

Chapter Twenty

The chapter opens with Tris anxiously awaiting a meeting between Jeanine and Jack Kang, counting down the hours while dining with Tobias, Lynn, and Lauren in the cafeteria. Tension is palpable as Tobias endures whispered insults of "coward" from passing Dauntless members, a result of his public Candor interrogation. Despite the provocation, Tobias remains composed until his focus shifts abruptly to Marcus, his abusive father, sitting among Candor members. Tris senses impending trouble as Tobias moves with purpose toward Marcus, signaling a confrontation fueled by deep-seated rage.

Tobias violently attacks Marcus, dragging him to the center of the room and beating him with a belt in a chillingly methodical manner. The scene mirrors the abuse Tobias suffered as a child, now reversed as he delivers the blows while quoting Marcus's own justification: "This is for your own good." The Dauntless onlookers laugh, but Tris is horrified, eventually intervening to stop the assault. Tobias coldly drops his mother's wedding ring near Marcus, declaring, "My mother says hello," before walking away, leaving Tris stunned by his calculated brutality.

In the aftermath, Tris confronts Tobias in the hallway, demanding an explanation for his actions. Tobias defends himself, asking if she suddenly pities Marcus after ignoring his struggles for weeks. He reveals the attack was a deliberate reenactment of his own trauma, a twisted retaliation for years of abuse. Tris recognizes the parallels between Tobias's inner turmoil and her own capacity for cruelty, realizing both harbor destructive impulses that both sustain and endanger them. The exchange leaves her shaken, unable to reconcile the Tobias she knows with the vengeful stranger before her.

The chapter ends with Tobias shutting Tris out, closing the elevator doors between them as she grapples with the implications of his actions. The encounter underscores

the darker aspects of their personalities and the fractures in their relationship. Tris is left to ponder the fine line between survival and self-destruction, as well as the consequences of unresolved pain. The scene sets the stage for further conflict, highlighting the emotional and moral complexities of their world.

