

Chapter Two

Tobias reflects on his traumatic memories as he walks through the Erudite compound, now ravaged by war and repurposed as a prison. The place triggers recollections of Tris's near-execution and his own suffering, filling him with hatred. Despite its decay, his newfound status as Evelyn's son grants him access, symbolized by the factionless band on his arm. Upon entering Tris's cell, he finds her surrounded by allies, her presence commanding the room despite her small stature. Their reunion is charged with emotion, highlighting their deep connection amidst the chaos.

Tris questions Tobias about the city's lockdown under Evelyn's rule, revealing her desperation to understand the situation. Tobias explains Evelyn's rhetoric about uniting against external oppressors, a narrative that conveniently maintains her control. Tris scoffs at the selfishness of this stance, while Christina voices pragmatic concerns about abandoning the city's problems. Tobias, torn between his mother's logic and his own desire for freedom, remains neutral, though his internal conflict is palpable. The group debates the ethics of leaving versus staying, underscoring their ideological divides.

The urgency escalates as Tobias warns Tris about impending trials where prisoners will be subjected to truth serum and likely convicted as traitors. Tris angrily compares Evelyn's suppression of truth to Jeanine's tyranny, refusing to back down. Tobias privately acknowledges his ambivalence—while he resents the city's confines, he questions owing anything to outsiders. Cara's curiosity about Tris's Divergent resistance to serum adds tension, sparking Tris's irritation. The conversation underscores the precariousness of their situation and the stakes of defiance.

Amidst the tension, Tobias and Tris find solace in each other, their physical contact a rare comfort. Tris's determination to fight contrasts with Tobias's cautious pragmatism, though both share a desire to escape the city's oppression. The chapter

closes with Tobias's desperation to protect Tris, hinting at future plans to break her out. Their bond and the looming threat of Evelyn's regime set the stage for a high-stakes confrontation, blending personal loyalty with broader political conflict.

