

Chapter Three

The chapter opens with the protagonist checking for a hidden gun under her mattress, revealing her inner turmoil and struggle to maintain composure. After calming herself, she notices Johanna Reyes and Marcus Eaton walking outside and impulsively follows them, hiding in an apple orchard to eavesdrop. Their tense conversation hints at a deeper conflict, as Johanna presses Marcus for information about the Erudite's attack on Abnegation, suggesting it was motivated by hidden knowledge rather than mere power grabs.

Marcus remains guarded, revealing only that the Abnegation were entrusted with sensitive information that Jeanine sought to steal—information so valuable that many leaders died protecting it. Johanna's attempts to gain his trust are met with resistance, as Marcus expresses deep distrust after past betrayals led to his friends' deaths. Their interaction ends with Johanna kissing his cheek and walking away, leaving Marcus momentarily stunned before he departs. The protagonist is left reeling from the revelation that her father may have been among those who died protecting this secret.

Determined to uncover the truth, the protagonist seeks out Tobias, finding him in a lighthearted moment with her brother Caleb. The scene contrasts sharply with the earlier tension, as Tobias demonstrates his Dauntless skills by throwing a knife at cheese. Caleb's improved demeanor suggests he is recovering from recent trauma, while the protagonist's use of Tobias's nickname "Four" hints at their intimate connection. The playful exchange momentarily distracts from the weighty secrets she has just overheard.

The chapter effectively juxtaposes moments of vulnerability, tension, and fleeting normalcy. The protagonist's emotional instability, Marcus's guarded secrets, and the brief respite with Tobias and Caleb all contribute to a growing sense of urgency to uncover the truth. The revelation about the Abnegation's hidden knowledge adds a

new layer to the conflict, driving the protagonist's determination to understand what cost her father's life and why the Erudite would kill for it.

