

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The chapter opens with the initiates arriving for another training session, this time focusing on knife-throwing. Eric, the rigid and intimidating Dauntless leader, announces the day's agenda while Four demonstrates the proper technique. The atmosphere is tense, with Eric's bad mood evident from his interactions, particularly his resentment toward Four after their recent loss in a capture-the-flag game. Tris, the protagonist, observes Four's movements closely, determined to master the skill despite the pressure. Her quiet determination contrasts with Peter's taunts, but she manages to hit the target first, earning a small victory.

As the training progresses, Al struggles to hit the target, drawing Eric's ire. Eric's frustration escalates into cruelty as he singles out Al, demanding he retrieve a knife while others continue throwing—a dangerous task. Al's refusal to comply, citing his fear of being hit, further angers Eric, who sees honesty as weakness. The tension peaks when Eric orders Al to stand in front of the target while Four throws knives at him, ostensibly to teach him not to flinch. Four's reluctance to participate hints at his disapproval, but Eric asserts his authority, forcing Four to comply.

The confrontation between Eric and Four underscores the power dynamics within Dauntless, with Eric's ruthlessness contrasting with Four's restrained defiance. Tris, unable to stomach the injustice, impulsively speaks up, demanding Eric stop. Her outburst draws a sharp look from Four, who seems to warn her against challenging Eric directly. The scene highlights the initiates' vulnerability and the brutal nature of Dauntless training, where pride and dominance often override reason.

The chapter closes with Tris's anger simmering as she witnesses Al's humiliation and Four's forced participation. The incident reinforces the harsh realities of Dauntless life, where defiance comes at a cost and compassion is seen as a liability. Tris's moral conflict—balancing self-preservation with her sense of justice—foreshadows future

struggles as she navigates the faction's cutthroat culture. The tension between Eric and Four, as well as Tris's growing defiance, sets the stage for further clashes in the story.

