

Chapter Twenty-Three

Tobias discovers a hidden note from Nita under his pillow, requesting a secret meeting at eleven. Though conflicted about keeping it from Tris, he rationalizes that Nita might have urgent matters to discuss. As he prepares to leave, he notices Uriah's flask and discreetly moves it, reflecting on his unfulfilled promise to Zeke to look after Uriah. The encounter sets a tone of secrecy and unease, hinting at underlying tensions within the group and Tobias's internal struggle with honesty in his relationship with Tris.

Nita leads Tobias through dim hallways to a secluded room adorned with bronze panels inscribed with names—the Chicago family trees. Tobias searches for familiar names, finding Uriah and Zeke Pedrad marked with “DD” for Divergent. Nita explains the matrilineal lineage system, revealing Tobias's own family tree, which traces back eight generations. The labels “AD” by his name and “AA” by Marcus's highlight their faction origins and choices, forcing Tobias to confront his inescapable ties to his parents, despite his efforts to distance himself.

The chapter delves into Tobias's emotional response to seeing his family history etched in bronze. He touches the lines connecting him to Evelyn and Marcus, feeling a mix of sadness and resignation. Nita reveals her true motive for the meeting: her earlier conversation about genetic damage was a test to gauge his reaction. She confides that she rejects the “damaged” label, hinting at a deeper resistance to the Bureau's classifications. Tobias, wary of her proximity and intentions, steps back, sensing a shift in their dynamic.

The encounter leaves Tobias unsettled, as Nita's revelation about her defiance against the Bureau's ideology raises questions about her trustworthiness. Her manipulative test and cryptic stance on genetic purity suggest she may be part of a larger rebellion. Tobias's internal conflict—between curiosity and caution, loyalty to Tris and intrigue with Nita—sets the stage for future tensions. The chapter ends on an ambiguous note,

foreshadowing potential alliances or betrayals in the evolving struggle against the Bureau's control.

