Chapter Thirty-Eight

Tobias observes the bustling activity outside the dormitory as GDs prepare airplanes for takeoff. He engages in lighthearted banter with Cara about her failed truth serum experiment on Tris, joking about Tris's stubbornness. Their conversation shifts to Tris's unexpected arrival, visibly distressed after a council meeting. The playful tone gives way to tension as Tris reveals the council's plan to reset the experiments using a memory-erasing serum, leaving Tobias and Cara alarmed by the ethical implications.

Tris explains the council's intention to deploy the memory serum virus across the experiments, effectively erasing their memories. As she processes this revelation, Tobias notices her internal conflict—unlike Cara, who reacts with certainty, Tris grapples with moral ambiguity. The group debates the council's overreach, with Tobias arguing against the violation of autonomy. Cara sarcastically suggests replacing the scientists, but Tris, struck by inspiration, proposes an alternative: using the same serum to reprogram the Bureau's leaders instead.

Tris's idea gains momentum as she outlines how resetting the Bureau could eliminate their prejudice against GDs and prevent future threats to the experiments. Cara raises practical concerns about erasing essential knowledge, but Tris believes targeted memory alteration is possible, citing Matthew's expertise. Tobias, however, interjects with a moral objection, pointing out the hypocrisy of forcibly altering memories—a mirror of the council's own plan. His intervention forces Tris to pause and reconsider the ethical weight of her proposal.

The chapter ends on a cliffhanger as Tobias physically blocks Tris's path, shielding his eyes from the glare of airplane wings. His challenge underscores the central dilemma: whether the ends justify the means. The scene captures the group's ideological divide—Cara's pragmatism, Tris's desperate ingenuity, and Tobias's principled resistance—setting the stage for a pivotal decision about power, memory, and

consent.