

# Chapter Forty-Eight

Tobias and Peter arrive at the factionless headquarters, a place Tobias still associates with the Erudite faction despite its current occupants. Tobias expresses his disdain for the building, while Peter pragmatically suggests finding a way inside. Tobias insists on walking in openly as Evelyn's son, though Peter reminds him of their fraught history and the risks involved. Their tense exchange highlights their uneasy alliance, with Peter prioritizing the memory serum over Tobias's safety. The scene sets the stage for a high-stakes confrontation with Evelyn, underscored by Tobias's unresolved emotions toward his mother.

Inside the lobby, Tobias and Peter encounter factionless guards, some familiar and others strangers, reflecting the factionless's growing influence. Tobias attempts to negotiate entry by claiming to have a message for Evelyn, but the guards remain skeptical until Grace, a former Abnegation neighbor, recognizes him. Her hesitation and eventual decision to alert Evelyn reveal the shifting dynamics of power and identity in the post-faction world. The tension eases slightly as Grace escorts them to an elevator, where Tobias questions her newfound willingness to wield a weapon, symbolizing the collapse of old faction norms.

Evelyn awaits them in a stark meeting room, her weariness evident as she stares out the window. Tobias dismisses Peter, leaving him alone with his mother. He confesses that the outsiders intended to erase the city's memories, viewing its inhabitants as beyond reason. Evelyn's resigned response—"Maybe they're right"—hints at her own disillusionment. Tobias studies her, grappling with the contrast between his childhood memories and the hardened woman before him. The emotional weight of the moment builds as he prepares to reveal his true purpose.

Tobias places the memory serum vial on the table, declaring his intent to make Evelyn drink it. He explains his belief that this drastic measure is the only way to prevent the

impending violent clash between her forces and Marcus's rebels. Evelyn's reaction is ambiguous—tears or a trick of the light—as she acknowledges the grim reality of their situation. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, leaving readers to wonder whether Tobias will follow through or if Evelyn will resist, with the fate of the city hanging in the balance.

