

Divergent



INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF VERONICA ROTH

Veronica Roth grew up in Barrington, Illinois, as the youngest of three children. Beginning in high school, she studied the Bible closely, and has considered herself a Christian ever since. Roth studied creative writing at Northwestern University. During her time as an undergraduate, she began working on the novel that would become *Divergent*. When she published the book in 2011, it was a surprise success, selling many hundreds of thousands of copies. Roth has written two sequels to *Divergent*: *Insurgent* and *Allegiant*. She's been married to her husband, Nelson Fitch, since 2011.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

It's hard to find many historical allusions in *Divergent*, since it's a non-speculative science fiction novel. Roth does, however, mention many of Chicago's most famous buildings, such as the John Hancock Building and the Sears Tower. These Chicago landmarks were built around the same time (1969 and 1973, respectively), and reflected Chicago's resurging economic prestige, following a long period of uncertain economic growth in the 40s and 50s.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Divergent is often compared to other works of young adult science fiction from the last ten years, including [The Hunger Games](#) and [Maze Runner](#). These works share a few common qualities: their protagonists are young adults (not children or tweens), trying to navigate their way through a futuristic adult world to which they don't quite belong. More importantly, the heroes and heroines of these novels are truly young adults: while they have a childish curiosity and innocence, they also have some qualities more commonly associated with adults, such as aggression, jealousy, and sexual desire. The "young adult boom" of the 2000s was heralded as a sea change in cultural sensibilities, and a mark of the new cultural and economic influence of 13- through 18-year-old readers.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Divergent*
- **Where Written:** Chicago, Illinois
- **When Published:** April 25, 2011
- **Literary Period:** The young adult "boom" of the 2000s
- **Genre:** Young adult fiction, science fiction
- **Setting:** Futuristic Chicago / "the city"

- **Climax:** Beatrice convinces Tobias not to shoot her
- **Point of View:** First person (Beatrice Prior), present-tense

EXTRA CREDIT

Best break ever: Veronica Roth wrote the first draft of *Divergent* in less than a month. This would be impressive in any case, but it's especially so considering that the month in question was Veronica's winter break during her senior year of college. That's right—at the same time that her classmates were binge-watching *Netflix*, Roth was writing the book that would make her a millionaire.

Choices, choices: Veronica Roth has an unusual family background. Her grandparents were raised Jewish, but her parents rejected all religious labels, and didn't raise their children to follow any organized religion. When Roth was in high school, she made a major change in her life by deciding to become a Christian. It's possible to interpret Beatrice Prior's decision to leave her parents' community and join Dauntless as a science-fiction version of Roth's decision to join the Christian church.



PLOT SUMMARY

The novel takes place in a futuristic version of Chicago, Illinois, in which the population has been split into five factions: Abnegation, Amity, Candor, Dauntless, and Erudite. Each faction has a different "persona" and a different role in the city. Abnegation people are plain and modest, and go into governance; Amity people are kind and nurturing, and go into welfare; Candor people are honest, and make good lawyers; the Dauntless are brave, and work as soldiers and guards; the Erudite are intelligent, and study science and technology.

As the novel begins, Beatrice Prior—a 16-year-old girl living in Abnegation—is preparing for her Choosing Ceremony. At the age of 16, everyone in the city is made to take an aptitude test that determines what kind of person they are; i.e., which faction they belong to. Afterwards, the 16-year-olds attend a Choosing Ceremony, where they choose the faction to which they'll belong for the rest of their lives. Beatrice worries that she'll find out that she's better suited for a faction other than Abnegation, thus disappointing her brother, Caleb Prior, and her parents, Andrew Prior and Natalie Prior. Beatrice is especially scared of disappointing her father, Andrew, an important government official, and Andrew's friend Marcus, another influential government leader.

During her aptitude test, Beatrice is given a hallucinogenic serum. She sees a series of visions: a dog attacking a child, a

man who interrogates her about her knowledge of a “brutal murderer,” etc. At the end of the test, Beatrice’s examiner, a woman named Tori, tells Beatrice that she’s **Divergent**: a forbidden mental state that allows Beatrice to move between different factions. Tori makes Beatrice promise never to tell anyone about her Divergence—she warns that the government wants to kill off all Divergent people.

At the Choosing Ceremony, Beatrice sees her brother Caleb choose Erudite, instead of the usual Abnegation. Afterwards, Beatrice chooses Dauntless. Although she’s excited and curious about Dauntless, she’s also worried that her parents will be devastated by the loss of their two children: after 16-year-olds choose their faction, they’re almost never allowed to visit other factions.

Beatrice is taken to her new community in Dauntless. There, she meets the Dauntless leader, Max, as well as Eric, a young, frightening government official, and Four, a charismatic young man who trains new recruits. Beatrice renames herself “Tris,” and quickly makes friends with Dauntless recruits from other factions, such as Christina, Will, and Al.

The new recruits begin their training, competing for a small number of spots reserved for the most highly-ranked trainees. Four coaches Tris and her peers through combat exercises. Tris is a poor fighter—she’s no match for opponents like Peter, a huge, sadistic recruit. In her first fight with Peter, Peter sends her to the hospital. Afterwards, Tris resolves to train even harder. She distinguishes herself in a citywide game of capture-the-flag that’s designed to measure recruits’ abilities. Tris climbs to the top of the Chicago Ferris Wheel, allowing her team to surprise-attack its opponents. Tris’s bravery and quick thinking impress Four, as well as her fellow recruits. Four begins flirting with Tris—exciting Tris, but also making her a little uncomfortable.

Tris stands up for a weak-willed trainee named Al, offering to take his place in a sadistic punishment that Eric devises for him. At the same time, Tris begins to enjoy her combat training more and more—she doesn’t feel the same sense of mercy or caution that she was taught in Abnegation for so many years.

Tris gets a visit from her mother, Natalie Prior, and Natalie tells Tris that she knows about Tris’s Divergence. Natalie also tells Tris to ask Caleb to research serum when Tris next sees Caleb—Tris has no idea why Natalie makes this request. Slowly, Tris realizes that Natalie was Dauntless before she chose to live in Abnegation.

Eric releases a ranking of the new recruits: Tris is ranked low, while Peter is ranked second. That night, Peter stabs the top-ranked recruit, a boy named Edward, in the eye. Afterwards, Edward drops out of Dauntless. Then the recruits enter the second part of their training: psychological training. They’re injected with hallucinogenic serum and forced to experience the things that frighten them most. Privately, Four conducts a

“fear simulation” with Tris, and discovers that Tris is good at resisting the effects of the serum. Four recognizes that Tris is Divergent, since Divergents can resist mental manipulation. Tris asks Four how he knows so much about Divergence, but Four doesn’t reply.

Reports begin to circulate about how Abnegation leaders—Andrew Prior, and his friend Marcus, in particular—have become corrupt. Although she’s infuriated by these reports, which she regards as propaganda, Tris concentrates on her training. She bonds with other recruits, such as Uriah and Marlene, who were born in Dauntless, rather than transferring from another faction. When the second round of rankings are released, Tris is at the top of her class. That night, Peter and a gang of followers try to kill Tris by throwing her into a chasm, but Four saves her life. Tris is shocked to discover that one of the people who tried to kill her was Al. Al, Tris realizes, has come to hate Tris for making him look weak. Tris angrily tells Al that she’ll kill him if he ever tries to talk to her again. Shortly afterwards, Al commits suicide by throwing himself into the chasm.

Tris proceeds with her psychological training. Four allows her to witness his own “fear landscape.” Tris notices that Four has only four fears—hence his nickname. One of Four’s fears is his father, Marcus, who abused him with a belt when he was a child. Four’s real name, Tris realizes, is Tobias—he used to live in Abnegation. Following the fear simulation, Tobias kisses Tris, and Tris kisses back. Tobias reveals that he knows Tris is Divergent, cementing their bond.

Tris fails badly at her own fear landscape, despite the early promise she’d shown. Frustrated with herself, she goes to visit Caleb, who’s now living in Erudite. Caleb tells Tris that he’s tempted to believe the things that Jeanine, his leader, had been writing about their father and about Abnegation.

Tris and her peers prepare for their final challenge: a fear simulation. In her fear simulation, Tris performs very well, mastering her own fears—including fear of having sex with Tobias. As a result of her good performance, Tris graduates at the top of the rankings. She and her peers are injected with a chemical, supposedly to allow Eric and Max to track their movements. Afterwards, Tris and Tobias have sex.

The next morning, Tris wakes up to find that her friends have been transformed into mindless Dauntless soldiers, thanks to the tracking chemical. Tris is immune to this mind control, however, due to her Divergence. She’s able to pretend to be a “zombie” as Eric and Max send their new soldiers into Abnegation. In Abnegation, Tris joins with Tobias—who’s also revealed to be Divergent, and therefore immune to the effects of the chemical. Soldiers capture Tris and Tobias and bring them to Jeanine, the mastermind behind the mind control scheme. Jeanine reveals her villainous plan—to use her new soldiers to conquer all of the city—then orders her soldiers to kill Tris and Tobias.

Tris is taken to a tank, where she's to be drowned. Before this can happen, however, her mother saves her. Natalie sneaks Tris out of the building, and sends her to a secret compound where Andrew, Caleb, and Marcus are hiding out. Before she can leave with Tris, however, Natalie is shot and killed.

Tris joins up with Andrew, Caleb, and Marcus: they plan to break into the Dauntless headquarters and shut down the computers that control the soldiers. Together, they manage to infiltrate the compound and make their way to the computer room, but not before Andrew dies protecting Tris. In the control room, Tris finds herself facing Tobias, now controlled by a new, stronger mind control drug. Tobias raises a gun to Tris's head, but Tris is able to convince Tobias to put the gun down by saying, "It's me." Freed from his mind control, Tobias switches off the computers, foiling Jeanine's plot. The novel ends with Tobias declaring his love for Tris.



CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Beatrice Prior / Tris – Beatrice, or Tris, is the protagonist and heroine of *Divergent*: a brave, curious young woman who struggles to find an identity for herself and also feels a strong desire to protect other people. At the beginning of the novel, Tris lives in Abnegation; i.e., she lives a monastic, ascetic life. Although she lives in a society where all people must choose between one of five factions—essentially, five personality types—Tris refuses (and indeed is unable) to be bound by any one of these. This makes her “**Divergent**,” a quality that has both its positives and its negatives—the most obvious drawback being that the government wants to kill off anyone who doesn't conform to a faction. She chooses to train and live among the Dauntless—those who prize courage and bravery—and yet even among the Dauntless, she feels a profound sense of dissatisfaction. Over the course of the book, Tris develops a “moral code” of her own—influenced, but not defined by the laws and rules of Dauntless or Abnegation. As a part of this moral code, Tris learns to protect other people, even when doing so endangers her own life. And yet Tris also learns how to respect herself and take care of herself—in short, she learns how to be selfish *and* selfless. Even at the end of the novel, Tris isn't sure what kind of person she is, or what community she belongs to. We can expect that she'll confront these questions in the next two books in the *Divergent* trilogy.

Tobias / Four – Tobias is one of the most mysterious characters in the book. Although Tobias used to be a highly promising warrior and strategist for the Dauntless, he chose to devote his life to training new Dauntless recruits instead of settling into a powerful government position, as most people of his abilities would do. This points to something that sets Tobias apart from most of his Dauntless peers: he's genuinely concerned with

helping other people. Unlike his rival, Eric, Tobias believes that being strong and brave—in other words, being Dauntless—means being selfless, sacrificing one's own safety to protect that of other people. Tobias imparts this lesson to Tris, with whom he has a romance that's still going on by the end of the book. Like Tris, Tobias is secretly **Divergent**, and also has an unusually small number of fears, meaning that he's an especially bold and courageous soldier. In spite of his bravery, Tobias suffers from deep psychological trauma: his father, Marcus, beat him with a belt when he was a child. As the novel ends, Tris helps Tobias overcome some of his fears and anxieties, and in return, Tobias declares his love for Tris.

Peter – A tough, ruthless Dauntless recruit. Peter is jealous and spiteful, and has a nasty habit of targeting anyone who outperforms him in the rankings: first Edward, whom he stabs in the eye, and later Beatrice Prior, whom he tries to throw into a chasm. Peter is exactly the kind of soldier Eric wants to create: insensitive and sadistic. As a result, he isn't given the mind-control serum when Eric and Max stage their coup: he's “perfect” as he is.

Natalie Prior – Beatrice Prior's mother. Natalie is a strong, nurturing woman, although the rules of Abnegation society make it difficult for her to show her love for Beatrice or Caleb Prior. Some ways into the novel, Beatrice discovers that Natalie is **Divergent**, and grew up among the Dauntless. Natalie proves herself to be a powerful warrior, more than capable of protecting her family. In the end, she sacrifices her life to keep Beatrice safe.

Eric – A young government official in Dauntless, and the rival of Tobias. Eric is a cruel, sadistic man, who believes that the ideal Dauntless soldier is selfish, ruthless, and indifferent to other people's suffering. Although Eric was ranked below Tobias during their training months, Eric was offered a top government job because Tobias turned it down first. Eric continues to resent Tobias for outperforming him in the rankings years before, and after he and Max stage a coup of the city, he reveals that he still considers Tobias his hated rival.

Al – A Dauntless recruit who struggles with many of the physical and psychological challenges of the training process. Although Al is at first grateful to Beatrice Prior for encouraging him and protecting him, he begins to resent Beatrice for making him look weaker and more incompetent. Al turns on Beatrice, even assisting Peter in trying to kill her. Ultimately, Al is unable to forgive himself for trying to hurt Beatrice—he kills himself from throwing himself into a chasm.

Andrew Prior – Beatrice Prior's father, a power leader in the Abnegation community. After Beatrice leaves Abnegation for Dauntless, Andrew is widely criticized for his poor parenting—much to Beatrice's distress. At the end of the novel, Andrew risks his safety to protect his city from the military coup, and bravely sacrifices his life to protect his daughter.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Jeanine Matthews – The highly intelligent, villainous leader of the Erudite. Jeanine is a skilled manipulator and a charismatic leader. Although she's capable of great acts of violence, Beatrice Prior notices that Jeanine isn't an emotional person: she's cold and calculating, murdering out of necessity, not anger.

Max – The ruthless leader of the Dauntless, instrumental in planning the military coup that occurs at the end of the novel.

Tori – A friendly tattoo artist who lives in Dauntless and sometimes volunteers to administer government aptitude tests. It is Tori who first discovers that Beatrice Prior is **Divergent**, and she keeps Beatrice's secret, thus saving her life.

Susan Black – Beatrice's best friend in Abnegation. She has a crush on Beatrice's brother, Caleb.

Robert Black – A kind young man, the brother of Susan Black, who decides to leave Abnegation and join the Amity community.

Marcus – A powerful Abnegation leader and the father of Tobias. Marcus is depicted as a devious, deeply untrustworthy man who gives Abnegation a bad name: he abused Tobias with a belt when Tobias was a small child.

Christina – A young woman from Candor who joins the Dauntless at the same time as Beatrice. Christina befriends Beatrice, and they bond over their ambition and their disgust with some of the more ruthless Dauntless recruits, such as Peter. Christina also shares Beatrice's strong sense of competitiveness.

Caleb Prior – Beatrice Prior's brother. He leaves Abnegation and joins the faction of Erudite.

Will – A young, intelligent Erudite man who joins the Dauntless at the same time as Beatrice Prior, and later becomes her friend. Although Will begins a romance with Christina, Beatrice kills him after he's turned into a zombie by Eric and Max's mind-control serum.

Edward – A Dauntless recruit, who's dating Myra.

Myra – A Dauntless recruit, dating Edward.

Cara – Will's sister.

Lauren – A young Dauntless woman.

Drew – A Dauntless recruit and follower of Peter.

Molly – A Dauntless recruit and follower of Peter.

Lynn – A Dauntless recruit and friend of Beatrice Prior.

Uriah – A Dauntless recruit and friend of Beatrice Prior.

Marlene – A Dauntless recruit and friend of Beatrice Prior.

Shauna – A Dauntless-born recruit and friend of Uriah.

Zeke – A Dauntless-born recruit and Uriah's older brother.



THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



IDENTITY, CHOICE, AND DIVERGENCE

In a way, *Divergent* is a book about choosing who you are. Because most of the characters in the novel are young adults, they're trying to find identities for themselves and choose what kind of personality to have, or, in another sense, which "club" to belong to. Roth raises many important questions about identity: How do we choose an identity? What are some of the advantages of choosing the same identity as someone else? What happens if we want to change identities?

In the fictional futuristic society of *Divergent*, people choose their identities once and only once: a process that readers will recognize as absurd. When the city's residents turn 16, there's an elaborate ritual that culminates in the 16-year-olds choosing one of five "factions" to live with for the rest of their lives: Abnegation, Candor, Dauntless, Erudite, and Amity. Each faction corresponds to a specific personality type—for example, the Dauntless are bold, aggressive, and brave. In short, then, the city's teenagers are forced to make a permanent choice about what kind of people they want to be, at the exact age when they should be experimenting with many different identities. As anyone who's been a teenager will know, it's impossible to decide who you are at the age of 16: inevitably, whatever decision you make at that age will come to seem like the wrong one.

Part of what makes Tris Prior such a sympathetic and relatable protagonist in *Divergent* is her refusal to stick to one faction: just like the average reader, she can't make up her mind what kind of person she wants to be. At times, she thinks she "truly" belongs among the Dauntless; at others, she's convinced that she's most comfortable among the people of Abnegation, who are selfless and Puritanical.

Although only a tiny fraction of people in the city are **Divergent** (according to the novel), Tris comes to realize that nobody around her has a "truly" fixed identity: in other words, everyone is at least a little Divergent. The characters who seem the most quintessentially Dauntless or Abnegation, such as Tobias or Natalie, Tris's mother, are revealed to have other identities, hidden beneath the ones they display to the public. The novel's point isn't that Natalie is really a Dauntless pretending to be Abnegation, or Abnegation pretending to be Dauntless. Rather, the suggestion is that nobody is Dauntless or Abnegation 100 percent of the time. People's identities change constantly, and

forcing people to choose one identity for themselves—particularly at such an early age—only leads to frustration. In the end, we see Tris embracing this truth. Throughout the book, she’s bounced back and forth between two or three different factions—in the novel’s final paragraph, however, she recognizes that she’ll have to “go beyond” any one of these factions. Identity, she comes to see, isn’t an outcome, to be decided on at the age of 16—instead, it’s an ongoing process.



STRENGTH, SELFISHNESS, AND SELFLESSNESS

Early in the novel, Tris Prior joins the faction of the Dauntless: a community of strong, war-like people who are taught to worship strength and courage above all else. The Dauntless are constantly being ordered to “prove themselves”—by fighting, jumping onto moving trains, dangling over a chasm, etc. And yet there’s seldom any real discussion of what strength and courage mean: everyone seems to take the words for granted. Especially in the second half of her novel, Roth explores what it truly means to be strong.

For the leaders of the Dauntless faction, such as Eric—one of the book’s main antagonists—strength is the ultimate sign of power and self-sufficiency. By this definition, being strong is all about taking care of oneself and *proving* oneself the strongest—in short, extreme selfishness. We see this idea in the kinds of warriors the Dauntless celebrate, such as Peter—an aggressive young Dauntless recruit in Tris’s training group. Peter is one of the most promising Dauntless warriors: he’s merciless in a fight, and seems to have no qualms about eliminating his closest competitors (he even stabs one of his rivals in the eye with a knife). When Eric and his allies stage a coup of the city, they reward Peter with a good position: evidently, Peter’s brand of merciless, guiltless strength is the one they admire most.

There’s also another definition of strength circulating among the Dauntless, however—one that the novel’s heroes, such as Tris and Tobias, celebrate. According to the Dauntless manifesto (the summing up of its principles), being Dauntless means embracing *selflessness*: overcoming one’s own weaknesses and using one’s power in order to help other people. Tobias is the embodiment of this definition of power: although he was ranked at the top of the Dauntless recruits, he’s chosen to devote his adult life to helping new recruits (a selfless position), rather than exerting his power in the Dauntless government (a selfish position). In short, Eric and Peter define strength as being able to overcome one’s weaknesses and take care of one’s self; Tobias and Tris define it as being able to overcome one’s fears and take care of others.

From early on, it’s clear that the latter definition of strength (selflessness) isn’t remotely as popular among the Dauntless at

the former (selfishness). On the occasions when Tris demonstrates selflessness, even her close friends misinterpret her actions, focusing on the most selfish, self-sufficient aspects of what she’s done—for instance, when Tris takes Al’s place in front of a target for knives, her peers compliment her for displaying her toughness, not for protecting Al. And yet the most impressive displays of strength in the novel are selfless—in other words, intended to help other people. In the novel’s climax, while the selfish Erudite and Dauntless governments hide far away, controlling their soldiers remotely, Tris endangers her own life by surrendering her weapon to Tobias, who’s being controlled by Erudite drugs. Due to her selfless sacrifice, Tris succeeds in “defeating” Tobias, breaking through his mind-control drugs—a display of strength, courage, and willpower far beyond anything Eric or Peter would dare attempt.

As *Divergent* makes clear, there’s a fine line between strength and selfishness; i.e., between power and the abuse of power. Left to its own devices, the cult of strength and courage has a tendency to devolve into the celebration of power for power’s sake—ideally, though, strength should be tempered by selflessness. When this broader view of power is accepted, it becomes clear that selflessness is actually a crucial part of *true* strength.



COMPETITION, GROUPS, AND RIVALRIES

One of the first things we notice about the futuristic society in *Divergent* is that it’s rigorously classified: almost all people belong to one of five factions, and within each of these factions, members are constantly ranked and assessed for their abilities. One byproduct of all this ranking and classifying is that a spirit of competitiveness hangs over the characters’ lives. Each one of the factions competes with the others for glory and power, and within the Dauntless faction, Tris Prior and her peers compete for a high spot in the all-important “rankings.” It’s worth exploring the theme of competition a little more closely, since the entire book is structured around different kinds of competitions, ranging from boxing matches to citywide wars.

Divergent suggests that competition builds group loyalty. In the early chapters, it’s established that the Abnegation community despises the Erudite for their pretentiousness and arrogance. More importantly, however, the Abnegation community defines itself in relation to the Erudites: when Tris’s father, Andrew, explains why he’s proud to live in Abnegation, he explains in the same breath why he’s proud *not* to live among the Erudite. The competitiveness between the factions in *Divergent* leads to a strong sense of solidarity *within* the faction—indeed, a common saying in the city is “faction before family.” (Although it’s never explicitly stated in this first novel, it seems likely that this is *why* the factions were founded in the first place: in a time of crisis,

the city's leaders created factions to promote loyalty and a strong herd mentality.)

Competitiveness inspires group loyalty, but ironically, it also encourages strong rivalries and resentments between members of the same group. This is apparent from day one of Tris's life in the Dauntless community. Even as Tris makes new friends among the Dauntless, and begins to think that she "belongs" among them, she can't help but form equally powerful rivalries with other Dauntless recruits, such as Peter and Molly. At one point, the new Dauntless recruits play a city-wide game of capture the flag—a good illustration of the paradoxes of competition. Tris and the other recruits are divided into two competing teams. In other words, the competitiveness of the game encourages loyalty *and* disloyalty: loyalty to fellow teammates and disloyalty to opponents. Competitiveness is both attractive and repellent: it brings people together in solidarity at the same time that it pushes people apart.

Tris Prior's complicated relationship with the Dauntless reflects some of the paradoxes of competition. She's intelligent enough to recognize that the purpose of the rankings and sparring exercises is to breed a sense of aggression, competitiveness, and group loyalty. And yet Tris can't quite "stand outside" the competition: she enjoys competing, even when she knows she's being manipulated. Competitiveness is a crucial part of Tris's character: throughout the novel, she's motivated to do well in the rankings, not only because she wants a bright future for herself but also just for the sake of the rankings themselves. As the novel closes, Tris is still trying to work out her feelings about competition: she knows it leads to rivalry and violence, but she still can't help but enjoy it.



FEAR, BRAVERY, AND MATURITY

During the time she spends training with the Dauntless, Tris Prior learns how to confront her deepest fears, and indeed, this is one of the most basic lessons she learns from her Dauntless mentors. The entire culture of the Dauntless community is centered on fear, as the Dauntless believe that fear—or rather, cowardice—is the most basic problem with the human race. Thus, the path to success and peace necessarily involves mastering one's fears and becoming brave. In general, *Divergent* shows how Tris "comes of age" by understanding and dealing with her fears.

One of the novel's most important points about fear is that everybody, without exception, feels it. Tris and her peers go through rigorous training, during which they're made to vividly experience their fears. Every one of the new recruits is shaken by this challenge: fear is their common denominator, bringing them closer together. One could even say that fear is the most fundamental thing "about" the characters, some of whom (Four, for example) are actually *named* after their fears.

If fear is a basic part of being human, then growing up requires

us to make sense of our fears. Interestingly, *Divergent* suggests that being brave doesn't mean *eliminating* fear altogether; rather, bravery requires us to come to terms with fear and deal with it even if we can't actually defeat it. During Tris's Dauntless training, she's injected with hallucinogenic serum that makes her experience her worst fears, but over time, Tris learns how to cope with her fears. She accepts that she'll always be frightened of the same things: drowning, losing her family, etc. Instead of trying to "hide" from these fears, Tris forces herself to accept them as realities. Because she's **Divergent** (and thus has access to a unique mental state that's never fully explained in the book), Tris has an easier time than most staying sane during her training: she's able to tell herself, "This is just a hallucination." Tris's courage and composure in the face of fear make her seem mature and adult-like to her peers among the Dauntless—and to readers.

Tris's struggle to come to terms with her fears is more than an important part of her training, though. It also represents one of her greatest strengths as a heroine. While many of Tris's peers and friends are easily manipulated by the propaganda released by the Erudites, Tris "sticks to her guns," recognizing that the Erudite are trying to scare the other factions into obedience. In general, Tris isn't as susceptible to manipulation and scare tactics as her friends. In no small part, this is because she's courageous; her Dauntless training has taught her to accept fear instead of trying to bury it altogether. Everyone feels fear, Tris included. But Tris is special: she learns how to deal with her fear in a productive way. In general, she's the heroine of the novel not so much because of her intelligence or her combat skills, but because she's Divergent: because of her Divergence, she's able to use fear in a productive way, becoming a brave, full-grown adult in the process.



WOMEN AND SEXUALITY

Divergent has been praised by some for its strong female protagonist. Tris Prior is a powerful, even heroic character, and during the course of the novel she protects the weak and saves countless lives. More importantly, Tris's heroism seems directly tied to the fact that she is a young woman: her gender gives her a powerful tool for fighting evil. It's worth considering the novel's take on women a little more closely.

The majority of *Divergent* is set in a society that's openly, even blatantly, masculine in its structure. The Dauntless—who are government by men and men only, it would appear—celebrate combat, aggression, violence, and other qualities that are more commonly associated with men than women. When Tris arrives at Dauntless, few people take her seriously, because she's a woman, and a small, unimposing woman at that. On a basic level, the structure of Dauntless society sends a strong message to Tris, telling her to be frightened, submissive, and meek. Throughout the novel, Tris responds to this "challenge"

from masculine Dauntless society, sometimes by imitating masculine behavior, and sometimes by using her gender to her advantage.

At times, Tris tries to succeed by imitating the masculine norms at Dauntless, but often, she's most successful when she doesn't pretend to be anything other than a woman. She masters the basics of personal combat, but never really excels at fighting: frankly put, biology is against her—she's not big enough to defeat an opponent like Peter. Tris's most impressive feats at Dauntless occur outside the domain of combat and aggression. During the capture the flag game, for example, she uses quick thinking to find her opponents before they find her. While it's certainly true that Tris lives in a masculine community, she's able to gain respect herself through intelligence, wit, and strategy—avenues that, while not necessarily feminine, are certainly less stereotypically masculine.

One major sign that Tris's gender is essential, not incidental, to her strength is the role of sexuality in the novel. Tris isn't a 12-year-old "tomboy"—during the course of the book, she discovers and explores her sexual desires via her relationship with Tobias (and at one point, it's strongly implied that Tris loses her virginity to Tobias). At the novel's climax, Tris's romantic desires become a weapon as well as a source of pleasure: when Tobias is brainwashed into wanting to kill Tris, Tris is able to "break through" to her lover by communicating her feelings, causing Tobias to regain control of his mind. Quite literally, Tris's (heterosexual) feminine romantic feelings save her life. Because Roth foregrounds Tris's passion for Tobias throughout the novel's climactic chapters, we never lose sight of the fact that she's a strong woman, not just a strong, genderless character.

From a feminist viewpoint, there are two major ways for young adult novels about women to go wrong. First, the book can make the mistake of depicting women as passive "damsels in distress"—waiting for heroic men to save them. *Divergent* certainly doesn't make this mistake, as Tris isn't just the protagonist of the book; she's arguably the strongest and most competent character. Second, young adult novels sometimes depict women as almost androgynous characters: while they are, in fact, female, nothing they say or do can identify them as women. *Divergent* doesn't shy away from gender or sexuality: Tris is a woman, with strong sexual desires for men. Although she learns to spar with the men surrounding her, she doesn't try to imitate these men. Instead, Tris pioneers her own brand of bravery, becoming a true heroine in the process.



TATTOOS

After each milestone in her life, Beatrice Prior gets a tattoo. Each tattoo has a different, specific symbolic meaning—for example, she gets a tattoo of the Dauntless symbol (a ring of fire) to celebrate the fact that she's finally feeling at home among the Dauntless. In general, though, Beatrice's tattoos symbolize her desire to form an identity for herself: tattoos remind her who she is, and inspire her to be strong and true to her principles. Thus, her first tattoo represents her family, symbolizing her continued allegiance to her old life in Abnegation; her second tattoo is Dauntless, symbolizing her love for her new community, etc.



DIVERGENCE

The most conspicuous symbol in *Divergent* is also one of the most complex. Beatrice Prior is Divergent, meaning that she doesn't have a strong allegiance to any one of the five factions: on the contrary, she has qualities that align her with more than one of the factions. Divergence also suggests a unique kind of mental state that isn't fully explained in the novel, as Divergents like Tris and Tobias have the ability to resist mind control and hallucinations that affect those more clearly "factioned." At first, Beatrice believes that she's alone in being Divergent: she's the only one in her city who can't decide what kind of person to be. But as the book moves on, it becomes increasingly clear that Beatrice isn't unique at all. She's surrounded by people who have secret identities or hidden loyalties: even her own mother, Natalie Prior, is Divergent. In this sense, Divergence symbolizes human beings' inability to be grouped into stable categories and fixed identities. Nobody is brave, kind, or honest 100 percent of the time—and the society that tries to pretend otherwise is doomed to break down.



MIRROR

There are several points in *Divergent* when the protagonist, Beatrice Prior, looks at herself in the mirror (in fact, the novel begins with a mirror). Mirrors represent how Beatrice examines herself constantly: probing her mind for weaknesses in order to figure out what kind of person she is. The constant presence of mirrors in the novel reminds us that Beatrice is maturing quickly, to the point where she's often a stranger to herself.



SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Katherine Tegen Books edition of *Divergent* published in 2011.

Chapter 1 Quotes

☝☝ We walk together to the kitchen. On these mornings when my brother makes breakfast, and my father's hand skims my hair as he reads the newspaper, and my mother hums as she clears the table— it is on these mornings that I feel guiltiest for wanting to leave them.

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker), Caleb Prior, Andrew Prior, Natalie Prior

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 3

Explanation and Analysis

Beatrice Prior, the protagonist of the novel, faces a difficult decision. Now that she's a young woman, she can either choose to live among her peers and her family—the Abnegation community—or she can choose to live in one of four other communities, each of which embodies a different moral or psychological value. Beatrice aspires to live somewhere else—she feels constricted by the strict moral code of Abnegation, and craves a place where she's allowed to be brave and daring. And yet she feels guilty about her own aspirations—she knows that leaving her family will cause them a lot of pain and sadness. In short, Beatrice is a highly relatable narrator: like any good hero or heroine, she aspires to go out and try something new. And yet she's also moral and thoughtful enough to think about the consequences her actions have for others.

Chapter 3 Quotes

☝☝ “Beatrice,” she says, “under no circumstances should you share that information with anyone. This is very important.” “We aren't supposed to share our results.” I nod. “I know that.” “No.” Tori kneels next to the chair now and places her arms on the armrest. Our faces are inches apart. “This is different. I don't mean you shouldn't share them now; I mean you should never share them with anyone, ever, no matter what happens. Divergence is extremely dangerous. You understand?”

Related Characters: Tori, Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 22-23

Explanation and Analysis

Tori, an administrator for the character test that all city residents must take, discovers something important about Beatrice. Beatrice has a rare quality called Divergence, which allows her to embody multiple personality types at once. Where most people in the community are brave *or* humble *or* intelligent, Beatrice alternates between multiple characteristics, or has aspects of all of them. As Tori explains, the government doesn't like Divergent people.

Tori doesn't explain *why*, precisely, the government is so averse to Divergence. Even so, we've already noticed that Beatrice's society is based on strict order and control. People's identities are fixed, in such a way that everyone in the city has a natural career path, a natural group of friends, etc. When someone like Beatrice refuses to go along with the city's strict classification rules, she inadvertently challenges the authority of the city leadership.

Chapter 4 Quotes

☝☝ “You know why,” my father says. “Because we have something they want. Valuing knowledge above all else results in a lust for power, and that leads men into dark and empty places. We should be thankful that we know better.” I nod. I know I will not choose Erudite, even though my test results suggested that I could. I am my father's daughter.

Related Characters: Andrew Prior, Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 35-36

Explanation and Analysis

Beatrice's father, Andrew, comments on the longstanding rivalry between two powerful city factions: Abnegation (Andrew and Beatrice's own faction) and Erudite (the faction of scholarly, intelligent people). Andrew believes that intelligent people inevitably crave power—they're so satisfied with their own intellectual abilities that they try to use their knowledge into dominate others. The only thing that can temper the Erudite lust for power is Abnegation—the desire to be modest, self-controlled, etc.

It's important to note that Beatrice mostly agrees with her father's analysis. As she says, she's still her father's daughter at this point in the novel—in other words, she's still basing her identity on someone else, instead of freely choosing the kind of person she wants to be. And yet Beatrice shows signs of “breaking free” from her family's control: she knows that she *could* be any number of different people—she's

Divergent, after all.

Chapter 5 Quotes

☝☝ Marcus offers me my knife. I look into his eyes—they are dark blue, a strange color—and take it. He nods, and I turn toward the bowls. Dauntless fire and Abnegation stones are both on my left, one in front of my shoulder and one behind. I hold the knife in my right hand and touch the blade to my palm. Gritting my teeth, I drag the blade down. It stings, but I barely notice. I hold both hands to my chest, and my next breath shudders on the way out.

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker), Marcus

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 47

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Marcus (an important city leader) presides over the choosing ceremony, an important event in which the 16-year-olds of the city choose the identity and community they'll bear for the rest of their lives: Abnegation, Erudite, Dauntless, Candor, or Amity. In the ceremony, choosing one's identity entails cutting one's own skin and bleeding into one of five ceremonial receptacles, each corresponding to a different group.

It's appropriate that choosing one's identity is a tough, painful exercise: one can't choose lightly to cut one's own flesh. The brutality of choosing one's identity reflects the severity of the choice itself: there's no going back once Beatrice decides what she'll be. Furthermore, the fact that the different receptacles collect the blood of new members reflects the familial closeness between members of the same faction. Even though members hail from all over the city, they're bound together by blood: not in the sense of sharing the same DNA, but in the sense of sharing the same interests and desires. At the same time, the almost savage aspect of this ceremony shows how regressive it really is—it's absurd to think of people as so "flat" that they can all be easily divided into only five groups, and even more absurd to divide them at age 16, a time when people are constantly growing and changing.

Chapter 7 Quotes

☝☝ "The chasm reminds us that there is a fine line between bravery and idiocy!" Four shouts. "A daredevil jump off this ledge will end your life. It has happened before and it will happen again. You've been warned."

Related Characters: Tobias / Four (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 65

Explanation and Analysis

When Beatrice arrives at her new home--the Dauntless stronghold--she's given an important lesson in bravery. Four (Tobias), a young, charismatic Dauntless leader, shows his new recruits the enormous chasm in the middle of the Dauntless stronghold. There are many "brave" Dauntless recruits who've tried to prove their bravery by jumping across the chasm--and every single one of these recruits has died. Tobias uses the memory of his dead recruits to prove that bravery doesn't necessarily imply risking one's own life needlessly. Tobias is a rare voice of caution and restraint, surrounded by daredevils and bullies. He's clearly very brave, but he tries to temper his bravery with intelligence. In short, Tobias and Beatrice are kindred spirits: they're in the Dauntless world, but they seem to take the Dauntless dogma with a grain of salt, adding other virtues because of their Divergent nature.

Chapter 8 Quotes

☝☝ It takes me five rounds to hit the middle of the target, and when I do, a rush of energy goes through me. I am awake, my eyes wide open, my hands warm. I lower the gun. There is power in controlling something that can do so much damage—in controlling something, period. Maybe I do belong here.

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 79

Explanation and Analysis

In this chapter, Beatrice begins her training at the Dauntless facility. Naturally, she's instructed in the art of combat, psychological warfare, and military strategy. At first, Beatrice struggles to come out of her shell--she's so used to being modest and reserved that she doesn't know how to fight back. But after some practice, she discovers that she's an excellent shot--she can fire a gun and throw a knife with great skill. Beatrice begins to realize that she fits in well at Dauntless: in spite of her Divergent nature, there's pleasure to be found in settling into one identity and community,

even if that identity doesn't totally represent her character.

●● But I understand now what Tori said about her tattoo representing a fear she overcame—a reminder of where she was, as well as a reminder of where she is now. Maybe there is a way to honor my old life as I embrace my new one. “Yes,” I say. “Three of these flying birds.” I touch my collarbone, marking the path of their flight—toward my heart. One for each member of the family I left behind.

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker), Tori

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 90

Explanation and Analysis

Beatrice takes an important step toward refashioning her identity: she gets a tattoo. Beatrice is beginning to fit in well with her new Dauntless friends, as she finds that she's a good fighter and a clever strategist who can use her intelligence and determination to win most fights. And yet Beatrice continues to miss her family: her father, mother, and brother. In order to remember her three family members, Beatrice gets a tattoo of three birds.

Beatrice's tattoo--i.e., the very fact that she's getting a tattoo at all--suggests that she's beginning to settle into one identity: she's secure enough in her personality that she's willing to mark it out in ink. And yet Beatrice's *choice* of a tattoo suggests that she's still deeply conflicted about her identity: she's living in Dauntless, but she chooses to commemorate her Abnegation roots. She's conflicted--split between two Factions (a huge no-no in the city). In short, Beatrice is feeling more Divergent than ever.

Chapter 9 Quotes

●● “It ends when one of you is unable to continue,” says Eric. “According to Dauntless rules,” Four says, “one of you could also concede.” Eric narrows his eyes at Four.

“According to the old rules,” he says. “In the new rules, no one concedes.”

“A brave man acknowledges the strength of others,” Four replies.

“A brave man never surrenders,” Eric says, and Four and Eric stare at each other for a few seconds.

I feel like I am looking at two different kinds of Dauntless—the honorable kind, and the ruthless kind. But even I know that in this room, it's Eric, the youngest leader of the Dauntless, who has the authority.

Related Characters: Eric, Tobias / Four, Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 95

Explanation and Analysis

In this moment, Eric and Four--two of the important teachers at the Dauntless compound--organize a ruthless match between two new recruits, Will and Al. Although Four wants the fight to end quickly and honorably, Eric takes a different approach: he wants the fight to be as long and bloody as possible.

Eric and Four's exchange reflects the two different sub-factions within the Faction of Dauntless. Eric thinks of combat as a bloody, sadistic sport, designed to prove one's strength and superiority. Four thinks of combat as a more complicated undertaking, designed to confirm one's inner strength, not just his or her ability to punch, kick, or shoot. In short, Eric thinks that Dauntless means blood; Four thinks it means honor.

Chapter 11 Quotes

●● “What rank were you?” Peter asks Four. I don't expect Four to answer, but he looks levelly at Peter and says, “I was first.” “And you chose to do this?” Peter's eyes are wide and round and dark green. They would look innocent to me if I didn't know what a terrible person he is. “Why didn't you get a government job?” “I didn't want one,” Four says flatly. I remember what he said on the first day, about working in the control room, where the Dauntless monitor the city's security. It is difficult for me to imagine him there, surrounded by computers. To me he belongs in the training room.

Related Characters: Peter, Tobias / Four, Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 125

Explanation and Analysis

Four reveals the truth: he was an enormously talented soldier when he was younger. But instead of parlaying his talents into a cushy government job, Four chose to return to the recruitment process, this time as an educator.

Why doesn't Four accept the plum government position that's his for the taking? Four seems uncomfortable with governing itself: he's more comfortable working one-on-one with recruits, *showing* them how to fight, than he is with ordering his subordinates into action. Furthermore, Four seems to question many of the Dauntless government officials' decisions. He doesn't really fit in with the Dauntless mindset--instead of embracing the gospel of pure strength and bloodshed, he opts for a milder, more honorable form of courage. If Four were in the government, he could use his influence to advance his own interpretation of courage--but instead, he's forced to accept the sadistic teachings of his superiors.

Chapter 13 Quotes

☝☝ “Catch on? Catch on to what? That you wanted to prove to Eric how tough you are? That you’re sadistic, just like he is?”
“I am not sadistic.” He doesn’t yell. I wish he would yell. It would scare me less. He leans his face close to mine, which reminds me of lying inches away from the attack dog’s fangs in the aptitude test, and says, “If I wanted to hurt you, don’t you think I would have already?”

Related Characters: Tobias / Four, Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker), Eric

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 165

Explanation and Analysis

Eric has ordered Four to throw knives at Beatrice; Four reluctantly does so, eventually nicking Beatrice's ear on purpose. Afterwards, Beatrice angrily confronts Four about his behavior: she thought that they were friends. Four replies that he's trying to help Beatrice.

While Four doesn't explain exactly why he's "helping" Beatrice, we can infer the truth. Four is worried that he's

making Beatrice look like a teacher's pet. By wounding Beatrice--albeit in the mildest possible way--he's making Beatrice look like an underdog, helping her earn the respect of her peers. Furthermore, by wounding Beatrice in front of Eric, Four is trying to protect Beatrice from Eric's sadism. In short, Four is always thinking ahead: a clever strategist, he hurts Beatrice a little in the short term to strengthen her in the long term.

Chapter 15 Quotes

☝☝ “Cara,” says Will, frowning, “there’s no need to be rude.”
“Oh, certainly not. Do you know what she is?” She points at my mother. “She’s a council member’s wife is what she is. She runs the ‘volunteer agency’ that supposedly helps the factionless. You think I don’t know that you’re just hoarding goods to distribute to your own faction while we don’t get fresh food for a month, huh? Food for the factionless, my eye.”
“I’m sorry,” my mother says gently. “I believe you are mistaken.”
“Mistaken. Ha,” Cara snaps. “I’m sure you’re exactly what you seem. A faction of happy-go-lucky do-gooders without a selfish bone in their bodies. Right.”

Related Characters: Cara, Will, Natalie Prior, Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 184

Explanation and Analysis

In this chapter, the Dauntless recruits get a chance to reunite with their families. At the reunion event, Beatrice--now named Tris--reunites with her mother, Natalie. Tris also meets her friends' parents, including Cara, Will's sister. Cara accuses Natalie of using her influential position to greedily hoard resources. Furthermore, Cara accuses the people of Abnegation of misrepresenting themselves as selfless and loving, when in reality they're just as greedy as everyone else.

The fact that such an unpleasant argument breaks out at a reunion event suggests that the divides between the Factions run deep: Cara's Faction (Erudite) hates Natalie's (Abnegation), and always will. The dispute between Erudite and Abnegation is particularly enormous, because the divide between intelligence and selflessness (at least as Roth sees it!) is a wide one. Intelligent people desire power and control, while selfless people desire peace and equality. Thus, Cara can't help herself from shouting at Natalie, even though Natalie is utterly blameless (as far as we know).

Chapter 17 Quotes

☝☝ My heart beats so hard it hurts, and I can't scream and I can't breathe, but I also feel everything, every vein and every fiber, every bone and every nerve, all awake and buzzing in my body as if charged with electricity. I am pure adrenaline.

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 221

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Tris begins an important rite of passage for Dauntless recruits: zip-lining down from the John Hancock Building. Tris is frightened but also exhilarated as she prepares to take her "leap of faith." She knows she could die, and yet comes to embrace her own feelings of fear.

Tris's behavior during this scene confirms why she fits in so well with the Dauntless. Tris is a shy, reserved person, but deep down, she has a boundless love for adventure and danger. Tris is both attracted and repelled by the Dauntless way of life: she enjoys combat, and yet also finds it immoral and disgusting. In short, Tris's attitude toward zip-lining symbolizes her feelings toward Dauntless itself: she's frightened and even disturbed by it, and yet she can't look away.

Chapter 18 Quotes

☝☝ "What changed?"
"The leadership," he says. "The person who controls training sets the standard of Dauntless behavior. Six years ago Max and the other leaders changed the training methods to make them more competitive and more brutal, said it was supposed to test people's strength. And that changed the priorities of Dauntless as a whole. Bet you can't guess who the leaders' new protégé is."

The answer is obvious: Eric. They trained him to be vicious, and now he will train the rest of us to be vicious too.

Related Characters: Tobias / Four, Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker), Eric

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 240

Explanation and Analysis

Here Four describes the history of the Dauntless community. There's been a massive shift in Dauntless

ideology in recent years. Previously, the Dauntless leaders believed in a strict code of honor and respect: victors owed respect and support to the people they defeated. Now, the old Dauntless "code" has disappeared. Thanks to Max and Eric's leadership, Dauntless soldiers are encouraged to glory in victory, gloating at their opponents' pain and suffering. By controlling the recruitment process, Eric is ensuring that the next generation of Dauntless warriors will be just as brutal and sadistic as he is.

Four's explanation helps us understand why he chose to become an educator instead of a government administrator. Four is smart and talented enough to work for the government, but he wants to make sure that Eric doesn't transmit have sole control over the new Dauntless soldiers. In order to restore the old Dauntless code of respect, Four chooses to work one-on-one with recruits, teaching them how to win, but also how to be honorable.

Chapter 21 Quotes

☝☝ I wanted to be like the Dauntless I saw at school. I wanted to be loud and daring and free like them. But they were not members yet; they were just playing at being Dauntless. And so was I, when I jumped off that roof. I didn't know what fear was.

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 263

Explanation and Analysis

Tris comes to terms with the second stage of her training. After learning the art of personal combat, Tris has now been coached in psychological warfare: she's trained to resist chemically-administered hallucinations. Tris realizes that she's encountering more frightening things than she's ever experienced before: she's jumped off of tall buildings and gotten in bloody fights, but she's never encountered anything half as frightening as her own hallucinations.

In short, Tris's own greatest enemy is her own mind. While most people would assume that the key part of being Dauntless is knowing how to fight, Tris understands that it's more important to control one's own mind. Tris agrees with Four on a code of self-control, psychological rigor, and quiet power. Knowing how to fight an armed opponent is important, but knowing how to control one's own thoughts is more valuable.

●● He pulls me forward a few inches and then slams me against the wall again. I clench my teeth to keep from crying out, though pain from the impact went all the way down my spine.
Will grabs Peter by his shirt collar and drags him away from me. "Leave her alone," he says. "Only a coward bullies a little girl." "A little girl?" scoffs Peter, throwing off Will's hand. "Are you blind, or just stupid? She's going to edge you out of the rankings and out of Dauntless, and you're going to get nothing, all because she knows how to manipulate people and you don't. So when you realize that she's out to ruin us all, you let me know."

Related Characters: Will, Peter, Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker)

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 267-268

Explanation and Analysis

Here the conflict between the two Dauntless "codes" becomes crystal clear. Peter--one of Tris's rivals for dominance among the new recruits--tries to cement his position by hurting Tris. Tris's friend Will defends her from Peter, pointing out that it's dishonorable to beat up a girl. Peter's answer shows how greedy and cruel he's become: for Peter, the only thing that matters is his ranking--he'll gladly beat up a girl if it helps him win. (Roth doesn't really comment on the sexist undertones of the two boys fighting over the "little girl," or just how "dishonorable" it is for a boy to fight a girl.)

Previously, Dauntless soldiers were trained to be honorable and respectful, rather than using their physical prowess to win at all costs. Nowadays, under Eric's leadership, Dauntless has become brutal, pointlessly competitive, and sadistic. Peter is the ideal "new" Dauntless soldier: amoral, ruthless, and generally dismissive of the very notion of honor.

Chapter 23 Quotes

●● Whoever he is, I like him. It's easier for me to admit that to myself now, in the dark, after all that just happened. He is not sweet or gentle or particularly kind. But he is smart and brave, and even though he saved me, he treated me like I was strong. That is all I need to know. I watch the muscles in his back expand and contract until I fall asleep.

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker), Tobias / Four

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 288-289

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Tris sleeps in Four's bed, while Four sleeps on the floor. Although there's no physical interaction between the two of them it's clear that Tris is beginning to feel attracted to Four: she likes his "masculine smell." But Tris's attraction to Four runs deeper than the physical. Tris admires Four for being strong and fast--in short, for being a perfect Dauntless warrior. But furthermore, Tris likes that Four is honorable: he treats Tris like a strong woman, even when he's saving her single-handedly. In short, Four is the ideal Dauntless warrior of the "old days" (before Eric rose to power). Four is tough and brutal, but he also believes in the old-fashioned values of honor and respect.

●● Somewhere inside me is a merciful, forgiving person.
Somewhere there is a girl who tries to understand what people are going through, who accepts that people do evil things and that desperation leads them to darker places than they ever imagined. I swear she exists, and she hurts for the repentant boy I see in front of me. But if I saw her, I wouldn't recognize her. "Stay away from me," I say quietly. My body feels rigid and cold, and I am not angry, I am not hurt, I am nothing. I say, my voice low, "Never come near me again." Our eyes meet. His are dark and glassy. I am nothing. "If you do, I swear to God I will kill you," I say. "You coward."

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker), Al

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 299-300

Explanation and Analysis

Tris comes face-to-face with her former friend, Al. Al has supported Tris before. But as it becomes clear that Tris is a talented, dangerous soldier, Al begins to resent her success. Desperate to rise to the top of the soldier rankings, Al conspires with other Dauntless recruits to kill Tris. Later--after the plan fails--Al tries to make amends with Tris.

Tris considers forgiving Al--as her Abnegation community would do--but in the end she refuses to let her old friend off so easy. She's been so thoroughly schooled in the Dauntless code of behavior that she instinctively treats Al with hostility. Tris recognizes that she's changed enormously since her days in Abnegation: in spite of all her objections to

Dauntless, she's grown into more of a true Dauntless soldier than she'd thought.

Chapter 28 Quotes

☛☛ We stop on the concrete around the metal bean, where the Erudite sit in small groups with newspapers or books. He takes off his glasses and shoves them in his pocket, then runs a hand through his hair, his eyes skipping over mine nervously. Like he's ashamed. Maybe I should be too. I'm tattooed, loose-haired, and wearing tight clothes. But I'm just not.

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker), Caleb Prior

Related Themes:   

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 351

Explanation and Analysis

Tris goes to visit her brother, Caleb. At the Erudite compound, Tris notices that Caleb is wearing glasses (presumably, a symbol of the Erudite people--the old cliché that smart people wear glasses). Caleb seems to be wearing glasses for no reason--he's so desperate to fit in with his new peers that he's willing to pretend that he has bad eyesight. The fact that Caleb seems ashamed of how he's changed further suggests that his commitment to Erudite is still fresh: he's insecure, and the sight of his sister is enough to make him feel guilty.

It's important to note that while Caleb seems uncomfortable with his new Erudite identity, Tris is perfectly secure in her Dauntless identity. Paradoxically, even though Tris is Divergent, she's "settled" into the role of a Dauntless warrior. Tris is a reluctant member of Dauntless, yet she's learned how to put on an appearance of total confidence.

☛☛ I don't know when I accumulated so many secrets. Being Divergent. Fears. How I really feel about my friends, my family, Al, Tobias. Candor initiation would reach things that even the simulations can't touch; it would wreck me. "Sounds awful," I say. "I always knew I couldn't be Candor. I mean, I try to be honest, but some things you just don't want people to know. Plus, I like to be in control of my own mind."

Related Characters: Christina, Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker), Al, Tobias / Four

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 371

Explanation and Analysis

Here Tris talks about the Candor community with her friend Christina. Christina was born into a Candor family, but never liked it there. She was a reserved, introverted child, and couldn't stand the idea of living in a place where she was required to disclose all her secrets.

The passage is important because it foreshadows the way that the Dauntless and Erudite leaders will use mind control to dominate their own people. Furthermore, the passage's emphasis on self-control and secretiveness reinforces the fact that Tris is a complex, conflicted character. While most of Tris's peers are willing to commit to one Faction, Tris goes through constant identity crises. She feels like a Dauntless soldier one day; a member of Abnegation the next. Like Christina, Tris could never survive in a community that demands total honesty: she changes her mind so often that she's often dishonest with herself.

Chapter 30 Quotes

☛☛ Simulation Tobias kisses my neck. I try to think. I have to face the fear. I have to take control of the situation and find a way to make it less frightening. I look Simulation Tobias in the eye and say sternly, "I am not going to sleep with you in a hallucination. Okay?"

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker), Tobias / Four

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 393-394

Explanation and Analysis

In this quotation, Tris has a strange encounter with Tobias in her hallucination (a hallucination that's being administered to train her to control her own emotions). Tobias--who by this point is involved in a secret relationship with Tris--kisses Tris. Tris, who's still sexually inexperienced, is frightened and a little intimidated by Tobias's advances. And yet she's confident enough in herself to summon the courage to turn Tobias down, asserting control over her own hallucinations.

The passage suggests the relationship between maturity,

fear, sexuality, and coming-of-age. Tris is clearly attracted to Tobias, but she's also afraid of sex and her own sexuality. In facing her fears and turning Tobias down, Tris becomes a more mature, confident young woman, taking control of her own fears at the same time that she takes control of her relationships with other people. In short, Tris confronts her fears of sexuality and learns how to deal with fear itself.

Chapter 31 Quotes

☝☝ “Sometimes I wonder,” I say, as calmly as I can, “what’s in it for you. This...whatever it is.”
 “What’s in it for me,” he repeats. He steps back, shaking his head. “You’re an idiot, Tris.”
 “I am not an idiot,” I say. “Which is why I know that it’s a little weird that, of all the girls you could have chosen, you chose me. So if you’re just looking for...um, you know...that...”
 “What? Sex?” He scowls at me. “You know, if that was all I wanted, you probably wouldn’t be the first person I would go to.”

Related Characters: Tobias / Four, Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker)

Related Themes: 

Page Number: 401-402

Explanation and Analysis

Tris and Tobias bicker over sex and attraction. Tris accuses Tobias of using her for sex (not an unreasonable claim), but Tobias angrily insists that he's not--if he just wanted sex, he'd have gone to a different woman.

Tris and Tobias seem equally inexperienced with relationships, even if Tobias is more experienced with sex per se. Tris clearly lacks confidence in her own beauty and intelligence, hence her refusal to believe that Tobias is interested in her in any serious capacity. Tobias, for his part, is clumsy in the way he defends his actions. In all, the passage is refreshing insofar as it shows two young adults talking openly and frankly about sex and sexuality. Neither Tobias nor Tris is very experienced with romance, but by talking with one another, they're *gaining* experience.

Chapter 34 Quotes

☝☝ She presses her palms together. I see no vicious glee in her eyes, and not a hint of the sadism I expect. She is more machine than maniac. She sees problems and forms solutions based on the data she collects. Abnegation stood in the way of her desire for power, so she found a way to eliminate it. She didn't have an army, so she found one in Dauntless. She knew that she would need to control large groups of people in order to stay secure, so she developed a way to do it with serums and transmitters. Divergence is just another problem for her to solve, and that is what makes her so terrifying—because she is smart enough to solve anything, even the problem of our existence.

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker), Jeanine Matthews

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 431-432

Explanation and Analysis

Tris comes face-to-face with her greatest enemy, Jeanine Matthews, the leader of the Erudite community. As Tris talks with Jeanine, she realizes the truth: Jeanine is using the people of Dauntless to wage an all-out war against the city. Jeanine is a cold-unfeeling woman, altogether unlike Tris's peers in Dauntless: she acts out of rationality, not anger.

The passage clarifies some of the differences between the Erudite and Dauntless communities (and perhaps, between a life of the mind and a life of individual bravery). The Erudite (or at least Jeanine) are coldly rational and unfeeling: their acts of evil are great, because they don't let sympathy get in the way. Even a Dauntless commander like Eric, in spite of his ruthlessness, isn't as dangerous as Jeanine: Eric thinks small, satisfying his desire for bloodshed in individual fights, not city-wide coups.

Chapter 36 Quotes

☝☝ “I’m factionless now.”
 “No, you aren’t,” my father says sternly. “You’re with us.”

Related Characters: Andrew Prior, Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker)

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 449

Explanation and Analysis

In this chapter, Tris reunites with her family. In the midst of the Erudite coup of the city, Tris leaves the Dauntless community altogether. She's been trained to think in terms of factions for so long that she can't conceive of a community for herself: without the Dauntless, she's nothing. But as Tris's father points out, Tris *does* have a community--her parents and siblings.

The quotation reminds us how thoroughly Tris has immersed herself in the Dauntless way of life throughout the novel. Factionalism has convinced Tris that her only true friends live in her faction--it takes Andrew's reminder to restore her faith in the family. The quotation further suggests that for most people in the city, Faction *is* family: a group that provides love, support, and acceptance.

Chapter 38 Quotes

☝ I have done this before—in my fear landscape, with the gun in my hand, a voice shouting at me to fire at the people I love. I volunteered to die instead, that time, but I can't imagine how that would help me now. But I just know, I know what the right thing to do is. My father says—used to say—that there is power in self-sacrifice. I turn the gun in my hands and press it into Tobias's palm.

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker), Andrew Prior, Tobias / Four

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 475

Explanation and Analysis

In this climactic scene of the novel, Tris points a gun at Tobias, who's been brainwashed to fight on behalf of Eric and Jeanine. Although Tris knows the "right" Dauntless thing to do is to shoot Tobias, she finds herself unable to hurt her friend and lover. Instead of embracing violence, like the good Dauntless soldier she's been trained to be, Tris opts for the way of Abnegation: she sacrifices her own safety and security to protect Tobias.

The passage proves that Tris, in spite of her success among the Dauntless recruits, can't be pinned down as Dauntless. A true Divergent, she alternates between Dauntless courage and Abnegation virtue. In the end, she seems to place a higher premium on love and compassion than on victory--a sure sign that she's transcended the petty factionalism of her society.

☝ Abnegation and Dauntless are both broken, their members scattered. We are like the factionless now. I do not know what life will be like, separated from a faction—it feels disengaged, like a leaf divided from the tree that gives it sustenance. We are creatures of loss; we have left everything behind. I have no home, no path, and no certainty. I am no longer Tris, the selfless, or Tris, the brave. I suppose that now, I must become more than either.

Related Characters: Beatrice Prior / Tris (speaker)

Related Themes:     

Page Number: 487

Explanation and Analysis

At the end of the novel, Tris comes to terms with her identity, or rather, her lack of an identity. Tris has been trained to think in terms of Factions--i.e., a person can be brave *or* selfless, but not both. At the end of the novel, Tris sees the absurdity of factionalism: she's brave, intelligent, selfless, etc.--there's no good way to reduce her identity to one quality.

Beyond Tris's disillusionment, her two home factions (Dauntless and Abnegation) have both been destroyed by the citywide coup, so Tris is now forced to transcend factionalism altogether. In so doing, Tris becomes a more identifiable protagonist. No reader of *Divergent* can be easily reduced to one overarching category--we're just as Divergent as Tris. In other words, we're meant to identify with Tris for going beyond life's simple categorizations.



SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1

An unnamed narrator describes a **mirror**, which her “faction” allows her to look at every three months, while the narrator’s mother cuts her hair. On one such day, the narrator’s mother cuts the narrator’s hair and whispers, “Today is the day”: today, the narrator will be sorted into one of five factions. The narrator, who’s 16, wonders if she’ll have to leave her mother, brother, and father soon.

It’s notable that the book begins with a description of a mirror: a classic symbol of self-contemplation and identity. The mirror signals us that this will be a book about understanding oneself—the process of self-examination that goes along with any coming-of-age story. It’s also important to note that the mirror—also a symbol of vanity—is a novelty in this narrator’s life, suggesting that her society is opposed to such “luxuries.”



The narrator thinks about the “Abnegation” community she lives in: a community in which “self-indulgence” is condemned. People in this community don’t celebrate birthdays or wear attractive clothing. Secretly, the narrator fantasizes about leaving this community, but she feels guilty for her feelings.

As the novel begins, the narrator is “out of sync” with her community: there’s a fundamental clash between the narrator’s desire for freedom and happiness and the community’s desire to subdue any “unnecessary” desires.



A short while after having her hair cut, the narrator sits in a bus with her brother, Caleb. Caleb, who’s less than a year older than the narrator, and therefore also headed to his aptitude tests that day, is a selfless, humble man, despite his good looks—in other words, he’s an ideal man for the Abnegation community. The bus takes Caleb, the narrator, and others to the ruins of the Sears Tower (a famous building in Chicago), now known as the Hub.

This section introduces the setting of Roth’s story, contrasting the real (the Sears Tower is a real building) with the imaginary (this Puritanical, rigidly divided society). Caleb and the narrator’s community is defined by a kind of forced modesty: even though Caleb is attractive, his community forces him to deny this fact.



Inside the Hub, Caleb and the narrator usually attend school. Today, however, their classes have been shortened to make room for a “Choosing Ceremony” in the afternoon. In the morning, the narrator goes to classes on Faction history and other subjects. She thinks about the aptitude test she’s about to take: a test that will sort her into one of five groups. The groups are: Abnegation (the group she lives in right now), Candor, Erudite, Amity, and Dauntless. The narrator goes to school with members of these other groups. In between classes, an “Erudite” boy pushes her to the ground.

It’s easy to see that Divergent is intended for a teenaged audience: this passage is essentially a description of a day at high school. Just like at any high school, the students separate into “cliques”—jocks, nerds, etc. The conceit of this novel is that high school cliques have become the basis for an entire society: the city of Chicago has divided into cliques (or factions), whose members are fiercely loyal to one another, and competitive with each other.



The narrator considers another one of the groups, the Dauntless. Every day, Dauntless people are supposed to prove their bravery by jumping from a moving train. Their job is to protect the city, though the narrator doesn't know from what.

Roth ends her chapter on a note of mystery: clearly, the city needs to be defended, but from whom or what we have no idea. Given that people don't know who their own enemies are, defense probably isn't such an urgent problem. This points to the idea that the city's groups or cliques don't necessarily serve any practical purpose (i.e., defense from an enemy), so much as they create a "herd mentality" and keep everyone following the rules.



CHAPTER 2

In the afternoon, the narrator is about to proceed with her aptitude test. Most of the test administrators are from the Abnegation community. The narrator notices Erudites, who "constantly pursue knowledge." She thinks about Caleb—who already knows which group he'll be placed into. For as long as the narrator can remember, Caleb has been generous and selfless.

Any high school kid knows about aptitude tests, from the SATs to the ACTs. Here, Roth captures the anxiety of these tests: the idea that one test can determine the course of one's future is terrifying, especially when everyone else's future seems to be predetermined.



One by one, the test administrators call the students into a room. Caleb goes into the room and emerges a short time later, looking very pale. The narrator knows she's not allowed to ask Caleb about his results, so she doesn't.

There's a lot of secrecy surrounding the aptitude tests. This is ironic, considering that for the rest of Caleb's life, everyone will know which faction he's chosen.



The narrator is called into a room, and she is finally identified as Beatrice Prior. She shares a quick smile with her friend, Susan Black. Inside the room, Beatrice meets a woman named Tori, who tells Beatrice to drink a strange liquid. She does, and loses consciousness.

Despite the banal format of the test (missing half a day of school, standing in line), the aptitude test has an almost mystical feeling: it's as if Beatrice is about to go on a transcendental journey.



Beatrice wakes up in a strange room. In front of her, there's a hunk of cheese, and a knife. A woman shouts at Beatrice to choose between the two items. Confused and frustrated, Beatrice crosses her arms and refuses to do so. The woman mutters, "Have it your way," and lets in a snarling dog. Beatrice is terrified by the dog. She then notices that there's a young girl sitting in the room. As the dog approaches the young girl, Beatrice throws herself in front of the dog, protecting the girl. Beatrice slowly realizes that the snarling dog is really harmless and friendly.

Beatrice seems to be hallucinating, as evidenced by the way her fantasies keep changing abruptly. At the beginning of the section, Beatrice's tests seem fairly coherent (we can guess that a violent person would choose the knife, etc.). But by the time Beatrice finds herself facing a dog, the meaning of the aptitude tests is almost incoherent. Even so, it's worth noting that Beatrice shows bravery and protectiveness.



Suddenly, the dog disappears, and Beatrice finds herself alone in the room. She turns and sees a man with a newspaper and scarred hands. He shows Beatrice a photograph of a “Brutal Murderer,” and asks Beatrice if she knows him. Beatrice lies and says that she doesn’t (but she doesn’t reveal how she knows the murderer to us). The man shouts that Beatrice is lying, but Beatrice insists otherwise.

In this bizarre section, Beatrice demonstrates more bravery and integrity by defending the young girl from the dog. Even if we can’t decipher the exact meaning of the tests, there’s an overarching theme here: Beatrice is strong, courageous, and trustworthy, and meanwhile the government uses intimate, invasive mental tests in order to “categorize” its citizens.



CHAPTER 3

Beatrice wakes up in a room lined with **mirrors**, and finds Tori standing over her. Tori says, “That was perplexing,” and leaves. Beatrice wonders if she’s failed her test. Tori reenters the room and gives Beatrice her results: inconclusive. All Tori knows is that Beatrice is *not* Amity or Candor—Beatrice’s dishonesty and refusal to take a knife indicate this. At the same time, Beatrice’s behavior with the dog suggests that she’s evenly split between Abnegation, Dauntless, and Erudite. In short, Beatrice embodies a state called “**Divergent**.” Tori tells Beatrice not to share this information with anyone—ever. She adds that being Divergent is extremely dangerous.

This is one of the novel’s most important sections, and our first introduction to the term “Divergent.” On one level, Divergence just means that a person doesn’t fit neatly into one of the preordained categories of this society. But there is another aspect to Divergence as well, one that Roth doesn’t really explain in this first novel: Divergence is a state of mind in and of itself, with its own special abilities and drawbacks. It’s also notable (and seemingly odd) that Beatrice’s test didn’t last very long, and it wasn’t very exhaustive (less so even than the average Meyers-Briggs personality test)—so we can imagine many such tests (maybe even the majority) coming up inconclusive. This points to an idea that Roth repeatedly brings up: what if everyone is a little Divergent? Otherwise the whole foundation of Roth’s society seems based on an oversimplified view of human nature, and Beatrice’s Divergence is essentially a fantasy about being special and unique while everyone else is not.



Later in the day, Beatrice decides not to ride the bus home. She walks through the city, noticing the decaying signs and streetlights. There are crumbling old buildings standing next to brand new ones, and a large “marsh” (which the reader might recognize as Lake Michigan).

We get more of a sense for the dystopian setting in which the novel plays out. Clearly, industry and business has declined (hence the crumbling buildings), and there seems to have been some kind of environmental catastrophe (hence the drained lake).



Beatrice thinks about her **Divergence**. If she’s assigned to a different Faction, following the results of her test, she’ll be separated from her family forever. On the other hand, Beatrice could also be assigned to be “factionless.” The factionless people in the city live in poverty because they’ve never been initiated into a faction.

At this point, Beatrice is terrified of her own Divergence, because she associates it with powerlessness. Belonging to a faction is a guarantee of food, shelter, friendship, and a secure sense of identity: being unable to decide on one’s faction, therefore, signals a hard, dangerous life.



As she walks home, Beatrice offers food to a poor factionless man, who eagerly accepts it. The man grabs Beatrice's wrist and says she has pretty eyes. Beatrice prepares to hit the man and run away. But before she can act, the man lets her go and says, "Choose wisely, little girl."

There's seemingly a difference between Divergence and "the factionless," but it's unclear how stark this divide is. On one level, it seems that the factionless are those who choose a faction but then simply fail its initiation rites, while Divergents start out with a totally different state of mind altogether. Either way, this man's warning feels prophetic, and adds to the sense of doom growing around Beatrice's approaching decision.



CHAPTER 4

Beatrice makes her way home. Her neighborhood is full of houses that look exactly the same: a mark of Abnegation's emphasis of plainness and simplicity. Beatrice has arrived home before Caleb. When Caleb arrives home, he's accompanied by Susan Black and Susan's brother, Robert. Beatrice knows that Caleb and Susan like each other—but they're only allowed to flirt in the tepid way that the Abnegation community approves. Beatrice imagines that one day, Caleb will marry Susan.

Beatrice's community, Abnegation, is Puritanical in all the predictable ways: sexuality is closely controlled, elaborate visual patterns or styles of any kind are forbidden, and an overall ethos of modesty and selflessness is praised above all else. One obvious drawback of this lifestyle (which the reader will probably notice right away) is that it limits human emotion and romance—Caleb and Susan are unable to express their true feelings and explore all the possibilities of life.



Caleb and Beatrice return to their house. Caleb asks Beatrice about her results, but she refuses to tell him. Silently, they prepare dinner for the family. After some time, their father and mother come home. Beatrice's mother notes that she's heard there was a problem with the testing that day—someone didn't get a conclusive result, and had to leave early. Caleb and Beatrice say they know nothing about this.

Beatrice doesn't tell her parents about her inconclusive results, and Caleb doesn't mention that Beatrice has been behaving oddly all day, even if he can sense it. This is strangely appropriate for Abnegation: even though everyone at the table has something on their mind, nobody talks about their feelings, for fear of seeming selfish.



Beatrice's father tells his family about his day at work. He works as a political leader alongside his friend Marcus: the city is ruled by 50 such political leaders. This has been the status quo in the city, ever since the five factions made a "Great Peace," years ago. Today, Beatrice's father says, an Erudite named Jeanine Matthews released a government report attacking Marcus's character; i.e., accusing him of being violent and cruel to his son, Tobias—a boy who chose to join Dauntless instead of Abnegation. Beatrice's father claims that the Erudites have been releasing lots of reports like this lately. He says that the Erudites, with their fancy knowledge and intelligence, are jealous of Abnegation's simplicity and plainness.

This is an important expository section, in which we learn that the city is ruled by a large council. We also begin to understand why the city is divided into factions in the first place: there's peace in this dystopian Chicago, supposedly due to the separation of the city into five sub-groups that balance each other out. It's obvious that this is an uneasy peace at best, however—even though there's no war, the factions despise each other, and all this tension naturally seems to foreshadow chaos and disorder to come. We can also tell that Tobias will be an important character, based simply on the fact that Beatrice mentions him for no apparent reason.



As Beatrice sits at the dinner table, she tries to make sense of her test. She still has to make a decision: which faction to join. She could be courageous and choose Dauntless, or selfless and choose Abnegation. Tomorrow she'll have to make a choice of some kind.

From the reader's perspective, Beatrice's decision is doomed from the start: there's no way for a 16-year-old teenager (or anyone, for that matter) to choose an oversimplified identity for herself without inviting disappointment and frustration. In a way, Beatrice will spend the next 200 pages arriving at this exact conclusion.



CHAPTER 5

The next day, Beatrice and Caleb ride the bus to the Choosing Ceremony. At the Hub, they join their fellow Abnegation members and walk into a large room, which is arranged as a series of concentric circles, decorated to symbolize each of the five factions. Beatrice and Caleb's parents, who have traveled to the ceremony separately, kiss their children and say, "See you soon." Beatrice thinks that, in fact, she may never see her parents again.

This is a poignant moment, not least because Beatrice's parents (at least as far as Beatrice knows) have no idea that their daughter is considering leaving their faction altogether. Because of the structure of the city's society, switching factions essentially means saying goodbye to one's family forever—another reminder of the absurdity of making a monumental choice about one's life at the age of 16.



The ceremony begins: Marcus stands at a podium and makes a long, formal speech. In his speech, Marcus praises the factions of the city for joining together in peace. As Marcus explains, the five factions were formed to eradicate what each faction saw as the source of evil. The people who believed that selfishness was the source of all evil became Abnegation; those who hated ignorance became Erudite; those who hated dishonesty became Candor; those who hated cowardice became Dauntless; and those who hated aggression became Amity.

It's telling that each of the five factions is defined negatively—which is to say, defined as a reaction to its own opposite. For instance, the Dauntless faction is designed as a reaction to cowardice first, and as a celebration of bravery second. This suggests that no single faction could survive on its own for long, as each one is defined by its relationship with the four other factions—a delicate balance that threatens to spill over into war at any moment.



Marcus continues explaining the five factions. Each of the five factions has a special job for maintaining the city. The Dauntless protect the city; the Erudite provide teachers and scientists; Abnegation provides selfless government officials; Candor provides honest, reliable legal workers; and Amity provides kindhearted counselors and caretakers.

The factions aren't just communities—each faction implies a certain personality type, which every member of that faction is meant to imitate. This whole system once again reads as an absurd and oversimplified view of human nature, suggesting just how "dystopian" and dehumanizing this society is.



After concluding his speech, Marcus calls each 16-year-old child to the front of the room, one at a time. Marcus gives each teenager a knife, which the teenager uses to cut his or her hand over one of five bowls. By bleeding into the bowl that symbolizes the proper faction, each teenager makes a choice about which faction to belong to.

The choosing ceremony impresses upon its 16-year-olds the seriousness of their choice: the teenagers are literally giving up a part of their selves by committing to one faction. The presence of blood in the ceremony reminds us of the violence and conflict implicit in the division of the city into five factions, and also adds a kind of primal, religious significance to this otherwise futuristic society. Each young person is essentially choosing a "tribe," and doing so by offering a sacrifice of blood.



When it's Caleb's turn to cut his hand, he drips blood over the Erudite bowl. There's a mutter of surprise in the room: Caleb is choosing a new faction for himself instead of remaining in Abnegation, as Beatrice had assumed he'd do.

Caleb sets the standard for the Prior family by "defecting" to another tribe. This suggests that Beatrice isn't the only one feeling anxiety about her future and her identity—probably, everyone around her is going through the same thing. All this could also be read as a more sinister version of a similar scene (with the Sorting Hat) in the most famous "young adult" series of all—Harry Potter.



When it's Beatrice's turn, she imagines herself joining Abnegation and spending the rest of her life around her friends and family. Since Caleb is leaving Abnegation, she thinks, she has no choice but to remain—leaving now would only break her parents' hearts. But as she prepares to cut her hand and make her choice, Beatrice thinks, "I am selfish. I am brave." Instead of dripping blood into Abnegation, she holds her hand over the Dauntless bowl.

The calculations that go through Beatrice's mind in this scene are familiar to any young adult trying to both "fit in" and "be herself." Beatrice wants to please her parents, but she also wants to be her own person—to make a choice for her own sake, not her family's. At the end of the day, Beatrice's sense of freedom and personal worth wins out—she chooses the "selfish" option (really just the option of freedom and rebelliousness) and leaves Abnegation.



CHAPTER 6

Beatrice has just joined the Dauntless faction. She notices her parents—her father looks accusatory, but her mother seems to be smiling. The ceremony ends abruptly, and the Dauntless initiates leave the Hub, Beatrice among them. Beatrice notices a boy who'd once been in the Erudite—he's chosen to join Dauntless, too.

As Beatrice tries to come to terms with her own decision, she's pleased to learn that she's not alone in the world—there are others just like her, who've had to make difficult choices by switching tribes. This is a sign that Beatrice will hopefully be able to find her own community among those who are similarly trying to reinforce a newly chosen identity.



Outside, the Dauntless walk to the nearby train: to prove their loyalty, the new Dauntless are supposed to jump onto the train. Although she's frightened, Beatrice jumps onto the moving train. She notices a former Erudite boy who's just joined Dauntless—he fails to make it onto the train, meaning that he'll be factionless for the rest of his life.

Right away we recognize the danger and uncertainty of life among the Dauntless. Because they celebrate bravery above all else, cowards are harshly punished—and are even allowed to die. Beatrice thought she'd find a community for herself as soon as she arrived in Dauntless, but it's clear this isn't the case—she'll have to keep working to earn her place in the community.



Onboard the train, a girl named Christina introduces herself to Beatrice. Christina thinks that they're headed to Dauntless headquarters, though she has no idea where this is. As Beatrice listens, she thinks about her parents—who'll have to go home to an empty house now. She wonders how she could have missed the fact that Caleb was an Erudite: for years she'd assumed that he was a natural for Abnegation.

Beatrice's mistake is to assume that Caleb "is" an Erudite, simply because of his decision at the choosing ceremony. Caleb isn't a different person than he was before, but Beatrice is so used to thinking in the factions' terms that she now tries to reinterpret Caleb's entire life, searching for evidence of his "true" Erudite nature.



After some time on the train, some of the Dauntless begin jumping off. The new recruits follow suit, jumping off the train onto nearby rooftops. Although some of the recruits refuse to jump, Beatrice forces herself to jump from the train, along with Christina. As they land—hard—on the rooftop, Christina starts laughing. “That was fun,” she says. Beatrice is worried, and she wonders if she’ll be able to survive for long among the Dauntless. As she thinks about this, she notices a body lying underneath the train tracks from which she just jumped: someone has died trying to jump off.

As the Dauntless recruits gather themselves, a man named Max speaks up. He announces that he’s a leader of the Dauntless. Although the recruits have just jumped from the train, they’re still standing on a tall building. Max challenges the recruits to jump off of the building they’re standing on. Worse, he doesn’t say what’s awaiting them at the bottom of the building. Before anyone else can react, Beatrice forces herself to jump off the building. As she falls, her body hits a net, which catches her safely.

The other Dauntless recruits follow Beatrice off the roof, and one by one, the net catches them. As Beatrice and her peers climb out of the net, they find that they’re surrounded by a large building complex: they’re standing in the Dauntless headquarters. A girl named Lauren notes that it’s unheard of for someone from Abnegation to be the first to jump. When she asks Beatrice for her name, Beatrice hesitates and then replies, “Tris.” Lauren introduces Tris to a young man named Four, who tells her, “Welcome to Dauntless.”

CHAPTER 7

Lauren and Four lead Tris and her fellow recruits down through the Dauntless headquarters. Lauren tells the recruits that the Dauntless-born initiates won’t be given a tour of headquarters, since they already know what it looks like. Four nods, and explains that he’ll be the recruits’ new instructor. Christina laughs at Four’s name, and Four snaps, “The first lesson you will learn from me is to keep your mouth shut!”

Four takes the new recruits down in the headquarters. Tris sees children running around—the opposite of the docile children she’s familiar with in Abnegation. Four takes Tris and the others to an enormous Pit, at the bottom of which there’s fast-moving water. Four warns the recruits that a daredevil jump into the water would be deadly.

Beatrice is full of doubt about her ability to survive among the Dauntless, but based on what we’ve already seen, she’s probably not alone. Although Beatrice assumes that her peers are cockier and more comfortable than she, it seems likely that they’re going through the same anxiety that she’s experiencing—especially at the sight of this grim reminder of the risks they’re taking.



It’s suggested that Beatrice immediately jumps off the building not because she’s feeling particularly brave, but rather because of sheer willpower—she wants to do something impressive to validate her presence in Dauntless. Thus courage (or “dauntlessness”) doesn’t always mean a lack of fear altogether, but instead acting despite one’s fears.



For Beatrice, a lifelong member of Abnegation, being special and unique (other than in her newly discovered Divergence) is a novelty—she’s always been taught to be modest and “blend in” with other people. In a sense, Beatrice is being reborn as a new, more confident person, so it’s only appropriate that she rename herself at this time.



The instructors at Dauntless make it clear that they’re not going to go easy on their new recruits. Overall, there is nothing at all comforting or welcoming about Tris’s first introduction to her new “family.”



Four wants his students to be brave and daring, but not to the point where they hurt themselves. Surprisingly, he’s a voice of reason and balance within the Dauntless community: in a place where self-endangerment is celebrated, Four provides some welcome moderation.



The recruits go to the dining hall, where they're served hamburgers. Tris has never had this food before: she was always taught to eat plain, simple food. Christina asks Four to identify a young man who's walking between the tables. Four explains that he's Eric, a young Dauntless leader. Eric approaches Tris and notices her gray Abnegation clothing. He smirks and says, "We'll see how long you last." Four turns to Eric and asks him about his position as a trainer. Four tells him "I'm satisfied with the position I currently hold," and Eric smirks. Tris wonders if Eric and Four are friends or rivals. She asks Four this question, point-blank. Four refuses to answer, and mutters, "Careful, Tris." Christina finds this amusing.

After dinner, Eric leads the Dauntless transfer recruits to their sleeping quarters. He explains that they'll be training every day for 9 hours. The transfer recruits will be ranked constantly—and later on, transfers will be ranked against with native-born Dauntless initiates. Eric smiles wickedly and tells his recruits that they'll need to be successful in their training, or they won't be given jobs afterwards. He also mentions that the majority of recruits will be cut during training, and forced to live factionless.

Tris sleeps in her quarters. She's never slept in the same room as a boy, and feels guilty about abandoning her parents. Although she'll be able to see her family on Visiting Day, she knows that things will never be the same between her and her parents: they'll always view her with suspicion now. As Tris thinks about all this, she hears a new recruit, Al, weeping in the bed next to hers. This surprises her: she didn't expect such a big, tough-looking boy to be so weak. At first, Tris wants to comfort the boy. But then she decides not to: she must be tougher.

CHAPTER 8

The Dauntless recruits begin their lessons: firing guns, boxing, etc. Four monitors the recruits' training. He tells them that the best way to fight cowardice is with preparation. The recruits, including Tris, begin with target practice—they fire their new guns at a target. Tris is a poor shot, and a boy named Will, formerly from Erudite, makes fun of her. With practice, though, Tris finds that she can hit the target after all. She feels good about her progress: there's pleasure in setting her mind to something and achieving it.

Right away, there seems to be a special dynamic between Four and Tris: although Four treats most of the recruits as pupils to be coached into success, he behaves a little differently toward Tris. Tris also gets some insight into Four's place in the Dauntless community (we get the sense that Four could have had Eric's job, but didn't accept it because he preferred teaching). That Tris can comment on Four's position without getting yelled at (like Christina) suggests that Four is more vulnerable than he wants to appear—and also it's possible that he's already attracted to Tris.



Eric is the opposite of Four: he's sadistic, and seems to take great pleasure in the idea of sending the majority of the recruits away from Dauntless, to live a life of poverty and misery. The "stakes" of failure in the Dauntless community inspire Tris and her peers to work much harder—if they fall behind, they could wind up as social outcasts.



Tris is frightened and uncertain about her future among the Dauntless, yet she gets a reminder that she's not alone: she's far from the only recruit to be terrified of the future. In a way, fear and sadness are the only things that unite Tris with her peers, but Tris tries to show strength by keeping her emotions to herself. She's already mimicking the other Dauntless, and refusing help to her peers—suppressing the "Abnegation" side of herself.



Here, we see the structure of Dauntless culture. Will and Tris taunt each other, but there's a certain grudging respect in the way they treat each other—they can be friendly but also competitive. Tris also discovers a pleasure that was never available to her in Abnegation: the pleasure of succeeding at something and then being proud of oneself.



At lunch, Tris eats with Christina, Will, and Al, the boy who cried the night before. Will, a former Erudite, points out two other former Erudites he knows, Edward and Myra, who are dating. Myra kisses Edward, and Tris reflexively flinches: as an Abnegation, she's not used to public affection. Will smirks and teases Tris playfully for her shyness. Tris laughs, too.

In the afternoon, the recruits go to a new room, where Four begins teaching them how to fight. Four tells Tris that she's not strong, but that she can use her elbows and knees to do well in combat.

In the evening, Tris eats with her new friends. Al proposes getting a new **tattoo** to celebrate his new home among the Dauntless, and Christina jokingly suggests dying his hair. After dinner, Christina shows Tris the "clothing place" available to the recruits. All the Dauntless are given credits every month, with which they can buy clothes and food. At the clothing place, she gives Tris eyeliner and a black dress. Tris is uncomfortable wearing these things, as she's used to loose, modest clothes.

Tris and Christina go to "the **tattoo** place," where they find Al getting a tattoo of a spider. Tris notices a tattoo of a raven, and thinks it's pretty. She's surprised to find Tori, her examiner, walking through the tattoo shop. Tori explains that she's a Dauntless, and works in the tattoo shop. Tris asks Tori about her test results, but Tori quickly replies that it'd be "unwise" to think about her test too much. She suggests that Tris get a tattoo of birds on her collarbone. Tris agrees to get a tattoo of three birds—symbolizing the three family members she's left behind.

CHAPTER 9

The next day, Four organizes fights between the new recruits. He explains that, since there's an odd number of recruits, one of them will be sitting out. Tris notices that her name isn't written on the wall, while the other recruits' names are—it looks like she'll be sitting out. As the recruits prepare for their fights, it occurs to Tris that her new friend, Christina, is probably her first real friend—although Tris had friends in Abnegation, it was hard to have a friendship where neither person wanted to talk about themselves.

As an Abnegation among the Dauntless, Tris is an outsider, even compared with the other transfer recruits. Her only strategy for success is to poke fun at herself, laughing along when the others joke about her old community.



Four shows signs of taking a special interest in Tris—where the other trainers regard Tris as weak and girlish, Four recognizes her true potential.



Tattoos will be a major motif, as whenever Tris goes through a milestone in her life, she gets a tattoo to commemorate the occasion. This is a way for Roth to literalize the change that Tris experiences during the course of the novel. One of Tris's most important changes is her discovery of her own body and her own sexuality. In Abnegation, beauty and sexuality are hidden beneath baggy clothing—now, Tris is getting in touch with her beauty for the first time.



It's significant that Tori, the woman who helped Tris come to terms with her own identity as Divergent, also works as a tattoo artist: tattoos are an important symbol of identity and, more important, the flexibility of identity. At this point in the book, Tris is still consumed with love for her family, and guilt at having left them behind. Thus, her tattoo symbolizes the family she's abandoned.



By leaving Tris out of the competition, Four makes Tris unpopular (perhaps intentionally). He makes her seem to be even more of an outsider, too weak and frightened to participate in an important Dauntless bonding activity. Roth makes an interesting point here regarding Christina as Tris's first "real" friend, suggesting that there must be an element of self-love and confidence (the qualities Abnegation suppresses) in allowing oneself to really become close to someone.



Tris surveys her peers. There's Peter, Drew, and Molly, already a trio of friends. Christina explains that Peter has "always been evil"—Christina and Peter grew up together. Drew, Tris can see, is big and intimidating. Molly is tall, like Christina, and supposedly very mean.

The fights begin. Al fights Will, and Tris winces as she watches. Tris confesses to Christina that she's uncomfortable hurting people. Will and Al continue fighting, and Eric yells at them not to slow down. Four, who's also monitoring the fight, argues with Eric—Four claims that the fight could end when one of the competitors concedes. As Eric and Four argue, Will and Al continue fighting. Eventually, Al succeeds in punching Will hard in the jaw. Will falls to the floor, and Eric orders Al to drag him away.

The next fight is between Molly and Christina. Molly hits Christina hard and fast, but Christina fights back. After a few minutes, Molly pushes Christina to the ground, drawing blood, and Christina yells that she's conceding. Tris is so disturbed by the sight of her friend bleeding that she instinctively grabs Al's arm.

Eric, annoyed that Christina has conceded so early, drags Christina out of the room and orders everyone else to follow him. Eric pushes Christina to the pit and orders Christina to hang over the railing overlooking the water for five minutes—if she can't do so, she'll be factionless. Christina nervously hangs over the railing. After a few minutes, Christina looks like she's about to slip. Al calls out encouragement for Christina, and Tris joins in. With her friends' encouragement, Christina succeeds in hanging for five minutes, and Eric allows her to come back.

CHAPTER 10

Tris has nightmares about Christina hanging over the railing. The next morning, she finds that Peter has spray-painted "Stiff"—a mean nickname for someone from Abnegation—on her mattress. Tris tries to reason with Peter, but Peter only says, "You and I will never be in the same faction." Afterwards, Al helps Tris change her sheets. Tris wonders if Al is a little too kind to be a Dauntless member—but then she remembers that he knocked out Will.

It's interesting to see the cliques within Dauntless. Although the purpose of the factions was to build group loyalty, the atmosphere of competition and combat actually creates new divisions within Dauntless.



There's a fine line between Eric's approach and Four's: Eric seems to enjoy fighting for its own sake, while Four wants Al and Will to fight so that they learn something. Because of this, Four allows the fight to finish when one competitor has no chance of winning. But Eric outranks Four, suggesting that the Dauntless leadership echoes Eric's sadistic point of view.



It's important that Tris grabs Al's hand. First, this suggests that Tris has yet to be "toughened up"—she's still a shy Abnegation girl. Second, it is a suggestion of sexuality, implying that she is developing a subconscious romantic interest in the boys surrounding her.



Here, we see how the factions create a sense of group loyalty and solidarity. Although Eric intends Christina's punishment as a mere exercise in humiliation, designed to alienate her from her peers, the punishment ends up having the opposite effect. Christina's fear and pain unites her with her peers, and they end up supporting her so vigorously that she succeeds in passing Eric's challenge. Unfortunately, this kind of solidarity is the exception in Dauntless, not the rule.



This section reinforces an idea that Roth has already implied—there's no such thing as a "true" Dauntless member. There's so much variety and complexity in the structure of Dauntless society (and the idea of "dauntlessness" itself) that two Dauntless recruits, here Peter and Tris, can feel like rivals rather than comrades.



That day, Tris is assigned a fight against Peter, despite the fact that Peter is much bigger than she. Tris considers conceding early, but she decides that she can't possibly be ranked last in the standings. The fight proceeds, and Peter gives Tris punishing blows to the nose and chest. Tris falls to the ground, dizzy. She manages to hit Peter a few times when he's bent over her, but within a few minutes she's lost consciousness.

Tris wakes up in a bed, surrounded by her friends—slowly, she realizes that she's been sent to the hospital. Al asks her if she's okay, and together they manage to joke about the fight. Tris's friends leave her to rest, but before they go, they remind her that there's a field trip tomorrow: the recruits are going to learn about Dauntless jobs. Al smiles and tells Tris that she looks brave. Tris thinks that Al has beautiful brown eyes and a strong jawline.

Tris remembers that in less than a week, she's due to visit with her family. Tris suspects that her parents won't want to see her: they're probably still too upset about her decision to leave Abnegation. Tris wishes she could tell her parents about being **Divergent**, so perhaps they'd understand. Tris makes sure to leave her hospital bed before night falls—she doesn't want to give Peter the satisfaction of sending her to the hospital for a night.

CHAPTER 11

The next morning, Tris wakes up and proceeds outside to the train, along with her peers. Inside, Tris catches a glimpse of her own appearance in a **mirror**: she has a black eye and a bruised jaw. Tris can barely believe this ugly sight is her own face. Tris's friends tease her for her appearance, and she laughs along with them.

On the train, Tris asks her friends what the Dauntless protect the city from. Nobody has a good answer, though. Christina jokes that there are monsters beyond the city. Will recalls that there were no guards at the fence until five years ago—the Dauntless used to just police the factionless, not the city limits. Tris remembers that her father voted to keep the Dauntless away from the factionless sector, as he said the factionless didn't need to be treated like enemies.

Even though Tris loses her fight with Peter, she shows courage and “drive” by refusing to concede to him, even at the point when he's beaten her to the ground. This suggests that Tris is a good Dauntless recruit, in spite of her physical limitations.



Tris realizes that—almost by accident—she's gained some friends for herself. In the same way that Christina's peers supported her when she had to dangle over the chasm, Tris's friends sympathize with her pain and suffering. At the same time, Tris begins to feel stronger romantic feelings for Al. Because these feelings are new to Tris (she apparently had no sexual thoughts while at Abnegation), she doesn't know what to do with them.



As Tris spends more time in Dauntless, she develops a sense for how to be tough, and—even more important—how to seem tough. In this scene, she correctly decides that she'll seem weak and childish if she spends the whole night in the hospital. Because one's image is so important in Dauntless, Tris returns to her bed.



The mirror is a recurring symbol in the novel, signaling Tris's changing self-image. Here, Tris realizes that she's become a different person, both because of her physical challenges and because of her bravery and toughness in the face of danger.



Tris and her peers want to be in Dauntless, but not, evidently, because they understand the urgency of Dauntless's purpose (i.e., protecting the city from some foreign enemy). The attraction of Dauntless life, seemingly, is that bravery and strength are alluring values in and of themselves. This total ignorance of what the “enemy” is has larger implications for the “dystopian” nature of the city's government, however, suggesting that the powerful have fabricated an outside threat in order to keep the populace afraid and in line.



The train takes the new recruits to the fence surrounding the city. There, Four greets them. He explains that mediocre Dauntless end up patrolling the fence. Will asks why the Dauntless patrol the fence, but Four doesn't reply. Peter asks Four for his rank in the training program, and Four replies that he was first. Peter finds this surprising—someone so talented should have worked in the government, he mutters. Tris remembers the conversation she overheard between Eric and Four on her first day. She also thinks about how she's probably ranked last among recruits.

As Four speaks to his recruits, a truck drives up, and Amity people step out. They ask for Beatrice, and Tris is a little surprised to hear her former name. One of the Amity men is Robert Black, Tris's old friend from Abnegation—like Tris, he's decided to leave his home. The other Dauntless recruits laugh at Robert for his kind demeanor, and tease Tris for her real name—up to this time, they didn't know it. Robert urges Tris to consider leaving the Dauntless, as he's sure the government would allow her to return to Abnegation. Tris stubbornly refuses, though. She admits that she's not happy, but explains that she doesn't want to leave. Saddened, Robert drives away.

As the truck drives away, Four approaches Tris and tells her that it was foolish to act friendly around Robert: Tris's peers will think she's an outsider among the Dauntless. Four also tells Tris that she could be a skilled attacker, provided that she taught herself to attack first.

CHAPTER 12

It's been two days since Tris's fight with Peter, and Tris is sent into another fight—with Myra. Luckily, Tris does well against Myra.

Late at night, Eric and other Dauntless people walk into the dormitories with flashlights and order everyone to run outside—there's to be another field trip. Everyone rushes to the train tracks, where they find a box of guns and paintballs. Four announces that the Dauntless will be playing a city-wide game of capture the flag. Eric and Four act as team captains, and they begin to dividing up the new transfers. To Tris's surprise, Four chooses Tris first, much to Eric's amusement. Afterwards, Four and Tris divide up the rest of the new recruits (including the Dauntless-born initiates).

The one thing that unites all the Dauntless recruits together is their fierce sense of competition. Tris is no less obsessed with being ranked first than Peter is: Dauntless has impressed the importance of the rankings upon all of its recruits. This makes Four seem more mature and mysterious—by rejecting the results of the rankings, he's essentially rejected the most basic aspect of Dauntless society (or at least Dauntless society as it's been presented to us so far).



This is an important, and somewhat unpleasant, reminder of the rivalries between the factions, and of Tris's secret Divergence. The Dauntless look down on all other factions, particularly Amity—a community based on the importance of kindness and generosity. The truth is that neither kindness nor courage by themselves are sufficient—only the combination of both virtues can be successful. Thus, the fact that Tris can interact with both Dauntless and Amity signals her maturity; i.e., her “well-roundedness” as a human being (a quality seemingly very rare in this society).



Four and Tris share a keen sense for public perception, perhaps because neither really “fits in” with the other Dauntless. Four continues to see Tris's potential, but he also wants her to be more aggressive—more Dauntless.



Tris begins to improve in the rankings, thanks to Four's encouragement and her own hard work.



The fact that Eric and Four head different teams symbolizes their rivalry: Eric and Four represent two different approaches to training recruits (Eric is cruel, Four is tough but supportive). Again, Four shows his support for Tris by choosing her first for his team. There's something both kindly and semi-romantic about Four's interest in Tris. Team-building events of this kind are very important in building group loyalty: Eric and Four hope to unite their recruits together using entertainment and competition.



Tris and her peers prepare to jump onto the moving train and travel out to begin their game. Someone pushes Tris as she prepares jump, but to her pleasure, she lands on the train without any trouble. As they ride out, Four instructs his team to be clever—they're not Erudite, but they have to be cunning to win. Tris notices Four's calmness and his powerful arm muscles. It also occurs to her that height and elevation will be an important part of this game: if she and her peers can climb into a high enough building, they'll be able to see their opponents coming.

The train stops, and the recruits are now in an unfamiliar part of the city. Immediately, Tris runs off on her own to find a high building she can use. The other recruits see what Tris is doing, and join her. Tris comes upon a huge Ferris wheel (which Chicago readers might recognize as the Chicago Ferris wheel). Tris climbs up the wheel, followed by Four, who seems to be afraid of heights. Four asks Tris, "What do you think the purpose of this exercise is?" Tris guesses that it's teamwork, and Four laughs. He explains that teamwork used to be a Dauntless priority, but it's not anymore. Tris and Four talk about the relationship between strategy and bravery, and Four notices that Tris doesn't seem very frightened by the prospect of climbing the wheel.

At the top of the wheel, Four and Tris notices a tiny light in the distance—it must be the other team, approaching. Suddenly, there's a creaking sound: the wheel has begun to turn. Tris and Four manage to hold onto a nearby bar, and they hurtle toward the ground, dismounting without hurting themselves as they near the concrete. Four pulls Tris to her feet, and Tris feels the warmth of his skin for a brief moment.

Tris and Four join their teammates and tell them they've found the other team's location. They run out toward a pier to surprise their opponents. There, Four's team finds a group of opponents guarding a flag. Christina and the others shoot paintballs at their opponents, and when they've shot them, Christina claims the flag, reasoning that Tris has already gotten enough glory that night. Four's team has won. Four personally congratulates Tris.

After the game, two of Tris's teammates, Uriah and Marlene, congratulate Tris on her bravery and quick thinking. She and her friends laugh and joke during the train ride home.

Four, like Tris, is something of an outsider among the Dauntless. Although he's ranked first, he doesn't choose the proper government job, and furthermore, Four encourages his recruits to be intelligent and moderate as well as brave. Perhaps it's because Tris recognizes a fellow outsider in Four that she begins to feel attracted to him.



This capture the flag game is a good representation of the theme of competition in the novel. As Four points out, capture the flag can be used to build loyalty and group solidarity. And yet the game is also a competition, meaning that the two halves of the new batch of recruits are pitted against one another. In short, capture the flag can be a tool for molding the recruits in Four's image, or in Eric's. Four wants the recruits to support one another, while Eric wants them to compete with and sabotage one another.



This is an important section because it shows Tris and Four beginning to become friends, outside of their traditional student-teacher relationship. It's also an early sign that Tris is a skilled Dauntless warrior—she may not be strong, but she's smart and brave.



The success of Four's team helps to prove that Four's strategy for training his recruits is the right one: it's better to encourage loyalty and cooperation than pure rivalry and competition (as Eric does). And yet it's undeniable that the capture the flag game does encourage competition—even Christina, Tris's friend, competes for the right to claim the flag.



Tris's skill has gained her some new friends—friends who aren't transfers from other factions. This symbolizes Tris becoming more and more tied to the Dauntless community.



CHAPTER 13

The next morning, Tris prepares for target practice. Eric announces that today is the last day of stage one: afterwards, the initiates will move on to tougher challenges. Eric shows Tris and her peers how to throw knives. Tris notices that Eric seems to be in a particularly bad mood. He keeps glaring at Four, who's also present for the training.

After 30 minutes, all the trainees have learned to throw their knives, with the exception of Al. Eric orders Al to retrieve his knife from behind the target—while the other recruits continue throwing theirs. Al refuses, and Eric then orders Al to stand in front of the target. Four mutters that this exercise isn't really necessary, but Eric reminds Four that he (Eric) is in charge. Eric orders Al to stand by the target while Four hurls knives. Tris protests that the punishment is useless—Eric is just bullying Al unnecessarily. Eric laughs and orders Tris to switch places with Al. Tris does so, reluctantly. She stands by the target while Four throws knives—at first with her eyes closed, then (after Four goads her) with them open. Four throws a knife, and it nicks Tris's ear. Tris can tell that Four did this on purpose.

Eric tells the other recruits that Tris is “daring,” and leaves. Tris angrily confronts Four and asks him why hurt her. Four smiles quietly and explains that he's just done her a huge favor. Tris continues to be angry with Four, and Four asks her, “If I wanted to hurt you, don't you think I would have already?”

As Tris spends more time in Dauntless, she gets a keener sense for the competitiveness between Four and Eric. This suggests that Tris is becoming more mature and more perceptive.



In this important scene, the characters show their “true colors.” Eric reveals himself to be a small-minded bully, more concerned about demonstrating his authority to Four than training good warriors. Four, meanwhile, proves himself to be calm and collected in the face of a fight, while Tris shows her bravery once again, and looks out for those who are weaker and more cowardly than she. (Her decision to “sacrifice” herself for Al also has conspicuous Christian overtones.)



It's not exactly clear why Four cuts Tris's ear—Four doesn't offer a totally coherent explanation. However, we can infer that he's trying to make Four seem like a victim, rather than a “teacher's pet.” If Four hadn't hurt Tris at all, Tris's peers would have assumed that Four was favoring her.



CHAPTER 14

Today is the day before Visiting Day, and Tris is worried that her parents might not show up.

Tris wakes up and showers before her training. As she's walking from the shower, Peter pushes her, taunting that he doesn't have to pay her any respect. A group of Peter's friends, including Molly and Drew, tease Tris, and Peter rips off the towel Tris is wearing. Embarrassed, Tris runs away, and begins to cry. Then she tries to pretend that she's not embarrassed about being naked. She puts on her dress, very slowly, and thinks about hurting Peter.

Tris is still closely tied to her family, even though she hasn't seen them in weeks. She feels guilty about leaving them behind.



In this section, Tris proves that while she's still Abnegation in many ways (her modesty, her ignorance of her own body), she's also getting more in touch with her Dauntless side: she wants revenge on Peter for humiliating her in front of her peers.



Tris knows that today is the day of her last fight—she hopes it’s with Peter, and is disappointed to learn that it’s with Molly. Tris thinks about Molly’s strengths as a fighter: Tris knows that she has a good punch, but bad footwork. Tris also knows that Molly will make the first move. She always does, and it’s a weakness.

Molly and Tris begin their fight. Molly teases Tris about being naked, but Tris remains calm. Molly launches toward Tris, and Tris is able to use her weight and aggressiveness against her, pushing her to the floor. Tris kicks Molly while she’s down—something Tris’s parents wouldn’t have approved of, Tris thinks—and kicks her again in the face and chest. Suddenly, Four pulls Tris away. Tris thinks that she *should* feel guilty for hurting Molly so badly—but she doesn’t.

Tris is a clever tactician—instead of relying on her skill in a fight (as she’s physically smaller and weaker than most of her opponents), she thinks about her opponent’s weaknesses in advance, maximizing her own success.



Ironically, Tris goes from being the most timid and complacent member of the Dauntless to the most aggressive, even violent member. Tris is a skilled planner, but she’s also rash and uncontrollable at times, as in this fight. The fact that Tris can make this change so quickly points to her Divergence, but also to the fact that she’s a conflicted young woman, trying to work out her own identity (yet another suggestion that “Divergent” just means human).



CHAPTER 15

It’s the morning of Visiting Day. Eric walks into the dormitories and tells the recruits that it’s best not to seem too attached. He then pulls Tris aside and tells her that he’s underestimated her talent—she did well yesterday. Tris isn’t flattered by this, though. If Eric is praising her, she thinks, she’s done something wrong.

Tris goes into the meeting room, where she sees her friends and enemies talking to their parents. She notices her mother and runs toward her. To Tris’s surprise and pleasure, she and her mother talk just as they used to: Tris tells her mother about school, but makes sure to ask her mother questions about herself. Tris’s mother—like a good member of Abnegation—insists that Tris tell her about her own life instead. She also explains that Tris’s father “had to be at work.” Tris’s mother notes that he has been selfish lately, but says he still loves Tris enormously. Tris notices that her mother seems oddly comfortable in the Dauntless headquarters.

Before can Tris can say much about herself, Four introduces himself to Tris’s mother—whose name, she says, is Natalie. Four tells Natalie that Tris is doing very well. Natalie thanks Four for his encouragement, and notices that Four looks somewhat familiar. Four says he doesn’t know when he would have met Natalie.

Tris realizes that she’s going down the wrong path: Eric’s path. In her fight with Molly, Tris exemplified the kind of thoughtless violence and punishment of weakness that Eric has been celebrating so far.



Tris’s fears of displeasing her family are both reasonable and exaggerated. It’s true that Tris has disappointed her father (this is why he’s not present), but she hasn’t alienated her mother in the slightest. We begin to sense that Tris’s mother has a lot of secrets of her own—Tris is far from the only character in this novel with a secret identity to hide, and a large part of Tris’s coming-of-age consists in her recognizing this about the people around her.



This is an example of a kind of “Chekhov’s Pistol”—a piece of seemingly useless information mentioned in a work of literature that’s clearly going to become important later on. We have no idea why Four looks familiar to Natalie, but we can be pretty sure that we’ll find out later.



Tris meets a woman who says that she's Al's mother—she can't find her son, and wants to know if Tris knows where he is, but Tris doesn't. Tris also meets Christina's mother, and Will's sister, Cara. Cara accuses Tris's father of manipulating his government position to favor the people of Abnegation. Natalie politely denies this, and her politeness seems utterly foreign to Tris.

Natalie asks Tris how she's doing, and Tris says that she's ranked near the bottom of her class. Natalie also asks Tris for her aptitude test results—reluctantly, Tris admits that her results were inconclusive. Natalie nods, and explains that many Abnegation people get this result. She warns Tris not to draw attention to herself. She also tells Tris that she'll love her no matter what. Tris is about to say the word "**Divergent**" out loud, but Natalie covers her daughter's mouth first.

Natalie then asks Tris to ask Caleb to research "simulation serum," as Natalie herself can't visit Caleb. Tris doesn't understand why Natalie is asking Tris to do this, but Natalie insists that she can't explain it. Before she goes, Natalie tells Tris, "They are already monitoring you." As Tris watches her mother leave, it occurs to her that her mother was once Dauntless.

CHAPTER 16

The afternoon after Natalie's visit, Tris finds Al sitting in the dormitory—he's been hiding from his parents. Tris notices that Al has a horrible bruise on his knee, and realizes that Al didn't want his parents to see his injuries. Al whispers that he's lost every fight he's fought so far.

Tris asks Al why he chose to be in Dauntless, and he explains that he thinks it's important to protect people. He says that he admires Tris for defending him, and adds that being Dauntless should be about being a protector, not a bully. As Al says this, he begins to cry.

This section is very poignant—Al refuses to see his parents, presumably because he doesn't want them to be sad about his beating. We also see more her about the conflict between the Erudite and Abnegation: the power-hungry Erudite apparently think that Abnegation should be removed from the government.



It's now clear that there's more to Natalie than meets the eye. She not only recognizes that Tris is Divergent, but she seems to have some personal experience with Divergence as well. As we might have suspected, Divergence isn't as uncommon as Tris has been led to believe—even if it's still something very dangerous to the authorities in this rigidly divided society.



Natalie again surprises her daughter, and gives more hints of trouble in the upper levels of government. Because personal talk is looked down upon in Abnegation (and Tris also seems to have been very unobservant there), Tris spent her entire life unaware of Natalie's past.



Al is the opposite of Tris in many ways: where Tris tries to "put on a show" for her peers, even when she's depressed and severely injured, Al hides from the people around him. This is a huge error in Dauntless, however, as it encourages others to think of Al as weak.



In spite of his weakness and alienation from the group (or perhaps, because of it), Al can see very clearly the problem in the Dauntless community as it exists. Courage is about protecting people, not hurting and bullying them.



In the evening, the transfers don't talk much about their parents' visits—it's just too painful. Christina mentions that her parents have a dog named Chunker, but adds that she hasn't been able to appreciate dogs, ever since her Aptitude Test. Tris is surprised to hear Christina talking about her test, as this information is strictly hidden. Al and Christina notice that Tris is uncomfortable, and Al quickly deduces that Tris is hiding something (using his Candor training). Tris lies and says that she got Abnegation, but chose Dauntless anyway.

As Tris becomes closer with her friends, she gets closer to revealing the truth about herself—that she's Divergent. She knows that this is supposed to be a secret, but doesn't seem to realize the danger of revealing it (and we as readers don't either, yet). Christina's comment about her dog is intriguing—suggesting that being told that one belongs to a certain personality type actually affects one psychologically, so that people start to conform to the identities others give them.



In the evening, the transfer recruits meet with Four, who explains the ranking system to them. They're about to enter stage two of training, which matters much more than stage one (the stage they've just completed). In the new rankings, Tris is ranked 6 of 9, Edward and Peter are 1st and 2nd, and Al and Myra are 8th and 9th.

Tris is in the middle of the rankings. She's a weak fighter, who loses more than she wins, but she's also sharp and quick-witted—thanks to Four's mentorship, Tris recognizes that these qualities make her valuable.



Later that night, Tris thinks about her mother—why, she wonders, did Natalie choose Abnegation after growing up in Dauntless? Suddenly, Tris hears a cry in the dark. Someone turns on the lights, revealing that Edward has been stabbed in the eye with a butter knife from the dining hall. Tris tells Edward to lie still. She finds that she can remain calm, even when everyone else in the room is frantic. Tris urges Edward to keep the knife in his eye, as she knows it's not safe to pull it out himself. Tris reminds herself of her own mother—kind and nurturing. Within a few minutes, a nurse comes to the room and takes Edward away. Tris notices that Drew and Peter are nowhere to be seen in the room.

It's clear enough what's happened: Drew and Peter have worked together to eliminate Edward, their most dangerous rival. In addition to being a troubling and disgusting episode, this passage tells us a lot about the limitations of Eric's strategy for training the recruits. Eric wants the recruits to work against one another—he thinks that this will encourage the recruits to work harder and be more successful. But this simply doesn't work—instead, the recruits sabotage each other, so that Edward, the most talented of the recruits, is taken out of the running.



The next day, the transfer recruits have free time. Will and Tris contemplate visiting Edward in the hospital, but decide not to, as they just don't know what they'd tell him. Will tells Tris about the Dauntless manifesto—one of the five manifestoes the factions produced when they were first formed. In their manifesto, the Dauntless celebrated the bravery that leads people to stand up for one another. Tris thinks she understands what Will is getting at. The Dauntless have strayed from their original purposes—they've gone from selfless strength and courage to cruelty.

Clearly, Tris has internalized her conversation with Al: she recognizes that the Dauntless have deviated from the "proper path." It's significant that her epiphany comes after Will tells her about the Dauntless manifesto—a document which, we gather, very few people have bothered to read. Will's intelligence and dedication to research are major assets—they help him situate Dauntless in a broader historical process, allowing him to see how arbitrary and thoughtless Eric's leadership really is.



Later in the day, Tris sees that Edward's bunk has been stripped clean, along with Myra's. Christina explains that they've both quit the Dauntless training program (Myra was Edward's girlfriend). There are now 7 transfer recruits.

Thanks to Peter's brutality, the Dauntless have lost their most promising transfer recruit.



CHAPTER 17

Tris spends her day trying to keep busy. She eats lunch in the dining hall by herself. Uriah, Tris's teammate from the capture the flag game, greets her and invites her to "a little initiation ritual." Uriah takes Tris to the train, and they join with some of Uriah's friends, including Shauna and Uriah's older brother, Zeke. Uriah tells Tris that Four would never come on this ritual. Tris deduces that her challenge must involve heights, seemingly the only thing Four is frightened of.

Uriah, Tris, and the others make their way to the abandoned Hancock building (a Chicago landmark) and take an elevator to the 100th floor. At the top of the skyscraper, they prepare to zip-line down a steel cable. Tris finds that she's unusually calm and courageous about the prospect of sliding down the building—Uriah seems impressed with her. Tris slides down the building and feels weightless. She screams with joy. At the bottom of the building, Shauna congratulates Tris on her bravery.

Tris returns to the headquarters, where she's satisfied to be able to tell her friends that she's been spending time with the Dauntless-born recruits. Tris realizes that she's been eager to bond with the people of Dauntless—which means that she'll try extra hard to do well in the next stage of initiation.

It's notable that Tris is making friends among the Dauntless recruits, not just the transfer recruits—clearly, her bravery and talent haven't gone unnoticed among Uriah and the others. Four's fear of heights (in contrast to Tris's seeming fearlessness regarding them) is always portrayed as a simple example of how even someone strong and skilled like Four can have hidden weaknesses.



It's no coincidence that Tris has now proven her bravery three times by showing that she's not afraid of heights. This symbolizes Tris's willingness to take a "leap of faith"—to close her eyes and embrace the unknown. This is an impressive talent, and a sign that Tris is much calmer and more levelheaded than her peers.



Tris is beginning to feel comfortable among the Dauntless. She's not competing with Uriah or Marlene—she's just enjoying their friendship. For the time being, Tris believes that she's a "true" Dauntless.



CHAPTER 18

From now on, the Dauntless-raised recruits train alongside the transfers. Lynn, a Dauntless-raised recruit, asks who's the highest-ranked transfer. Peter answers, and Lynn smirks. One by one, Four calls the recruits out to go through a simulation. When it's Tris's turn, Four tells her that she's going to "face her fear." He gives her a serum, which she recognizes as the same kind of serum she took for her aptitude test.

As the serum sets in, Tris feels that she's standing in a field of grass. Suddenly, a flock of crows flies toward her, tearing at her body with their talons. Blood drips down Tris's body, and she weeps. Suddenly, Tris hears Four's voice: "You stay in the hallucination until you can calm down."

It's telling that the second stage of Dauntless training is psychological in nature—facing one's fears directly. This suggests that psychological strength is far more important than physical prowess. This also means that Tris will now be on more equal ground with her peers, who can't rely on their superior physical strength anymore.



Tris feels birds tearing her skin, probably symbolizing her anxieties about leaving her family behind (as she got a tattoo of birds to represent her family members).



Tris tries to calm herself, but can't—she continues weeping. Suddenly, she finds herself sitting back in her chair, next to Four. Four tries to console Tris, but can't. Tris attacks Four for "torturing her," but Four insists that learning how to be brave isn't easy—the simulations are necessary. Tris whispers that she wants to go home. Four then tells Tris a secret: the training process for new recruits has changed lately. It's become more rigorous and sadistic, thanks to the influence of Eric, the protégé of the Dauntless leader. Tris tells Four that, if he'd accepted a government job of his own—appropriate for someone ranked first in training—then he could have ensured that the training program was gentler. Four doesn't reply to this.

Four may be more kind and nurturing than Eric, but he's still a trainer whose job is to produce warriors. Thus, it's only natural that Tris would begin to resent Four for his toughness. Even though he's friendly with Tris, he still gives her difficult challenges that are scientifically designed to push her and even hurt her. In her anger, Tris points out the complications of Four's otherwise humble, "selfless" decision to remain a trainer rather than joining the government. Ironically, by putting his loyalty to recruits before his own ambition, Four has potentially damaged his recruits' lives by allowing the sadistic Eric to have too much government power of his own.



CHAPTER 19

Tris returns to her dormitory, where she finds her fellow recruits reading a paper together. Peter reads the story aloud—it's about Tris and Caleb's father. The story argues that Andrew Prior (Tris's father's name) must be a corrupt man, or his own children would have chosen to follow in his footsteps instead of leaving Abnegation. The story also alleges that Marcus, Andrew's friend, had a child who left Abnegation two years before, due to Marcus's sexual abuse. Tris wants to attack Peter for reading the story out loud, but Will pulls Tris away before she can land a blow.

This is a sign that Tris is still fiercely loyal to her family—she doesn't yet put "faction before family," as she's supposed to. Here, Tris allows her pride and family loyalty to overcome her calmness and self-control—and we also see just how aggressive and angry her time in Dauntless has made her. The mention of sexual abuse in this section is troubling as well, even though it appears in the otherwise mostly false Erudite story.



Christina and Tris go to get **tattoos**, and Christina convinces Tris to get a tattoo of a flaming circle—the Dauntless seal—to go with the tattoo of the birds. Afterwards, Will asks Tris about her hallucination. It calms Tris to talk to others about the experience. She learns that Will is frightened of acid.

Tris's Dauntless tattoo celebrates another milestone, and symbolizes her acceptance within the Dauntless community. She's no longer a weak, frightened recruit—she's a full-blown Dauntless woman.



Tris goes to the Pit, where she's surprised to find Four, who is drunk and staggering close to the railing. Four tells Tris that she "looks good," and Tris can't help but smile. Al finds Tris and escorts her to dinner, though he notices some romantic tension between Tris and Four. Tris has a fun night horsing around with Al and her other friends—she's forgotten her horror at her own hallucination.

This section is somewhat amusing (and makes the sexual tension between Four and Tris more explicit), but it's also implied that Four got drunk because he's depressed about what Tris said to him—that he could have done more good by choosing a different career. It's also refreshing to see Tris behaving like an irresponsible teenager, not a soldier (it's a nice reminder that this is a young adult book).



CHAPTER 20

Tris is about to begin her second hallucination simulation, accompanied by Four once again. She sees herself in a shadowy room: it's the Pit floor, next to the chasm over the water. Tris sees her peers, and notices a **mirror** in the distance. Suddenly, Four appears, smiling. Tris feels her legs locking into the ground, and the room slowly fills with water. Tris is about to drown, and her friends laugh and point at her. As water floods into Tris's lungs, she tells herself that she's only imagining herself drowning.

Tris awakes from her simulation, with Four standing over her. Four tells her, "You're **Divergent**." Tris tries to lie, but Four isn't fooled—he warns her that she'll need to hide her Divergent characteristics in future simulations, or else risk being killed.

After her simulation, Tris goes to visit Tori, who works in the **tattoo** parlor. She asks Tori for some information about being **Divergent**. Though she doesn't say the word, Tori seems to understand what Tris is asking. She explains that Tris has a very special condition, and she's capable of recognizing that some of her experiences aren't real. Tori adds that Tris is capable of manipulating her simulations, or ignoring them entirely. Finally, Tori tells Tris that Divergents who are also Dauntless tend to die. The Dauntless government kills Divergents, but Tori has deleted all records of Tris's **Divergence** from Dauntless records: the only people who know about Tris's condition are Tori, Natalie, Four, and Tris herself. Tori mentions that her own brother was Divergent. He was found dead in the Chasm, supposedly an accident.

Tris doesn't really understand her own situation. She asks Tori why the Dauntless government cares about people manipulating their own hallucinations. Tori admits that she doesn't know. She guesses that being able to manipulation hallucinations is only one small part of being **Divergent**; i.e., only one small part of why Divergence is so dangerous.

CHAPTER 21

It's been 4 days since Tris spoke to Tori. In that time, the Erudite community has published two more articles like the one Peter read—criticizing Abnegation in general and Tris's father Andrew in particular.

At this point, the presence of a mirror should tell us right away that Tris is going through an important stage of self-examination. Sure enough, Tris is about to undergo psychological testing designed to probe her for fear and anxiety of any kind. Notably, Tris is frightened of group exclusion: she's so desperate to be accepted as Dauntless that she can't bear the thought of being turned away.



There's no explanation for how Four knows that Tris is Divergent (frankly, there hasn't yet been an explanation of what Divergence is, beyond an inability to pass a test). Nevertheless, it's once again affirmed that Divergence is dangerous to the government, which encourages the city to divide into discrete (i.e., non-Divergent) groups.



Tori gives us a little more information about Divergence here. The government considers Divergents are dangerous because they're immune to mind control or mental manipulation. In other words, Divergence doesn't just mean "well-roundedness"; it's also a mental state with its own unique abilities. Essentially, "Divergents" are like the protagonists of coming-of-age novels (or any young person trying to grow into their own unique identity): brave, self-motivated, capable of thinking for themselves, and uncertain about both authority and their own identities.



This is Roth's way of acknowledging that we still don't know exactly what Divergence is: all we really know is that it's dangerous to a government that insists upon classifying people. It's strangely appropriate that Divergence—the state of being indefinable, at least by government standards—is itself undefined in this book!



Tension is building between Erudite and Abnegation, and thus between the different factions of the city. It seems likely that war and a breakdown of the city's structure is on the horizon.



Tris takes a walk by herself. She considers all the hallucinations she's faced in the past few days: drowning, catching fire, watching her family bleed to death, and—in the most recent hallucination—being forced to shoot her own family. Thinking about these episodes makes Tris realize something: she's always been Dauntless, even when she lived in Abnegation.

Soon after, Tris goes through another simulation: in this simulation, an armed man forces her to shoot her own family (similar to an earlier simulation she experienced). In the middle of her hallucination, she looks up and sees Four standing beside her—"I know this isn't real," she says. Tris wonders if Four is also **Divergent**.

Every evening now, Tris falls asleep while her peers cry and scream: they've been far more shaken by their hallucinations than she has. On this particular evening, she returns to her dormitory to find the new rankings. She's surprised to see that she's been ranked first, just ahead of Peter. Tris notices Peter giving her a look of pure hatred. Peter shouts that Tris is manipulating everyone around her—pretending to be a weak girl in order to get an advantage in the rankings. Will seems curious about this, and he asks Tris if it's true that she's manipulative, but Tris denies it. Frustrated, she leaves the dormitory and tries to find somewhere to be alone.

Outside the dormitory, Tris runs into Lynn, Uriah, and Marlene. They congratulate her on her high ranking, and tell her she's practically guaranteed a spot in the top ten because of her performance so far. Lynn, Uriah, and Marlene are also very highly ranked in their own, separate standings for the native-born Dauntless: they're all in the top four. Tris's friends show her the guns they've borrowed: they plan to use them to practice their aim (Lynn assures Tris that the guns aren't real; they shoot pellets).

As the friends practice their aim, Four interrupts them. He explains that students aren't allowed to practice with guns so late in the day—he orders everyone back to their dormitories, and promises not to tell Eric about their indiscretion. Tris wonders to herself if Four has read the Dauntless manifesto, which praises the value of standing up for the weak and helpless. As Tris walks back to her dormitory, Four tells her not to worry; "It'll be over soon." Reflexively, Tris grabs Four's hand, and her heartbeat quickens.

Tris knows that she's Divergent, but she's still thinking in terms of the factions. She assumes she must be one faction or the other, so now she believes that her true identity is Dauntless. Essentially she's still just trying to "fit in."



Tris puts two and two together: if Four could identify her own Divergence, he's probably Divergent, too. It's notable that Tris's nightmares continue to revolve around her family's deaths—she's still anxious about abandoning her parents.



Where before Tris was the weak, insecure one, now her peers have shown their true colors: they have deep psychological weaknesses (and perhaps scars), laid bare by the hallucinogenic serum. Because of her Divergence—and, perhaps, her happy childhood, thoughtfulness, and maturity as a human being—Tris is less susceptible to the serum's influence. Once again, the spirit of competition and strength in Dauntless assumes a selfish motive for everything, so everyone naturally believes that Tris is manipulative.



Tris now seems closer to the native-born Dauntless than the transfer recruits, and it's not hard to see why. Because the native Dauntless aren't vying for a mere ten spots, they're more secure in their status in the world, and thus a little less competitive. Tris, by the same token, doesn't have to worry about being attacked or sabotaged while she's around Uriah.



Tris has become more mature, and is now ready to question her authorities' leadership—thus, she wonders if Four is aware how corrupt the Dauntless have become. Tris continues to be attracted to Four, as his combination of toughness, sensitivity, and intelligence seem to mirror her own (and he's also generally portrayed as just an ideal "love interest" for her).



Back in the dormitory, Tris gets in bed. She wonders if it's really worth it to be Dauntless. Late at night, she gets up to drink some water and overhears Eric talking to a woman she doesn't know. The woman reminds Eric that his priority is rooting out "Divergent rebels." Eric promises to find the rebels, acknowledging that it was the mysterious woman who had him appointed to the Dauntless government in the first place.

As Tris listens to this exchange, she feels someone pull her to the ground and cover her eyes and mouth—it's Peter, along with some other boys. Cackling wickedly, Peter carries Tris to the chasm. Tris, now blindfolded, realizes that one of the other boys who's carrying her is Al.

Tris senses that she's very close to the chasm railing. She bites the hand that's over her mouth, and receives a punch to the face in return. Suddenly, Tris hears cries and shouts. A few moments later, Four pulls the blindfold off Tris's face—he's defended her from Peter and the others.

CHAPTER 22

Four has just saved Tris's life, and he takes her to wash the blood off her face. Four explains that he's beaten up Drew and let Peter and Al return to their dormitory. Peter claimed that he was only trying to scare Tris. Four offers to report the incident to the Dauntless government, but Tris declines—she doesn't want the others to think she's scared. Four nods, and tells Tris to spend more time with her transfer friends. Tris explains that she thought Al was her transfer friend. Four explains that Al liked Tris as long as she showed some weakness; in order to get the others on her side again, she'll have to pretend to be weaker than she really is.

As Tris prepares to go back to her dorm, she tells Four that her attackers didn't just try to hurt her; they also "touched her." Four seems to understand what this means, but Tris clarifies, "Not in the way you're thinking ... but almost." With this in mind, Four tells Tris that she'll need to keep herself safe for a few weeks, and not draw too much attention to herself. Four also tells Tris not to call him Four—but he doesn't say what name Tris should use instead.

Previously, Tris had been eager to be accepted as Dauntless, but now that she stands a chance of becoming truly Dauntless, Tris begins to doubt whether it's worth it—especially now that she knows how corrupt and violent the faction as become. This mirrors the way Tris realizes her danger to Eric and the Dauntless leadership: she can never really be Dauntless because she's Divergent.



We've already seen Peter sabotage his fellow recruits in order to get ahead in the game. Here, we're shocked to find that Al is in on the plan, too: he's allied himself with a stronger bully and turned against his former friend.



Tris is tough and self-reliant, but not to the point where she can fight off a group of boys. She continues to depend on Four to survive—as evidenced by this scene, in which he seems to save Tris from being murdered.



Tris operates according to her own "code"—in other words, she doesn't report Peter and his henchmen, despite the fact that this would make her life easier and safer. Tris is so committed to maintaining an image of toughness and self-reliance that she doesn't want to tarnish that image in any way. It's also a mark of the intensity of Dauntless culture that a kind, sensitive boy like Al could be driven to hurt one of his own friends: Dauntless culture encourages everyone to compete with their peers, and doesn't seem to punish those who use violence to get ahead.



This is one of the most ambiguous passages in the novel. The idea of being "touched" has a clear sexual edge—it sounds like Tris was afraid of being sexually assaulted as well as hurt. It's equally significant that Four picks up on Tris's implication right away. This suggests that Four might have some personal experience with sexual assault himself. The connection between Four and Tris is closer than ever.



CHAPTER 23

Tris decides not to go back to the dorms—that would be suicidal. Instead, she sleeps in Four’s bed while Four sleeps on the floor. She can smell his scent on his pillow, and it smells “distinctly male.” Tris thinks to herself that she likes Four—he’s not kind, but he’s smart and courageous.

Tris wakes up and prepares to face her peers. She’s in pain all over: her side aches and her face has a vicious bruise, but she’s full of adrenaline. In the dining hall, Tris chooses to sit next to Will. She notices that Al isn’t in the room. Tris, Will, Christina, and Uriah eat their meal together, and discuss what happened the night before. Tris reveals that Peter, Drew, and Al tried to hurt her. Christina is especially shocked that Al tried to hurt Tris. Tris also notices Drew sitting in the dining hall: he’s covered with bruises, and there’s a massive cut down his eyebrow.

Uriah proposes that Tris and her friends do something to avenge Tris’s attack. Uriah clarifies: he’s not talking about beating up Peter and his gang. Instead, they’ll have to defeat Peter in the most humiliating way: by beating him in the rankings.

The recruits proceed with their training. As Christina and Tris walk to their latest assignment, Christina apologizes for claiming the flag during the capture the flag game—she admits that it was selfish.

The recruits arrive in a large, dark room. Four explains that the Dauntless government has been gathering information on the recruits’ greatest fears. Here in the room, recruits will face different manifestations of people’s fears, using the combat training they learned in phase one and the emotional conditioning they picked up in phase two. The recruits will be given one chance to maneuver their ways through a “fear landscape.” Their success with this challenge will determine their rankings for phase three of training. As Four explains, Peter asks if it’s “fair” for some recruits to have more fears than others. Four laughs and says that Peter doesn’t know the meaning of the word “fair”—he’s clearly frightened of a tiny girl from Abnegation. Christina and Will laugh.

Tris becomes increasingly attracted to Four—for his body and his good looks as much as his personality. A young person exploring his or her sexuality is almost always a part of any coming-of-age novel.



Tris is relieved to find that not all of her friends have turned against her: seemingly just Al. The culture of competition in Dauntless is strong, but not to the point where it’s truly every man for himself—Christina and Will remain loyal to Tris. Drew’s grotesque appearance is an indirect sign of Four’s feelings for Tris: evidently, Four was so furious that Tris was in danger that he took his anger out on Drew.



The people of Dauntless believe in the law of “an eye for an eye.” Even a “gentle” recruit like Uriah wants to avenge Tris’s pain, even if he’d prefer to get revenge in the rankings, not the chasm.



Christina shows a streak of humility, showing that Tris isn’t the only one who’s having second thoughts about Dauntless culture.



The Dauntless government maintains an enormous amount of control over its citizens: it knows what they’re afraid of, and this gives it huge power. Although the government claims that it’s trying to produce the best warriors possible, it’s simultaneously gathering intelligence on its recruits’ weaknesses and insecurities. In short, the government claims that it’s helping its recruits gain power over other factions, but really, the government is trying to gain power over its own people.



Back in the dormitory, Tris finds Al. Al asks if he could talk to Tris alone, and Will angrily says that Al will never get near Tris again. Al nods, tearfully, and tells Tris that he's sorry for what he tried to do to her. Tris contemplates forgiving Al for what he did. But then she realizes that she's not a forgiving person: whatever forgiveness she learned from Abnegation, she's lost forever. With this in mind she tells Al that she'll kill him if he ever comes near her again.

Tris has her own doubts about Dauntless culture: she knows there's something barbaric about the way it pits people against one another. And yet Tris doesn't have a good idea of what to replace Dauntless with. For this reason, she behaves coldly and even cruelly around Al: instead of forgiving him, she threatens him with more pain.



CHAPTER 24

Tris has a dream in which she sees Natalie. Suddenly, Christina wakes her up and rushes her to the chasm. The Dauntless have just discovered a body at the bottom of the water, and they're pulling it up with rope right now. Tris realizes that the body they're recovering is Al's: he's thrown himself to his death. Christina and Tris weep for Al's death. Tris then begins to laugh hysterically, trying unsuccessfully to stop herself.

Although Al tried to hurt her—and even kill her—Tris feels guilty about pushing Al away from her, rather than forgiving him. Al's death reminds Tris of the limits of Dauntless culture: by pitting the recruits against one another, Eric has created an atmosphere of pain and shame, where recruits sabotage each other instead of providing useful support.



There's a funeral for Al. There, everyone except Tris drinks a lot. Tris runs into Tori, and together they join up with Tris's friends. Tris sees Molly, who teases her about Andrew, her father. Tris wants to fight Molly, but Will breaks up the fight right away.

Tris still can't entirely control her feelings about her family: whenever someone else criticizes her father and mother, Tris tries to fight them.



The funeral begins, with Eric presiding. Eric explains that Al's suicide was an act of bravery, for which he should be celebrated by his peers. After Eric's eulogy, Tris tells Four that Eric's speech was absurd: it encourages Dauntless recruits to sacrifice their lives instead of preserving them. Four tells Tris to calm herself. He reminds her that he nicked her ear with a knife: he did so, he explains, to remind Tris that she needed to be courageous in order to protect others.

Eric's presence at Al's funeral sends a dark message: it reminds us that Eric's ethos of competition and cruelty has indirectly led to Al's death. By encouraging Al and his peers to vie for a high position in the rankings, he drove Al to hyper-competitiveness and self-hatred. Four, by contrast, uses pain for a good purpose: to force his recruits to be strong and self-motivated.



Tris confesses to Four that she feels guilty about Al's death. If she'd forgiven Al, she wonders, he might have chosen not to kill himself. Tris realizes that she's not as purely Dauntless as she thought: she still feels an instinct to forgive and accept, the product of her Abnegation upbringing. Four, recognizing that Tris is getting emotional, kisses Tris's forehead, and Tris touches Four's waist with her hands.

In this important scene, Tris shows some physical affection for Four, and vice versa. Tris isn't sure what she wants: if she wants to remain in Dauntless or leave altogether. Her attraction to Four is partly because she senses that he too feels like an outsider among the Dauntless.



CHAPTER 25

Late at night, Will, Christina, and Tris look out over the chasm. They've gotten new **tattoos** to commemorate Al's death. Tris got a symbol of Abnegation: a pair of hands. Tris accepts that Abnegation is an important part of her identity.

Tris notices a newspaper containing new stories attacking the Abnegation leadership. The Erudite leader is a woman named Jeanine, whom Will knows slightly. Will reports that Jeanine is an intelligent, perceptive woman. He implies that the city would be better if other factions—not just the Abnegation representatives—were allowed to lead. Tris notices that Will and Christina are closer than usual—they might even be attracted to each other.

Tris decides to walk around by herself. Her friends go back to the dormitory, and Tris contemplates the chasm from which Al jumped. She turns, and finds Four standing nearby. Four invites Tris to come with him: he going to be testing the newest form of serum. Together, Four and Tris take the serum and go into the dark room: together, they'll experience Four's nightmares.

As the serum sets in, Four and Tris find themselves at the top of a huge tower. Tris realizes that Four finds this terrifying. They jump from the tower, into a tiny room. Tris realizes this is Four's other great fear: confinement. Tris tries to calm Four down by feeling his heartbeat. She jokes, "Most boys would enjoy being trapped in close quarters with a girl." Four smiles weakly and tells Tris that these nightmares come from his childhood, when he was punished by being sent into a tiny closet.

Tris and Four see a woman, whom Four is supposed to shoot. Four manages to shoot the woman with Tris's encouragement, and she disappears. Then they see a tall, thin man, wearing Abnegation clothing. Tris is surprised to find that she recognizes this man—it's Marcus, her father's friend. Marcus yells threateningly and waves a belt, whispering, "This is for your own good." Tris realizes that Marcus's son, Tobias, who joined Dauntless years ago, must be Four. Marcus multiplies into dozens of Marcuses, and "Tobias" stands in front of Tris, defending her. When he does so, all the Marcuses disappear.

In the first third of the novel, Tris wasn't sure where she belonged. In the middle third, she believed she belonged in Dauntless. Now, in the final third of the book, she begins to wonder if she belongs anywhere. Her uncertainty about her identity is reflected in her tattoos: she's both Abnegation and Dauntless.



Even Will, who knows full-well how easily the ideals of a faction can be corrupted to suit the leadership's personal motives, is tempted to believe that Abnegation is corrupt. This reflects the fact that everyone in this novel—including and especially Tris—is hungry for power of some kind, and is naturally loyal to their original family or faction. Will, Tris, and their peers want to rise to the top of the rankings, just as Erudite wants the chance to run the city.



Tris and Four have a close friendship at this point in the novel, so Tris doesn't think twice about spending time with Four after hours. Four's trust for Tris is reflected in his decision to show her his secret fears.



Tris finds that she can joke about her sexuality—this would have been inconceivable for her, even a month ago. It's a mark of Four's tenderness and honesty that he reveals his weakness and fears to Tris: evidently, he trusts Tris to keep his secrets. In no small part, this is because Four also knows a big secret about Tris: that she's Divergent.



Tris is surprised to realize that she understands some of Four's fears, as she recognizes Marcus, another leader on her father's government council in Abnegation. This is another reminder that Tris and Four have a lot in common: they even know some of the same people. It also explains why Four would have looked familiar to Natalie, and why Four picked up on Tris's fear of "being touched" after nearly being thrown into the chasm.



The simulation ends. Tris realizes that Tobias has only four fears—hence his nickname. Tobias takes Tris’s hand and says that he has something else to show her.

Tobias has revealed an important part of himself to Tris, and this adds to the long list of things that Tris and Four have in common: a troubled past in Abnegation, a nickname, doubts about life in Dauntless, etc.



CHAPTER 26

Hand in hand, Tobias and Tris walk to the chasm. As they walk, Tobias explains that he can never entirely master his four fears. He also tells Tris something she’s been wanting to know for a while: his test results. Tobias says he was selected to be in Abnegation, but he chose to leave Abnegation for Dauntless. This surprises Tris—she’d expected him to reveal that he’s **Divergent**, like her. Tris tells Tobias that she left Abnegation because she wasn’t selfless enough. Tobias immediately disputes this, reminding Tris of how she’s bravely protected others.

Although Tobias doesn’t admit that he’s Divergent, he seems more aware of what Divergence really means than Tris herself is. Tris still thinks in terms of rigid categories—she refuses to believe that she could be representative of all five factions. By contrast, Tobias shows Tris that she could easily belong to more than one faction, even Abnegation (based on her protectiveness).



Tobias leans in and kisses Tris on her mouth. They kiss for a few minutes as they stand by the chasm. As she kisses Tobias, Tris realizes that, if things had worked out a little differently, they’d both be living in Abnegation.

Tobias and Tris’s kiss reflects their shared experiences, and the closeness they’ve developed in the last chapters. They know so much about each other that they’re falling in love—and they’re also just young adults exploring their sexuality.



CHAPTER 27

The next morning, Tris is in an excellent mood. In the dining hall, Tris sees Tobias, but he doesn’t sit with her. Uriah reminds everyone that it’s fear landscape day—instead of going through their own landscapes, the recruits will travel through the landscape of one of the instructors. Christina hopes that it’s Tobias’s landscape: she’s sure that beneath his tough exterior, he’s weak and easily scared.

Christina isn’t far off: she recognizes that Tobias’s toughness is all for show. This points to the fact that toughness is often a performance, rather than a natural trait. Since arriving at Dauntless, Tris has become skilled at exactly this performance.



The coach of the Dauntless-born initiates, Lauren, tells everyone what they await in today’s fear landscape. The average person has about 15 fears: by experiencing these fears head-on, recruits can teach themselves to be braver.

Life in the five factions is so rigorously controlled that even one’s fears are tabulated and counted up. Even if this seems unrealistic, the basic idea of fear-training—that facing one’s fears one can help one become braver—is hard to disagree with.



Tris watches as the other students go through their fear landscape session. Each student plugs into a computer and takes serum, allowing them to see an instructor's fears. When it's Tris's turn, she's not nervous. Lauren injects her with serum. Tris sees a deep chasm, into which she's being lowered. She begins to scream and cry, and suddenly, Tris finds herself back in the dark room, surrounded by Lauren and Tobias. Tobias asks, "What the hell was that?" Tris has become too frightened, but when she sees Tobias's face, she manages to calm herself. Tobias says, "This is pathetic," and Tris is so furious that she punches him in the face. She walks out of the room.

Tris thought that she could master her own fears. But she's deviated too far into sentimentality and tenderness: she finds herself identifying with the people who've hurt her, like Al, and returning to the most painful episodes in her life, such as her near-death experience in the chasm. These aren't unnatural ways to think by any means, but they certainly don't make Tris a better Dauntless soldier. Tobias has a tough job: he has to train Tris as a soldier while also showing his love for her. At times, Tobias can't do both—here, for instance, he goes too hard on Tris, provoking her anger.



CHAPTER 28

Tris has just failed her fear landscape test. The silver lining, she realizes, is that now Peter and his followers won't think of her as a legitimate threat.

Tris is a rationalist—she's always thinking ahead, and collecting herself immediately after a setback. In "faction" terms, this seems like more of an Erudite quality than Dauntless or Abnegation.



Tris, furious with herself for her poor performance, jumps onboard the train, and rides it into the heart of the city. She gets off at the Erudite headquarters, thinking that she'll visit Caleb. At the headquarters, she's able to walk inside without a fight—much to her surprise. The interior of the Erudite headquarters is dominated by an enormous library, decorated with a portrait of Jeanine, the leader.

The contrast between Abnegation and Erudite couldn't be clearer here. Where the Abnegation leadership remains painfully humble, Jeanine, the head of the Erudite, has her own portrait hanging in a position of power. It's somewhat ironic that Roth portrays the "bookish" group as the villains in her society, since she's the writer, after all.



Tris asks a librarian to help her find her brother, but the librarian refuses. As Tris becomes angry, she hears a voice—it's Caleb, who's surprised to see her. Caleb is wearing glasses, Tris notices, even though his vision is perfect.

It's telling that Caleb wears glasses for no reason—he's so eager to fit in that he alters his appearance to create the stereotypical image of bookishness and intelligence.



Tris and Caleb take a walk outside the library, through a park (which Chicago natives will recognize as Millennium Park). Tris confesses that she wants to go back to Abnegation—she's sick of Dauntless. Tris also makes it clear that she's annoyed with Caleb, because he hasn't visited her. Caleb asks Tris if she made the right choice in going to Dauntless, and Tris replies, "I don't think there was one." Tris notices that Caleb looks tired.

Caleb seems selfish and ambitious in this section—he's been so obsessed with fitting in among the Erudite that he seems to have abandoned his family. Yet at the same time, Tris has been doing exactly the same thing—she thinks about her family all the time, but she hasn't visited Caleb either.



Tris asks Caleb about Jeanine, who's been speaking about corruption in Abnegation. Caleb says he's unsure if he believes Jeanine or not. Tris finds it surprising that Caleb is even considering Jeanine's arguments, since his own parent is an Abnegation leader. She tries to reason with Caleb, but Caleb tells her that she's not thinking clearly. Tris interprets this to mean that Caleb has become arrogant—he looks down on all non-Erudites. Caleb tells Tris that she should leave, and Tris gets up to go. She mentions to Caleb that Natalie wants him to research serum.

As Tris tries to leave the Erudite headquarters, two guards tell her to come with them. They take her to Jeanine's offices. Jeanine tells Tris about her aptitude tests: there was some kind of glitch, and the results were never recorded. Jeanine points out that Tris is one of only two people in history to switch from Abnegation to Dauntless. Tris has no idea why she's in Jeanine's office, but she can sense that Jeanine suspects her of being dangerous.

Tris tries to play the part of a Dauntless recruit: arrogant, cocky, and bold. She tells Jeanine that she's the best recruit the Dauntless have, and this seems to reassure Jeanine that Tris is harmless. Tris also says that she doesn't miss her parents in the slightest—her real family is in Dauntless. Jeanine asks Tris if she agrees with the reports Jeanine has been publishing. Tris lies and says that she does.

After meeting Jeanine, Tris is driven back to the Dauntless headquarters in a car. When she returns to Dauntless, she finds Eric waiting for her. Eric, who recognizes the car as Erudite, accuses Tris of betraying Dauntless, and takes her to Tobias. Eric says that Tris is a dangerous spy, associating with other factions—something which Tobias immediately disputes. Tris, remembering Tobias's advice, forces herself to cry, so that she seems weak and frail. Tobias says that Tris tried to kiss him, and ran off after Tobias turned her down. Eric laughs and seems to accept this relationship.

Alone, Tobias apologizes to Tris for being harsh with Tris during the simulation. He compliments Tris on pretending to be weak—he recommends that she continue to use this strategy. Tris kisses Tobias, and Tobias tells her to meet him alone at 11:30.

Surprisingly, Caleb is taking Jeanine's arguments seriously, even though they attack his own parents. This points to the fact that faction loyalty is often stronger than family loyalty: Caleb has an easier time trusting Jeanine than he does his own parents. Here Roth plays up the idea that there is an inherent arrogance in intelligence: smart people like Caleb believe that they have all the answers.



Tris is intelligent enough to recognize that Jeanine is suspicious of her. This reminds us that the Erudite aren't necessarily the most intelligent people in the city—they're simply the people who believe that intelligence is the most important thing about a person.



Tris has become skilled at performing. Here, she invents a "character" on the spot: a cocky, slow-witted Dauntless soldier. Because of Jeanine's own arrogance about the superiority of the Erudite, she's ready to believe that Tris really is as foolish as she appears.



Eric's loyalty to the Dauntless is so great that he interprets even a visit to the Erudite as a sign of betrayal. It's almost pathetic that Eric believes this—although he's a powerful government official, he's imprisoned by his own Dauntless ideology. Notably, Tris follows Tobias's advice and pretends to cry in order to make Eric underestimate her. Tris is a powerful, tough young woman, but she understands that many (particularly men) won't respect this, and so she is forced to trick them with a performance of weakness.



Tris and Tobias essentially form their own, two-person faction-within-a-faction. Their common culture is that they distrust Dauntless displays of power and force—there has to be more to life, they think.



Back in the dormitory, Christina asks Tris where she's been all day, and if Tobias is angry that Tris hit him. Tris doesn't tell Christina where she's been, and Christina moves on to another topic: Will kissed her. Tris is happy for Christina, and wishes she could tell her friend about Tobias.

Christina tells Tris more about herself. Christina spent most of her childhood believing that she'd become a Candor. The Candor initiation ritual, she remembers, involves taking truth serum and spilling every secret. The great advantage of living in Candor, she says, is that there's no manipulation: everyone says exactly what's on their mind. Christina could never have been in Candor, she claims, because she likes to be in control of her own mind.

Late at night, Tris meets up with Tobias as planned. Tobias takes Tris to the train, and they jump onboard. Tobias and Tris kiss and touch each other, and Tobias notices Tris's collarbone **tattoo**. After some time, they arrive at their destination: Erudite headquarters. Tobias points out that the Erudites are violating protocol by keeping their lights on late into the night.

Tobias explains to Tris what they're doing here. Tobias has found reports in the Dauntless compound that look like war plans, seemingly intended for a war against Abnegation. Tobias guesses that the Erudites' newspaper stories have been designed to stir up hatred of Abnegation, making it easier for a full-scale rebellion. Tobias wonders aloud how the Erudite are going to manipulate the other factions into fighting against Abnegation.

CHAPTER 29

Tris remembers the Abnegation initiation ceremony. Every year the initiates, who've been spending their time performing community service, listen to the Abnegation manifesto, and then share a meal.

The Dauntless initiation ceremony is about to begin. As Tris prepares for the ceremony, she thinks to herself that she really is Abnegation through and through—perhaps she chose the wrong faction after all. Nevertheless, Tris tries to focus on her final challenge: the fear landscape.

Throughout the book, Roth reminds us that Tris isn't actually that special—at the same time that she's going through self-doubt, finding a boyfriend, etc., her peers (such as Christina) are doing the same things.



The flaw in Candor culture, Roth suggests, is that total honesty leads to a total exposure of weakness to authority, and thus total power for the government. Only when people keep secrets and have a private life can there be real freedom—otherwise, the government knows everyone's secrets, weaknesses, etc.



The Erudites seem to be planning something dangerous, hence their violation of protocol—pushing the strict boundaries of this society. Tris continues to explore her sexuality with Tobias.



The Erudite recognize the fragility of the five factions, and so use propaganda to stir up the inherent resentment between them. Because of the culture of rigid divisiveness and competition, this doesn't seem like a difficult task. And yet it's still a mystery how the Erudite are going to turn this resentment into actual violence.



The Abnegation ceremony is painfully simple—the emphasis on simplicity and modesty is so great that it becomes oppressive to human happiness and freedom.



Tris has changed her mind about Dauntless so many times already that the point is clear: she doesn't have any one clear, defined identity. Instead, she moves back and forth between Abnegation, Amity, Dauntless, etc.—just like the Divergent (that is, complex and real) person she is.



At the ceremony, Tris and her peers prepare to go through their final challenge. Eric tells everyone that Tris will be going last, since she fell to the bottom of the standings following her embarrassing performance in the previous fear landscape. There are only six transfer recruits left in the program: Will, Christina, Drew, Peter, Molly, and Tris.

It's Tris's turn to go through the challenge. Eric injects her with an orange liquid that'll make her hallucinate, and asks her if she's ready.

The stage is set for more action and drama, as Tris now has to compete against her friends and peers for an elite position in the rankings.



It's daunting that Eric is the one administering Tris's test: Four isn't around to protect her.



CHAPTER 30

Tris begins her fear challenge. She finds herself alone in a strange place, with grass and concrete buildings. The sky is green, and birds fly around her. Crows snatch at Tris, but she's able to ignore the pain they cause her. Tris finds a gun in her hand, and she uses it to shoot away the birds.

The landscape changes: Tris is now on the edge of a beach. Waves cascade over her head, throwing her to the ground. Tris manages to remain calm and hold onto the rocks, preventing herself from being crushed by the waves.

The scenery changes again: this time, Tris finds herself in a dark place, surrounded by cackling enemies. Tris notices Peter carrying a torch. Peter jabs the flame at Tris, burning her flesh. Then Tris begins to smell something odd: rain. Raindrops crash down on her, hurting her burnt skin. Tris wishes that she only had four fears—but of course, she has many more.

Tris finds herself back in the Abnegation headquarters. She notices that the room is lined with **mirrors**. A man whose face is covered with scars walks closer and closer to Tris. Tris tries to tell herself that this is imaginary, but she can't stop herself from screaming. Tris takes her gun and shoots herself in the head.

Suddenly, Tris finds herself sitting next to Tobias. She notices a huge bed behind her. Tobias smiles, and pulls off Tris's jacket. He kisses her, but Tris doesn't feel well. She tells "simulation Tobias" that she's not going to have sex with him. Tobias disappears.

Tris's first challenge, significantly, are birds, which seem to be a fear of hers, but also to represent her family. This is perhaps Tris's most basic, long-lasting fear: the fear that she's alienated and disappointed her parents.



Tris is also frightened of water and drowning, as we've seen in her previous fear challenges.



One of Tris's fears is of her peers in the Dauntless community—both because Peter and Al tried to kill her, and because of the constant sense of competition that makes it seem like they are all, on some level, enemies. Throughout all this, however, Tris remains fairly calm—she's able to "stand outside" her own experiences to the point where she can wait for the test to be over.



Tris is daunted by the sight of a mysterious man, and the presence of mirrors suggests that this fear represents a major part of Tris's own self-image. Tris is sometimes willing to sacrifice herself without thinking, hence her decision to shoot herself in the head. She is, in perfect Abnegation form, selfless.



Tris's most recent fear is the fear of sex and sexuality. She's so inexperienced with sex (and grew up in such a repressed, Puritanical community) that she regards it as frightening and sinister.



Tris finds herself facing her parents and brother. She also becomes conscious of a gun pressed to her head. She hears Jeanine’s voice saying, “Do it.” Tris realizes that she’s pointing her own gun at Caleb. Caleb says, “It’s okay.” Again, Tris hears Jeanine’s voice, ordering her to fire a gun. Jeanine counts down from ten, and Tris feels a growing sense of panic.

Tris keeps circling around her most fundamental fear: her fear of losing her family forever. Tris can sense that she’s been pitted against her family—because she’s in a different faction, she’s being coached to hate the people of Abnegation and Erudite.



Tris remembers something Tobias told her: selflessness and bravery aren’t so different. Although she’s holding a gun and pointing it at Caleb, Tris decides to put the gun down, thinking “Shoot me instead.” There’s a click and a bang, and then the simulation ends.

At the end of the day, Tris is strong enough to sacrifice herself rather than hurt her family. It’s also telling that this comes with her realization that selflessness and bravery—that is, Abnegation and Dauntlessness—aren’t inherently different.



CHAPTER 31

Tris finds herself sitting in an empty room, surrounded by Eric, Tobias, and a man whom Tris recognizes as Max (the leader of the Dauntless). Eric congratulates Tris—she’s successfully completed her final test. Eric also gives Tris an injection of black liquid. This, he explains, will allow the Dauntless to track her location at all times; the Erudite have just invented it.

Tris has completed her test, and yet her only “reward” is a new liquid injected into her bloodstream. The Dauntless governments’ tests and controls never end—there’s always another serum, representing another form of government control.



Back in the initiation room, Tris meets up with her other friends. Tobias tells Tris that he’d be surprised if she weren’t ranked first: she only faced seven fears, a remarkably low number. Tris, remembering her fear landscape, asks Tobias if he was watching the simulation. He tells her that only the top Dauntless leaders are allowed to do so.

It’s telling that Tobias gives Tris some privacy—or at least pretends to have done so. While the government of Dauntless insists upon controlling every aspect of its recruits’ minds, Tobias respects Tris’s inner life.



Tris and Tobias decide to leave the room and find a more private place. In his bedroom, Tobias kisses Tris, and touches her body. Tris suggests that Tobias is only using Tris for sex, but Tobias vigorously denies this. Tobias also notices that Tris has a new **tattoo**—the Abnegation sign, on her back. Tobias smiles and says that he has the same tattoo. Tobias removes his shirt. Tris likes this, but says, “I’m afraid of what I want.”

Tris’s experiences with Tobias are an excellent example of how to deal with fear: confronting it. Tris is both frightened of and attracted to the thought of having sex with Tobias. The only way to rid herself of her compulsion is to give in to it. It’s also reassuring to Tris that Tobias shares her past at Abnegation, and even has a tattoo to make this immediately apparent.



Tobias touches Tris very gently, and tells her that she need not be afraid. Now that they’re getting to know each other better, he explains, Tris will only have six fears instead of seven: together, they’ll be Four and Six.

Tris and Tobias are closer than ever—and tellingly, they’re united by what they fear, not what they love (i.e., Four and Six). Fear is such an important basis for behavior in the Dauntless culture that even Tris and Tobias—two reluctant Dauntless soldiers—allow it to control their behavior. At the same time, this allows Tobias to deliver a romantic line about the two overcoming their fears together, and it’s implied that Tris loses her virginity here.



CHAPTER 32

After their romantic session, Tris and Tobias make their way back into the dining hall. They've spent the last two hours in Tobias's bed—now, everyone else has left the testing room and gone to their dormitories.

Tris meets up with Christina in the dining hall. She tells Tris that she's planning on becoming a trainer like Four. Christina asks Tris which part of the fear simulation gave Tris the most trouble. Reluctantly, Tris admits that she was frightened of sex.

The recruits then hear a microphone: Eric is ready to make an announcement. He explains that the top ten initiates will choose their future professions. The top initiate, he says, is Tris. Tris is thrilled with this news—she now feels that she belongs in Dauntless, whether she's **Divergent** or not. She's also happy to see that Uriah, Will, and Christina are also in the top ten, along with Peter. Numbers 11 and 12 are Molly and Drew, both of whom Tris despises. Molly and Will kiss to celebrate their success, and Tris does the same with Tobias—it is the best moment of her life, she thinks.

As she kisses Tobias, Tris realizes something: Eric and Max are working with the Erudite to develop serums that can control people and track their movements. Tobias can see that something important has dawned on Tris, but he can't figure out what it is. Tris whispers that she'll have to tell Tobias later, when they're in private together. Privately, Tris thinks that she's discovered how the Erudite are going to manipulate the factions into fighting against Abnegation.

CHAPTER 33

Tris goes to bed, planning to tell Tobias what she's discovered tomorrow. The next morning, she wakes up to find Christina and Will getting dressed. She says her friends' names, but they don't hear her. Tris realizes what's going on: Christina and Will have become zombies: sleepwalkers. Tris wonders if Tobias is under the influence of mind control as well. She senses that, in spite of what he told her, Tobias is **Divergent**, and thus immune to the serum like herself.

Tris and Tobias are alone, symbolizing the intimacy and solidarity of their relationship. Instead of aligning with the Dauntless faction, Tris and Tobias have formed a "faction" of their own.



At this point, Tris's fear of sex is almost a distant memory—she's moved past it in real life, not just a simulation. It's also telling that Christina—seemingly the friendliest and most moderate of the recruits—decides to follow in Four's footsteps.



This is the highpoint of Tris's relationship with the Dauntless community. Although she's had doubts about the ethics of Dauntless before, Tris is pleased with herself for finishing at the top of the rankings, and she has certainly formed some close friendships with Christina, Uriah, and Will. For the time being, then, there's no real conflict between Tris's desires and the desire of the Dauntless group, and so she feels like she finally has a secure identity and community.



It's clear that the novel is approaching a climax, as Tris has a sudden epiphany of just how Erudite is planning on starting a war between the factions. Fittingly, this device is a kind of mind-altering serum—the same device that's been a part of most of the novel's major plot points, and a crucial aspect of this society in general.



Roth plays up the suspense as Tris misses her opportunity to talk to Tobias. Her mistake was to think that the Dauntless government would wait before activating its mind control program. In spite of what Tobias himself has actually told Tris, she prays that Tobias is Divergent. Once again Divergence is presented as not just an especially complex personality type, but as an actual mental (and even physical) state different from the majority of other people.



Tris quickly gets dressed, mirroring the movements of the people around her. She realizes what's been going on. The new recruits were injected with mind-control serum as soon as they became Dauntless. The entire faction has been converted into an army of soldiers, loyal to whomever controls the serum. Tris tries to hide the fact that she's immune to the serum by mimicking the movements of those around her.

As she and her peers march through the halls of headquarters, Tris tries to scan the room for Tobias. She notices Tobias, looking as blank-faced as anyone else. As she approaches Tobias, she squeezes his hand, and he squeezes back, proving that he's not a zombie. Tris breathes a sigh of relief: Tobias really is **Divergent**.

Tobias, Tris, and the others board a train. As they prepare to get on, Tobias whispers for Tris to run. Tris refuses, though, she needs to stay around to protect her family. The train takes the soldiers to Abnegation, where Tris finds hundreds of other Dauntless soldiers, marching in the same rhythm. To her horror, Tris sees Tori pushing an Abnegation leader to the ground. She hears gunshots—the Dauntless zombies are preparing to kill the people of Abnegation.

Tris sees Eric approaching Tobias. Eric leers at Tobias and whispers, "No one's going to remember that I came in second now, are they?" Eric prepares to shoot Tobias in the face. At the last minute, Tris raises her own gun and shoots Eric in the foot. Tobias draws his own gun and shoots at Eric's followers. Together, Tobias and Tris run away, but before they've gotten far, a group of soldiers stops them, wounding Tris in the shoulder. Eric, bleeding from his foot, identifies Tris and Tobias as "**Divergent** rebels."

CHAPTER 34

Soldiers take Tobias and Tris to see Jeanine. Jeanine tells them that she's always suspected that Tris and Tobias could be **Divergent**. Jeanine suspects that Tobias is more strongly allied with Abnegation, even though he's chosen Dauntless. This combination allowed Tobias to avoid mind control.

Tris needs to conceal her independent self by blending into the group. Tobias's advice to Tris is especially relevant right now, as he's always encouraged Tris to hide her abilities so that she can surprise her opponents at the perfect moment—and this is exactly the strategy that Tris is about to use.



It's telling that Tris and Tobias can communicate with something as minor as a hand-squeeze; in only a few weeks, they've developed their own personal language, and their own "group solidarity," based on Divergence and free-thinking.



It's becoming increasingly clear what's going on: the Erudite and the Dauntless government are cooperating to attack Abnegation, the current governors of the city. Just as Peter and his peers tried to attack Edward, the top-ranked recruit, so Dauntless and Erudite are working together to eliminate their most powerful enemy.



In this scene, Eric seems especially pathetic—he's still so obsessed with the rankings, after all these years, that they've driven him to take part in this murderous plot to divide the city. Tris chooses not to shoot Eric anywhere lethal—she's still reluctant to take a human life, in spite of all the encouragement the Dauntless (Eric included) gave her during training.



Here, Jeanine gives most of the details about Tobias's Divergence (something Tobias himself had previously denied to Tris). Tobias, much like Tris, wavers between Abnegation and Dauntless—in other words, between bravery and selflessness (which may be similar things, as we've seen). As Roth sees it, freedom comes from the "marriage" of these two states of mind: people who are brave and selfless can think for themselves instead of imitating factions.



Jeanine goes on to explain her plan to Tobias and Tris. She knows that she needs an army of loyal soldiers in order to seize control over the city, so she's made a deal with the Dauntless leaders: Dauntless soldiers in return for good jobs in the new Erudite government. Jeanine plans to use her new government to purge the city of the factionless, thus bringing prosperity to everyone.

Jeanine suggests that Tobias should be thanking her for shooting the people of Abnegation, since Tobias hated his own father, an Abnegation leader. Tobias denies that he supports Jeanine's plan at all. Jeanine shrugs, and Tris realizes that Jeanine is the most evil kind of person there is: she's not emotional in the slightest; rather, she treats Abnegation or the factionless as mere "problems" to be solved, albeit with cold-blooded murder.

Jeanine tells Tobias that scientists will use his **Divergence** to develop a new drug that can control the Divergent, of which there are probably many among Abnegation. Tris, on the other hand, will be executed as soon as possible. Furious, Tobias tries to attack Jeanine, but before he can do any damage, soldiers pull him away. Jeanine orders soldiers to take Tobias and Tris away. Tris bites the hand of one of the soldiers pulling her out of the room. The soldier hits her on the head, knocking her out.

Jeanine proceeds to explain her "evil plan" to Tris and Tobias—just like a super-villain in a James Bond movie. As in any Bond flick, Jeanine feels confident giving away the details of her plan because she's sure that Tris and Tobias are going to die soon.



Throughout the book, Tris has tried to figure out what kind of person she wants to be. Sometimes, she's been cold and emotionless, and sometimes kinder and warmer. Here, Tris comes to realize that there's nothing admirable about pure strength or a lack of compassion. Jeanine exemplifies both, and so is the most dangerous kind of villain there is.



The situation seems pretty dire for Tobias and Tris, and appropriately, Roth ends the chapter with a "cliffhanger." It's important to note that many Abnegation people are Divergent: there's something about selflessness and modesty that makes people more likely to be free-thinking and open-minded, and thus immune to the usual factions of society.



CHAPTER 35

Tris regains consciousness and finds herself in a small room. She's still bleeding heavily. Tris notices that there's a video camera in the room. Gradually, she realizes that she's sitting in an enormous, glass-lined tank, into which water is slowly trickling.

Tris tries to calm herself. She remembers being a child, when Natalie would bathe her. This reminds Tris of God—something she doesn't think of very often. As she contemplates God, Tris is glad she shot Eric in the foot instead of the head.

The petty cruelty behind this villainous plan is clear—the Dauntless government knows that Tris is terrified of drowning, so it makes sure to kill her by drowning. At the same time, this situation has a rather clichéd, action-movie feel to it—the villain explains her plan to the heroine, and then instead of having her killed right away, leaves her alone in a situation where she has more time to escape or be rescued.



Interestingly, the presence of water has a calming influence on Tris—she's able to overcome her fears by associating her pain with pleasurable memory. This suggests that Tris's experience in the tank is like a Christian baptism: Tris is being "born again," free from one of her old fears.



Suddenly, Tris hears a loud bang, and sees the glass of her tank cracking. She's amazed to see Natalie, armed with a gun, peer into the tank—she says, "We have to run." Tris stands up and asks her mother, point-blank, if her mother was Dauntless. Natalie replies that she was. Before Tris can ask anything else, Natalie and Tris run out the room. Tris realizes that she's been sent to Abnegation headquarters.

As Tris and Natalie run through Abnegation, Natalie explains a few things to Tris. Natalie has been monitoring train schedules ever since the attacks began, so that she could save her daughter. Tris demands to know how Natalie knew that Tris was **Divergent**. Natalie replies that she is Divergent, too: her own mother was a Dauntless leader, and sent her to Abnegation because she'd be safer there. Divergent people are dangerous to the factions, Natalie continues, because they refuse to think and act according to their factions' orders.

Natalie leads Tris out of the building and points her toward a building where she claims Andrew and Caleb are hiding. As Natalie rushes away, there's a bang, and Tris sees her mother clutching her abdomen: she's just been shot. Tris screams. She wants to fall into despair and give up, but by remembering the feeling of Tobias's hands, she manages to find the strength to run away, back to her family.

CHAPTER 36

Tris is running away from her mother's body, pursued by three Dauntless soldiers. Furious, Tris fire behind her as she runs away—she wants to avenge the death of her mother. She manages to outrun her pursuers. Suddenly, Tris sees Will—a zombie—in front of her. She raises her gun and shoots Will in the head, killing him.

Tris manages to make it to her family's hiding place, as Natalie has directed her. Inside the hiding place, she finds Caleb and Andrew, along with a few other Abnegation people, including Marcus. Caleb notices that Tris is bleeding from her shoulder, and he takes her inside to care for her wound. Tris tells her father, "I'm factionless now," but her father replies that Tris is "with us."

In this deus ex machina moment, Tris's mother saves her from certain death. Tris and her mother have one important connection: Tris switched from Abnegation to Dauntless, while Natalie moved from Dauntless to Abnegation. This suggests that there's more fluidity between the factions than had previously been supposed—it's possible to move back and forth between them, according to the way one's personality changes.



Divergence is apparently partly a medical or a chemical condition, but it's mostly just a kind of independence and willingness to question authority. Thus, Tris discovers, Divergence isn't as uncommon as she'd previously thought: there are many Divergent people in her life. This suggests that the mark of a mature person isn't bravery, intelligence, kindness, etc., but rather the willpower to move back and forth between all of these characteristics, and others. In short, Divergence is human, and that's why it's so dangerous to the government of the city.



Natalie sacrifices her life to protect her child (another Christian motif, and the epitome of Abnegation). Tris has spent most of the book terrified that her family will stop caring about her because she abandoned them for Dauntless. Now, Tris loses her mother—ironically, in the same instant that she realizes that her mother truly loves her.



Tris has previously expressed a reluctance to hurt or kill other people. Here, however, she makes the questionable decision to actually kill Will—who was previously a friend of hers—in order to save others.



Tris's exchange with her father reiterates an important point: although factions are designed to create artificial families and strong group solidarity, people also usually have a strong bond to their actual, biological families, regardless of ideology.



Tris tells her family that they need to “wake up” the Dauntless soldiers immediately. They can do this by accessing the computers that control the serum in the Dauntless soldiers’ brains. Marcus laments the horrible situation, but Tris senses that his sorrow is only for show. The mind-control computers, Tris guesses, are probably located in the Dauntless headquarters. Tris tells her father that she’ll need help to break into headquarters: anyone who can fire a gun and isn’t afraid of heights.

Tris demonstrates further intelligence by forming a coherent plan for how to defeat the governments of Dauntless and Erudite as quickly as possible. She also has her first real interactions with Marcus here—a man she suspects of being a child molester (hence Tobias’s fear of his father).



CHAPTER 37

Tris and her family assemble a team to sneak into the Dauntless headquarters and shut down the computers: Caleb (since he’s Erudite, and knows some things about the mind-control project), Andrew (since he’s an Abnegation leader), and Marcus, who claims to be good with computers. The team climbs onto the train and heads for Dauntless.

Here, Tris assembles a team of her own, incorporating the best of Abnegation, Erudite, and Dauntless. This reinforces another key point: it is possible for different kinds of people to cooperate and work together—in other words, they don’t have to live in competition and mutual hate, and in fact are stronger when they combine their skills. All this further suggests why the government purposefully divides people up—to keep them from uniting and becoming more powerful.



Onboard the train, Marcus asks Tris about her choice. Tris replies that she doesn’t regret choosing Dauntless at all: Dauntless taught her how to be brave and selfless.

Tris’s words are important to understand her character. Even if Dauntless wasn’t the “perfect” fit for her, it gave her lessons that are undeniably important, about trust, loyalty, and bravery.



Tris and the others arrive at the Dauntless compound. They manage to jump off the moving train without trouble, and Tris remembers, almost nostalgically, the first time she jumped off the train. Tris then tells her team to jump off the roof into the net below—just as Tobias told her to do on her first day in Dauntless. Andrew, Caleb, and Marcus are frightened of jumping, but they manage to convince themselves to take the leap.

It’s a mark of Tris’s coming of age that she’s now teaching the other members of her “Team” to jump from the moving train. At the beginning of the novel, Tris was the reluctant student, summoning the courage to make the jump. This scene essentially shows the “undauntless” characters becoming Dauntless themselves, further reinforcing the absurdity of this society’s categorization of people.



When everyone has landed in the net, they hear a voice, ordering them to surrender. Tris is surprised to find that the voice belongs to Peter—who’s clearly still “awake.” Tris manages to overpower Peter by kicking him in the groin. She points a gun to his head, and asks Peter why he’s not a zombie—Peter says that he was handpicked to be a leader, based on his “skill set.” Tris tries to make Peter tell her where the computers are, and she shoots him in the arm. Peter, wincing in agony, tells Tris that he’ll only tell her the location of the weapons if she helps him escape from the compound safely. Reluctantly, Tris agrees.

Peter is a good “case study” for the corruption of the Dauntless faction. Originally, the Dauntless were supposed to protect the weak, but recently, they’ve begun to glorify power for its own sake. For this reason, Peter is the ideal Dauntless soldier: cold, cruel, strong, and sadistic. Tris is understandably reluctant to form an alliance with someone so odious, but she seems to have no choice—she’s not a torturer, so she has to bring Peter along with her to the computer room.



Peter takes Tris to the eighth floor of headquarters. They pass by the stores and meeting rooms where Tris has spent most of her last few months. The team follows Peter to the eighth floor, where they find a group of soldiers. The soldiers fire at Tris and her friends, but Tris manages to shoot some of them first. Tris notices that one of the soldiers isn't behaving like a zombie—like her, he must be **Divergent**. That soldier motions for Tris and her friends to leave, and they run away.

Tris orders Marcus and Caleb to stay behind with Peter, who's been seriously wounded in the arm, thanks to Tris. For a split second, Tris feels sympathetic for Peter, but then she remembers what he did to Edward.

Andrew and Tris proceed to the computer room. As they draw closer, they see another group of soldiers approaching. Andrew runs away from the computer room, drawing the soldiers away from Tris's final destination. To Tris's horror, Andrew runs toward a hallway that she knows to be a dead-end. There's a loud shot, and Tris sees her father groaning in pain. She whispers, "Dad," and watches as he falls to the ground.

Tris manages to collect her feelings. Instead of staying behind to crouch over her father's body, and then die herself, she runs into the computer room. There, she finds a wall of TV screens, showing images of every corner of Abnegation. She also finds Tobias, sitting in a chair.

CHAPTER 38

Tris has just found Tobias sitting in the computer room. Tobias points a gun at Tris and orders her to drop her weapon. Reluctantly, Tris does so.

Tobias approaches Tris, and Tris sees his finger tightening as he prepares to shoot. Tris ducks, narrowly avoiding a bullet. She kicks Tobias in the ribs, leading him to drop his gun. Tris now points a gun at Tobias's head.

The Divergents are a secret group within but also apart from the factions. Because they must keep their identities hidden, they have no way of communicating or acting as a real "group," but when they can recognize each other, there is an automatic sense of loyalty and solidarity between them. Essentially, they are their own "faction."



Tris continues to think in terms of action and reaction, offense and revenge. For this reason, she can't summon much sympathy for Peter—he hurt Edward, and therefore he deserves to suffer.



Andrew dies protecting his child, just as Tris's mother did. The tragic irony of this is that Tris finally has a guarantee that her parents really do love her—i.e., they haven't come to hate her for leaving Abnegation. But the cost of this guarantee is very high. Tris loses her parents forever, as they both make a very Christian and "abnegating" sacrifice.



Tris is about to face her toughest challenge: she'll be pitted against the person she cares about most.



Tris realizes that Tobias is now under the influence of a new mind control serum that targets even the Divergent.



Tris quickly gains the upper hand over Tobias, proving that she's mastered the art of self-defense as well as psychological resistance.



Tris is about to shoot Tobias when she realizes the truth: she can't force herself to hurt someone she cares so much about. Tris whispers, "Tobias, I know you're in there somewhere." Tris begins to cry—she thinks to herself that she looks pathetic and weak. She remembers what her father used to tell her: "There is power in self-sacrifice."

Here Tris gives up her chance to kill Tobias (as she killed Will, who was also under the influence of mind control, but was apparently less important to Tris than Tobias is). Rather than hurt a person she cares about, she tries a different method of control. Not coincidentally, this "method" is deeply rooted in the Christian theme of self-sacrifice. By endangering herself, Tris gains a surprising amount of power over Tobias.



Tris, now kneeling on the floor, gives her gun to Tobias. She's terrified of losing her life, but knows that she could never hurt Tobias herself. She presses her head to Tobias's chest, so that she can hear his heartbeat.

Even though Tris is risking her own life, she'd rather endanger her own life than hurt Tobias, whom she seems to truly love. This is essentially a dramatic, romantic test of young love—will Tris and Tobias's "two-person faction" be strong enough to conquer the mind control drugs?



CHAPTER 39

Tobias holds a gun to Tris's head, but doesn't shoot. He seems to be wavering, fighting his own mind-control. Tris whispers, "It's me." Suddenly, Tobias kisses Tris, and begins to cry. Tris asks Tobias how he fought his mind control, and Tobias replies, "I don't know, I just heard your voice."

Tris's love for Tobias, and his love for her, is apparently so powerful that it disrupts the mind control drugs, saving both of their lives.



Tris looks around the computer room, amazed by Jeanine's evil ingenuity. She notices one screen that shows soldiers gathering around Peter, Caleb, and Marcus. She yells for Tobias to do something, and Tobias types a complex code into the computer. Then he taps the screen, and the soldiers drop their guns. Tobias has disarmed the Dauntless soldiers: they're no longer under the influence of mind control. Tobias then finds a disc and gives it to Tris. He explains that the disc contains information about the orders that the soldiers have been given.

This scene is significant for a few reasons. First, Tris's actions save Peter's life—despite her hatred for Peter, she acts as his protector. Second, Tris is able to save her friends' lives by (literally) getting them to think for themselves. This is a sign of the importance of Divergence—clear, individual thinking, untainted by faction propaganda. Finally, it's worth noting that Tobias hangs onto the disc—we can guess that this will be a plot point in the sequel to Divergent.



Tobias and Tris leave the computer room, and they see Caleb crouched over Andrew's dead body. Marcus rushes toward Tobias, calling him "Son." Tobias looks very uncomfortable. Tris hisses to Marcus that "The only reason I haven't shot you yet" is because Tobias should get to do it instead.

Here, Tobias and Marcus interact for the first time in years. In spite of the Erudite's corruption, they seem to have been right about Marcus's abusiveness. Although Roth supplies little information about what Marcus actually did, this lack of information only makes Marcus seem like a more sinister character.



The team discusses their next steps. Caleb wonders what Candor will do. Tris replies that the Candors certainly won't side with the Erudite after what's happened. Tris can't help herself from thinking about Will, who she's just killed. She'll never be able to see Christina again—Christina will know right away that Tris killed her boyfriend.

Tris tells Tobias that both of her parents are now dead. Tobias replies that they died bravely, showing their love for Tris. He asks Tris why she didn't shoot him while she had the chance. She replies, "It would have been like shooting myself." Tobias tells Tris that he's in love with her. They kiss.

Tris feels the disc containing information about mind control protocol. She notices Marcus staring at it, and fears that she's "not safe, not yet." As Abnegation medics run into the building and escort Peter to a hospital, Tris notes that Abnegation and Dauntless are now both "broken." Tris, Tobias, and Caleb are factionless now. Tris is no longer "just" Tris the selfless or Tris the brave. She concludes, "I must become more than either."

Tris has killed people today, and she seems to deeply regret her actions, even if they ultimately saved other lives. Tris's pursuit of peace and protection has alienated her from some of her friends, rather than bringing them closer together.



Throughout the book, we've seen ample proof that Tobias and Tris have a lot in common. Here, we get the most eloquent explanation of their connection. Tobias loves Tris, but significantly, Tris doesn't respond, at least not yet. She has feelings for Tobias, but she may not be ready to declare her love for him.



Tris has been struggling to decide on one identity throughout the novel. Here, she arrives at the only logical conclusion left to her: she has no single identity, and the very idea of reducing someone's identity to one of five categories is deeply flawed. Instead of relying on the factions, Tris will have to craft an identity of her own. The book ends on this uncertain but fundamentally optimistic note, as Roth also sets up larger government conflicts as a cliff-hanger for the second work of her trilogy.





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