

# CHAPTER ONE

The chapter opens with the protagonist, a sixteen-year-old girl from the Abnegation faction, reflecting on her appearance during a rare moment in front of a mirror. Her mother cuts her hair, a ritual allowed only on specific days, highlighting the faction's strict rules against vanity. The protagonist observes her mother's calm demeanor and contrasts it with her own curiosity about her changing appearance. This scene sets the tone for the faction's values of selflessness and restraint, while also hinting at the protagonist's internal conflict between conformity and individuality.

The narrative shifts to the morning of the protagonist's aptitude test, a pivotal event that will determine her future faction. She discusses the test with her mother, who seems unusually understanding, and the protagonist feels a mix of guilt and determination about potentially leaving her family. The breakfast scene with her brother Caleb and father underscores the warmth of her family life, making her impending choice even more emotionally charged. The protagonist's thoughts reveal her anxiety about the test and the life-altering decision she must make the following day.

On the bus ride to school, the protagonist observes the stark differences between factions, such as the Candor's black-and-white attire symbolizing their commitment to honesty. The city's deteriorating infrastructure and the Dauntless's reckless behavior further emphasize the societal divisions. Caleb's selfless act of giving up his seat exemplifies Abnegation values, while the protagonist's physical clumsiness and lingering questions about her brother's feelings add depth to her character. The journey to school builds tension as the protagonist prepares for the test.

Arriving at school, the protagonist notes the frenetic energy of her peers on this last day before the Choosing Ceremony. The crowded hallways, where factions briefly mix, feel chaotic and overwhelming. A brief interaction with Caleb leaves her unsettled, as

he avoids answering whether he's nervous about the test. The chapter ends with the protagonist heading to class, still grappling with her fears about the test and the life-changing decisions ahead, while the bustling school environment mirrors her inner turmoil.

