

Chapter Twenty-One

The chapter opens with Tris and the others being informed of an attack drill over the intercom during breakfast. The instructions are to lock doors, cover windows, and remain quiet until the alarms stop. Tris notices Tobias appears exhausted and distracted, picking at his food. The group's lack of purpose since leaving the city leaves Tris feeling unsettled, as she is accustomed to constant action and conflict. She tries to relax but struggles with the idle waiting.

Tris attempts to engage Tobias by sharing her awe at seeing the world from a plane the previous day, but his response is dismissive due to his fear of heights. His reaction disappoints her, as she had hoped for a more enthusiastic or curious response. Their conversation turns tense when Tobias reveals his distress over the revelation about Marcus, his father, not being executed. Tris is frustrated, realizing she underestimated how deeply this news would affect him.

The alarms suddenly sound, disrupting their conversation and forcing everyone to take cover. Tris covers her ears while Tobias secures the room. As the others settle in, Tris turns to her mother's journal entries for distraction. The entries reveal her mother's mission to infiltrate the city to save the Divergent, posing as a Dauntless member before eventually joining Erudite to stop a killer. Tris is puzzled by the discrepancy between her mother's plan and her eventual choice to join Abnegation.

The chapter ends with Tris grappling with the unanswered questions about her mother's past decisions. The journal entries provide glimpses into her mother's motivations and the Bureau's manipulations, but they also raise new mysteries. Tris's frustration with Tobias and the unsettling drill amplify her sense of disorientation, leaving her searching for clarity amid the chaos.