in with me.”

“Into your fear landscape?”

“Yes.”

“I can do that?”

“The serum connects you to the program, but the program determines whose landscape you go through. And right now, it’s set to put us through mine.”

“You would let me see that?”

I can’t quite look at her. “Why else do you think I’m going in?” My stomach hurts even worse. “There are some things I want to show you.”

I open the box and take out the first syringe. She tilts her head, and I inject the serum, just like we always do during fear simulations. But instead of injecting myself with the other syringe, I offer her the box. This is supposed to be my way of evening things out, after all.

“I’ve never done this before,” she says.

“Right here.” I touch the place. She shakes a little as she inserts the needle, and the deep ache is familiar, but it no longer bothers me. I’ve done this too many times. I watch her face. No turning back, no turning back. Time to see what we’re both made of.

I take her hand, or maybe she takes mine, and we walk into the fear landscape room together.

“See if you can figure out why they call me Four.”

The door closes behind us, and the room is black. She moves closer to me and says, “What’s your real name?”

“See if you can figure that out, too.”

The simulation begins.

The room opens up to a wide blue sky, and we are on the roof of the building, surrounded by the city, sparkling in the sun. It’s beautiful for just a moment before the wind starts, fierce and powerful, and I put my arm around her because I know she’s steadier than I am, in this place.

I’m having trouble breathing, which is normal for me, here. I find the rush of air suffocating, and the height makes me want to curl into a ball and hide.

“We have to jump off, right?” she says, and I remember that I can’t curl into a ball and hide; I have to face this now.

I nod.

“On three, okay?”

I nod again. All I have to do is follow her, that's all I have to do.

She counts to three and drags me behind her as she runs, like she's a sailboat and I'm an anchor, pulling us both down. We fall and I struggle against the sensation with every inch of me, terror shrieking in every nerve, and then I'm on the ground, clutching my chest.

She helps me to my feet. I feel stupid, remembering how she scaled that Ferris wheel with no hesitation.

"What's next?"

I want to tell her it's not a game; my fears aren't thrilling rides she gets to go on. But she probably doesn't mean it that way.

"It's—"

The wall comes from nowhere, slamming into her back, my back, both our sides. Forcing us together, closer than we've ever been before.

"Confinement," I say, and it's worse than usual with her in here, taking up half the air. I groan a little, hunching over her. I hate it in here. I *hate* it in here.

"Hey," she says. "It's okay. Here—"

She pulls my arm around her. I've always thought of her as spare, not an ounce of extra anything on her. But her waist is soft.

"This is the first time I'm happy I'm so small," she says.

"Mmhmm."

She's talking about how to get out. Fear-landscape strategy. I am trying to focus on breathing. Then she pulls us both down, to make the box smaller, and turns so her back is against my chest, so I'm completely wrapped around her.

"This is worse," I say, because with my nervousness about the box and my nervousness about touching her combined, I can't even think straight. "This is definitely…"

"Shh. Arms around me."

I wrap my arms around her waist, and bury my face in her shoulder. She smells like Dauntless soap, and sweet, like apple.

I'm forgetting where I am.

She's talking about the fear landscape again, and I'm listening, but I'm also focused on how she *feels*.

"So try to forget we're here," she finishes.

"Yeah?" I put my mouth right up against her ear, on purpose this time, to

keep the distraction going, but also because I get the feeling I'm not the only one who's distracted. "That easy, huh?"

"You know, most boys would enjoy being trapped in close quarters with a girl."

"Not claustrophobic people, Tris!"

"Okay, okay." She guides my hand to her chest, right under where her collarbone dips. All I can think about is what I want, which has nothing to do with getting out of this box, suddenly. "Feel my heartbeat. Can you feel it?"

"Yes."

"Feel how steady it is?"

I smile into her shoulder. "It's fast."

"Yes, well, that has nothing to do with the box." Of course it doesn't. "Every time you feel me breathe, you breathe. Focus on that."

We breathe together, once, twice.

"Why don't you tell me where this fear comes from. Maybe talking about it will help us somehow."

I feel like this fear should have vanished already, but what she's doing is keeping me at a steady level of heightened uneasiness, not taking my fear away completely. I try to focus on where this box comes from.

"Um… okay." *Okay, just do it, just say something real*. "This one is from my… fantastic childhood. Childhood punishments. The tiny closet upstairs."

Shut in the dark to think about what I did. It was better than other punishments, but sometimes I was in there for too long, desperate for fresh air.

"My mother kept our winter coats in our closet," she says, and it's a silly thing to say after what I just told her, but I can tell she doesn't know what else to do.

"I don't really want to talk about it anymore," I say with a gasp. She doesn't know what to say because no one could possibly know what to say, because my childhood pain is too pathetic for anyone else to handle—my heart rate spikes again.

"Okay. Then… I can talk. Ask me something."

I lift my head. It was working before, focusing on her. Her racing heart, her body against mine. Two strong skeletons wrapped in muscle, tangled together; two Abnegation transfers working on leaving tentative flirtation behind. "Why is

your heart racing, Tris?"

"Well, I… I barely know you." I can picture her scowling. "I barely know you and I'm crammed up against you in a box, Four, what do you think?"

"If we were in your fear landscape…" I say. "Would I be in it?"

"I'm not afraid of you."

"Of course you're not. That's not what I meant." I meant not *Are you afraid of me?* but *Am I important enough to you to feature in the landscape anyway?*

Probably not. She's right, she hardly knows me. But still: Her heart is racing.

I laugh, and the walls break as if my laugh shook them and broke them, and the air opens up around us. I swallow a deep breath of it, and we peel away from each other. She looks at me, suspicious.

"Maybe you were cut out for Candor, because you're a terrible liar," I say.

"I think my aptitude test ruled that one out pretty well."

"The aptitude test tells you nothing."

"What are you trying to tell me? Your test isn't the reason you ended up Dauntless?"

I shrug. "Not exactly, no. I…"

I see something out of the corner of my eye, and turn to face it. A plain-faced, forgettable woman stands alone at the other end of the room. Between her and us is a table with a gun on it.

"You have to kill her," Tris says.

"Every time."

"She isn't real."

"She looks real. It feels real."

"If she was real, she would have killed *you* already."

"It's okay. I'll just… do it." I start toward the table. "This one's not so bad. Not as much panic involved."

Panic and terror aren't the only kinds of fear. There are deeper kinds, more terrible kinds. Apprehension and heavy, heavy dread.

I load the gun without thinking about it, hold it out in front of me, and look at her face. She's blank, like she knows what I'm going to do and accepts it.

She's not dressed in the clothes of any faction, but she might as well be Abnegation, standing there waiting for me to hurt her, the way they would. The way they will, if Max and Jeanine and Evelyn all get their way.

I close one eye, to focus on my target, and fire.

She falls, and I think of punching Drew until he was almost unconscious.

Tris's hand closes around my arm. "Come on. Keep moving."

We walk past the table, and I shudder with fear. Waiting for this last obstacle might be a fear in itself.

"Here we go," I say.

Creeping into the circle of light we now occupy is a dark figure, pacing so just the edge of his shoe is visible. Then he steps toward us, Marcus with his black-pit eyes and his gray clothes and his close-cut hair, showing off the contours of his skull.

"Marcus," she whispers.

I watch him. Waiting for the first blow to fall. "Here's the part where you figure out my name."

"Is he…" She knows, now. She'll know forever; I can't make her forget it if I wanted to. "Tobias."

It's been so long since someone said my name that way, like it was a revelation and not a threat.

Marcus unwinds a belt from his fist.

"This is for your own good," he says, and I want to scream.

He multiplies immediately, surrounding us, the belts dragging on white tile. I curl into myself, hunching my back, waiting, waiting. The belt pulls back and I flinch before it hits, but then it doesn't.

Tris stands in front of me, her arm up, tense from head to toe. She grits her teeth as the belt wraps around her arm, and then she pulls it free, and lashes out. The movement is so powerful I'm amazed by how strong it looks, by how *hard* the belt slaps Marcus's skin.

He lunges at Tris, and I step in front of her. I'm ready this time, ready to fight back.

But the moment never comes. The lights lift and the fear landscape is over.

"That's it?" she says as I watch the place where Marcus stood. "Those were your worst fears? Why do you only have four… oh."

She looks at me.

"That's why they call you…"

I was afraid that if she knew about Marcus, she would look at me with pity,

and she would make me feel weak, and small, and empty.

But she saw Marcus and she looked at *him*, with anger and without fear. She made me feel, not weak, but powerful. Strong enough to fight back.

I tug her toward me by her elbow, and kiss her cheek, slowly, letting her skin burn into mine. I hold her tightly, slouching into her.

"Hey." She sighs. "We got through it."

I put my fingers through her hair.

"*You* got me through it," I say.

I take her to the rocks that Zeke, Shauna, and I go to sometimes, late at night. Tris and I sit on a flat stone suspended over the water, and the spray soaks my shoes, but it's not so cold that I mind. Like all initiates, she's too focused on the aptitude test, and I'm struggling with talking to her about it. I thought that when I spilled one secret, the rest would come tumbling after, but openness is a habit you form over time, and not a switch you flip whenever you want to, I'm finding.

"These are things I don't tell people, you know. Not even my friends." I watch the dark, murky water and the things it carries—pieces of trash, discarded clothing, floating bottles like small boats setting out on a journey. "My result was as expected. Abnegation."

"Oh." She frowns. "But you chose Dauntless anyway?"

"Out of necessity."

"Why did you have to leave?"

I look away, not sure I can give voice to my reasons, because admitting them makes me a faction traitor, makes me feel like a coward.

"You had to get away from your dad," she says. "Is that why you don't want to be a Dauntless leader? Because if you were, you might have to see him again?"

I shrug. "That, and I've always felt that I don't quite belong among the Dauntless. Not the way they are now, anyway." It's not quite the truth. I'm not sure this is the moment to tell her what I know about Max and Jeanine and the attack—selfishly, I want to keep this moment to myself, just for a little while.

"But… you're incredible," she says. I raise my eyebrows at her. She seems

embarrassed. “I mean, by Dauntless standards. Four fears is unheard of. How could you not belong here?”

I shrug again. The more time goes by, the stranger I find it that my fear landscape isn’t riddled with fears like everyone else’s. A lot of things make me nervous, anxious, uncomfortable… but when confronted with those things, I can *act*, I’m never paralyzed. My four fears, if I’m not careful, will paralyze me. That’s the only difference.

“I have a theory that selflessness and bravery aren’t all that different.” I look up at the Pit, rising high above us. From here I can see just a small slice of night sky. “All your life you’ve been training to forget yourself, so when you’re in danger, it becomes your first instinct. I could belong in Abnegation just as easily.”

“Yeah, well. I left Abnegation because I wasn’t selfless enough, no matter how hard I tried to be.”

“That’s not entirely true,” I say with a smile. “That girl who let someone throw knives at her to spare a friend, who hit my dad with a belt to protect me—that selfless girl, that’s not you?”

In this light, she looks like she comes from another world, her eyes rendered so pale they almost seem to glow in the dark.

“You’ve been paying close attention, haven’t you?” she asks, like she just read my mind. But she’s not talking about me looking at her face.

“I like to observe people,” I say slyly.

“Maybe you were cut out for Candor, Four, because you’re a terrible liar.”

I set my hand down next to hers and lean closer. “Fine.” Her long, narrow nose is no longer swollen from the attack, and neither is her mouth. She has a nice mouth. “I watched you because I like you. And… don’t call me ‘Four,’ okay? It’s… nice. To hear my name again.”

She looks momentarily bewildered.

“But you’re older than I am… Tobias.”

It sounds so good when she says it. Like it’s nothing to be ashamed of.

“Yes, that whopping two-year gap really is *insurmountable*, isn’t it?”

“I’m not trying to be self-deprecating,” she says stubbornly. “I just don’t get it. I’m younger. I’m not pretty. I—”

I laugh, and kiss her temple.

“Don’t pretend,” she says, sounding a little breathless. “You know I’m not. I’m not ugly, but I am certainly not pretty.”

The word “pretty,” and all that it represents, seems so completely useless right now that I have no patience for it.

“Fine. You’re not pretty. So?” I move my lips to her cheek, trying to work up some courage. “I like how you look.” I pull back. “You’re deadly smart. You’re brave. And even though you found out about Marcus… you aren’t giving me that look. Like I’m… a kicked puppy, or something.”

“Well,” she says factually. “You’re not.”

My instincts were right: She is worth trusting. With my secrets, with my shame, with the name that I abandoned. With the beautiful truths and the awful ones. I know it.

I touch my lips to hers. Our eyes meet, and I grin, and kiss her again, this time more sure of it.

It’s not enough. I pull her closer, kiss her harder. She comes alive, putting her arms around me and leaning into me and it’s still not enough, how can it be?

I walk her back to the transfer dormitory, my shoes still damp from the river spray, and she smiles at me as she slips through the doorway. I start toward my apartment, and it doesn’t take long for the giddy relief to give way to uneasiness again. Somewhere between watching that belt curl around her arm in my fear landscape and telling her that selflessness and bravery were often the same thing, I made a decision.

I turn at the next corner, not toward my apartment but toward a stairway that leads outside, right next to Max’s place. I slow down when I pass his door, afraid that my footsteps will be loud enough to rouse him. Irrational.

My heart pounds when I reach the top of the stairs. A train is just passing, its silver side catching moonlight. I walk beneath the tracks and set out toward the Abnegation sector.

Tris came from Abnegation—part of her innate power comes from them, whenever she’s called upon to defend people who are weaker than she is. And I

can’t stand to think of the men and women who are like her falling to Dauntless-Erudite weapons. They may have lied to me, and maybe I failed them when I chose Dauntless, and maybe I’m failing Dauntless now, but I don’t have to fail myself. And *I*, no matter what faction I’m in, know the right thing to do.

The Abnegation sector is so clean, not a scrap of trash on the streets, sidewalks, or lawns. The identical gray buildings are worn in places from where selfless people have refused to mend them when the factionless sector so badly needs the materials, but neat and unremarkable. The streets here could easily be a maze, but I haven’t been gone long enough to forget the way to Marcus’s house.

Strange, how quickly it became *his* house instead of mine, in my mind.

Maybe I don’t have to tell him; I could tell another Abnegation leader, but he’s the most influential one, and there’s still a part of him that’s my father, that tried to protect me because I’m Divergent. I try to remember the swell of power I felt in my fear landscape, when Tris showed me he was just a man, not a monster, and that I could face him. But she’s not here with me now, and I feel flimsy, like I’m made of paper.

I walk up the path to the house, and my legs are rigid, like they don’t have joints. I don’t knock; I don’t want to wake anyone else. I reach under the doormat for the spare key and unlock the front door.

It’s late, but the light is still on in the kitchen. By the time I walk through the door, he’s already standing where I can see him. Behind him, the kitchen table is covered with papers. He’s not wearing his shoes—they’re on the living room carpet, their laces undone—and his eyes are just as shadowed as they are in my nightmares about him.

“What are you doing here?” He looks me up and down. I wonder what he’s looking at until I remember that I’m wearing Dauntless black, heavy boots and a jacket, tattoo ink on my neck. He comes a little closer, and I notice that I’m as tall as he is, and stronger than I ever have been.

He could never overpower me now.

“You’re no longer welcome in this house,” he says.

“I…” I stand up straighter, and not because he hates bad posture. “I don’t care,” I say, and his eyebrows pop up like I just surprised him.

Maybe I did.

“I came to warn you,” I say. “I found something. Attack plans. Max and Jeanine are going to attack Abnegation. I don’t know when, or how.”

He watches me for a second, in a way that makes me feel like I’m being measured, and then his expression shifts into a sneer.

“Max and Jeanine are going to attack,” he says. “Just the two of them, armed with some simulation syringes?” His eyes narrow. “Did Max send you here? Have you become his Dauntless lackey? What, does he want to scare me?”

When I thought about warning the Abnegation, I was sure the hardest part would be getting myself through this door. It never occurred to me that he wouldn’t *believe* me.

“Don’t be stupid,” I say. I would never have said that to him when I lived in this house, but two years of intentionally adopting Dauntless speech patterns make it come out of my mouth naturally. “If you’re suspicious of Max, it’s for a reason, and I’m telling you it’s a good one. You’re right to be suspicious. You’re in danger—you all are.”

“You dare to come to my house after you betrayed your faction,” he says, his voice low, “after you betrayed your *family*… and insult me?” He shakes his head. “I refuse to be intimidated into doing what Max and Jeanine want, and certainly not by my son.”

“You know what?” I say. “Forget it. I should have gone to someone else.”

I turn toward the door, and he says, “Don’t walk away from me.”

His hand closes around my arm, tightly. I stare at it, for a second feeling dizzy, like I’m outside of my own body, already separating myself from the moment so I can survive it.

You can fight him, I think, as I remember Tris drawing back the belt in my fear landscape to strike him.

I pull my arm free, and I’m too strong for him to hold on to. But I can only muster the strength to walk away, and he doesn’t dare shout after me, not when the neighbors could hear. My hands shake a little bit, so I put them in my pockets. I don’t hear the front door shut behind me, so I know he’s watching me go.

It wasn’t the triumphant return I pictured.

I feel guilty when I pass through the doorway to the Pire, like there are Dauntless eyes all over me, judging me for what I just did. I went against the Dauntless leaders, and for what? For a man I hate, who didn't even believe me? It doesn't feel like it was worth it, worth being called a faction traitor.

I look through the glass floor to the chasm far beneath me, the water calm and dark, too far away to reflect any moonlight. A few hours ago I was standing right here, about to show a girl I hardly knew all the secrets I've fought so hard to protect.

She was equal to my trust, even if Marcus wasn't. *She*, and her mother, and the rest of the faction she believes in, are still worth protecting. So that's what I'm going to do.