

Chapter Sixteen

The chapter opens with Tris in a tense standoff, carefully moving her hand toward a hidden knife as Dauntless traitors and Divergent prisoners gather in an elevator bank. She observes the fear of a Candor woman beside her and the bravery of a young boy, while forcing herself to focus on her breathing to stay calm. The Dauntless soldiers report their successful capture of hundreds of unconscious people, though Tris remains unaware of their motives. Her thoughts shift to Eric, an Erudite leader, as she steels herself to kill him, despite her reluctance, seeing it as her last chance to strike a meaningful blow against the enemy.

Eric arrives and coldly announces that only two Divergent will be spared for testing, while the rest will be executed. He methodically selects victims based on their age, claiming younger Divergent are less developed. When he shoots the young boy beside Tris, she barely contains her rage and grief, using her outburst to draw Eric's attention. He taunts her, speculating about her Divergence and mocking her defiance. As he leans closer, Tris seizes her moment, stabbing him with the knife, unable to bear watching the act but driven by necessity.

Chaos erupts as Eric collapses, and the Dauntless traitors scramble for their weapons. Uriah and other loyal Dauntless launch a counterattack, turning the tide. Tris, overwhelmed and shaking, struggles to pick up Eric's gun, her hands slick with his blood. Tobias (Four) shields her from gunfire, firing at the traitors while she watches in disbelief as their faction arrives to rescue them. The loyal Dauntless overwhelm the traitors, who flee or are subdued, though Tris feels useless in the fight, her emotions and physical exhaustion rendering her nearly helpless.

The chapter ends with the gunfire fading and the immediate threat neutralized. Tris, covered in Eric's blood, remains in shock as she realizes he is still alive, moaning on the floor. The rescue by the loyal Dauntless leaves questions unanswered—how they

awoke from the simulation, why the traitors attacked, and what comes next. The violence and tension underscore the brutal stakes of the conflict, with Tris's actions marking a pivotal moment in her struggle against the Erudite regime.

