The Death Cure

In *The Death Cure*, the harrowing conclusion to the *Maze Runner* trilogy, **Thomas** and his friends escape WICKED's control—only to discover the organization's experiments were just the beginning. The **Flare virus** is spreading uncontrollably, turning humanity into mindless, cannibalistic **Cranks**.

WICKED claims they've found a cure, but at a horrific cost: the survivors of the Trials must **surrender their memories** permanently. Thomas refuses, leading a rebellion against WICKED's scientists. With allies like **Minho**, **Newt**, and **Brenda**, he races to uncover the truth behind the Flare—and whether the cure is real or another lie.

As battles rage in the **Scorch** and **WICKED's headquarters**, Thomas faces gut-wrenching choices: trust the organization that tortured him, or risk humanity's extinction. The finale delivers **shocking betrayals, brutal losses, and a last stand that redefines survival**.

Chapter 1

Thomas has been confined for over three weeks in a sterile white room, stripped of all comforts and human contact. His isolation is absolute—no windows, constant light, identical meals, and no communication. Though he tries to track time instinctively, the irregularity of meals disorients him. The room contains only a toilet and a useless wooden desk, leaving him alone with his thoughts about the Flare, a deadly virus slowly eroding his humanity. Despite these harsh conditions, it's the unbearable stench of his own unwashed body that gnaws at his sanity, making him feel like he's rotting from the inside out.

The lack of hygiene begins to consume Thomas, fueling irrational fears that his filth symbolizes impending death. He questions whether Teresa and Brenda were right about his deteriorating mental state and the Flare's rapid progression. Dark thoughts plague him, especially about his friends' fates—Minho, Newt, and others—wondering if they're suffering the same torment. Anger simmers beneath the surface, directed at WICKED, the organization responsible for his captivity and the exploitation of his life. Thomas vows revenge, clinging to his rage as a lifeline against madness.



Each day, Thomas follows a rigid routine: eating, exercising, and staring at the door, hoping it will open fully. He's tried escaping but finds nothing useful in the empty desk drawers. His mind races with memories of his friends and Teresa, whose betrayal haunts him. Her final words—"WICKED is good"—intensify his hatred, making her a symbol of all his suffering. The anger toward her and WICKED becomes a twisted anchor, perhaps the only thing keeping him from complete breakdown as the days drag on.

For three more days, Thomas endures the monotony of isolation, his resolve hardening. His existence narrows to survival and vengeance, each moment fueling his determination to make WICKED pay. On the twenty-sixth day, the door finally opens, marking a potential turning point in his captivity. The chapter captures Thomas's psychological unraveling and the fierce resilience born from his desperation and rage.

Chapter 2

Thomas, confined in a white room, had often fantasized about escaping WICKED but knew it was futile. When the door finally opens, he freezes, sensing an invisible barrier. The Rat Man, a familiar and unsettling figure, enters carrying a folder and sits calmly, ignoring Thomas’s sarcastic remark about a "good morning." Despite his anger, Thomas feels a flicker of hope at the mention of "positive news," though he quickly dismisses it, knowing WICKED’s deceitful nature.

The tension escalates as Thomas confronts the Rat Man, accusing him of lying about the Flare virus. The Rat Man remains composed, insisting the suffering served a greater purpose. Thomas’s frustration peaks as he mocks WICKED’s experiments, but the Rat Man’s claim that Thomas himself had agreed to the plan leaves him unsettled. Memories of his past involvement with WICKED resurface, though they feel distant and fragmented.

The Rat Man reveals the grim truth: WICKED’s experiments, including the Maze, were designed to study Thomas’s brain patterns to find a cure for the Flare. He argues that the sacrifices were necessary for humanity’s survival. Thomas grapples with this revelation, recalling flashes of his role in the organization. While he acknowledges his past, he struggles to reconcile it with the brutality he’s endured, feeling both complicit and betrayed.

Exhausted, Thomas sinks to the floor, torn between skepticism and the dawning realization that the Rat Man might be telling the truth. The chapter ends with Thomas on the brink of uncovering more about his past, yet wary of trusting WICKED’s narrative. The Rat Man’s professorial tone contrasts with Thomas’s emotional turmoil, leaving the reader questioning what truths—or lies—await him next.

Chapter 3

In this chapter, Thomas grapples with the shocking revelation that he and the other Gladers are immune to the Flare, a deadly virus, which is why they were subjected to the cruel Trials by WICKED. The experiments, including the lies and monsters they faced, were part of an elaborate plan to find a cure. Thomas realizes this truth aligns with his fragmented memories, making it undeniable. Rat Man confirms that WICKED was created to study immune individuals like Thomas, using non-immune subjects as controls. The revelation leaves Thomas disturbed, especially when Rat Man avoids disclosing who isn’t immune.

Thomas confronts Rat Man about the lies during the Trials, particularly the false promise of a cure at the safe haven. Rat Man justifies the deception, claiming the Trials generated crucial data for the eventual cure. Thomas questions why he was isolated for weeks, to which Rat Man explains it was to study his brain’s response to the virus, referred to as the "killzone." The killzone, where the Flare attacks the brain, is central to WICKED’s experiments. Rat Man reveals WICKED’s full name—World in Catastrophe, Killzone Experiment Department—emphasizing their mission to map immune brains for a cure. Despite the logic, Thomas remains distrustful.

After the intense conversation, Thomas is led to a shower room, where he is given fresh clothes and time to clean up. Rat Man informs him he will soon reunite with his friends, though Thomas remains wary. The chapter highlights Thomas’s internal conflict as he processes the truth about WICKED’s motives. His thoughts drift to Teresa, a former best friend, whose absence leaves a void despite his growing resentment. The chapter ends with Thomas embracing the small relief of leaving his confinement, focusing on the immediate comfort of a shower while bracing for the uncertain reunion ahead.

The chapter underscores themes of manipulation, trust, and the moral ambiguity of WICKED’s actions. Thomas’s journey is marked by a mix of clarity and doubt as he pieces together his role in the larger experiment. The tension between his logical acceptance of WICKED’s goals and his emotional resistance to their methods drives the narrative forward. The setting shifts from confinement to a more open space, symbolizing a transitional phase for Thomas as he prepares to face the next stage of WICKED’s plan, still grappling with unanswered questions about his past and future.



Chapter 4

After cleansing himself and donning fresh clothes, Thomas feels a renewed sense of hope, though his tattoo serves as a stark reminder of his past trials. As he waits outside the bathroom, the Rat Man reappears, greeting him with a forced smile. Thomas suppresses his sarcasm, focusing instead on gathering information and reuniting with his friends. The Rat Man reveals that Phase Three of the Trials involved varied tests for each participant, emphasizing their role in helping WICKED solve a critical puzzle. Thomas is skeptical but follows him to a small auditorium where the other Gladers are gathered.

Relief floods Thomas as he sees his friends—Minho, Newt, Frypan, and others—alive and seemingly well, though their cheerful demeanor may be superficial. He searches for Brenda and Jorge but finds no trace of them. Minho’s boisterous greeting lightens the mood, but Thomas remains preoccupied, especially when he spots Teresa. Their reunion is tense; Thomas attempts telepathic communication, but their connection seems severed. Despite Teresa’s attempts to reconcile, he struggles to trust her after her betrayal, though he masks his anger as embarrassment under the Gladers’ teasing.

The Rat Man interrupts the reunion, announcing that the group will soon regain their memories—a revelation that stuns everyone. Thomas is particularly shaken by the mention of removing the Swipe, which would restore their lost past. The Rat Man’s casual delivery contrasts sharply with the weight of his words, leaving the Gladers in uneasy silence. As he takes the stage, the chapter ends on a cliffhanger, hinting at a pivotal moment where the characters’ understanding of themselves and WICKED’s motives may drastically change.

The chapter underscores themes of trust, trauma, and the lingering effects of the Trials. Thomas’s internal conflict with Teresa and his cautious optimism about the

future highlight his growth amid adversity. The Rat Man’s announcement about the Swipe’s removal introduces a new layer of uncertainty, setting the stage for potential revelations and further challenges. The Gladers’ camaraderie provides fleeting comfort, but the looming restoration of their memories promises to disrupt their fragile unity.



Chapter 5

In Chapter 5, Thomas grapples with the sudden offer to restore his memories, a prospect that initially seemed desirable but now feels unsettling. Rat Man announces the end of the Trials, emphasizing the importance of their cooperation to combat the Flare and save humanity. However, Thomas and his friends, including Minho and Newt, remain deeply distrustful of WICKED, especially after the losses they've endured. The group's anger flares as Rat Man dismisses their suffering, insisting the sacrifices were necessary for the greater good.

The chapter highlights a sharp divide among the survivors. While Teresa and Aris advocate for trusting WICKED and regaining their memories, Frypan and others vehemently oppose the idea, fearing further manipulation. Thomas, torn between curiosity about his past and mistrust of WICKED, leans toward refusal. Rat Man's attempt to sway them by appealing to their longing for family and pre-Trial memories only deepens the tension, leaving Thomas questioning the authenticity of any restored memories.

As the group debates, Thomas privately resolves with Minho and Newt to resist WICKED's plans, recognizing the need for caution and timing. Their solidarity contrasts with the majority's decision to proceed with memory restoration, leaving Thomas disheartened. The chapter underscores their determination to break free from WICKED's control, even as they face internal conflict and uncertainty about their next steps.

The chapter concludes with Rat Man leading the group to a sterile room equipped with ominous medical devices designed to remove the Swipe. Thomas's apprehension grows as he observes the unfamiliar machinery, reinforcing his refusal to participate. The scene sets the stage for a looming confrontation, as Thomas and his allies prepare to challenge WICKED's authority while navigating the risks of rebellion.

Chapter 6

The chapter opens with tension as the Rat Man reveals the truth about the group's immunity to the Flare virus. Thomas grapples with fear and shock upon learning that Newt, a close friend, is not immune. The Rat Man explains the necessity of a control group for their experiments, emphasizing that most are immune, but a few, including Newt, are not. Newt reacts with forced bravado, downplaying the severity of his fate, while Thomas struggles to process the news. The emotional weight of the revelation is palpable as others in the room react with despair or numbness.

The Rat Man shifts focus to the next phase of their ordeal: a procedure to remove brain implants and restore memories using a device called the Retractor. He assures them the process will be less traumatic than the Changing they experienced in the Maze. Despite his promises, skepticism lingers among the group. The Rat Man leaves to prepare the medical teams, prompting a chaotic outburst of conversations as the characters debate their next steps. The chapter highlights the group's fractured trust in WICKED and their growing unease about the procedure.

Teresa, Minho, and Thomas engage in a heated discussion about whether to proceed. Teresa advocates for compliance, arguing that regaining their memories is essential for making informed decisions. Thomas and Minho, however, distrust WICKED’s motives, fearing manipulation. Newt and Frypan join the debate, with Newt adamantly refusing to participate, despite his vulnerability to the Flare. The tension between Teresa and the others underscores the deep divisions within the group, as her loyalty to WICKED remains a point of contention.

The chapter concludes with Teresa consulting Aris, another key figure, to sway the group’s opinion. Thomas and his friends remain resolute in their defiance, unwilling to trust WICKED’s promises. The unresolved conflict sets the stage for further confrontation, as the characters brace themselves for the uncertain consequences of

their choices. The chapter masterfully blends emotional turmoil with ethical dilemmas, leaving readers questioning the true intentions of WICKED and the fate of the protagonists.



Chapter 7

The chapter begins with Thomas and his friends, Newt and Minho, being led by Rat Man (Assistant Director Janson) through a series of rooms where WICKED doctors prepare to perform an unspecified procedure. The group is divided, with some, like Frypan, reluctantly agreeing to participate, while others, including Newt and Minho, refuse. Thomas senses the surreal and sinister nature of the situation, comparing it to a gangster's roll call before an execution. The casual demeanor of the WICKED staff contrasts sharply with the gravity of the experiment, heightening Thomas's unease and determination to resist.

As the group moves to the final room, Thomas and Minho openly defy Rat Man, refusing the procedure. Rat Man's calm but strained reaction suggests underlying tension. The scene takes a dramatic turn when Brenda, a familiar face from the Scorch, appears among the WICKED staff. She secretly warns Thomas not to trust anyone except her and Chancellor Paige, leaving him confused about her true allegiance. Her sudden embrace and whispered message disrupt the proceedings, drawing Rat Man's ire and deepening Thomas's suspicions about WICKED's motives.

Thomas grapples with conflicting emotions about Brenda's presence. Memories of their time together in the Scorch resurface, but Teresa's disdain for Brenda adds to his inner turmoil. Teresa's willingness to undergo the procedure further strains their relationship, as Thomas questions her judgment. Brenda's cryptic warning and her apparent involvement with WICKED leave Thomas uncertain whether she is an ally or another variable in the experiment. The chapter underscores the pervasive mistrust and manipulation that define Thomas's world.

The tension escalates as Thomas, Minho, and Newt remain defiant, observing the others who submit to the procedure. Thomas considers escaping but is warned by Rat Man that armed guards are monitoring them. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, with

Thomas poised for action, sensing that a critical moment is approaching. The stage is set for a potential confrontation, emphasizing the themes of resistance, betrayal, and the blurred lines between friend and foe in WICKED’s twisted game.



Chapter 8

The chapter opens with Thomas, Minho, and Newt being forcibly apprehended by armed guards from WICKED. Despite the overwhelming odds—five guards against three teenagers—Thomas feels a strange calm, bolstered by his resolve to resist. The boys are dragged through corridors, with Minho putting up a fierce but futile struggle, until they are locked in a small, unexpectedly furnished bedroom. Though it’s a far cry from the harsh conditions of the Glade’s Slammer, the reality of their captivity quickly sets in as Thomas futilely tries to escape, only to be admonished by Newt for his outburst.

Inside the room, tensions rise as the boys debate their missed opportunities to escape. Minho criticizes Thomas for hesitating, arguing that waiting for a perfect moment is unrealistic. Thomas defends his caution, citing the overwhelming force of their captors. The conversation shifts when Thomas reveals Brenda’s cryptic warning not to trust WICKED, except for her and Chancellor Paige. Newt and Minho are skeptical, questioning Brenda’s loyalty, but Thomas insists on giving her the benefit of the doubt, drawing parallels to his own complicated past with WICKED.

As the boys eat in silence, their frustration and exhaustion become palpable. Minho sarcastically suggests surrendering to WICKED, prompting Thomas to mock the idea of a peaceful future in a world ravaged by the Flare. Newt somberly reflects on the bleak reality—even if a cure is found, the world may never recover. Thomas, haunted by WICKED’s cruel experiments—especially Newt’s infection—rejects the organization’s utilitarian justification for their actions, fearing that regained memories might sway his convictions.

The chapter concludes with the boys resolving to seize their next chance to escape, no matter the risks. Newt’s yawn breaks the tension, reminding them of the need to rest for the challenges ahead. Despite their exhaustion and despair, they agree to act

decisively the following day, united in their determination to defy WICKED. The chapter underscores their resilience and the deepening moral conflict surrounding WICKED’s methods.



Chapter 9

Thomas drifts into a restless sleep, haunted by fragmented dreams of his past. He recalls tender moments with his mother, such as her urging him to eat cereal and watching him play with building blocks. These memories are bittersweet, as they are overshadowed by the looming presence of the Flare, a deadly virus affecting his parents. Thomas senses his own immunity, a fact that will soon be discovered by doctors. The warmth of these recollections contrasts with the underlying dread of his family’s inevitable decline.

The dreams shift to simpler times, like riding his bike on a hot day and visiting a stagnant pond with his mother. Despite the oppressive heat and deteriorating environment, these moments are filled with love and nostalgia. His mother cherishes their time together, aware of their limited future. Thomas’s attempts to skip rocks, a skill taught by his father, serve as a poignant reminder of the family’s fractured state. The scenes highlight the fragility of happiness in a world ravaged by disease.

The tone darkens as Thomas dreams of a pivotal moment: a man in a suit informs him and his mother about WICKED, a global initiative to study the Flare’s effects on the brain. Thomas is revealed to be immune, part of a rare group scorned as "Munies." WICKED offers protection and a chance to contribute to a cure, leaving his mother no choice but to let him go. Her tearful farewell underscores the tragedy of their separation, as she spares him from witnessing her descent into madness, mirroring his father’s fate.

Thomas awakens abruptly to the Rat Man and armed guards announcing the return of his memories. The chapter closes with a sense of foreboding, as Thomas braces for the forced recollection of his past. The juxtaposition of tender memories and harsh realities underscores the emotional weight of his journey, setting the stage for the challenges ahead. The chapter masterfully blends nostalgia, loss, and impending

conflict.



Chapter 10

Thomas wakes up disoriented, his mind clouded by childhood memories from his dreams. The tension escalates when Janson, the Rat Man, informs Thomas, Newt, and Minho that they must comply with WICKED’s plans, claiming it’s for their own good. Newt reacts with fury, refusing to accept Janson’s justification, while Thomas senses this is a pivotal moment. Janson attempts to placate them, emphasizing the importance of completing their mission, but Newt’s anger remains unchecked, leading to a standoff with armed guards.

Minho unexpectedly agrees to cooperate, surprising Thomas, who suspects an ulterior motive. Thomas subtly signals Newt to play along, feigning compliance to buy time. Despite Newt’s reluctance, he follows Minho’s lead, and the group moves forward. Janson, ever manipulative, tries to reassure them they’ll be heroes, but Thomas dismisses his empty words. As they navigate the facility, Janson explains its design, referencing past events like the Gladers’ escape from the Maze, which triggers Thomas’s traumatic memories.

Newt’s simmering rage boils over when Janson refers to the Gladers as "subjects," leading him to physically attack the Rat Man. Guards intervene, but Janson orders them to stand down, insisting they proceed. Newt’s defiance highlights the group’s growing resentment toward WICKED’s dehumanizing tactics. Thomas, however, grapples with conflicting thoughts—his past belief in WICKED’s mission clashes with his current disillusionment. The phrase "WICKED is good" echoes in his mind, a remnant of his former self.

In the final moments, Thomas decides to play his part, urging Newt and Minho to cooperate, though his true intentions remain unclear. Minho’s nervous smile and Newt’s clenched fists reflect their internal struggle between resistance and survival. The chapter ends on a tense note, setting the stage for a critical confrontation, as

Thomas prepares to confront WICKED one last time, knowing the stakes have never been higher.



Chapter 11

The chapter opens with Thomas and his friends, Newt and Minho, attempting to overpower a group of armed guards in a desperate mutiny. Thomas fights fiercely, striking two guards, but the group is quickly subdued when a female guard threatens to kill him. The confrontation ends with all three Gladers restrained, their rebellion crushed in moments. Janson, their captor, mocks their failed attempt, accusing them of delusion and implying the Flare virus has compromised their minds. Thomas feels a surge of despair as he realizes their plan has failed.

Janson berates the group, emphasizing their foolishness for challenging armed guards. Thomas defiantly argues that he was manipulated as a child into aiding WICKED, but Janson dismisses his claims, reminding Thomas of his past complicity. The tension escalates as Janson orders the guards to prepare Thomas for a procedure involving a metallic mask, likely to extract memories or manipulate his mind. Thomas resists violently, but the guards overpower him, dragging him toward a medical room where Brenda, a figure from his past, awaits.

Inside the room, Thomas is shocked to see Brenda assisting WICKED. He pleads with her, recalling their bond forged during the Scorch trials, but she remains cryptic, urging him to trust her. Brenda’s ambiguous behavior leaves Thomas torn between betrayal and hope. She reveals she and Jorge are immune to the Flare and subtly hints at a hidden agenda, winking at Thomas when the guards aren’t looking. Despite her reassurances, Thomas remains terrified of the impending procedure.

As Brenda prepares the sedative, Thomas clings to the possibility that she might help him escape. The guards pin him down, ignoring his struggles, while Brenda’s actions suggest she may be orchestrating a covert plan. The chapter ends on a tense note, with Thomas’s fate uncertain but a glimmer of hope remaining due to Brenda’s cryptic signals. The confrontation underscores the themes of trust, manipulation, and the

lingering trauma of WICKED’s experiments on the Gladers.



Chapter 12

In a tense and action-packed sequence, Brenda and Thomas execute a daring escape from their captors. Brenda cleverly uses a syringe to incapacitate a guard holding Thomas, allowing him to break free. Thomas swiftly attacks the female guard, knocking her unconscious, while Brenda seizes the opportunity to grab the guard's weapon. The two then arm themselves with Launchers, high-tech weapons that fire electrified grenades. Brenda fires first, stunning the female guard with a lightning-filled explosion, demonstrating her defiance against WICKED and solidifying her alliance with Thomas.

The pair quickly moves to rescue their friends, Newt and Minho, navigating the facility's corridors with urgency. Using a stolen key card, they breach a room where the Rat Man, Janson, and additional guards are stationed. Brenda and Thomas incapacitate the guards with their Launchers, while Newt and Minho tackle the remaining threats. Thomas confronts Janson, demanding his key card and subduing him with a Launcher blast, leaving him convulsing on the ground. The group's resolve is clear as they mock Janson's suffering, underscoring their hatred for WICKED and their determination to escape.

With their enemies temporarily neutralized, the group plans their next move. Brenda suggests reaching Jorge, a pilot, and his Berg aircraft in the hangar as their best chance for escape. However, the urgency escalates as approaching footsteps and shouts signal the arrival of more guards. Thomas devises a quick strategy, positioning the team to ambush the incoming threats. Minho and Newt prepare to flank the guards, while Thomas and Brenda aim to take out the first wave with their Launchers, showcasing their adaptability under pressure.

The chapter culminates in a cliffhanger as the group braces for the impending confrontation. The camaraderie and trust among Thomas, Brenda, Newt, and Minho

are evident as they ready themselves for battle. Brenda’s unwavering loyalty and combat readiness reinforce her role as a key ally. The chapter highlights the group’s resilience and resourcefulness, setting the stage for a high-stakes escape while leaving readers eager for the next phase of their rebellion against WICKED.



Chapter 13

The chapter opens with Thomas and his allies, including Brenda, preparing for a confrontation with WICKED guards. Thomas grapples with trust issues, unsure whether to fully rely on Brenda despite her crucial role in their escape. The tension escalates as the first guard arrives, and Thomas fires a Launcher, incapacitating him with an electric grenade. Two more guards follow, but Minho and Brenda swiftly neutralize them, leaving one guard subdued and disarmed. Newt joins the fray, brutally taking down a fourth guard, emphasizing the group's desperation and the high stakes of their mission.

As the skirmish ends, Newt spots a beetle blade—a surveillance device—monitoring their every move, urging the group to flee before reinforcements arrive. Thomas interrogates a captured guard, who reveals that fifty guards are on duty but mysteriously absent, hinting at another undisclosed operation. Despite Minho's aggressive tactics, the guard insists she knows nothing more, only that some personnel were redirected elsewhere. Thomas senses her frustration, suggesting she may be telling the truth. The group decides to take her hostage, with Brenda leading the way through the facility’s labyrinthine halls.

The group advances cautiously, recalling past traumas like the Maze as they navigate the sterile corridors. Upon reaching a set of double doors, their hostage warns against proceeding, claiming armed guards await on the other side. Thomas, however, suspects WICKED’s overconfidence and prepares to use a stolen key card. He organizes the team into a defensive formation, planning to storm through the doors with Launchers ready. Minho positions the hostage to unlock the door, threatening retaliation if she resists. The tension mounts as Thomas counts down, but before they can act, an alarm blares and the lights cut out, leaving their fate uncertain.

The chapter highlights the group’s precarious alliance, their relentless fight for survival, and the ever-present threat of WICKED’s manipulation. Thomas’s leadership is tested as he balances trust and suspicion, while the team’s cohesion is their only hope against overwhelming odds. The abrupt ending—a blaring alarm and darkness—leaves readers on edge, foreshadowing another imminent confrontation or twist in their harrowing journey. The action-packed sequence underscores the themes of resilience and betrayal, setting the stage for the next phase of their escape.



Chapter 14

The chapter opens with Thomas and his friends in a state of chaos as an alarm blares and their guard disappears. Minho blames himself for the situation, but Thomas takes charge, using a key card to open a door. The group launches grenades into the darkness, creating a barrage of explosions, but no enemies appear. Thomas orders them to stop, realizing they are wasting ammunition. Amid the confusion, Brenda admits something feels "off," and Newt suggests they might be part of another experiment, heightening the group's unease.

As the alarm suddenly stops, the group finds themselves in a eerily empty reception area lit by red emergency lights. Thomas, relying on fragmented memories, recognizes the space but remains disoriented. He devises a plan: Brenda will guide them to the hangar to secure an escape route while they search for their missing friends. The group prepares to face potential resistance, with Minho and Newt expressing their readiness to fight. Brenda leads them through deserted hallways, encountering only scurrying beetle blades, which Minho unsuccessfully attempts to shoot.

Upon reaching the weapons depot, they find the door open and shelves stocked, but signs of recent activity—clean spots in the dust—suggest weapons were recently taken. Newt points this out, but Minho dismisses it as obvious, sparking a heated argument. Newt’s frustration boils over, leading to an emotional outburst and apology, hinting at his deteriorating mental state. Brenda intervenes, explaining that the missing weapons imply a coordinated effort by guards, raising suspicions about their motives.

The chapter ends with the group grappling with the unsettling realization that their escape might be a manipulated test. Thomas reflects on their vulnerability, feeling like lab mice in a maze. The absence of guards, the unlocked depot, and the missing weapons deepen their paranoia. Brenda’s loyalty is questioned, but she insists she’s as

clueless as they are. The tension among the group mounts, underscoring their desperation and uncertainty about what lies ahead.



Chapter 15

The chapter opens with Minho, Brenda, and Thomas debating the disappearance of weapons and guards in their facility. Minho suggests that WICKED intentionally left non-lethal Launchers to avoid killing them, but Brenda counters that the guards always carry Launchers. Thomas recalls the terrifying behavior of Cranks—Flare-infected individuals who turn violent—and the group speculates that Cranks may have invaded, stolen weapons, and killed the guards. The tension escalates as they realize their situation is far more dangerous than they initially thought.

Newt’s sudden arrival intensifies the conflict. Minho provokes him with insensitive remarks about his Flare infection, leading to a physical fight between the two. Thomas and Brenda intervene, but the altercation leaves Thomas frustrated by their lack of cohesion during a crisis. Newt, clearly struggling with his deteriorating mental state, storms off, leaving the group to grapple with his erratic behavior and the looming threat of Cranks or WICKED’s manipulations.

Thomas attempts to refocus the group, assigning tasks to gather weapons and ammunition for their escape. He follows Newt into the hallway, where Newt admits to feeling unwell but insists he’ll help the others escape, hinting at his own resignation. Thomas tries to reassure him, but Newt abruptly leaves to retrieve an unspecified item, ignoring Thomas’s pleas to stay together. Thomas returns to the others, uneasy about Newt’s unpredictable actions.

As Thomas, Minho, and Brenda prepare to leave, they load up with weapons and ammo, but Newt’s absence weighs on them. Minho’s harsh comments about Newt’s condition spark tension, and Brenda abruptly shifts the conversation to a cryptic reference about their past in the Scorch. The chapter ends on an ominous note, emphasizing the group’s fractured dynamics and the uncertainty of their survival as external and internal threats converge.

Chapter 16

Thomas and his friends, including Newt, Minho, and Brenda, are determined to escape the WICKED complex. After gathering weapons and ammunition, they search for their missing companions but find the facility eerily empty, with no trace of Rat Man or the guards. Their growing unease peaks when they discover a room filled with bound and gagged guards, suggesting a hidden threat. Despite Brenda’s urge to interrogate them, Thomas insists on prioritizing their escape, fearing a trap or imminent danger. The group presses on toward the hangar, wary of whoever overpowered the guards.

As they navigate the dimly lit hallways, the group hears unsettling moans and discovers a shattered window leading to a dark room. Cautiously, they investigate and find the missing guards tied up on the floor, some struggling against their restraints. Newt’s grim humor lightens the tension, but the scene reinforces their urgency to leave. Brenda argues for questioning the guards, but Thomas and Minho overrule her, emphasizing the need to avoid delays. The group resumes their journey, alert for any signs of the unseen adversary responsible for the guards’ capture.

Upon reaching the hangar, the group finds it mostly deserted, with only two Bergs remaining. They spread out to search the area, and Minho spots Jorge, their pilot, injured and hidden behind a crate. Brenda rushes to his aid, relieved but frantic for answers. Jorge, disoriented and in pain, asks for time to recover before explaining what happened. Thomas reflects on how his fear of Jorge has faded, recalling their past conflicts and eventual alliance. The reunion with Jorge offers hope, but the mystery of the missing Berg and the fate of their friends lingers.

The chapter builds tension as the group navigates the abandoned complex, uncovering clues about the unseen threat while grappling with their own fears and priorities. Thomas’s leadership is tested as he balances caution with urgency, and the discovery of Jorge provides a glimmer of hope amid the uncertainty. The eerie atmosphere and

unresolved questions set the stage for further challenges, leaving the reader eager to learn what lies ahead for Thomas and his friends as they prepare for their next move.



Chapter 17

Thomas is stunned to learn that Teresa and others have escaped WICKED without him and his friends, leaving them behind. He struggles to process the betrayal, especially from Teresa, who had recently seemed loyal to WICKED. Jorge, injured and disoriented, recounts how Teresa's group overpowered guards and fled in a Berg, knocking him out during the chaos. The group debates the motives behind the escape, with Thomas questioning Teresa's sudden change of heart, while Minho and Newt express anger at being abandoned.

Tensions rise as Jorge tries to explain the limited details he knows, interrupted by Minho's sarcasm and Jorge's taunts about past conflicts. Brenda urges them to focus on their shared goal rather than bickering. Thomas remains fixated on Teresa's actions, unable to reconcile her escape with her recent behavior. Brenda suggests the others may have had no choice, but Minho dismisses this, insisting they were deliberately left behind. The group's frustration mounts as they grapple with the implications of the betrayal.

Newt proposes their own escape using a Berg, and Jorge confirms his piloting skills, though Thomas questions why WICKED would send someone so valuable to the Scorch. Jorge deflects, emphasizing his loyalty to Brenda. Before they can act, an alarm blares, and guards storm the hangar, weapons drawn. The sudden attack forces the group into immediate action, cutting short their planning and heightening the urgency of their situation.

The chapter ends on a cliffhanger as the guards open fire, leaving the group's fate uncertain. Thomas's lingering doubts about Teresa's motives remain unresolved, overshadowed by the immediate threat. The confrontation underscores the group's precarious position, trapped between WICKED's forces and the betrayal of their former allies. The urgency to escape intensifies, setting the stage for a high-stakes

confrontation in the next chapter.



Chapter 18

The chapter opens with Thomas and his group under intense attack in a hangar, dodging gunfire and electrified grenades. As they take cover behind a cargo box, tensions rise among the group, with Minho and Newt exchanging frantic shouts. Jorge, initially an outsider, commits to helping them after realizing the attackers are targeting him too. Thomas feels a surge of relief at gaining an ally, but their immediate priority is surviving the assault and reaching Jorge’s Berg, a nearby aircraft that offers their only escape. The group’s desperation is palpable as they strategize their next move amid the chaos.

Minho takes charge, assigning roles for their counterattack: he and Newt cover the flanks while Thomas and Brenda fire over the crate. Brenda, armed with pistols, displays a mix of determination and dark humor, endearing herself to Thomas. The group executes their plan, launching grenades and forcing some attackers to retreat. Jorge identifies his Berg as their target, and the team prepares to make a run for it. The brief lull in the attack heightens the urgency, as Thomas notes the inviting open hatch of the Berg, symbolizing their hope for survival.

As the group sprints toward the Berg, the hangar erupts into a storm of gunfire and explosions. Thomas and Brenda provide covering fire while Jorge races ahead to prepare the aircraft. However, disaster strikes when Brenda is hit by a grenade, collapsing in agony as electricity courses through her body. Thomas, Newt, and Minho rush to her aid, dragging her toward the Berg under heavy fire. Jorge returns with a flamethrower-like weapon, creating a diversion that forces the attackers back. The scene is chaotic, with Thomas narrowly avoiding a bullet and Brenda’s condition worsening.

Despite the overwhelming odds, the group manages to reach the Berg’s hatch, hauling Brenda inside as Jorge secures their escape. Newt and Thomas exhaust their

ammunition, but the guards launch a final desperate charge. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, with the group’s fate hanging in the balance as the attackers close in. The relentless action and emotional stakes underscore the characters’ resilience and camaraderie, leaving readers eager to see if they can successfully flee.



Chapter 19

Thomas awakens to agonizing pain, his body convulsing uncontrollably as blinding lights and electric crackles overwhelm his senses. He realizes the Berg’s engines are roaring to life, sparking fears of abandonment by his friends. Despite his physical torment, he clings to the hope that they won’t betray him. As his vision clears, armed guards loom over him, their intentions unclear, but static drowns out their voices. The scene is chaotic, with Thomas barely conscious yet acutely aware of the danger surrounding him.

Suddenly, his friends intervene, tackling the guards in a violent struggle. Minho, Newt, and Jorge fight fiercely, giving Thomas a chance to recover. Weak and disoriented, he observes the battle through a haze of smoke, his body numb but his determination intact. The guards appear to be retreating or feigning defeat, leaving Thomas suspicious of their motives. All he desires is escape, and the Berg’s open hatch offers a glimmer of hope just feet away.

Crawling painfully toward the ship, Thomas battles exhaustion and nausea, the sounds of gunfire and explosions heightening his urgency. His friends cover his retreat, firing at the guards as they back toward the ramp. Jorge’s Launcher blazes, while Minho and Newt fight relentlessly. Thomas reaches the ramp but collapses, unable to speak or move further. The hatch begins closing, and his friends drag him inside just in time, sealing themselves safely within the Berg.

As the ship locks shut, Thomas succumbs to unconsciousness, overwhelmed but filled with relief. Newt’s apologetic remark hints at their rough rescue, but Thomas is too exhausted to respond. Despite his physical collapse, a profound joy washes over him—they’ve escaped WICKED. The chapter ends with Thomas passing out, his trust in his friends reaffirmed and his hope for freedom renewed.

Chapter 20

Thomas awakens in a cargo hold, injured and disoriented, alongside Brenda, Minho, and Newt after their escape from WICKED. Brenda, also wounded, informs him they've slept for ten hours while Jorge flew them to safety. Thomas struggles with the reality of their new freedom, questioning what the "real world" holds beyond the Scorch's wasteland. Brenda explains that only tropical regions are uninhabitable, while other areas, like Denver—where Teresa and others fled—offer safer, albeit guarded, quarantine zones for immunes like themselves.

The conversation shifts to the challenges of survival in a post-apocalyptic world. Brenda pragmatically mentions finding jobs, emphasizing the need to adapt. Thomas, overwhelmed, grapples with the weight of their newfound freedom and the lingering threat of WICKED. Brenda reassures him that Jorge can manipulate tracking systems to keep them hidden. Thomas, however, remains fixated on reuniting with Teresa, though he avoids discussing his motives with Brenda.

Brenda details the harsh realities of immune individuals, known as "Munies," who face resentment from the infected majority despite their value in high-risk roles. She shares her own past, revealing how she and Jorge joined WICKED out of necessity after losing family to the Flare. Thomas, reflecting on his fragmented memories, unexpectedly recalls his mother, expressing grief over her likely fate. Brenda comforts him, reminding him that his friends—Minho, Newt, and even Teresa—care deeply for him.

The chapter concludes with Thomas mourning Chuck, whose death epitomizes WICKED's cruelty. Brenda's words offer little solace as Thomas grapples with loss and the moral ambiguity of their world. The conversation underscores the group's precarious future—caught between survival, loyalty, and the haunting scars of their past.

Chapter 21

In this chapter, Thomas and Brenda discuss their urgent need to remove or disable the brain implants WICKED has placed in Thomas and his friends, which could allow the organization to control them. Brenda reveals she knows a former WICKED doctor named Hans, who escaped to Denver and possesses the expertise to help them. Thomas recalls disturbing instances of WICKED’s control, reinforcing the urgency of their mission. The conversation ends with Brenda kissing Thomas on the cheek, leaving him flustered but hopeful as they finally have a clear direction—traveling to Denver to find Hans.

The group holds a heated meeting, dubbed a "Gathering," to decide their next steps. Minho challenges every point, casting suspicion on Brenda, but they ultimately agree unanimously to head to Denver. They plan to pose as Immunes seeking work to gain access to the city, though Newt, who is infected with the Flare, must remain on their ship, the Berg. The chapter highlights the tension within the group but also their collective resolve to break free from WICKED’s influence, despite the risks involved.

After the meeting, Thomas retreats to rest, overwhelmed by a headache but feeling a rare sense of peace. He reflects on their escape, doubting WICKED orchestrated it, given the guards’ fierce resistance. As he drifts into sleep, he dreams of a traumatic memory from his past at WICKED, where a stern man pressures him to reaffirm his commitment to their cause. The dream underscores Thomas’s internal conflict and the psychological toll of WICKED’s manipulations.

The chapter culminates with Thomas’s dream sequence, revealing his childhood indoctrination into WICKED’s mission to combat the Flare. The dream exposes his deep-seated shame and rebellion, as he recites WICKED’s propaganda under duress before fleeing into darkness. This flashback adds depth to Thomas’s present struggles, emphasizing his desire to escape WICKED’s control and reclaim his autonomy. The

chapter blends action, tension, and introspection, advancing the plot while deepening character motivations.



Chapter 22

In this chapter, Thomas shares his recurring dreams and suspected memories with the group during a Gathering aboard the Berg. He recounts his childhood, being taken by WICKED due to his immunity, and his training with Teresa, hoping to piece together his past. The group listens intently, but Minho dismisses the relevance, expressing his hatred for WICKED and Teresa. Newt, distant and irritable, compares Brenda favorably to Teresa, sparking a tense exchange. Brenda defends her stance against WICKED, explaining she only cooperated to survive but now believes in their collective chance to resist.

The conversation shifts to WICKED’s potential manipulation of the group through the devices in their brains. Brenda speculates that WICKED might hesitate to control them remotely, as they lack direct observation and fear harming them. She emphasizes the urgency of reaching Denver to find Hans, who could help remove the devices. Newt, however, remains skeptical, questioning why WICKED wouldn’t force them into submission immediately. Thomas resolves to proceed to Denver, earning support from Minho, but Newt’s growing despair casts a shadow over the decision.

Newt’s outburst reveals his inner turmoil as he declares himself a "Crank" destined to die, refusing to risk infecting others in Denver. His anger and resignation deepen the group’s tension, culminating in him storming off. Minho follows, ending the Gathering on a somber note. Brenda reassures Thomas they’re making the right choice, but Thomas reflects on the absence of clear moral boundaries, only varying degrees of hardship. His exhaustion and the unresolved tension leave him questioning their path forward.

Throughout the chapter, Thomas grapples with the weight of his memories and the group’s fractured dynamics. The envelope in his pocket symbolizes unanswered questions and looming decisions. Newt’s despair and Brenda’s determination highlight

the group’s diverging perspectives, while Thomas’s numbness underscores the emotional toll of their journey. The chapter ends with a sense of uncertainty, as the characters confront their fears and the ever-present threat of WICKED’s influence.



Chapter 23

Thomas and his friends—Brenda, Jorge, and Minho—stand at the threshold of the world beyond WICKED’s control, filled with nervous anticipation. As they prepare to enter a heavily secured area, Jorge emphasizes the importance of secrecy, instructing them to use fake identities and remain silent to avoid detection. The group approaches massive iron doors, where a voice demands their names and purpose. Jorge confidently presents their forged documents, though Thomas struggles with anxiety, fearing their ruse will fail and they’ll be sent back to WICKED.

After a tense wait, the doors open, revealing a narrow alley leading to another fortified wall. Jorge inputs their fake information into a panel, and the group undergoes a viral immunity test. A mechanical device pricks their necks to confirm their immunity, a process that unnerves Brenda and Thomas. Once cleared, the voice warns them to conceal their immune status in Denver, where it could draw hostility. Jorge downplays their plans, claiming they’ll leave soon, while Thomas quietly questions the term “VCT,” which Brenda explains refers to Viral Contagion Threat.

The group proceeds through another set of doors into a detector, a small chamber that scans them individually. Jorge, Brenda, and Minho pass through first, leaving Thomas alone with his rising unease. When it’s his turn, he steps inside, and after a series of beeps, the doors open to a bustling atrium filled with people. The sudden shift from isolation to a crowded space overwhelms him, but he spots his friends and joins them, taking in the chaotic yet vibrant surroundings.

The chapter captures the tension of transitioning from WICKED’s controlled environment to an unpredictable outside world. Thomas’s internal struggle with fear and uncertainty contrasts with Jorge’s calculated confidence, highlighting the group’s precarious situation. The detailed security procedures and the revelation of societal biases against Immunes add depth to the dystopian setting, setting the stage for

further challenges as they navigate this new reality.



Chapter 24

The chapter begins with Thomas reflecting on his tumultuous history with Gally, a former rival from the Glade who killed Chuck under WICKED's manipulation. Though Thomas had once beaten Gally severely, he feels relief at the possibility Gally survived, as he doesn’t want to be a murderer. Brenda and Jorge reveal that Gally was psychologically broken by WICKED, who orchestrated Chuck’s death as part of an experiment. This revelation shifts Thomas’s anger from Gally to WICKED, deepening his hatred for the organization’s cruel tactics.

Brenda explains that Gally descended into madness after the incident, behaving erratically and eventually being sent away. Despite this, Thomas receives a note allegedly from Gally, urging them to meet with a group called the Right Arm, rumored to oppose WICKED. Though Brenda and Jorge doubt Gally’s sanity and warn of a potential trap, Thomas trusts his instincts and insists on following the lead. He argues that Gally, as a fellow victim of WICKED, could be a valuable ally, and the group reluctantly agrees to proceed.

As they travel through Denver by cab, Thomas is awed by the city’s advanced technology and bustling population, though he questions whether it’s real or another WICKED simulation. However, closer observation reveals a darker reality: people avoid each other, many wear masks, and posters about the Flare and Cranks dominate the streets. The presence of armed security forces and widespread graffiti suggests a society on edge, with Chancellor Paige’s defaced posters hinting at political unrest.

The chapter ends with Thomas growing increasingly unsettled by the city’s decay and the pervasive sense of fear. Despite Jorge’s reassurance that they can blend in, Thomas remains wary of WICKED’s reach. The juxtaposition of Denver’s superficial grandeur and underlying dystopia leaves him questioning the world’s true state, while the urgency to meet Gally and uncover the Right Arm’s role drives the group forward.

Chapter 25

Thomas and his friends enter Gally’s dimly lit apartment, where tension lingers from past conflicts. Gally, visibly scarred, harbors resentment toward Thomas and Minho for their previous actions, particularly Minho’s aggression during a Gathering. Thomas expresses guilt over his role in Gally’s suffering, while Gally reveals his remorse for Chuck’s death, blaming WICKED for manipulating him. The group’s uneasy reunion sets the stage for a discussion about their shared enemy, WICKED, and the looming threats facing their world.

Gally explains that he was rescued by the Right Arm, a group dedicated to dismantling WICKED, and reveals how they tracked Thomas’s arrival in Denver. The Right Arm seeks insider knowledge to exploit WICKED’s weaknesses, but Gally emphasizes the urgency of their mission due to two critical issues: the unchecked spread of the Flare virus and the mysterious disappearance of Immunes. The Flare is being masked by the drug Bliss, while Immunes are allegedly being kidnapped and sold back to WICKED for further Trials.

The group grapples with the dire implications of Gally’s revelations. Thomas fears a world overrun by Cranks and worries that Immunes like himself are being targeted. Gally suggests that WICKED’s futile search for a cure is diverting resources that could otherwise protect the remaining healthy population. The Right Arm aims to repurpose WICKED’s assets for practical solutions, but their plan hinges on cooperation from Thomas and his friends, who remain skeptical of Gally’s motives.

Despite lingering distrust, Thomas recognizes the gravity of the situation and the potential for collaboration. Gally’s plea to unite against WICKED resonates, as the group acknowledges the impending collapse of civilization. The chapter ends with an unresolved tension, leaving Thomas and his friends to weigh their next steps in the face of global catastrophe and WICKED’s relentless influence.

Chapter 26

The chapter begins with Brenda, Jorge, Minho, and Thomas deciding to leave their current location to prioritize finding Hans, a key figure who can remove the tracking device from Thomas's head. Thomas questions Gally, a former rival, about the truth of his claims regarding the Right Arm's plans against WICKED. Despite their past conflicts, Thomas chooses to trust Gally, who provides instructions for rejoining their cause. The group departs with a sense of urgency, and Thomas feels a newfound hope as they prepare to take action against their common enemy.

The next day, after securing a motel and gathering supplies, the group locates Hans through persistent efforts. They arrive at his rundown apartment, where Hans initially dismisses Thomas as unimportant and refuses to cooperate. Brenda intervenes, emphasizing Thomas's significance to WICKED and the danger of leaving the implants in place. Reluctantly, Hans agrees to help but remains abrasive, leaving to prepare for the procedure. Thomas grows increasingly anxious about the risks of the operation, especially in such an unsterile environment.

As the group waits, Thomas suddenly experiences a violent physical episode, losing control of his body. He collapses to the floor, convulsing uncontrollably while his friends panic, unable to help. Despite his clear mind, Thomas cannot speak or move voluntarily, and his body begins acting independently. The chapter takes a dark turn as Thomas realizes he is no longer in control of his own actions, heightening the tension and uncertainty surrounding WICKED's influence over him.

The chapter ends with Thomas's body moving against his will, his voice uttering words he did not choose: "I can't… let you… do this." This chilling moment suggests WICKED may have activated the implant, seizing control of Thomas remotely. The group is left in shock, facing a new and dire threat as Thomas's autonomy is stripped away, setting the stage for a desperate struggle against WICKED's manipulation.

Chapter 27

The chapter depicts Thomas losing control of his body as an external force—likely linked to his brain implant—takes over, forcing him to act against his will. Despite his desperate attempts to resist, he attacks his friends Brenda, Jorge, and Minho, even wielding a knife. His actions are driven by a fail-safe mechanism designed to prevent the removal of his implant. Thomas is horrified by his inability to stop himself, screaming pre-programmed phrases like “I can’t let you do this!” while his friends struggle to restrain him, confused and alarmed by his violent behavior.

As the conflict escalates, Thomas’s body targets Hans, the person attempting to remove the implant. His friends intervene, pinning him down, but Thomas’s enhanced strength allows him to break free and attack Hans with the knife. A chaotic struggle ensues, with Brenda, Jorge, and Minho desperately trying to subdue him. Thomas’s internal battle is agonizing—he wants to help his friends but is powerless against the implant’s control. The scene highlights the brutality of WICKED’s programming and the trauma it inflicts on both Thomas and those trying to save him.

Eventually, the group overpowers Thomas and carries him into a makeshift lab, where Hans prepares to sedate him. Thomas recalls a similar situation in the Glade, adding a layer of tragic familiarity to his helplessness. Despite his final, violent outburst—smacking Jorge and screaming—his friends manage to hold him still long enough for Hans to administer a sedative. The physical struggle mirrors Thomas’s emotional turmoil as he grapples with the loss of autonomy and the horror of being used as a weapon against his allies.

As the sedative takes effect, Thomas briefly regains control of his voice, uttering his disdain for WICKED before losing consciousness. The chapter ends on a tense note, leaving his fate uncertain but underscoring the relentless cruelty of the organization manipulating him. The ordeal emphasizes themes of agency, betrayal, and the lengths

to which his friends will go to free him from WICKED’s influence.



Chapter 28

In this chapter, Thomas experiences a drug-induced dream that dredges up a traumatic memory from his past. He recalls being fifteen and sitting with Teresa in a dimly lit room, both haunted by their involvement in a horrific event called the Purge. They were forced to exterminate the original Creators due to a Flare outbreak, an act that fills Thomas with self-loathing. Teresa rationalizes their actions as necessary to continue the Trials, but Thomas struggles to reconcile his guilt. The dream fades as he chooses to focus on the future rather than dwell on the past.

Upon waking, Thomas feels groggy and burdened by the dream’s remnants. He learns from Minho that Hans successfully deactivated the device controlling him, ending his violent episode. Their banter lightens the mood, but the gravity of their situation soon returns when Brenda, Jorge, and Hans enter with solemn expressions. Hans confirms the device is off, severing Thomas’s mental link to Teresa and Aris, which brings him relief rather than sadness. Hans, however, decides to leave with his wife, unable to join their fight against WICKED.

Thomas, now clear-headed, shifts his focus to their next steps. He resolves to reunite with their friends and confront Gally, determined to dismantle WICKED’s operations. Acknowledging his role in the failed experiments, he feels compelled to prevent further suffering. When Jorge questions his use of "we," Thomas firmly declares their alliance with the Right Arm, a resistance group opposing WICKED. His unwavering commitment silences the group, though Minho pragmatically suggests eating first.

The chapter underscores Thomas’s internal conflict and his growing resolve to atone for his past. The dream serves as a catalyst, reinforcing his determination to stop WICKED’s cycle of exploitation. While his friends grapple with the risks ahead, Thomas’s leadership emerges as he steers them toward a decisive confrontation. The mix of camaraderie, guilt, and purpose drives the narrative forward, setting the stage

for their next challenge.



Chapter 29

Thomas and his companions visit a coffee shop recommended by Hans and his wife, a new experience for Thomas. The atmosphere is tense, with a red-shirted guard testing patrons for the Flare and a visibly disturbed man sitting motionless, likely under the influence of Bliss. Brenda explains the man's condition, unsettling Thomas, who hopes he'll leave soon. The group eats in silence, aware of their urgent mission but grateful for the brief respite. Brenda then asks to speak privately with Thomas, prompting Minho and Jorge to wait outside, though Minho is visibly annoyed by the secrecy.

Brenda attempts to confide in Thomas, insisting her connection to him in the Scorch was genuine and hinting at undisclosed information about Chancellor Paige and WICKED. Thomas abruptly cuts her off, refusing to dwell on the past and emphasizing their need to focus on their current mission. Brenda reluctantly agrees but reassures him he's on the right path. Thomas notices the strange man again, now injecting something into his arm, just as a Flare tester enters the café. The tension escalates as the tester approaches the man, sparking Thomas's curiosity.

The situation quickly spirals out of control when the man resists the tester, leading to a physical altercation. The tester shouts for everyone to evacuate, declaring the man infected, and chaos erupts as patrons scramble for the exit. Brenda urgently insists they leave, but Thomas hesitates, captivated by the unfolding confrontation. The chapter ends with the coffee shop descending into pandemonium, screams filling the air as the crowd flees, leaving Thomas and Brenda in the midst of the turmoil.

The chapter highlights the group's exhaustion and the oppressive atmosphere of their world, where danger lurks in mundane settings. Thomas's refusal to engage with Brenda's revelations underscores his determination to move forward, even as unresolved tensions linger. The sudden eruption of violence serves as a stark reminder of the ever-present threat of the Flare, disrupting their momentary respite and forcing

them back into action. The scene leaves readers anticipating the next steps in their perilous journey.



Chapter 30

Thomas finds himself trapped in a chaotic coffee shop as a violent struggle erupts between two men, one of whom is infected with a virus called the Bliss. Despite the panicked crowd fleeing, Thomas remains calm, knowing his immunity protects him. Brenda, Minho, and Jorge signal for him to escape, but he stays, observing as a man in a red shirt subdues the infected individual. The shop empties, leaving Thomas alone with the two men. Red Shirt, aggressive and suspicious, orders Thomas to retrieve a gun and questions his presence, accusing him of ignoring the infected man’s erratic behavior earlier.

Red Shirt’s hostility escalates as he demands Thomas prove his immunity by submitting to a test. Thomas complies, and the device confirms his status as a “Munie” (immune). However, Red Shirt remains distrustful, especially when Thomas claims to work for WICKED, an organization tied to the virus. Thomas grows frustrated with his own naivety for not leaving sooner. The tension peaks as Red Shirt threatens to shoot if Thomas moves, just as a team of hazmat-suited workers arrives to handle the infected man. Their ominous gear triggers a vague memory in Thomas, hinting at a deeper connection to his past.

The hazmat team prepares to restrain the sobbing infected man, who pleads ignorance about the Bliss’s dangers. Red Shirt mocks his excuses, insisting he knew the risks. Thomas pities the man, whose desperate cries for mercy go unheard. Red Shirt taunts Thomas, urging him to watch the impending procedure, which seems cruel and unsettling. The infected man refuses to cooperate, curling into a ball and begging for release, but the workers insist he straighten his legs, warning of severe pain otherwise. Thomas is horrified by the callousness of the situation.

As the confrontation intensifies, Thomas’s hatred for Red Shirt grows, recognizing the man’s sadistic enjoyment of the infected man’s suffering. The hazmat team moves in,

their mysterious blue device adding to the tension. Thomas, torn between fear and anger, watches helplessly, regretting his decision to stay. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, with the infected man’s fate uncertain and Thomas trapped in a nightmarish scenario, questioning his choices and the morality of those around him.



Chapter 31

In this chapter, Thomas finds himself in a dire situation after witnessing an infected man being immobilized by a blue gel and carried away by workers. His attention shifts to Red Shirt, a hostile figure who threatens Thomas at gunpoint, insisting he accompany him for unknown reasons. When Minho and others attempt to intervene, Red Shirt forces them to flee, leaving Thomas alone and at his mercy. The tension escalates as Red Shirt reveals his disdain for Thomas and his intention to profit from him, emphasizing Thomas’s vulnerability and the grim reality of his predicament.

Thomas is forced to comply with Red Shirt’s demands, walking through a desolate urban landscape littered with posters warning about the Flare, a deadly, manmade virus causing brain degeneration and societal collapse. The posters detail symptoms and urge citizens to report suspected carriers, adding to the dystopian atmosphere. Thomas reflects on his encounters with infected individuals, known as Cranks, and feels a flicker of unresolved memory about the Flare’s origins. The oppressive environment and Red Shirt’s constant threats heighten the sense of impending danger.

As they approach a waiting car, Thomas desperately searches for an escape but finds no opportunity. Red Shirt orders him into the vehicle, instructing him to cuff himself, leaving Thomas with no choice but to obey. Despite his fear, Thomas remains defiant, exchanging tense words with his captor. His hope hinges on Minho and the others potentially rescuing him, but the immediate threat of Red Shirt’s gun keeps him compliant. The chapter underscores Thomas’s resilience and the bleakness of his circumstances.

The scene culminates with the arrival of a hovering cop machine, which Red Shirt dismisses as irrelevant. Thomas, however, sees it as a possible distraction or chance for intervention. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, leaving Thomas’s fate uncertain as

he faces the looming threat of being taken away by Red Shirt. The tension between his desperation and Red Shirt’s ruthless control drives the narrative forward, setting the stage for the next confrontation.



Chapter 32

Thomas is shocked when a cop machine approaches him, revealing a video feed of Janson, who claims to have saved him from a bounty hunter. Janson urges Thomas to return to WICKED, emphasizing that he is the "Final Candidate" crucial to their mission. Though Thomas is repulsed by the idea, he feigns consideration to buy time, especially after Janson reveals that Newt’s condition with the Flare is deteriorating rapidly. The news unsettles Thomas, who is torn between his distrust of WICKED and his concern for his friend.

As the conversation ends, Thomas is left shaken, staring at the dead bounty hunter before his friends—Minho, Brenda, and Jorge—arrive. He explains the encounter, including Janson’s warning about Newt’s worsening state. Minho is visibly distressed, highlighting the depth of their bond with Newt. Thomas insists they must act quickly to help him, though Brenda points out the logistical challenges of leaving the city as night falls. The group’s urgency is tempered by the practical difficulties ahead.

Jorge observes that the city feels increasingly eerie, with fewer people around and an unsettling atmosphere. His comments add to the group’s unease, but Thomas remains focused on Newt, proposing they attempt to leave despite the obstacles. Brenda mentions the need for a cab, given their distance from the city’s entrance. The chapter ends with the group setting off, though Minho’s troubled expression hints at looming dangers.

The chapter underscores Thomas’s internal conflict—balancing his hatred for WICKED with his desperation to save Newt. Janson’s manipulation and the threat of the Flare heighten the stakes, while the eerie urban environment amplifies the tension. The group’s dynamic reveals their loyalty and shared dread, setting the stage for a perilous journey ahead. The unresolved tension leaves readers anticipating the next steps in their desperate race against time.

Chapter 33

The chapter follows Thomas and his group as they navigate a desolate, eerie city at night, searching for transportation to reach their destination. The unsettling atmosphere is heightened by distant sounds reminiscent of the Scorch, leaving Thomas increasingly uneasy. After hours of fruitless searching, Brenda insists they rest for the night, arguing that continuing is too dangerous and impractical. Though reluctant, Thomas and Minho eventually agree, recognizing the logic in her suggestion. The group decides to head to a nearby motel, but the tension lingers as they remain alert to potential threats in the shadowy streets.

As they approach the motel, Jorge suddenly stops, sensing something amiss. The group grows tense, scanning their surroundings for signs of danger. Brenda claims to have seen someone hiding nearby, sparking a debate about whether to investigate or retreat. Minho, ever defiant, shouts into the darkness, while Thomas urges caution, fearing a trap. The uncertainty leaves the group divided, but they ultimately prioritize reaching safety over confronting the mysterious presence. The encounter leaves Thomas unsettled, his mind racing with possibilities about who—or what—might be following them.

Once inside the motel, Thomas struggles to sleep, plagued by worries about their delayed mission to help Newt and the identity of their potential pursuers. His thoughts drift to Teresa and other allies, wondering if they could be involved. The chapter highlights the group’s vulnerability in an unfamiliar environment and their differing approaches to danger—Minho’s boldness versus Thomas’s caution. The unresolved tension from the street encounter lingers, underscoring the unpredictability of their situation and the looming threats they face.

The chapter ends with Thomas finally succumbing to exhaustion, though his fears remain unresolved. The delay in aiding Newt weighs heavily on him, compounded by

the uncertainty of what the next day will bring. The group’s dynamics and individual reactions to stress are on full display, setting the stage for further conflict and challenges ahead. The pervasive sense of unease and unanswered questions leaves readers anticipating the next developments in their perilous journey.



Chapter 34

The chapter begins with Thomas and his group leaving their motel to continue their journey through the eerily deserted city. Despite the early hour, the streets are nearly empty, with the few pedestrians avoiding eye contact and behaving nervously. The group senses something is wrong, heightened by the sight of a woman reading a poster about the Flare, which triggers a vague memory for Thomas. Their unease grows as they search for a cab, discussing their fears about Newt’s condition and the unsettling atmosphere of the city.

As they walk through a narrow street, Thomas spots a disturbing scene: a shirtless man hunched over in an empty lot, digging frantically into the ground. The man’s erratic movements and the blood on his hands and mouth horrify the group, prompting them to flee. The encounter leaves them shaken, and Minho speculates the man was eating a person, reinforcing their fears about the spread of the Flare and the city’s descent into chaos. The group remains silent as they finally find a cab and head to the airport, their dread mounting.

Upon arriving at the Berg, they find it dark and abandoned, with no sign of Newt. Minho rushes inside, calling for him, but receives no response. Thomas and Brenda split up to search the ship, their hope dwindling as they note the lack of power and Newt’s absence. The oppressive silence and stifling heat inside the Berg amplify their anxiety, leaving them braced for the worst.

Minho discovers a note in the common area, his expression grim as he hands it to Thomas. The note confirms their fears: Newt is gone. The chapter ends on a somber note, with Thomas reading the scribbled message, the weight of their loss settling over the group. The encounter in the city and Newt’s disappearance underscore the escalating danger and despair of their situation.

Chapter 35

The chapter opens with Thomas and his group sitting in tense silence, grappling with their next steps. Thomas wrestles with the idea of returning to WICKED to save Newt, despite his deep aversion to the organization. Minho abruptly takes charge, declaring that their immediate priority is rescuing Newt, regardless of the risks. His decisive leadership galvanizes the group, and they agree to head to the Crank Palace, a facility for those infected with the Flare, where they believe Newt has been taken.

Brenda reveals grim details about the Crank Palace, describing it as a harsh place where the infected are sent to live out their remaining days. She warns the group about the dangers of entering unarmed, as they lack ammunition. Despite her concerns, Minho remains resolute, and Jorge confirms the location is nearby. The group quickly boards their aircraft, landing near the facility within twenty minutes. Upon arrival, they encounter a bleak landscape, with the Crank Palace surrounded by a wooden wall and guarded by armed, weary-looking men.

As the group approaches the gate, the guards react defensively, demanding answers. Jorge cleverly claims they are from WICKED, framing their mission as an official retrieval. The guards, unimpressed and hostile, demand payment for information about Newt. Tensions rise as Minho and Jorge negotiate, with Jorge offering his cash card in exchange for guidance. The guards’ cynical demeanor and ominous warnings about the dangers inside the facility heighten the group’s unease, but their determination to find Newt remains unwavering.

The chapter ends with the group following one of the guards into the Crank Palace, bracing for the unknown. The guard’s dark humor and grim advice about potential encounters with Cranks underscore the peril they face. Thomas and his friends, though apprehensive, press forward, driven by loyalty to Newt and Minho’s unwavering leadership. The stage is set for a dangerous and emotionally charged rescue mission,

with the group’s resolve tested against the horrors of the Flare-infected world.



Chapter 36

The chapter opens with Thomas and his group entering the Crank Palace, a grim settlement designed as a refuge for those infected with the Flare. The guard explains the layout—a series of concentric rings with communal areas at the center and deteriorating housing on the outskirts. Initially intended as a humane solution, the Palace has devolved into a lawless zone where residents, aware of their inevitable descent into madness, engage in rampant crime and debauchery. The guard's description paints a picture of a failed humanitarian effort, where hopelessness and lack of consequences have created a nightmarish environment.

As the group traverses the Palace, Thomas observes the squalor: broken windows, littered streets, and an eerie sense of being watched. Distant screams and shouts heighten the tension, emphasizing the chaos. Thomas questions why the place hasn't been shut down, to which the guard responds with grim pragmatism, stating there's no better alternative for the infected. The exchange highlights the moral ambiguity of the situation, leaving Thomas grappling with guilt over his reluctance to aid WICKED's efforts. Brenda's blunt accusation that the Palace is merely a holding pen for the doomed underscores the bleak reality.

The group learns that the Palace is overcrowded, with Immunes (workers) disappearing mysteriously, likely recruited by WICKED for their Trials. The guards reveal tensions are escalating, hinting at an impending crisis. Thomas insists on being kept safe while they search for Newt, their missing friend. As they wait, a seemingly sane couple briefly interacts with them before retreating, locking themselves away—a stark reminder of the fear and despair pervading the Palace. The encounter reinforces the horror of living among the infected, with the couple's behavior mirroring the group's own dread.

The chapter concludes with the guards returning with news of Newt, but their uneasy demeanor foreshadows trouble. Newt, though found, refuses to see his friends, bluntly telling them to leave. This rejection leaves the group stunned and raises questions about his state of mind. The guards’ discomfort and the escalating chaos in the background suggest the situation is deteriorating rapidly, leaving Thomas and his friends in a precarious and emotionally charged predicament.



Chapter 37

The chapter begins with Thomas and Minho confronting the guards who located their friend Newt. Despite the guards' reluctance to proceed without payment, Thomas and Minho insist on seeing Newt first. Jorge and Brenda support their stance, leading to a tense negotiation. The guards eventually agree to guide them deeper into the compound, but the atmosphere grows increasingly grim as they encounter dilapidated buildings and people suffering from the effects of the Bliss, a drug that induces a euphoric stupor.

As the group moves further into the compound, the environment deteriorates, revealing widespread chaos and neglect. Thomas witnesses violent altercations and individuals in distress, but the guards dismiss any intervention, prioritizing their mission. The group presses on, reaching the Central Zone, a chaotic hub filled with Cranks—people infected with a debilitating disease. The scene is one of madness, with individuals exhibiting extreme emotions, from hysterical laughter to violent outbursts, while guards struggle to maintain order.

Upon entering the Central Zone, Thomas is overwhelmed by the frenzied behavior of the Cranks. The guards lead the group toward a bowling alley where Newt is supposedly located, but the journey is fraught with unsettling encounters. Thomas avoids eye contact to prevent provoking the Cranks, who taunt and harass the newcomers. The group passes abandoned shops, underscoring the decay of the area, while Thomas grapples with growing anxiety about the unpredictable dangers surrounding them.

The chapter culminates in a disturbing encounter when a Crank woman aggressively propositions Thomas, highlighting the pervasive instability of the Central Zone. Brenda remarks on the unsettling nature of the interaction, but the guards remain indifferent. The chapter ends with the group pressing forward, their resolve tested by the

harrowing environment, as Thomas struggles to maintain composure amid the escalating tension and uncertainty.



Chapter 38

The chapter opens with Thomas, Minho, Brenda, and Jorge arriving at a dilapidated bowling alley to find their friend Newt, who has been captured and left there by guards. The building is in disrepair, with no doors and a faded sign, creating a grim atmosphere. After negotiating payment with the guards, the group enters the alley, where Minho spots Newt in the back. Thomas feels uneasy, unsure of what to say to Newt, who had previously told them to leave him behind. The tension is palpable as they prepare to confront their friend, who is clearly in a desperate state.

Inside the bowling alley, the group finds a stark contrast to their expectations. The lanes are destroyed, replaced by makeshift sleeping areas for people under the influence of Bliss, a drug only the wealthy can afford. Fires burn where the pins once stood, adding to the smoky, chaotic environment. Thomas notices Newt in a distant lane, his blond hair visible in the firelight. As they approach, Newt suddenly shouts at them to leave, revealing his hostility and despair. His words confirm Thomas’s fear that Newt is no longer the same person they once knew.

Newt’s demeanor is volatile as he confronts the group, clutching a stolen Launcher and warning them to stay away. He reveals that the guards abandoned him after realizing he was infected with the Flare, a deadly disease. Despite Thomas and Minho’s pleas to take him with them, Newt insists they leave, explaining that he doesn’t want them to witness his descent into madness. His hands shake as he holds the weapon, emphasizing his unstable condition. The group is torn between their loyalty to Newt and the reality of his irreversible decline.

The confrontation escalates as Newt stands and points the Launcher at Minho, declaring himself a Crank and demanding they abandon him. His anger and pain are evident as he accuses Thomas of making him sick just by being there. Thomas is deeply hurt by Newt’s words, realizing the gravity of the situation. The chapter ends

with the group facing an impossible choice: leave their friend to his fate or risk further conflict with a person who is no longer in control of his actions. The emotional weight of the scene underscores the tragic consequences of the Flare and the bonds of friendship being tested to their limits.



Chapter 39

In this tense chapter, Thomas confronts Newt, who is visibly struggling with his deteriorating mental state. Newt initially points a Launcher at Thomas but then lowers it, expressing remorse and pleading with his friends to leave him. He reveals he is joining a group of Cranks planning to escape to Denver, insisting his condition is worsening and he doesn't want them to witness his decline. Despite Thomas and Minho's protests, Newt becomes increasingly agitated, begging them to remember him as he once was and demanding they go.

The situation escalates when a group of hostile Cranks intervenes, siding with Newt and threatening Thomas and his friends. A greasy-haired Crank attacks Thomas with a glass shard, but Brenda and Minho step in, leading to a chaotic brawl. Newt, overwhelmed by fury, fires his Launcher at the aggressor, shocking everyone with his sudden violence. Though relieved Newt didn't target them, Thomas is unsettled by the drastic change in his friend's behavior.

Newt's instability reaches a breaking point as he aims the Launcher at Minho, tears streaming down his face. He orders them to leave, his voice trembling with desperation. Minho is heartbroken, questioning how their world has come to this, but Thomas, recognizing the hopelessness of the situation, reluctantly agrees to go. He pulls Brenda and Minho away, stepping over bodies and navigating the chaotic lobby to escape the Central Zone.

The chapter ends with Thomas leading his friends away from Newt, consumed by grief and disbelief. The emotional weight of abandoning a once-close friend to his fate is palpable, underscored by Minho's despair and Thomas's resigned sorrow. The scene highlights the tragic toll of the Flare virus, not only on Newt's sanity but also on the bonds between the characters, leaving them to grapple with loss and the harsh realities of their world.

Chapter 40

The chapter begins with Thomas and his group exiting a bowling alley, only to find themselves surrounded by aggressive Cranks—people infected by the Flare who have descended into madness. The Cranks taunt them, their faces twisted with bloodlust, forcing Thomas to avoid eye contact to prevent provoking an attack. Despite the tension, the group presses forward through the dilapidated Central Zone, haunted by the sounds of laughter and screams. The atmosphere is thick with danger, and Thomas feels a growing dread as they navigate the hostile environment.

As the group moves away from the chaos, they encounter the two guards who had earlier abandoned them. The guards, now unarmed, frantically urge them to run as a pack of Cranks gives chase. Thomas and his friends sprint toward their escape vehicle, the Berg, with the frenzied Cranks close behind. The guards abruptly divert, leaving Thomas’s group to fend for themselves. The pursuit intensifies, but the Cranks fail to close the gap, allowing the group to barely reach the Berg and take off just in time.

Once airborne, the group watches the enraged Cranks from the safety of the ship, reflecting on their tragic transformation. Brenda notes how the infected were once ordinary people, now reduced to feral behavior due to the Flare. Minho, however, is consumed by grief over his friend Newt’s fate, frustrated by the lack of empathy from Jorge. The emotional weight of the situation hangs heavily in the air, with Thomas unable to offer comfort as the Berg flies away from the Crank Palace.

The chapter ends on a somber note, emphasizing the hopelessness of the Cranks’ condition and the personal loss suffered by Minho. Thomas sits silently beside him, sharing in his sorrow as they leave the nightmare behind. The loss of Newt underscores the brutal reality of their world, where survival often comes at the cost of humanity. The group’s escape offers no relief, only a reminder of the relentless horrors they face.

Chapter 41

Thomas and Minho, devastated by Newt's descent into madness and his decision to stay behind with the Cranks, retreat to the common area of the Berg. As they process their grief, Thomas reflects on their deep friendship, realizing how much Newt meant to him. The pain of losing Newt to the Flare—a fate worse than death—weighs heavily on him. Minho, equally shattered, questions Newt’s actions, unable to reconcile the friend they knew with the deranged person he’s become. Their conversation reveals the horror of the Flare’s effects, leaving them both silent and haunted.

The group lands in Denver, where Minho expresses a newfound understanding of WICKED’s mission after witnessing Newt’s suffering firsthand. Thomas grapples with the moral ambiguity of their situation, recognizing that nothing about the Flare is simple. Brenda and Jorge join them, offering condolences, but Minho’s anger erupts, and he storms out. Brenda tries to steer the group toward planning their next steps, but grief overshadows practicality. Thomas acknowledges Minho’s deeper bond with Newt, hinting at the long road to acceptance ahead.

As the group disperses, Thomas is consumed by thoughts of Newt’s grim future. In a moment of clarity, he remembers the note Newt gave him. Rushing to the bathroom, he reads the heartbreaking plea: *“Kill me. If you’ve ever been my friend, kill me.”* The message underscores Newt’s terror of losing himself to the Flare and his desperation to avoid suffering. Thomas is overwhelmed by guilt, realizing he failed to honor his friend’s wish before leaving him behind. The note’s stark demand forces Thomas to confront the brutal reality of their world.

The chapter ends with Thomas grappling with the weight of Newt’s request and his own inability to act. The note serves as a painful reminder of the Flare’s cruelty and the impossible choices it forces upon them. Thomas’s sorrow is compounded by the realization that Newt’s fate is now sealed, leaving him to wonder if there was ever a

way to save his friend. The emotional toll of the ordeal leaves the group fractured, with Thomas bearing the heaviest burden of all.



Chapter 42

Thomas chooses to keep Newt’s message to himself, hardening his resolve to move forward. The group spends two days in the Berg, discussing their next steps, which inevitably circle back to Gally and the Right Arm—a faction opposing WICKED. With concerns about WICKED potentially restarting the Trials, Thomas and his friends align with the Right Arm’s goals. Their plan is clear: they must return to Gally’s apartment to gather more information, despite lingering worries about Cranks breaking out of the Palace.

On the third morning, the group prepares to leave, eager to act after days of inactivity. Jorge takes charge, insisting he handle communication, while Brenda suggests finding a cab upon arrival. Minho’s impatience reflects the group’s urgency to escape their stagnant despair. As the Berg’s ramp lowers, however, they are met with an unexpected threat—three armed individuals in protective masks, signaling danger rather than a welcome. The open gates and lifeless bodies nearby hint at a broader crisis unfolding.

A tense standoff ensues, with the armed group demanding compliance. Jorge attempts defiance, but the armed man’s cold confidence forces the group to surrender. Thomas recognizes the futility of resistance as weapons are trained on them. Reluctantly, they raise their hands and are escorted to a waiting van, where more armed figures await. The captors’ indifference to violence underscores their desperation, leaving Thomas to calculate their slim odds of escape.

Inside the van, Thomas probes for answers, asking who is funding the capture of Immunes, but receives no response. The group is ordered to wear black hoods, plunging them into darkness as the van moves. The chapter ends on a note of grim resignation, with Thomas and his friends powerless against their captors, who seem to hold all the cards. The encounter leaves their fate uncertain, with the threat of WICKED

and external forces closing in.



Chapter 43

The chapter begins with Thomas and his companions being transported in a van, hooded and disoriented, after a long and nauseating ride. Upon arrival, they are roughly handled and warned not to remove their hoods until instructed. Minho’s defiance earns him a violent response, emphasizing the captors’ brutality. Thomas is led through a series of corridors and into a large room filled with distressed people, their faces marked by fear and injury. The atmosphere is tense as the group is pushed into the room, where they finally remove their hoods and take in their unsettling surroundings.

Inside the room, Thomas and his friends encounter a woman who reveals the chaotic state of the city, where the government declared an abrupt state of emergency, and authorities vanished. Others share similar stories of being captured while fleeing or seeking work, painting a picture of a society collapsing under the weight of the Flare virus. The guards from the Crank Palace recount their own struggles, highlighting the rapid deterioration of order. The group realizes the situation is far worse than they imagined, with the virus outpacing containment efforts and the world teetering on the brink of disaster.

Thomas is shocked to spot Aris, a familiar face from Group B, among the captives. Their reunion is bittersweet, as Aris reveals that many of their friends have been taken by another group, likely returned to WICKED. The mood shifts further when Teresa suddenly appears, stirring mixed emotions in Thomas. Despite their fraught history, Teresa insists on speaking privately, hinting at unresolved tensions and miscommunications. Thomas is wary but agrees, though Brenda’s visible displeasure adds to the underlying tension.

As Teresa leads Thomas aside, she reveals that most of her group, including Frypan, has been captured by bounty hunters and likely returned to WICKED. Thomas

struggles with anger and grief, unsure how to reconcile his feelings for Teresa. Minho’s sarcastic remark underscores the group’s distrust, but Teresa ignores him, focusing on her urgent conversation with Thomas. The chapter ends with Thomas reluctantly agreeing to talk, though he remains skeptical of her intentions, setting the stage for further confrontation and revelations.



Chapter 44

Thomas and Teresa engage in a tense conversation, marked by distrust and unresolved conflict. Thomas, wary of Teresa's past actions in the Scorch, accuses her of abandoning him at WICKED, while she insists she came after him instead. Their exchange is heated, with Teresa pleading for understanding, claiming her actions were meant to save him. Thomas struggles between anger and a lingering desire to believe her, but her explanations leave him unconvinced. The emotional weight of their fractured friendship hangs heavily over the discussion.

Teresa reveals critical information about WICKED's plans, explaining that the organization is preparing to restart the Trials with new Immunes, despite her belief that the cycle will never end. She admits her regret and expresses a desire to atone by saving their friends and others. Thomas remains skeptical, noting her sudden alignment with his views only after regaining her memories. Teresa's vulnerability and apparent sincerity momentarily soften his stance, but he questions her motives, unsure if she can be trusted.

The conversation shifts to their dire circumstances, as both acknowledge their impending capture by WICKED. Teresa suggests they could still act against the organization if Thomas would trust her again, proposing to rally Aris and others to their cause. Thomas, however, is cautious, wary of her timing and intentions. His internal conflict is evident—he despises her past betrayals yet feels a pang of sadness for their lost bond. The unresolved tension underscores the complexity of their relationship.

In the end, Thomas walks away, leaving Teresa hurt and his own emotions in turmoil. His repeated phrase, "We'll see what happens," reflects his guarded hope and lingering doubt. The chapter closes with Thomas grappling with his feelings—resentment toward Teresa's actions, yet an unwillingness to fully dismiss her. Their interaction highlights themes of trust, redemption, and the painful legacy of

their shared history under WICKED’s manipulation.



Chapter 45

Thomas returns to find Minho, Brenda, and Jorge, and shares unsettling news from a traitor: WICKED plans to restart their experiments, rounding up Immunes like them. Minho reacts angrily, calling Thomas a fool for trusting her, though Thomas admits he might be right. Jorge interrupts, stressing the need to escape rather than debate loyalties. Their discussion is cut short when armed captors enter, distributing bread and water. Minho and Thomas whisper about overpowering the guards, but Thomas warns against the risk given their weapons.

Tensions escalate when Minho refuses food, accusing the guards of poisoning it. Seizing an opportunity, he suddenly attacks the armed guard, triggering chaos. The Launcher discharges, and others join the fight, subduing the remaining captors. Brenda grabs the Launcher while Jorge helps Minho disarm the guard. The captives quickly restrain all four guards, leaving one bloodied. Thomas, initially frozen, springs into action, realizing they must extract information before reinforcements arrive.

A mob mentality takes hold as some advocate executing the guards, but Thomas insists on interrogation first. He takes a pistol and threatens one guard, demanding answers about WICKED’s plans. The guard denies any connection, claiming allegiance to the Right Arm instead. Thomas presses further, questioning why they kidnapped Immunes, but the guard stands by his story. The revelation introduces a new faction, complicating their understanding of who is truly behind their capture.

The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, with the group’s immediate fate uncertain. Thomas’s interrogation hints at a larger conflict beyond WICKED, suggesting other forces are at play. The sudden violence and shifting alliances underscore the desperation and distrust among the captives. The introduction of the Right Arm raises new questions, leaving readers to wonder who can be trusted and what their ultimate goals are.

Chapter 46

In Chapter 46, Thomas and his group confront a man claiming to work for the Right Arm, an organization they believed to be allies. Confused by the man’s involvement in capturing Immunes, Thomas presses him for answers at gunpoint, but the man refuses to divulge information, calling Thomas’s bluff. Despite the tension, Thomas hesitates to use violence, revealing his moral conflict. The standoff highlights the group’s desperation for answers and the man’s defiance, setting the stage for escalating tensions.

Minho takes a more aggressive approach, shooting the man in the foot to force cooperation. The violent act shocks Thomas but demonstrates Minho’s willingness to do what’s necessary. The captives insist they know nothing, only following orders for payment. However, one guard reluctantly offers to take a few of the group to their boss, fearing further violence. This moment underscores the captives’ fear and the group’s determination to uncover the truth.

The room erupts into chaos as others argue over who should go, with concerns about safety outside. A woman warns that traveling in large numbers would attract danger, emphasizing the threat of Cranks—infected killers roaming the area. She advises a small, swift group to minimize risk. Her words reveal the precariousness of their situation, balancing the need for answers against the lethal dangers beyond their shelter.

The chapter ends with tension unresolved, as the group debates their next move. The woman’s warning about Cranks heightens the stakes, while Minho and Thomas prepare to leave with the captives. The scene captures the group’s internal conflict, their reliance on brute force for survival, and the ever-present threat of the outside world. The chapter sets up a perilous journey ahead, with trust and safety in short supply.

Chapter 47

In Chapter 47, tension escalates as Minho fires a gunshot to silence the crowd, signaling the urgency of their situation. A woman informs the group that the city has been overrun by Cranks, who have overpowered the police and infiltrated Denver. She warns against venturing outside, emphasizing the danger of large groups and the need for stealth. Despite her reassurances that her group are the "good guys," skepticism remains, with one person questioning their treatment as prisoners. The woman advises that if they must leave, only a small group should go to avoid detection.

Thomas impulsively volunteers to go with Brenda, arguing that her calm demeanor makes her a better partner than the hot-tempered Minho. Minho protests, insisting the group should stay together for safety, but Thomas persuades him to stay behind to protect their plans and the remaining survivors. Minho reluctantly agrees, warning Thomas not to die, which reinforces Thomas's resolve. The exchange highlights the trust and camaraderie between the characters, as well as Thomas's growing leadership role in the face of adversity.

Lawrence, a guide, leads Thomas and Brenda toward a van, debating whether to travel on foot for stealth or by vehicle for speed. Thomas and Brenda opt for the van, fearing the dangers of being exposed on foot. As they prepare to leave, Lawrence stresses the need for silence and readiness, unlocking the door to a dark and eerily quiet outside world. The tension mounts as they sprint to the van, hearing distant laughter but seeing no immediate threats. The scene underscores the pervasive danger of the Cranks and the group's precarious situation.

Just as they secure themselves inside the van and start the engine, a loud noise shakes the vehicle—someone has jumped onto the roof. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, leaving the fate of Thomas, Brenda, and Lawrence uncertain. This abrupt conclusion heightens the sense of imminent danger and unpredictability, setting the

stage for the next confrontation in their desperate escape from Denver.



Chapter 48

The chapter opens with a tense chase scene as Lawrence speeds through an alley in a van, pursued by a mysterious woman clinging to the windshield. Despite the van's violent maneuvers, she maintains a eerie smile and pounds on the glass until Lawrence slams the brakes, sending her flying. Shockingly, she survives, rising with a snarl and a wounded face, her eyes locking onto Thomas with a mix of madness and fleeting clarity. This moment unsettles Thomas, highlighting the blurred line between sanity and infection among the Cranks, the diseased population overtaking the city.

As the van continues, the group observes the chaotic streets of Denver, now overrun by Cranks scavenging or fighting. The silence inside the van underscores their fear of drawing attention. Brenda and Lawrence discuss how the Cranks' sudden takeover may have been a coordinated effort, tipping the balance once they outnumbered healthy people. Lawrence dismisses the "how" in favor of focusing on their grim reality, emphasizing the urgency of their mission as he navigates the darkened alleys with practiced precision.

The tension escalates when the van hits an unseen object, jolting the passengers and forcing Lawrence to slow down. Despite Thomas and Brenda's pleas to turn the headlights back on, Lawrence initially resists until the noise likely alerts nearby Cranks. When the lights reveal a horde of gaunt, corpse-like figures blocking the alley, the group is frozen with dread. The Cranks' synchronized movement to clear a path adds an unnerving layer of unnatural control, contrasting their feral appearance.

The chapter ends on a note of eerie ambiguity as the Cranks gesture for the van to pass, leaving Lawrence to remark on their unsettling politeness. This moment underscores the unpredictability of the infected—alternately violent and strangely coherent—deepening the group's unease. Thomas's lingering horror at the woman's brief clarity and the horde's organized behavior hints at the tragic humanity still buried

within the Cranks, amplifying the emotional weight of their survival struggle.



Chapter 49

The chapter opens with Thomas, Brenda, and Lawrence attempting to escape a horde of Cranks—violent, deranged individuals—by speeding through an alley in their van. Despite their initial relief at moving past the crowd, the van suddenly jolts and crashes into a wall, pinning two Cranks. The group quickly realizes they've been trapped as the Cranks swarm the vehicle, attacking it with fists, shovels, and sledgehammers. The van's tires or axles appear damaged, leaving them unable to gain traction, and the windows begin to crack under the relentless assault, heightening the sense of imminent danger.

As panic sets in, the Cranks intensify their attack, smashing windows and attempting to break into the van. Thomas unbuckles his seatbelt and grabs a makeshift weapon to fend off an arm reaching through a shattered rear window. Brenda offers him a Launcher, but he opts for a gun instead, firing at the encroaching Cranks. The van lurches unpredictably, throwing Thomas into a seat and causing further chaos. The windshield and side windows are now heavily damaged, obscuring their view and amplifying the terror of their situation.

Lawrence struggles to regain control of the van as the Cranks continue their assault, with some even climbing onto the roof. A woman pleads to be let in, claiming she only wants food, but her aggressive actions betray her desperation. Thomas fires again, unsure how many he's killed, as the van finally begins to move more steadily. The Cranks chase them, but the van gradually picks up speed, running over some and leaving the rest behind. The noise of squealing tires and screams fades as they escape the immediate threat.

Exhausted and traumatized, Thomas collapses onto the seat, struggling to catch his breath. Lawrence navigates the van through a series of turns before entering a garage, where the door closes behind them, signaling a temporary reprieve. The chapter ends

with the group physically safe but emotionally shaken, their harrowing escape underscoring the brutality of the Cranks and the constant peril of their world.



Chapter 50

The chapter opens with Thomas, Brenda, and Lawrence arriving in a damaged van, surrounded by armed guards in a pitch-black environment. Lawrence warns that the guards are waiting for them to exit, suspecting their identities. Despite their fear of being mistaken for infected Cranks, they follow Lawrence’s instructions to step out slowly. A blinding spotlight suddenly illuminates the room, revealing a dozen armed figures. The guards interrogate Lawrence, demanding to know why he brought strangers, and Thomas explains their connection to Gally and their desire to understand the Right Arm’s motives.

The guards remain skeptical but agree to take Thomas and Brenda to their leader. They are led through a dilapidated building to a makeshift conference room, where Gally and a large man named Vince await. Brenda expresses disappointment at the Right Arm’s shabby headquarters, while Gally defends their circumstances. Thomas confronts Vince, accusing the Right Arm of betraying their cause by kidnapping immunes, much like WICKED. Vince remains silent until Gally vouches for Thomas and Brenda, prompting Vince to reveal their true plan.

Vince explains that the Right Arm is gathering immunes not for profit but to infiltrate WICKED’s headquarters. This revelation shocks Thomas, who questions the morality of using people as pawns. Vince’s urgency suggests the operation is critical, though details remain unclear. The chapter ends on a tense note, with Thomas and Brenda grappling with the implications of Vince’s plan and whether they can trust the Right Arm’s methods.

The chapter highlights themes of trust, survival, and moral ambiguity. Thomas’s frustration with the Right Arm mirrors his earlier disillusionment with WICKED, underscoring the blurred lines between resistance and tyranny. Vince’s cryptic explanation leaves room for doubt, setting the stage for further conflict. The dialogue-

driven scene reinforces the characters’ desperation and the high stakes of their mission, while the bleak setting emphasizes the grim reality of their world.



Chapter 51

Thomas and Vince engage in a tense discussion about WICKED’s plans and the fate of the Immunes. Thomas realizes that WICKED’s involvement in the disappearances could be exploited as a way to infiltrate their operations. Vince emphasizes the need to redirect WICKED’s resources toward saving humanity rather than pursuing a futile cure. The conversation reveals a shared distrust of WICKED’s motives, with both men agreeing that their experiments are wasteful and misguided.

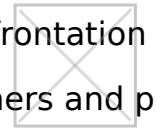
Thomas questions whether WICKED could ever find a cure, but Vince dismisses the idea, citing Thomas’s own actions as proof of its impossibility. Vince reveals that the Right Arm has lost faith in WICKED’s mission and is focused on alternative solutions. Thomas clarifies that his goal isn’t revenge but to repurpose WICKED’s resources for the greater good. Vince demands transparency, insisting Thomas share his knowledge before revealing their plans.

Brenda urges Thomas to cooperate, recognizing this as their best chance to achieve their goals. Thomas discloses that WICKED believes he is the key to completing their cure, but their constant manipulation makes their motives unclear. Vince shares that the Right Arm has dwindled to a few hundred members, most of whom are not immune to the Flare. The group’s priority is to salvage what remains of humanity, even as the virus spreads.

The tension escalates as Thomas presses Vince for details about their plan. Vince hints at a strategy more effective than weapons—a way to neutralize WICKED’s arsenal entirely. The chapter ends on a note of intrigue, with Thomas eager to learn more about this mysterious advantage. The exchange underscores the growing alliance between Thomas’s group and the Right Arm, united by their common enemy and desperate hope for survival.

Chapter 52

In Chapter 52, the group discusses a daring plan to neutralize WICKED’s military advantage. Gally explains that WICKED’s trained soldiers and advanced weaponry make direct confrontation impossible for the Right Arm, which consists of ordinary people like teachers and plumbers. The solution hinges on Charlotte Chiswell, a former lead engineer for WICKED’s arms manufacturer, who has developed a way to remotely disable their weapons by targeting a common chip. This would level the playing field, forcing WICKED into hand-to-hand combat, where the Right Arm believes they stand a better chance.



The plan involves infiltrating WICKED’s facility with 80 fighters using three Bergs. A small device must be planted inside to activate Charlotte’s weapon-jamming technology. Once the weapons are disabled, the group will breach the facility’s walls and overwhelm WICKED’s forces. Vince emphasizes the urgency, as delaying could allow WICKED to further exploit resources meant for curing the Flare. Thomas and his friends, who know the facility’s layout, are seen as critical to the mission’s success, especially in planting the device beforehand.

Vince vents his frustration about WICKED’s monopolization of global resources, arguing that their single-minded pursuit of a cure has neglected other critical needs, worsening the Flare’s impact. He believes WICKED’s false promises have eroded public preparedness, leaving the world vulnerable. The chapter underscores the moral stakes of the mission: if the Right Arm fails, WICKED’s unchecked power will continue to devastate society. Thomas, though hesitant, recognizes the necessity of the plan and his role in ensuring its success.

The chapter ends with Vince hinting at Thomas’s pivotal involvement in planting the device, though the specifics remain unclear. The tone is tense yet determined, as the group prepares for a high-risk assault that could either cripple WICKED or result in

their own annihilation. Thomas’s internal conflict—weighing the horrors of battle against the greater good—adds emotional depth to the strategic discussion, setting the stage for the impending confrontation.



Chapter 53

Thomas resolves to infiltrate WICKED headquarters by posing as a returning participant in the Trials, confident he'll be welcomed. He volunteers to plant a disabling device to neutralize WICKED's weapons, relying on allies like Teresa, Aris, and Brenda for support. Vince agrees to have Charlotte train Thomas on the device, while Gally outlines the plan: Thomas will be flown near WICKED's base, hike in alone, and act naturally until the main assault team arrives. Despite the danger, Thomas remains composed, focusing on the mission's critical role in their strategy.

Charlotte, a no-nonsense technician, briefs Thomas on the device's functions. It's compact, fitting in a backpack with supplies for his hike, and will disable WICKED's weapons within an hour of activation. Thomas acknowledges the simplicity of the task but worries about planting it undetected. Gally assigns Lawrence to escort Thomas and a pilot to a hidden Berg hangar for the flight. Though the route through Crank-infested Denver is risky, daylight offers some reassurance, easing Thomas's nerves as preparations continue.

Before departure, Brenda seeks out Thomas, and their exchange reveals their deepening bond. Though their friendship began under false pretenses, Brenda admits she now genuinely cares for him. Their banter masks underlying concern, and Brenda's emotional plea for him to survive underscores the mission's stakes. Thomas, touched but awkward, reciprocates her sentiment, and they share a heartfelt moment, sealing a pact to stay alive. Brenda's smile briefly lifts Thomas's spirits, reinforcing his determination to succeed.

The chapter concludes with Thomas and Brenda's emotional farewell, highlighting the personal stakes of the mission. Thomas's readiness contrasts with his lingering fears, but Brenda's encouragement steels his resolve. Their promise to reunite safely adds a layer of hope amid the looming danger. As Thomas finalizes preparations, the team's

coordinated efforts and his personal connections underscore the chapter’s themes of trust, sacrifice, and the weight of leadership in a high-stakes rebellion.



Chapter 54

The chapter opens with Lawrence driving a newer van provided by the Right Arm, accompanied by a silent pilot and Thomas, who is armed with a pistol. The group is tense, having transitioned from a secure facility to navigating a city overrun by Cranks. The morning sun offers a fleeting sense of safety, contrasting with the chaos of the previous night. Lawrence outlines their simple plan: reach the hangar without dying, a goal Thomas finds reassuring despite the underlying danger. The van moves through a desolate urban landscape, with only scattered Cranks visible, hinting at the city’s decay and the threats lurking in the shadows.

As they drive down a highway toward the city’s exit, Lawrence explains that the hangar is their safest destination, promising an hour-long journey to safety. Thomas remains skeptical, given their recent experiences, while the pilot stays quiet. The group’s unease grows when they encounter a bizarre scene: cars driving in circles and a crowd of Cranks fighting over sacks of garbage. Lawrence decides to push through the chaos, ignoring the pilot’s protests. Thomas observes the violent struggle for scraps, highlighting the desperation of the Cranks and the grim reality of their world.

The situation escalates as Lawrence accelerates toward a gap between the erratic cars, only for one to collide with the van. The impact sends Thomas crashing into the window, shattering glass and spinning the vehicle out of control. When the van finally stops, battered but intact, the attacking cars flee, leaving the group shaken but unharmed. The abrupt violence underscores the unpredictability of their environment and the constant peril they face. Despite the crash, the group survives, emphasizing their resilience amid relentless danger.

The chapter ends with a startling revelation: Thomas spots Newt, a former friend, among the Cranks outside the van. This moment of recognition adds emotional weight to the narrative, hinting at deeper personal stakes for Thomas. The encounter leaves

the reader questioning Newt’s fate and the broader implications for the group’s mission. The chapter masterfully blends action, tension, and character-driven drama, setting the stage for further conflict and exploration of the post-apocalyptic world.



Chapter 55

The chapter opens with Thomas encountering his friend Newt in a horrifying state—his body battered, his clothes torn, and his appearance resembling the Cranks, the infected beings they've been fleeing. Despite his condition, Newt recognizes Thomas, sparking a glimmer of hope. Meanwhile, Lawrence, the van's driver, attempts to leave the scene, but Thomas insists on stopping to check on Newt. A tense confrontation ensues, with Thomas threatening Lawrence with a gun to ensure he can approach his friend, despite Lawrence's warnings that Newt is beyond saving.

Thomas approaches Newt, who initially shows moments of clarity, recalling their past and explaining his erratic behavior as a result of the infection. Newt reveals he joined the Cranks out of desperation, as being alone is even more dangerous. Thomas pleads with him to come along, offering to restrain him for safety, but Newt's mood shifts violently. He erupts into a rage, blaming Thomas for their suffering in the Maze and accusing him of selfish heroism. His words are laced with pain and betrayal, revealing deep-seated resentment.

The situation escalates as Newt's anger turns physical. He tackles Thomas, pinning him down and demanding to know why Thomas came to him. In a chilling moment, Newt reveals he once attempted suicide in the Maze, further emphasizing his despair. He then forces Thomas's gun against his own forehead, begging Thomas to kill him before he fully succumbs to the infection. Thomas is horrified, refusing to comply, but Newt insists, framing it as the only way to atone for his past failures.

The chapter ends in a heart-wrenching standoff, with Newt screaming at Thomas to shoot him, alternating between rage and desperate pleading. Thomas is paralyzed by the moral weight of the decision, torn between his loyalty to his friend and the unthinkable act of taking his life. The scene underscores the tragedy of their situation, as Newt's humanity flickers beneath the infection, leaving Thomas with an impossible

choice.



Chapter 56

In this harrowing chapter, Thomas grapples with the aftermath of shooting his best friend, Newt, at his desperate request. Overcome with guilt and sorrow, he avoids looking at the consequences of his actions, fleeing to a waiting van. The weight of what he has done consumes him, leaving him emotionally numb and physically shaken. As the van speeds away, Thomas is haunted by the memory of Newt's final moments of clarity, pleading for death, and the horror of pulling the trigger. The silence in the van mirrors his internal turmoil, with no words of comfort from his companions.

The journey to the airport is a blur for Thomas, who mechanically follows instructions while trapped in his grief. Boarding the Berg, he remains silent, lying on a couch and staring blankly at the ceiling. Despite finally being free from WICKED, he feels no relief, only the crushing burden of his actions. Memories of Chuck's death and Newt's madness replay in his mind, leaving him emotionally paralyzed. His decision to return to WICKED's territory reflects his resignation—he no longer cares about his fate, consumed by the trauma of losing his friends.

Lawrence, the leader of the group, questions Thomas's choice to return to WICKED, warning him of their brutality. Thomas, however, feels beyond fear, his emotional numbness overriding any sense of self-preservation. Lawrence's skepticism is met with quiet determination, though Thomas's hollow demeanor suggests he is barely holding himself together. A brief attempt at humor from Lawrence about the dangers of the wilderness falls flat, underscoring the gravity of their mission. Thomas prepares for the next phase, mechanically gathering supplies but unable to shake the images of his fallen friends.

As the Berg descends over a snow-covered forest, Thomas prepares to jump, his body moving on autopilot. Lawrence offers a terse farewell, and Thomas forces a smile,

though he receives none in return. The physical cold of the outside world mirrors his inner emptiness as he lands in the snow. The chapter closes with Thomas’s relentless torment—the repetition of “He’d killed Newt” emphasizing his unshakable guilt. His journey ahead is fraught with danger, but his emotional scars weigh heavier than any external threat.



Chapter 57

Thomas finds himself in a serene forest clearing, surrounded by towering pines and crisp air, a stark contrast to the disease-ridden world he knows. As the Berg disappears into the sky, he feels a rare sense of peace but is determined to move quickly, avoiding thoughts of his past actions. The forest's sights, sounds, and smells overwhelm his senses, a welcome change from his confined life in the Maze and the Scorch. He marvels at the untouched beauty, wondering how nature would thrive without humans, as he hikes toward his destination.

After an hour of walking, Thomas reaches a barren, rocky expanse leading to a cliff overlooking the ocean. WICKED's imposing headquarters looms ahead, its cracked, fortress-like buildings evoking a haunted asylum. The complex's weathered appearance suggests resilience against both nature and human interference. Thomas crosses the desolate terrain, acutely aware of the silence broken only by distant waves. He spots a beetle blade, a reminder of his past in the Glade, and continues toward WICKED, this time choosing to enter rather than escape.

Approaching the campus, Thomas notices the remnants of failed landscaping and more beetle blades patrolling the grounds. The tinted windows reveal nothing, and an approaching storm reminds him of the Scorch's violent weather. Memories flood back as he stands before the glass doors—his escape from the Maze and the traumatic events that followed. Despite his reluctance, he knocks, signaling his voluntary return to the organization he once fled.

The Rat Man, Janson, greets Thomas with smug satisfaction, welcoming him back as if his return was inevitable. Thomas, however, remains cold and resolute, refusing to feign camaraderie. As he steps inside WICKED's headquarters, a chill runs down his spine, mirroring the frosty exterior. His decision to cooperate is pragmatic, but his disdain for WICKED and its methods remains unchanged, setting the stage for the

challenges ahead.



Chapter 58

Thomas arrives at a dreary, brightly furnished lobby with Janson, who apologizes for the destruction of Denver and emphasizes the urgency of their mission. Thomas, carrying a hidden device in his backpack, feigns a need to use the bathroom to plant it discreetly in a cabinet above the sink. He activates the device, masking the sound with running water, before rejoining Janson. As they walk, Thomas questions meeting Chancellor Paige, but Janson deflects, focusing on the logistics of distributing the cure and praising Thomas as the "Final Candidate" for his independent thinking.

Janson leads Thomas to an office where two associates, Dr. Wright and Dr. Christensen, await. Thomas confronts Janson about his role, learning he was chosen over Teresa for his rebellious nature, which WICKED had manipulated. Despite his anger, Thomas agrees to proceed, though he resents being played. The doctors stress the delicacy of the operation, framing it as a critical step to save humanity. Thomas remains skeptical, challenging their motives and sarcastically referencing past trials, but Janson insists on explaining the final phase.

The tension escalates as Janson reveals the culmination of the trials: WICKED needs Thomas's brain. This shocking demand leaves Thomas stunned, torn between dread and curiosity. The chapter ends on a cliffhanger, emphasizing the moral ambiguity of WICKED's methods and Thomas's pivotal role in their plans. The revelation underscores the dehumanizing nature of their experiments, reducing Thomas to a mere tool for their agenda.

Throughout the chapter, Thomas's internal conflict and distrust of WICKED are palpable. His actions—planting the device and questioning Janson—highlight his defiance, even as he is cornered into compliance. The dialogue exposes WICKED's manipulative rhetoric, masking exploitation under the guise of salvation. The chapter sets the stage for a moral and physical reckoning, leaving readers questioning the true

cost of the cure and Thomas's fate.



Chapter 59

Thomas is confronted by WICKED scientists who reveal he is the "Final Candidate" needed to complete their cure for the Flare virus. They explain that vivisection of his brain—while he is sedated but alive—will provide the final data required for the blueprint. Though the procedure is fatal, they emphasize its necessity and assure him he won’t feel pain. Thomas is stunned, realizing this isn’t a test but a definitive end, and grapples with the weight of sacrificing himself for a potential cure. His thoughts drift to Teresa, wondering if she knew, and the betrayal stings deeply.

The scientists, including Janson and Dr. Christensen, stress that Thomas’s brain holds unique resistance to the Flare, making him irreplaceable. They admit the Trials were designed to avoid mass vivisection, but now his death is the final step. Thomas challenges their confidence, accusing them of kidnapping more immune subjects as backups. Janson deflects, insisting they’ll do whatever it takes for the cure. Despite their clinical tone, Thomas senses their desperation and the moral ambiguity of their methods. The scientists offer him a choice, framing it as a noble sacrifice for humanity.

Overwhelmed, Thomas requests time alone to process the decision. He wrestles with conflicting emotions: the desire to escape with the Right Arm versus the possibility that his death could save lives like Newt’s. The scientists escort him to a private room, urging him to comply soon. As Thomas sits in silence, his earlier escape plan feels futile. The chapter captures his internal turmoil—fear, resignation, and a fleeting willingness to submit—as he faces an impossible choice between survival and altruism.

The chapter ends with Thomas exiting Janson’s office, suffocated by the weight of his predicament. The hallway symbolizes his isolation and the inevitability of his fate, leaving readers to ponder whether he will accept martyrdom or resist. The scientists’ cold pragmatism contrasts sharply with Thomas’s humanity, underscoring the ethical tension at the heart of WICKED’s mission. His final thoughts—of Newt and the Right

Arm—hint at unresolved defiance, setting the stage for a pivotal decision.



Chapter 60

Thomas, isolated and unable to communicate with his allies, is led by doctors through a series of corridors, their forced politeness heightening his unease. He sarcastically demands an extravagant last meal, only to be offered sandwiches, reinforcing his sense of impending doom. Sitting in a room with a typing pad, he contemplates his dire situation, realizing the severity of the experiments awaiting him. Despite his reluctance, he writes farewell notes to friends, stalling for time as he hopes for rescue.

As Thomas waits, his anxiety grows, and he dozes off until a knock startles him awake. Janson insists they begin the procedure immediately, dismissing Thomas’s attempts to delay. Resigned, Thomas agrees to follow, though panic grips him as he’s taken to a sterile prep room filled with medical equipment. The sight of Dr. Christensen, masked and ready, confirms his worst fears—he is about to be dissected alive.

Just as the doctors prepare to sedate him, an alarm blares, signaling an attack by the Right Arm. A frantic woman bursts in, revealing that the enemy has infiltrated the building. Thomas feels a surge of relief, believing rescue is imminent. However, Janson’s chilling response—urging the doctors to proceed quickly—shatters his hope, leaving him terrified as the chapter ends on a cliffhanger.

The chapter masterfully builds tension, juxtaposing Thomas’s internal turmoil with the cold efficiency of his captors. His fleeting hope during the alarm underscores the brutality of his situation, while Janson’s ruthless prioritization of the procedure highlights the organization’s single-minded cruelty. The unresolved ending leaves readers questioning Thomas’s fate and the Right Arm’s ability to intervene in time.

Chapter 61

Thomas is paralyzed with fear as Janson orders Dr. Christensen to proceed with an urgent medical procedure, despite Thomas's hesitation. A sharp prick from a syringe renders Thomas immobile, leaving him terrified and helpless as he realizes the gravity of his situation. Janson departs, leaving the doctor to prepare Thomas for surgery, while Thomas grapples with the grim possibility of death unless the Right Arm intervenes in time. The chapter vividly captures his panic and the cold efficiency of WICKED's operatives as they override his protests.

Dr. Christensen works swiftly, conducting tests on Thomas while remaining visibly tense. Thomas, unable to move, reflects on whether the Right Arm’s efforts to disable WICKED’s weapons have succeeded and if anyone will rescue him. He questions whether WICKED might actually be close to finding a cure, adding a layer of moral ambiguity to his plight. As the doctor declares him ready for surgery, Thomas is wheeled into the hallway, his despair deepening as he confronts the likelihood of his impending death.

A sudden explosion disrupts the procedure, causing chaos in the hallway. The doctor regains control and rushes Thomas into the operating room, where a team scrambles to prepare him despite the escalating crisis. Thomas, still paralyzed, observes the frenetic activity around him, his fear mounting as he is transferred to the operating table. The medical team works with urgent precision, inserting IVs and monitoring devices, while Thomas remains acutely aware of his helplessness.

As the drugs take full effect, Thomas’s consciousness fades, and the chapter ends with his resigned hope that the procedure will work. The bright lights and bustling room dissolve into darkness, leaving Thomas at the mercy of WICKED’s plans. The scene underscores the tension between his personal terror and the organization’s relentless pursuit of their goals, leaving readers with a cliffhanger about his fate.

Chapter 62

Thomas exists in a state of prolonged darkness, barely aware of his own consciousness. The faintest glimmer of awareness allows him to recognize the void surrounding him, but it offers no clarity or comfort. He senses that he is being kept alive for a sinister purpose—likely for his brain to be examined or dissected. This realization confirms he is not dead, though his existence feels more like a suspended nightmare than true survival.

Amid the oppressive blackness, Thomas drifts in confusion, unable to grasp time or place. His thoughts are fragmented, and his awareness is limited to the grim certainty of his fate. The darkness feels endless, a suffocating prison for his mind. Yet, within this abyss, a faint voice eventually breaks through, calling his name repeatedly. The sound is distant but persistent, a lifeline in the void.

The voice becomes Thomas’s focal point, pulling him from his passive state. Though disoriented, he resolves to follow it, forcing himself to move toward the source. This decision marks his first active choice in what feels like an eternity, a small but significant act of defiance against the darkness. The voice represents more than sound—it symbolizes identity and purpose, drawing him back to himself.

Ultimately, Thomas’s journey toward the voice reflects a deeper struggle for survival and self-awareness. The chapter captures his transition from passive acceptance to active pursuit, hinting at a possible escape from his mental prison. The repetition of his name underscores the importance of identity, suggesting that reclaiming it may be key to his awakening. The excerpt leaves his fate uncertain but imbued with a sense of hope.

Chapter 63

Thomas awakens disoriented in an unfamiliar room, hearing an unknown woman’s voice expressing faith in him. Struggling to regain full consciousness, he notices the door closing as the person leaves. Despite initial grogginess, he feels physically fine and realizes his mind is intact. A manila folder labeled with his name catches his attention, containing a map of the WICKED complex and a letter from Chancellor Paige, which he begins to read.

The letter reveals that the Trials are over, and Thomas’s life has been spared. Chancellor Paige explains that she halted the procedure despite opposition, as enough data exists to develop a cure for the Flare. She urges Thomas to escape with his friends and other Immunes, emphasizing the urgency. The enclosed map outlines three routes: one to exit the building, another to locate the Immunes, and a third to a hidden Flat Trans for a fresh start.

Thomas processes the letter’s revelations, trusting Brenda’s confidence in the chancellor. He pockets the documents and leaves the room, finding the hallway deserted amid the chaos of an attack by the Right Arm. Studying the map, he memorizes the path to the tunnel and begins his escape, noting the other marked routes. The disruption caused by the attack seems to provide cover for his flight.

As Thomas moves through the hallway, he double-checks the map and is shocked to discover that WICKED has hidden the Immunes in the Maze. This revelation stuns him, forcing him to reconsider the implications of his mission and the true nature of WICKED’s actions. The chapter ends with Thomas grappling with this discovery as he presses forward.

Chapter 64

Thomas discovers two mazes on the map—one for Group A and one for Group B—buried deep beneath WICKED's headquarters. Despite his dread, he follows Chancellor Paige's directions, navigating through dark tunnels and ascending a ladder to emerge into a snowy, barren landscape. The cold air and dim light disorient him, leaving him uncertain how much time has passed since he entered the complex. Determined to reconnect with the Right Arm, he sets off toward a cluster of buildings, hoping to find their makeshift entrance created by earlier explosions.

As Thomas sprints across the snow-covered ground, lightning illuminates the stark surroundings, emphasizing his vulnerability. He searches the perimeter of several buildings, crouching low to avoid detection, but finds no immediate way inside. His efforts lead him to a courtyard where he spots rubble and a gaping hole in a building's side—evidence of the Right Arm's explosive entry. Just as he prepares to approach the two figures he assumes are allies, an unseen assailant grabs him from behind, dragging him away with surprising strength.

Thomas is forcefully subdued and thrown to the ground, where he comes face-to-face with Janson, the Rat Man, who expresses disappointment at his escape attempt. Janson's presence confirms betrayal within WICKED's ranks, leaving Thomas powerless as he struggles against his captor. The chapter ends on a tense note, with Janson ominously declaring that they will now proceed "the hard way," suggesting darker trials ahead for Thomas.

The chapter highlights Thomas's desperation and resourcefulness as he navigates WICKED's labyrinthine complex, only to be thwarted at the last moment. The confrontation with Janson underscores the pervasive treachery within the organization and sets the stage for further conflict. The bleak, wintry setting mirrors Thomas's isolation and the escalating stakes of his rebellion against WICKED's control.

Chapter 65

In this intense chapter, Janson confronts Thomas with a knife, claiming his actions are driven by a mission to save humanity, despite his evident descent into violence. Thomas, restrained and cautious, realizes Janson is unhinged and determined to force him back into WICKED's experiments. When Thomas is momentarily released, he seizes the opportunity to fight back, kicking Janson and disarming him. A brutal struggle ensues as Thomas battles both Janson and another guard, fueled by desperation and adrenaline, culminating in him grabbing the knife and threatening his captors to let him go.

The confrontation escalates when Thomas, cornered and defiant, throws the knife at the guard, fatally wounding him. Shocked by his own actions, Thomas flees as Janson, horrified, gives chase. Thomas races toward a hole in the building, where he encounters two allies who recognize him. Janson catches up, demanding Thomas's return, but the allies stand their ground, revealing their disdain for WICKED. Janson, displaying signs of the Flare virus, retreats after a tense exchange, warning them of the consequences of their defiance.

Thomas, still catching his breath, urgently asks about his friends and Vince, the leader of the resistance. The guards inform him that preparations are underway for a major attack—planting explosives to demolish the WICKED facility. Thomas is stunned by the revelation, realizing the scale of the rebellion's plans. The chapter ends with a sense of impending chaos as the resistance prepares to strike a decisive blow against WICKED, underscoring the high stakes of their struggle.

This chapter highlights Thomas's transformation from a pawn of WICKED to a defiant rebel, willing to kill to secure his freedom. Janson's deterioration mirrors the corruption of WICKED, while the resistance's bold plans signal a turning point in the conflict. The tension between survival and morality is palpable, leaving readers anticipating the

explosive consequences of the rebellion’s next move.



Chapter 66

In this chapter, Thomas experiences a moment of clarity about the Right Arm’s true intentions. He realizes their fanaticism and destructive goals, noting their lack of conventional weapons and their focus on explosives. This makes him question their motives, as he suspects they aim to destroy rather than take control. His priority shifts to saving his friends and rescuing captured individuals, despite the Right Arm’s conflicting agenda. A conversation with a woman confirms his fears—the explosives are set to detonate soon, but the safety of those inside remains uncertain, relying only on Vince’s vague hopes.

Thomas decides to confront Vince, seeking answers and a way to protect the Immunes. As he navigates the dangerous, dimly lit building, he finds Vince and Gally in a fortified room, preparing for an attack. Thomas pleads with them to delay the explosion until the Immunes are rescued, but Vince refuses, prioritizing their mission over lives. Gally, however, shows unexpected hesitation, hinting at a deeper conflict within him. Thomas realizes he must act alone or with minimal support, emphasizing the urgency of their situation and the moral divide between him and the Right Arm.

The tension escalates as Thomas appeals to Gally’s humanity, reminding him of their shared past in the Maze. Vince threatens Thomas, labeling him a traitor if he abandons their cause. Despite this, Gally surprises Thomas by agreeing to join him, signaling a newfound trust. Together, they escape Vince’s group and reunite with their friends—Minho, Brenda, Jorge, Teresa, and Aris—in a side room. The emotional reunion is brief, as Thomas quickly explains the dire need to rescue the Immunes and escape via a hidden Flat Trans before the Right Arm destroys the facility.

The chapter ends with Thomas revealing the unexpected next step: returning to the Maze. This shocking directive leaves his friends questioning but underscores the urgency and high stakes of their mission. Thomas’s leadership and moral conviction

drive the group forward, setting the stage for a perilous journey back to a place they once fought to escape. The chapter highlights themes of trust, sacrifice, and the clash between destructive vengeance and compassionate rescue.



Chapter 67

Thomas and his group, including Teresa and Gally, decide to leave the Right Arm and return to the Maze after discovering a letter in the recovery room. Brenda guides them using Thomas's map, and they ignore warnings from Vince and others about the dangers ahead. Thomas leads the group through the abandoned WICKED facility, feeling haunted by the past but determined to move forward. The eerie atmosphere and memories of those lost weigh on him, yet he embraces his role as a Runner again, trusting Brenda's directions as they navigate the labyrinthine halls.

Their journey takes a violent turn when they are ambushed by unseen attackers in a dark hallway. Thomas fights fiercely, using his knife to defend himself, while the others engage in their own struggles. Despite the chaos, the group manages to overpower their assailants and regroup. Thomas urges everyone to keep moving, and they continue their sprint through the facility, eventually reaching the Griever chamber—a place filled with painful memories of their past escape from the Maze. The dusty, neglected pods serve as a grim reminder of WICKED's experiments and Thomas's complicity.

Climbing a ladder, they enter the observation room where Thomas once input the code to shut down the Grievers, triggering memories of Chuck's death. Minho notes the absence of guards, and Thomas speculates that the Maze itself is enough to deter escape. The group ascends further, reaching the Cliff, where the once-illusionary sky is now a dull ceiling. The ivy-covered walls of the Maze loom overhead, stark and imposing, symbolizing the lives lost and the weight of their past actions. Teresa's haunted reflection mirrors Thomas's feelings, and they share a moment of solidarity.

As the group prepares to enter the Maze, Thomas pauses to take in the surreal reality of their return. The absence of holographic illusions reveals the stark truth of their surroundings, and the towering walls stand as grim monuments to their shared

trauma. Despite the uncertainty ahead, Thomas feels a renewed sense of purpose. The chapter ends with the group stepping into the Maze, ready to face whatever challenges lie ahead, united in their mission to atone for the past and save those still trapped within.



Chapter 68

Minho and Thomas lead the group back into the Maze, a place filled with painful memories and eerie familiarity. Thomas reflects on the past, noting the ivy-covered walls and the spot where he once tried to save Alby, now a reminder of loss. The Gladers, accompanied by Brenda, Jorge, and Gally, reach the Glade, only to find it overcrowded with hundreds of Immunes, including children. The sight of the dilapidated Homestead and other landmarks stirs deep emotions in Thomas, but the reunion with old friends like Frypan and Sonya briefly lightens the mood.

Thomas and Minho quickly shift focus to organizing the large crowd for their escape. Despite Minho’s skepticism about the Immunes’ fighting abilities, Thomas remains determined, emphasizing the importance of numbers. They divide the group into manageable units, assigning leaders like Teresa and Brenda to guide them through the Maze and WICKED’s complex. Thomas rallies everyone with a speech, urging them to resist WICKED’s plans and promising a path to safety, though his words are cut short by an ominous sound.

A series of violent cracks and tremors disrupt the Glade, sending panic through the crowd. Thomas realizes the Right Arm has triggered explosives, and chaos erupts as a massive section of the wall collapses, crushing a group of people. The sudden devastation leaves Thomas stunned, the bloodshed a grim reminder of the stakes they face. The chapter ends with the Glade in turmoil, the survivors reeling from the attack and the uncertain path ahead.

The chapter blends action, emotion, and tension as the characters confront their past and the immediate danger of WICKED’s machinations. Thomas’s leadership is tested, and the group’s resilience is challenged by both external threats and internal doubts. The explosive climax underscores the brutal reality of their fight for survival, leaving readers on edge for what comes next.

Chapter 69

The chapter opens with chaos as the Maze collapses around Thomas and the others. The ground shakes violently, structures crumble, and the wounded scream in terror. Thomas urgently directs Sonya and the group to flee, while Minho takes charge of the rear. The Homestead and Map Room disintegrate, forcing everyone into a desperate race for survival. Thomas, Teresa, and Brenda coordinate the evacuation, ensuring order amid the panic. The urgency escalates as sections of walls and ceilings collapse, highlighting the dire need to escape before the entire Maze implodes.

As the group navigates the disintegrating Maze, the danger intensifies. Thomas leads the way, dodging falling debris and helping those who stumble. The ground shifts unpredictably, creating new obstacles like protruding stone and explosive fractures. Sonya assists in guiding others through bottlenecks, while Thomas pushes forward, driven by the hope that the exit remains intact. The harrowing journey is marked by casualties, including a man struck by a boulder, underscoring the lethal unpredictability of the collapsing environment. The survivors press on, their fear palpable but their determination unwavering.

Thomas finally reaches the Cliff, where a makeshift bridge offers a path to safety. Teresa and Brenda organize the survivors to cross the boards and descend through the Griever hole. Thomas stays behind to ensure everyone escapes, though Sonya urges him to go ahead and guide those below. Reluctantly, he agrees, crossing the bridge and descending the ladder. The scene at the bottom is momentarily calm, with Teresa directing the survivors. However, the respite is short-lived as Thomas notices the Griever pods ominously opening, signaling a new threat.

The chapter ends on a cliffhanger as the Griever pods activate, revealing an impending danger. Thomas and Teresa exchange a horrified glance, realizing their ordeal is far from over. The survivors, already traumatized by the Maze’s collapse, now face

another lethal challenge. The chapter masterfully blends action, tension, and emotional stakes, leaving readers anxious for the next development. Thomas’s leadership and the group’s resilience are tested to their limits, setting the stage for a continued struggle for survival.



Chapter 70

In this intense chapter, Teresa urgently reveals a critical weakness in the Grievers—a hidden handle inside their blubbery skin that, when pulled, kills them. Thomas immediately acts on her instructions, sprinting to the nearest pod where a Griever is awakening. Despite the creature’s grotesque, trembling form, Thomas forces his hand through its moist skin, locates the handle, and yanks it out, causing the Griever to collapse. He repeats this process with two more pods, efficiently neutralizing the threats while Teresa helps others escape through nearby doors. The urgency escalates as more people arrive, sliding down a chute into the chaotic scene.

Thomas moves swiftly to the fourth pod, but the Griever is already emerging, its mechanical appendages aiding its escape. He barely manages to disable it, but the fifth Griever fully exits its pod, transforming into a deadly, spiked ball. It attacks a group of newcomers, killing several before Thomas can intervene. Grabbing a pipe as a makeshift weapon, he charges the creature, shouting for Minho to evacuate the others. The Griever proves formidable, deploying saws and claws, and even impaling a fleeing man. Teresa suddenly leaps onto the creature, distracting it but becoming trapped in its grasp.

As Teresa struggles, Thomas fights desperately to free her, dodging the Griever’s attacks and striking with his pipe. The creature retaliates, throwing him across the room, but he persists, climbing onto its body and searching for the lethal handle. Teresa, now partially suffocated, continues to resist. Thomas finally finds the handle, tearing it free just as the Griever’s blades nearly strike Teresa. The creature collapses, its machinery dying, and the room falls silent. Exhausted and injured, Thomas and Teresa share a moment of relief, grateful for their survival amid the carnage.

With the immediate threat neutralized, Teresa helps Thomas to his feet, and they prepare to leave. Thomas notices that the chute has stopped delivering people, and

Minho has guided the last survivors through the doors. The chapter ends with Minho turning to face Thomas and Teresa, signaling a brief respite but hinting at unresolved challenges ahead. The battle against the Grievers has taken a heavy toll, but their teamwork and determination have bought them a fleeting moment of safety.



Chapter 71

The chapter begins with Thomas navigating a crowded hallway filled with survivors who have escaped the Maze but have halted their progress. He reunites with Brenda, who expresses guilt for leaving Minho behind, but Thomas reassures her she made the right choice. The group, including Teresa, presses forward through dim, flickering lights and distant explosions, their anxiety palpable. They reach a stairwell, where Brenda insists they ascend, and Thomas leads the way, determined to push through exhaustion as they climb multiple flights.

As the group advances, the building shakes violently from nearby explosions, throwing Thomas to the floor and filling the air with dust and debris. After ensuring everyone is unharmed, he urges them to keep moving, desperate to reach their destination before the structure collapses. They finally arrive at the maintenance room, where Thomas discovers the Flat Trans—a portal to safety—hidden behind a canvas. Relieved but cautious, he tests it first, stepping through to confirm it leads to a lush, green environment before returning to guide the others.

Thomas organizes the survivors to pass through the Flat Trans, assigning a woman to oversee the process while he rejoins his friends, including Minho, Brenda, and Teresa. The urgency escalates as explosions grow closer, threatening to bring the building down. Just as the last of the group prepares to escape, Janson and WICKED security guards arrive, armed and intent on capturing Thomas and his allies. A tense standoff ensues, with Thomas and his friends scavenging makeshift weapons to defend themselves.

The chapter ends on a cliffhanger as another explosion rocks the room, toppling shelves and heightening the chaos. Janson taunts Thomas, emphasizing his value as the "Final Candidate," while Thomas and his friends brace for a confrontation. The scene is fraught with tension, leaving their fate uncertain as the building continues to

crumble around them. The chapter underscores themes of resilience, trust, and the relentless pursuit of freedom amid dire circumstances.



Chapter 72

The chapter opens with Thomas and his companions navigating a chaotic battlefield as explosions rock the room, sending debris flying. Despite the turmoil, Thomas manages to dodge obstacles and help Gally and Brenda stay on their feet. The group charges into combat, clashing with their enemies in a frenzied melee. Thomas confronts Janson, the Rat Man, engaging in a brutal fight where he inflicts a severe wound but remains locked in a desperate struggle for survival. The scene is chaotic, with allies like Minho and Brenda also embroiled in their own violent confrontations.

Thomas and Janson’s fight intensifies as they grapple, each gaining momentary advantages before the other counters. Thomas overpowers Janson, choking him in a fit of rage until Minho intervenes, revealing Janson is already dead. The battle around them subsides as their enemies are defeated, but the room continues to collapse from ongoing explosions. Amid the destruction, Thomas and his friends regroup, only for the chaos to escalate further as the building’s structure fails, raining debris and dust upon them.

As they flee toward safety, Teresa suddenly appears, shoving Thomas out of the way just before a massive section of the ceiling crushes her. Thomas is devastated, witnessing Teresa’s fatal injury and hearing her final, whispered words of regret. Overcome with grief, he recalls the losses of other friends like Chuck and Newt, blaming WICKED for their deaths. Brenda and Minho drag him away, forcing him to move forward as the building collapses around them, flames and smoke filling the air.

The chapter concludes with Thomas and his surviving companions rushing through the maintenance room toward the Flat Trans, narrowly escaping as the entire structure collapses behind them. The relentless explosions and destruction underscore the high stakes of their mission and the personal toll it has taken on Thomas. The scene leaves him physically and emotionally battered, yet driven to survive despite the

overwhelming loss and chaos surrounding him.



Chapter 73

Thomas, disoriented and breathless, crawls away from the Flat Trans as Brenda deactivates it, leaving him puzzled by her expertise. Despite their apparent safety, Brenda insists on staying behind for one final task, while Minho urges Thomas to leave with him. As the two catch their breath, they share a silent moment of reflection, overwhelmed by the trauma and loss they've endured. Thomas grapples with the guilt of Teresa's death and his unspoken actions toward Newt, sensing Minho's unspoken understanding of their shared grief.

Exiting the shed, Thomas is stunned by the lush, vibrant landscape before him—a paradise of rolling hills, forests, and ocean. The rescued survivors scatter across the terrain, some reveling in their newfound freedom. Brenda soon joins them, setting the shed ablaze to ensure no remnants of their past threats remain. When she offers condolences for Teresa, Thomas responds with a quiet "thanks," too emotionally drained for further words. The group watches the fire, symbolizing the end of their harrowing journey.

Hours later, Thomas sits alone on a cliff, absorbing the breathtaking sunset. Minho has already begun organizing their new community, relieving Thomas of any leadership burdens. Exhausted and resolved to avoid further conflict, Thomas cherishes the peace, hoping their isolation will shield them from the world's ongoing struggles with the Flare. Brenda interrupts his solitude, and their conversation turns wistful as they compare the sunset to their memories of WICKED. The moment underscores their hard-won freedom, though shadows of lost friends linger in Thomas's mind.

As darkness falls, Brenda joins Thomas, and their quiet exchange shifts to tentative hope for the future. When she mentions their immunity and the potential for a fresh start, Thomas questions her certainty, but she deflects with a kiss. Letting go of his suspicions, he embraces the moment, savoring the tranquility and Brenda's

companionship. The chapter closes with a sense of closure and cautious optimism, as Thomas finally allows himself to rest, both physically and emotionally.

