

Chapter Thirty-Eight

The chapter opens with the protagonist reflecting on her mother's words during a past simulation attack, questioning whether her mother's intention was solely to save her or also to protect a file. This internal conflict is compounded by her distrust of Marcus, whom she acknowledges as neither wholly good nor bad, but a complex figure whose cruelty doesn't necessarily make him dishonest. As she walks back to the Eaton house, she notices fires burning in large metal bowls, signaling a gathering of Dauntless and factionless members, where leaders like Evelyn, Harrison, Tori, and Tobias prepare to announce their attack plan against the Erudite.

The leaders reveal a broad strategy to assault Erudite headquarters, emphasizing the need to destroy their information and control mechanisms, particularly the simulation transmitters. Evelyn and Tori explain that those with transmitters must stay behind to avoid being weaponized by Jeanine, sparking mixed reactions among the crowd. The protagonist observes the unity of the factions in their shared hatred of Erudite but remains uncertain about the morality of their plan. Tobias and Christina, however, seem hesitant, hinting at underlying dissent.

As the crowd erupts in cheers, the protagonist feels a surge of collective triumph but also notices Evelyn's detached demeanor, describing her expression as mask-like. Tori rallies the group with a chant of "Down with Erudite," which unites the factions in their common enemy. However, the protagonist's friends, Christina and Tobias, refrain from joining, with Christina voicing her discomfort. Lynn, on the other hand, passionately defends the attack, recalling the atrocities committed by Erudite.

The chapter ends on a tense note, highlighting the moral ambiguity of the planned attack. While the factions are united in their desire for revenge, the protagonist and her close allies grapple with the ethical implications of their actions. The contrast between the fervor of the crowd and the reservations of key characters underscores

the chapter's central conflict: the fine line between justice and vengeance, and the cost of collective violence.

