

# Chapter 42: Los Angeles: Daniel 7

The chapter opens with Daniel reflecting on Dominic Hann's failed attempt to destroy Ross City, noting that while Hann survived his injuries, his reign of terror is over. Daniel and his brother Eden are recovering in the hospital, observing the city's Level system being restored—yet with subtle changes Eden secretly implemented. Daniel grapples with guilt over his past detachment from the Undercity's struggles, realizing Eden had been right all along. His scars serve as reminders of a life he tried to leave behind, but he now understands that ignoring his past is not the solution.

June visits Daniel before her return to the Republic, and their conversation reveals a newfound ease and affection between them. They discuss Eden's alterations to the Level system, which will allow Undercity residents to protest and share resources without punishment. Though uncertain whether the government will accept these changes, Daniel prepares to face the AIS and defend their actions. June offers her support, and their emotional exchange underscores their deepening bond, with Daniel admitting his true home is wherever June is.

The scene shifts to Daniel and Eden standing before the AIS and President Ikari, who interrogates them about their unauthorized modifications to the Level system. Eden takes responsibility, but Daniel boldly asserts that their changes were necessary to force the government to listen to its people. The tense atmosphere mirrors the political struggles June once faced in the Republic, highlighting the difficulty of challenging oppressive systems. Director Min's silent support hints at potential allies within the government, but the outcome remains uncertain.

The chapter concludes with Daniel's unfinished defense, emphasizing the dangers of a society where dissent is punished. His words echo Eden's earlier arguments, reinforcing the theme of systemic injustice and the need for change. The brothers' calm defiance contrasts with the officials' discomfort, suggesting a turning point in

Ross City's rigid hierarchy. The unresolved tension leaves readers anticipating the consequences of their rebellion and the future of their fight for equality.

