

CHAPTER TEN

The chapter opens with the protagonist waking from a nightmare in which she fails to save Christina from falling, only to discover her mattress vandalized with the word "Stiff" by Peter, a fellow Dauntless initiate. Their tense exchange reveals Peter's animosity, as he coldly asserts they will never truly belong to the same faction. Despite her anger, the protagonist resists retaliating, aided by Al, who helps her clean up and advises ignoring Peter's provocations. Their conversation shifts to Al's guilt over knocking out another initiate, Will, during training, highlighting the brutal nature of Dauntless initiation.

The protagonist's anxiety escalates when she learns she must fight Peter in the training arena. Christina and Al express concern, suggesting she take a fall to avoid severe injury, but their lack of faith in her abilities stings. Observing Molly's defeat against Edward, the protagonist mentally assesses Peter's strengths—his speed, ruthlessness, and tactical precision—and acknowledges her own lack of combat skill. Though tempted to feign unconsciousness, she resolves to fight, fearing the consequences of being ranked last among the initiates.

As the fight begins, Peter taunts her, demanding tears or begging, while Four and Eric watch from the sidelines. The protagonist's impulsive kick is easily countered, and Peter knocks her to the ground. Eric impatiently orders Peter to stop toying with her, prompting a swift and brutal attack. A punch to her jaw leaves her disoriented, followed by a kick to the stomach that steals her breath and sends her collapsing in pain. The scene underscores the merciless nature of Dauntless training and the protagonist's vulnerability.

The chapter emphasizes the psychological and physical toll of initiation, as the protagonist grapples with bullying, self-doubt, and the pressure to prove herself. Peter's cruelty and her friends' well-meaning but discouraging advice amplify her

isolation. The fight's outcome leaves her humiliated and injured, foreshadowing greater challenges ahead. The narrative captures the tension between resilience and despair, as she confronts the harsh realities of her new faction.

