

“Careful, Tris.”

The chapter opens with Four, the Dauntless instructor, reflecting on his role in guiding eight initiates—five from Candor, two from Erudite, and one from Abnegation—through the rigorous initiation process. He disapproves of the recent cuts implemented by leaders Eric and Max, who aim to mold Dauntless into a faction of brute strength. Four secretly plans to leave Dauntless once he uncovers Max and Jeanine’s schemes, even if it means abandoning his post mid-initiation. As he leads the initiates through the tunnels, he prepares to assert his authority, knowing he lacks Amar’s natural charisma and must rely on strict discipline to command respect.

Four introduces himself to the initiates, but his name, "Four," prompts skepticism from Christina, a Candor transfer. Her sarcastic remarks challenge his authority, prompting him to confront her aggressively. He warns her to stay silent, establishing his dominance early on. The tension highlights Four’s struggle to balance his disdain for Candor’s bluntness with the need to maintain control. As they enter the Pit, Four momentarily admires the vibrant energy of the space, a rare moment of appreciation for the faction he’s grown disillusioned with. He guides the initiates toward the chasm, signaling the start of their Dauntless journey.

The focus shifts to Tris, the Abnegation transfer, who stands out for her unfamiliarity with Dauntless customs, like eating hamburgers. Christina’s incredulous reaction underscores the cultural divide between factions. Four observes Tris closely, feeling a residual Abnegation courtesy toward her but forcing himself to adopt Dauntless slang. Tris’s dry humor surprises him, and he nearly smiles, revealing a flicker of connection. Their interaction is interrupted by Eric’s arrival, whose youthful leadership and Erudite ties make him a controversial figure. Four tenses, wary of Eric’s potential to expose his own Abnegation past or undermine Tris.

Eric's taunts toward Tris and probing questions about Four's activities heighten the tension. Four feigns indifference to Max's messages, hiding his covert investigation into Eric and Max's plans. The chapter closes with Four's internal conflict: his disdain for Eric's cruelty, his protective instinct toward Tris, and his determination to uncover the truth before leaving Dauntless. The interactions set the stage for the power dynamics and personal stakes that will define the initiation process and Four's evolving loyalties.

