

#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR  
VERONICA ROTH

# THE TRANSFER

A  
DIVERGENT  
STORY



# THE TRANSFER

A  
DIVERGENT  
STORY

VERONICA ROTH



KATHERINE TEGEN BOOKS  
An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

# Contents

[The Transfer: A Divergent Story](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Books by Veronica Roth](#)

[Back Ads](#)

[Copyright](#)

[About the Publisher](#)

## The Transfer: A Divergent Story

I EMERGE FROM the simulation with a yell. My lip stings, and when I take my hand away from it, there is blood on my fingertips. I must have bitten it during the test.

The Dauntless woman administering my aptitude test—Tori, she said her name was—gives me a strange look as she pulls her black hair back and ties it in a knot. Her arms are marked up and down with ink, flames and rays of light and hawk wings.

“When you were in the simulation . . . were you aware that it wasn’t real?” Tori says to me as she turns off the machine. She sounds and looks casual, but it’s a studied casualness, learned from years of practice. I know it when I see it. I always do.

Suddenly I’m aware of my own heartbeat. This is what my father said would happen. He told me that they would ask me if I was aware during the simulation, and he told me what to say when they did.

“No,” I say. “If I was, do you think I would have chewed through my lip?”

Tori studies me for a few seconds, then bites down on the ring in her lip before she says, “Congratulations. Your result was textbook Abnegation.”

I nod, but the word “Abnegation” feels like a noose wrapped around my throat.

“Aren’t you pleased?” she says.

“My faction members will be.”

“I didn’t ask about them, I asked about you.” Tori’s mouth and eyes turn down at the corners like they bear little weights. Like she’s sad about something. “This is a safe room. You can say whatever you want here.”

I knew what my choices in the aptitude test would add up to before I arrived at school this morning. I chose food over a weapon. I threw myself in the path of the dog to save the little girl. I knew that after I made those

choices, the test would end and I would receive Abnegation as a result. And I don't know that I would have made different choices if my father hadn't coached me, hadn't controlled every part of my aptitude test from afar. So what was I expecting? What faction did I want?

*Any of them. Any of them but Abnegation.*

"I'm pleased," I say firmly. I don't care what she says—this isn't a safe room. There are no safe rooms, no safe truths, no safe secrets to tell.

I can still feel the dog's teeth closing around my arm, tearing my skin. I nod to Tori and start toward the door, but just before I leave, her hand closes around my elbow.

"You're the one who has to live with your choice," she says. "Everyone else will get over it, move on, no matter what you decide. But you never will."

I open the door and walk out.

I return to the cafeteria and sit down at the Abnegation table, among the people who barely know me. My father doesn't permit me to come to most community events. He claims that I'll cause a disruption, that I'll do something to hurt his reputation. I don't care. I'm happier in my room, in the silent house, than surrounded by the deferential, apologetic Abnegation.

The consequence of my constant absence, though, is that the other Abnegation are wary of me, convinced there's something wrong with me, that I'm ill or immoral or strange. Even those willing to nod at me in greeting don't quite meet my eyes.

I sit with my hands clenching my knees, watching the other tables, while the other students finish their aptitude tests. The Erudite table is covered in reading material, but they aren't all studying—they're just making a show of it, trading conversation instead of ideas, their eyes snapping back to the words every time they think someone's watching them. The Candor are talking loudly, as always. The Amity are laughing, smiling, pulling food from their pockets and passing it around. The Dauntless are raucous and loud, slung over the tables and chairs, leaning on one another and poking one another and teasing.

I wanted any other faction. Any other faction but mine, where everyone has already decided that I am not worth their attention.

Finally an Erudite woman enters the cafeteria and holds up a hand for silence. The Abnegation and Erudite quiet down right away, but it takes her shouting “Quiet!” for the Dauntless, Amity, and Candor to notice her.

“The aptitude tests are now finished,” she says. “Remember that you are not permitted to discuss your results with *anyone*, not even your friends or family. The Choosing Ceremony will be tomorrow evening at the Hub. Plan to arrive at least ten minutes before it begins. You are dismissed.”

Everyone rushes toward the doors except our table, where we wait for everyone else to leave before we even get to our feet. I know the path my fellow Abnegation will take out of here, down the hallway and out the front doors to the bus stop. They could be there for over an hour letting other people get on in front of them. I don’t think I can bear any more of this silence.

Instead of following them, I slip out a side door and into an alley next to the school. I’ve taken this route before, but usually I creep along slowly, not wanting to be seen or heard. Today all I want to do is run.

I sprint to the end of the alley and into the empty street, leaping over a sinkhole in the pavement. My loose Abnegation jacket snaps in the wind, and I peel it from my shoulders, letting it trail behind me like a flag and then letting it go. I push the sleeves of my shirt up to my elbows as I run, slowing to a jog when my body can no longer stand the sprint. It feels like the entire city is rushing past me in a blur, the buildings blending together. I hear the slap of my shoes like the sound is separate from me.

Finally I have to stop, my muscles burning. I’m in the factionless wasteland that lies between the Abnegation sector and Erudite headquarters, Candor headquarters, and our common places. At every faction meeting, our leaders, usually speaking through my father, urge us not to be afraid of the factionless, to treat them like human beings instead of broken, lost creatures. But it never occurred to me to be afraid of them.

I move to the sidewalk so I can look through the windows of the buildings. Most of the time all I see is old furniture, every room bare, bits of trash on the floor. When most of the city’s residents left—as they must have, since our current population doesn’t fill every building—they must not have left in a hurry, because the spaces they occupied are so clean. Nothing of interest remains.

When I pass one of the buildings on the corner, though, I see something inside. The room just beyond the window is as bare as any of the others I've walked by, but past the doorway inside I can see a single ember, a lit coal.

I frown and pause in front of the window to see if it will open. At first it won't budge, and then I wiggle it back and forth, and it springs upward. I push my torso through first, and then my legs, toppling to the ground inside in a heap of limbs. My elbows sting as they scrape the floor.

The building smells like cooked food and smoke and sweat. I inch toward the ember, listening for voices that will warn me of a factionless presence here, but there's only silence.

In the next room, the windows are blacked out by paint and dirt, but a little daylight makes it through them, so I can see that there are curled pallets scattered on the floor all over the room, and old cans with bits of dried food stuck inside them. In the center of the room is a small charcoal grill. Most of the coals are white, their fuel spent, but one is still lit, suggesting that whoever was here was here recently. And judging by the smell and the abundance of old cans and blankets, there were quite a few of them.

I was always taught that the factionless lived without community, isolated from one another. Now, looking at this place, I wonder why I ever believed it. What would be stopping them from forming groups, just like we have? It's in our nature.

"What are you doing here?" a voice demands, and it travels through me like an electric shock. I wheel around and see a smudged, sallow-faced man in the next room, wiping his hands on a ragged towel.

"I was just . . ." I look at the grill. "I saw fire. That's all."

"Oh." The man tucks the corner of the towel into his back pocket. He wears black Candor pants, patched with blue Erudite fabric, and a gray Abnegation shirt, the same as the one I'm wearing. He's lean as a rail, but he looks strong. Strong enough to hurt me, but I don't think he will.

"Thanks, I guess," he says. "Nothing's on fire here, though."

"I can see that," I say. "What is this place?"

"It's my house," he says with a cold smile. He's missing one of his teeth. "I didn't know I would be having guests, so I didn't bother to tidy up."

I look from him to the scattered cans. "You must toss and turn a lot, to require so many blankets."

“Never met a Stiff who pried so much into other people’s business,” he says. He moves closer to me and frowns. “You look a little familiar.”

I know I can’t have met him before, not where I live, surrounded by identical houses in the most monotonous neighborhood in the city, surrounded by people in identical gray clothing with identical short hair. Then it occurs to me: hidden as my father tries to keep me, he’s still the leader of the council, one of the most prominent people in our city, and I still resemble him.

“I’m sorry to have bothered you,” I say in my best Abnegation voice. “I’ll be going now.”

“I do know you,” the man says. “You’re Evelyn Eaton’s son, aren’t you?”

I stiffen at her name. It’s been years since I heard it, because my father won’t speak it, won’t even acknowledge it if he hears it. To be connected to her again, even just in facial resemblance, feels strange, like putting on an old piece of clothing that doesn’t quite fit anymore.

“How did you know her?” He must have known her well, to see her in my face, which is paler than hers, the eyes blue instead of dark brown. Most people didn’t look closely enough to see all the things we had in common: our long fingers, our hooked noses, our straight, frowned eyebrows.

He hesitates a little. “She volunteered with the Abnegation sometimes. Handing out food and blankets and clothes. Had a memorable face. Plus, she was married to a council leader. Didn’t everyone know her?”

Sometimes I know people are lying just because of the way the words feel when they press into me, uncomfortable and wrong, the way an Erudite feels when she reads a grammatically incorrect sentence. However he knew my mother, it’s not because she handed him a can of soup once. But I’m so thirsty to hear more about her that I don’t press the issue.

“She died, did you know?” I say. “Years ago.”

“No, I didn’t know.” His mouth slants a little at one corner. “I’m sorry to hear that.”

I feel strange, standing in this dank place that smells like live bodies and smoke, among these empty cans that suggest poverty and the failure to fit in. But there is something appealing about it here too, a freedom, a refusal to belong to these arbitrary categories we’ve made for ourselves.

“Your Choosing must be coming up tomorrow, for you to look so worried,” the man says. “What faction did you get?”

“I’m not supposed to tell anyone,” I say automatically.

“I’m not anyone,” he says. “I’m nobody. That’s what being factionless is.”

I still don’t say anything. The prohibition against sharing my aptitude test result, or any of my other secrets, is set firmly in the mold that makes me and remakes me daily. It’s impossible to change now.

“Ah, a rule follower,” he says, like he’s disappointed. “Your mother said to me once that she felt like inertia had carried her to Abnegation. It was the path of least resistance.” He shrugs. “Trust me when I tell you, Eaton boy, that resisting is worth doing.”

I feel a rush of anger. He shouldn’t be telling me about my mother like she belongs to him and not to me, shouldn’t be making me question everything I remember about her just because she may or may not have served him food once. He shouldn’t be telling me anything at all—he’s nobody, factionless, separate, nothing.

“Yeah?” I say. “Look where resisting got you. Living out of cans in broken-down buildings. Doesn’t sound so great to me.” I start toward the doorway the man emerged from. I know I’ll find an alley door somewhere back there; I don’t care where as long as I can get out of here quickly.

I pick a path across the floor, careful not to step on any of the blankets. When I reach the hallway, the man says, “I’d rather eat out of a can than be strangled by a faction.”

I don’t look back.

When I get home, I sit on the front step and take deep breaths of the cool spring air for a few minutes.

My mother was the one who taught me to steal moments like those, moments of freedom, though she didn’t know it. I watched her take them, slipping out the door after dark when my father was asleep, creeping back home when sunlight was just appearing behind the buildings. She took them even when she was with us, standing over the sink with her eyes closed, so distant from the present that she didn’t even hear me when I spoke to her.

But I learned something else from watching her too, which is that the free moments always have to end.

I get up, brushing flecks of cement from my gray slacks, and push the door open. My father sits in the easy chair in the living room, surrounded by paperwork. I pull up straight, tall, so that he can't scold me for slouching. I move toward the stairs. Maybe he will let me go to my room unnoticed.

"Tell me about your aptitude test," he says, and he points at the sofa for me to sit.

I cross the room, stepping carefully over a stack of papers on the carpet, and sit where he points, right on the edge of the cushion so I can stand up quickly.

"Well?" He removes his glasses and looks at me expectantly. I hear tension in his voice, the kind that only develops after a difficult day at work. I should be careful. "What was your result?"

I don't even think about refusing to tell him. "Abnegation."

"And nothing else?"

I frown. "No, of course not."

"Don't give me that look," he says, and my frown disappears. "Nothing strange happened with your test?"

During my test, I knew where I was—I knew that while I felt like I was standing in the cafeteria of my secondary school, I was actually lying prostrate on a chair in the aptitude test room, my body connected to a machine by a series of wires. That was strange. But I don't want to talk to him about it now, not when I can see the stress brewing inside him like a storm.

"No," I say.

"Don't lie to me," he says, and he seizes my arm, his fingers tight like a vise. I don't look at him.

"I'm not," I say. "I got Abnegation, just as expected. The woman barely looked at me on my way out of the room. I promise."

He releases me. My skin pulses from where he gripped it.

"Good," he says. "I'm sure you have some thinking to do. You should go to your room."

"Yes, sir."

I get up and cross the room again, relieved.

"Oh," he says. "Some of my fellow council members are coming over tonight, so you should eat dinner early."

“Yes, sir.”

Before the sun goes down, I snatch food from the cupboards and the refrigerator: two dinner rolls and raw carrots with the greens still attached, a hunk of cheese and an apple, leftover chicken without any seasoning on it. The food all tastes the same, like dust and paste. I keep my eyes fixed on the door so I don’t collide with my father’s coworkers. He wouldn’t like it if I was still down here when they came.

I am finishing off a glass of water when the first council member appears on the doorstep, and I hurry through the living room before my father reaches the door. He waits with his hand on the knob, his eyebrows raised at me as I slip around the banister. He points up the stairs and I climb them, fast, as he opens the door.

“Hello, Marcus.” I recognize the voice as Andrew Prior’s. He’s one of my father’s closest friends at work, which means nothing, because no one *really* knows my father. Not even me.

From the top of the stairs I look down at Andrew. He’s wiping his shoes on the mat. I see him and his family sometimes, a perfect Abnegation unit, Natalie and Andrew, and the son and daughter—not twins, but both two years younger than I am in school—all walking sedately down the sidewalk and bobbing their heads at passersby. Natalie organizes all the factionless volunteer efforts among the Abnegation—my mother must have known her, though she rarely attended Abnegation social events, preferring to keep her secrets like I keep mine, hidden away in this house.

Andrew meets my eyes, and I rush down the hallway to my bedroom, closing the door behind me.

To all appearances, my room is as sparse and clean as every other Abnegation room. My gray sheets and blankets are tucked tightly around the thin mattress, and my schoolbooks are stacked in a perfect tower on my plywood desk. A small dresser that contains several identical sets of clothing stands next to the small window, which lets in only the barest sliver of sunlight in the evenings. Through it I can see the house next door, which is just the same as the one I’m in, except five feet to the east.

I know how inertia carried my mother to Abnegation, if indeed that man was speaking the truth about what she’d told him. I can see it happening to

me, too, tomorrow when I stand among the bowls of faction elements with a knife in my hand. There are four factions I don't know or trust, with practices I don't understand, and only one that is familiar, predictable, comprehensible. If choosing Abnegation won't lead me to a life of ecstatic happiness, at least it will lead me to a comfortable place.

I sit on the edge of the bed. *No, it won't*, I think, and then I swallow the thought down, because I know where it comes from: the childish part of me that is afraid of the man holding court in the living room. The man whose knuckles I know better than his embrace.

I make sure the door is closed and wedge the desk chair under the knob just in case. Then I crouch next to the bed and reach under it to the trunk I keep there.

My mother gave it to me when I was young, and told my father it was for spare blankets, that she had found it in an alley somewhere. But when she put it in my room, she didn't fill it with spare blankets. She closed my door and touched her fingers to her lips and set it on my bed to open it.

Inside the unlocked trunk was a blue sculpture. It looked like falling water, but it was really glass, perfectly clear, polished, flawless.

"What does it do?" I asked her at the time.

"It doesn't do anything obvious," she said, and she smiled, but the smile was tight, like she was afraid of something. "But it might be able to do something in here." She tapped her chest, right over the sternum. "Beautiful things sometimes do."

Since then I have filled the trunk with objects that others would call useless: old spectacles without glass in them, fragments of discarded motherboards, spark plugs, stripped wires, the broken neck of a green bottle, a rusted knife blade. I don't know if my mother would have called them beautiful, or even if I would, but each of them struck me the same way that sculpture did, as secret things, and valuable ones, if only because they were so overlooked.

Instead of thinking about my aptitude test result, I pick up each object and turn it in my hands so I've memorized every part of every one.

I wake with a start to Marcus's footsteps in the hallway just outside the bedroom. I'm lying on the bed with the objects strewn on the mattress

around me. His footsteps are slowing down as he comes closer to the door, and I pick up the spark plugs and motherboard pieces and wires and throw them back into the trunk and lock it, stowing the key in my pocket. I realize at the last second, as the doorknob starts to move, that the sculpture is still out, so I shove it under the pillow and slide the trunk under the bed.

Then I dive toward the chair and pull it from under the knob so my father can enter.

When he does, he eyes the chair in my hands with suspicion.

“What was that doing over here?” he says. “Are you trying to keep me out?”

“No, sir.”

“That’s the second time you’ve lied to me today,” Marcus says. “I didn’t raise my son to be a liar.”

“I—” I can’t think of a single thing to say, so I just close my mouth and carry the chair back to my desk where it belongs, right behind the perfect stack of schoolbooks.

“What were you doing in here that you didn’t want me to see?”

I clutch the back of the chair, hard, and stare at my books.

“Nothing,” I say quietly.

“That’s three lies,” he says, and his voice is low but hard as flint. He starts toward me, and I back up instinctively. But instead of reaching for me, he bends down and pulls the trunk from beneath the bed, then tries the lid. It doesn’t budge.

Fear slides into my gut like a blade. I pinch the hem of my shirt, but I can’t feel my fingertips.

“Your mother claimed this was for blankets,” he says. “Said you got cold at night. But what I’ve always wondered is, if it still has blankets in it, why do you keep it locked?”

He holds out his hand, palm up, and raises his eyebrows at me. I know what he wants—the key. And I have to give it to him, because he can see when I’m lying; he can see everything about me. I reach into my pocket, then drop the key in his hand. Now I can’t feel my palms, and the breathing is starting, the shallow breathing that always comes when I know he’s about to explode.

I close my eyes as he opens the trunk.

“What is this?” His hand moves through the treasured objects carelessly, scattering them to the left and right. He takes them out one by one and thrusts them toward me. “What do you need with *this*, or *this* . . . !”

I flinch, over and over again, and don’t have an answer. I don’t need them. I don’t need any of them.

“This is *rank* with self-indulgence!” he shouts, and he shoves the trunk off the edge of the bed so its contents scatter all over the floor. “It poisons this house with selfishness!”

I can’t feel my face, either.

His hands collide with my chest. I stumble back and hit the dresser. Then he draws his hand back by his face to hit me, and I say, my throat tight with fear, “The Choosing Ceremony, Dad!”

He pauses with his hand raised, and I *cower*, shrinking back against the dresser, my eyes too blurry to see out of. He usually tries not to bruise my face, especially for days like tomorrow, when so many people will be staring at me, watching me choose.

He lowers his hand, and for a second I think the violence is over, the anger stalled. But then he says, “Fine. Stay here.”

I sag against the dresser. I know better than to think he’ll leave and mull things over and come back apologizing. He never does that.

He will return with a belt, and the stripes he carves into my back will be easily hidden by a shirt and an obedient Abnegation expression.

I turn around, a shudder claiming my body. I clutch the edge of the dresser and wait.

That night I sleep on my stomach, pain biting each thought, with my broken possessions on the floor around me. After he hit me until I had to stuff my fist into my mouth to muffle a scream, he stomped on each object until it was broken or dented beyond recognition, then threw the trunk into the wall so the lid broke from the hinges.

The thought surfaces: *If you choose Abnegation, you will never get away from him.*

I push my face into my pillow.

But I’m not strong enough to resist this Abnegation-inertia, this fear that drives me down the path my father has set for me.

The next morning I take a cold shower, not to conserve resources as the Abnegation instruct, but because it numbs my back. I dress slowly in my loose, plain Abnegation clothes, and stand in front of the hallway mirror to cut my hair.

“Let me,” my father says from the end of the hallway. “It’s your Choosing Day, after all.”

I set the clippers down on the ledge created by the sliding panel and try to straighten up. He stands behind me, and I avert my eyes as the clippers start to buzz. There’s only one guard for the blade, only one length of hair acceptable for an Abnegation male. I wince as his fingers stabilize my head, and hope he doesn’t see it, doesn’t see how even his slightest touch terrifies me.

“You know what to expect,” he says. He covers the top of my ear with one hand as he drags the clippers over the side of my head. Today he’s trying to protect my ear from getting nicked by clippers, and yesterday he took a belt to me. The thought feels like poison working through me. It’s almost funny. I almost want to laugh.

“You’ll stand in your place; when your name is called, you’ll go forward to get your knife. Then you’ll cut yourself and drop the blood into the right bowl.” Our eyes meet in the mirror, and he presses his mouth into a near-smile. He touches my shoulder, and I realize that we are about the same height now, about the same size, though I still feel so much smaller.

Then he adds gently, “The knife will only hurt for a moment. Then your choice will be made, and it will all be over.”

I wonder if he even remembers what happened yesterday, or if he’s already shoved it into a separate compartment in his mind, keeping his monster half separate from his father half. But I don’t have those compartments, and I can see all his identities layered over one another, monster and father and man and council leader and widower.

And suddenly my heart is pounding so hard, my face is so hot, I can barely stand it.

“Don’t worry about me handling the pain,” I say. “I’ve had a lot of practice.”

For a second his eyes are like daggers in the mirror, and my strong anger is gone, replaced by familiar fear. But all he does is switch off the clippers and set them on the ledge and walk down the stairs, leaving me to sweep up

the trimmed hair, to brush it from my shoulders and neck, to put the clippers away in their drawer in the bathroom.

Then I go back into my room and stare at the broken objects on the floor. Carefully, I gather them into a pile and put them in the wastebasket next to my desk, piece by piece.

Wincing, I come to my feet. My legs are shaking.

In that moment, staring at the bare life I've made for myself here, at the destroyed remnants of what little I had, I think, *I have to get out.*

It's a strong thought. I feel its strength ringing inside me like the toll of a bell, so I think it again. *I have to get out.*

I walk toward the bed and slide my hand under the pillow, where my mother's sculpture is still safe, still blue and gleaming with morning light. I put it on my desk, next to the stack of books, and leave my bedroom, closing the door behind me.

Downstairs, I'm too nervous to eat, but I stuff a piece of toast into my mouth anyway so my father won't ask me any questions. I shouldn't worry. Now he's pretending I don't exist, pretending I'm not flinching every time I have to bend down to pick something up.

*I have to get out.* It's a chant now, a mantra, the only thing I have left to hold on to.

He finishes reading the news the Erudite release every morning, and I finish washing my own dishes, and we walk out of the house together without speaking. We walk down the sidewalk, and he greets our neighbors with a smile, and everything is always in perfect order for Marcus Eaton, except for his son. Except for me; I am not in order, I am in constant disarray.

But today, I'm glad for that.

We get on the bus and stand in the aisle to let others sit down around us, the perfect picture of Abnegation deference. I watch the others get on, Candor boys and girls with loud mouths, Erudite with studious stares. I watch the other Abnegation rise from their seats to give them away. Everyone is going to the same place today—the Hub, a black pillar in the distance, its two prongs stabbing the sky.

When we get there, my father puts a hand on my shoulder as we walk to the entrance, sending shocks of pain through my body.

*I have to get out.*

It's a desperate thought, and the pain only spurs it on with each footstep as I walk the stairs to the Choosing Ceremony floor. I struggle for air, but it's not because of my aching legs; it's because of my weak heart, growing stronger with each passing second. Beside me, Marcus wipes beads of sweat from his forehead, and all the other Abnegation close their lips to keep from breathing too loudly, lest they appear to be complaining.

I lift my eyes to the stairs ahead of me, and I am on fire with this thought, this need, this chance to escape.

We reach the right floor, and everyone pauses to catch their breath before entering. The room is dim, the windows blocked off, the seats arranged around the circle of bowls that hold glass and water and stones and coal and earth. I find my place in line, between an Abnegation girl and an Amity boy. Marcus stands in front of me.

"You know what to do," he says, and it's more like he's telling himself than me. "You know what the right choice is. I know you do."

I just stare somewhere south of his eyes.

"I'll see you soon," he says.

He moves toward the Abnegation section and sits in the front row, with some of the other council leaders. Gradually people fill the room, those who are about to choose standing in a square at the edge, those watching sitting in the chairs in the middle. The doors close, and there's a moment of quiet as the council representative from Dauntless moves to the podium. Max is his name. He wraps his fingers around the edge of the podium, and I can see, even from here, that his knuckles are bruised.

Do they learn to fight in Dauntless? They must.

"Welcome to the Choosing Ceremony," Max says, his deep voice filling the room easily. He doesn't need the microphone; his voice is loud enough and strong enough to penetrate my skull and wrap around my brain. "Today you will choose your factions. Until this point you have followed your parents' paths, your parents' rules. Today you will find your own path, make your own rules."

I can almost see my father pressing his lips together with disdain at such a typical Dauntless speech. I know his habits so well, I almost do it myself, though I don't share the feeling. I have no particular opinions about Dauntless.

“A long time ago our ancestors realized that each of us, each individual, was responsible for the evil that exists in the world. But they didn’t agree on exactly what that evil was,” Max says. “Some said that it was dishonesty. . . .”

I think of the lies I have told, year after year, about this bruise or that cut, the lies of omission I told when I kept Marcus’s secrets.

“Some said that it was ignorance, some aggression. . . .”

I think of the peace of the Amity orchards, the freedom I would find there from violence and cruelty.

“Some said selfishness was the cause.”

*This is for your own good* is what Marcus said before the first blow fell. As if hitting me was an act of self-sacrifice. As if it hurt him to do it. Well, I didn’t see *him* limping around the kitchen this morning.

“And the last group said that it was cowardice that was to blame.”

A few hoots rise up from the Dauntless section, and the rest of the Dauntless laugh. I think of the fear swallowing me last night until I couldn’t feel, until I couldn’t breathe. I think of the years that have ground me into dust beneath my father’s heel.

“That is how we came by our factions: Candor, Erudite, Amity, Abnegation, and Dauntless.” Max smiles. “In them we find administrators and teachers and counselors and leaders and protectors. In them we find our sense of belonging, our sense of community, our very lives.” He clears his throat. “Enough of that. Let’s get to it. Come forward and get your knife, then make your choice. First up, Zellner, Gregory.”

It seems fitting that pain should follow me from my old life into my new one, with the knife digging into my palm. Still, even this morning I didn’t know which faction I would choose as a haven. Gregory Zellner holds his bleeding hand over the bowl of dirt, to choose Amity.

Amity seems like the obvious choice for a haven, with its peaceful life, its sweet-smelling orchards, its smiling community. In Amity I would find the kind of acceptance I’ve craved my entire life, and maybe, over time, it would teach me to feel steady in myself, comfortable with who I am.

But as I look at the people sitting in that section, in their reds and yellows, I see only whole, healed people, capable of cheering one another, capable of supporting one another. They are too perfect, too kind, for someone like me to be driven into their arms by rage and fear.

The ceremony is moving too fast. “Rogers, Helena.”

She chooses Candor.

I know what happens in Candor’s initiation. I heard whispers about it in school one day. There, I would have to expose every secret, dig it out with my fingernails. I would have to flay myself alive to join Candor. No, I can’t do that.

“Lovelace, Frederick.”

Frederick Lovelace, dressed all in blue, cuts his palm and lets his blood drip into the Erudite water, turning it a deeper shade of pink. I learn easily enough for Erudite, but I know myself well enough to understand that I am too volatile, too emotional, for a place like that. It would strangle me, and what I want is to be free, not to be shuffled into yet another prison.

It takes no time at all for the name of the Abnegation girl beside me to be called. “Erasmus, Anne.”

Anne—another one who never found more than a few words to speak to me—stumbles forward and walks the aisle to Max’s podium. She accepts her knife with shaking hands and cuts her palm and holds her hand over the Abnegation bowl. It’s easy for her. She doesn’t have anything to run from, just a welcoming, kind community to rejoin. And besides, no one from Abnegation has transferred in years. It’s the most loyal faction, in terms of Choosing Ceremony statistics.

“Eaton, Tobias.”

I don’t feel nervous as I walk down the aisle to the bowls, though I still haven’t chosen my place. Max passes me the knife, and I wrap my fingers around the handle. It’s smooth and cool, the blade clean. A new knife for each person, and a new choice.

As I walk to the center of the room, to the center of the bowls, I pass Tori, the woman who administered my aptitude test. *You’re the one who has to live with your choice*, she said. Her hair is pulled back, and I can see a tattoo creeping over her collarbone, toward her throat. Her eyes touch mine with peculiar force, and I stare back, unflinching, as I take my place among the bowls.

What choice can I live with? Not Erudite, or Candor. Not Abnegation, the place I am trying to get away from. Not even Amity, where I am too broken to belong.

The truth is, I want my choice to drive a knife right through my father's heart, to pierce him with as much pain and embarrassment and disappointment as possible.

There is only one choice that can do that.

I look at him, and he nods, and I cut deep into my own palm, so deep the pain brings tears to my eyes. I blink them away and curl my hand into a fist to let the blood collect there. His eyes are like my eyes, such a dark blue that in light like this they always look black, just pits in his skull. My back throbs and pinches, my collared shirt scratching at the raw skin there, the skin he wore into with that belt.

I open my palm over the coals. I feel like they're burning in my stomach, filling me to the brim with fire and smoke.

I am free.

I don't hear the cheers of the Dauntless; all I hear is ringing.

My new faction is like a many-armed creature, stretching toward me. I move toward it, and I don't dare to look back to see my father's face. Hands slap my arms, commending me on my choice, and I move to the rear of the group, blood wrapping around my fingers.

I stand with the other initiates, next to a black-haired Erudite boy who appraises and dismisses me with one glance. I must not look like much, in my Abnegation grays, tall and scrawny after last year's growth spurt. The cut in my hand is gushing, the blood spilling onto the floor and running down my wrist. I dug too deep with the knife.

As the last of my peers choose, I pinch the hem of my loose Abnegation shirt between my fingers and rip. I tear a strip of fabric from the front and wrap it around my hand to stop the bleeding. I won't need these clothes anymore.

The Dauntless sitting in front of us come to their feet as soon as the last person chooses, and they rush toward the doors, carrying me with them. I turn back right before the doors, unable to stop myself, and I see my father sitting in the front row still, a few other Abnegation huddled around him. He looks stunned.

I smirk a little. I did it, *I* put that expression on his face. I am not the perfect Abnegation child, doomed to be swallowed whole by the system

and dissolved into obscurity. Instead, I am the first Abnegation-Dauntless transfer in more than a decade.

I turn and run to catch up with the others, not wanting to be left behind. Before I exit the room, I unbutton my ripped long-sleeved shirt and let it fall on the ground. The gray T-shirt I am wearing beneath it is still oversized, but it's darker, blends in better with the black Dauntless clothes.

They storm down the stairs, flinging doors open, laughing, shouting. I feel burning in my back and shoulders and lungs and legs, and suddenly I am unsure of this choice I've made, of these people I've claimed. They are so loud and so wild. Can I possibly make a place for myself among them? I don't know.

I guess I don't have a choice.

I push my way through the group, searching for my fellow initiates, but they seem to have disappeared. I move to the side of the group, hoping to get a glimpse of where we're headed, and I see the train tracks suspended over the street in front of us, in a cage of latticed wood and metal. The Dauntless climb the stairs and spill out onto the train platform. At the foot of the stairs, the crowd is so dense that I can't find a way to get in, but I know if I don't climb the stairs soon, I might miss the train, so I decide to push my way in. I have to clench my teeth to keep myself from apologizing as I elbow people aside, and the momentum of the crowd presses me up the steps.

"You're not a bad runner," Tori says as she sidles up to me on the platform. "At least for an Abnegation kid."

"Thanks," I say.

"You know what's going to happen next, right?" She turns and points at a light in the distance, fixed to the front of an oncoming train. "It's not going to stop. It's just going to slow down a little. And if you don't make it on, that's it for you. Factionless. It's that easy to get kicked out."

I nod. I'm not surprised that the trial of initiation has already begun, that it began the second we left the Choosing Ceremony. And I'm not surprised that the Dauntless expect me to prove myself either. I watch the train come closer—I can hear it now, whistling on the tracks.

She grins at me. "You're going to do just fine here, aren't you?"

"What makes you say that?"

She shrugs. "You strike me as someone who's ready to fight, that's all."

The train thunders toward us, and the Dauntless start piling on. Tori runs toward the edge, and I follow her, copying her stance and her movements as she prepares to jump. She grabs a handle at the edge of the door and swings herself inside, so I do the same thing, fumbling at first for my grip and then yanking myself in.

But I'm unprepared for the turning of the train, and I stumble, smacking my face against the metal wall. I grab my aching nose.

"Smooth," one of the Dauntless inside says. He's younger than Tori, with dark skin and an easy smile.

"Finesse is for Erudite show-offs," Tori says. "He made it on the train, Amar, that's what counts."

"He's supposed to be in the other car, though. With the other initiates," Amar says. He eyes me, but not the way the Erudite transfer did a few minutes ago. He seems more curious than anything else, like I'm an oddity he needs to examine carefully in order to understand it. "If he's friends with you, I guess it's okay. What's your name, Stiff?"

The name is in my mouth the second he asks me the question, and I am about to answer like I always do, that I am Tobias Eaton. It should be natural, but in that moment I can't bear to say my name out loud, not here, among the people I hoped would be my new friends, my new family. I can't—I *won't*—be Marcus Eaton's son anymore.

"You can call me 'Stiff' for all I care," I say, trying out the cutting Dauntless banter I've only listened to across hallways and classrooms until now. Wind rushes into the train car as it picks up speed, and it's *loud*, roaring in my ears.

Tori gives me a strange look, and for a moment I am afraid that she's going to tell Amar my name, which I'm sure she remembers from my aptitude test. But she just nods a little, and relieved, I turn toward the open doorway, my hand still on the handle.

It never occurred to me before that I could refuse to give my name, or that I could give a false one, construct a new identity for myself. I'm free here, free to snap at people and free to refuse them and free even to lie.

I see the street between the wooden beams that support the train tracks, just a story beneath us. But up ahead, the old tracks give way to new ones, and the platforms go higher, wrapping around the roofs of buildings. The climb happens gradually, so I wouldn't have noticed it was happening if I

hadn't been staring at the ground as we traveled farther and farther away from it, farther and farther into the sky.

Fear makes my legs go weak, so I back away from the doorway and sink into a crouch by one wall as I wait to get to wherever we're going.

I am still in that position—crouched by the wall, my head in my hands—when Amar nudges me with his foot.

“Get up, Stiff,” he says, not unkindly. “It’s almost time to jump.”

“Jump?” I say.

“Yeah.” He smirks. “This train stops for no one.”

I press myself up. The fabric I wrapped around my hand is soaked through with red. Tori stands right behind me and pushes me toward the doorway.

“Let the initiate off first!” she shouts.

“What are you doing?” I demand, scowling at her.

“I’m doing you a favor!” she answers, and she shoves me toward the opening again. The other Dauntless step back for me, each one of them grinning like I’m a meal. I shuffle toward the edge, grabbing the handle so hard the tips of my fingers start to go numb. I see where I’m supposed to jump—up ahead, the tracks hug the roof of a building and then turn. The gap looks small from here, but as the train gets closer, it seems larger and larger, and my imminent death seems more and more likely.

My entire body shakes as the Dauntless in the cars ahead of us make the jump. None of them miss the roof, but that doesn’t mean I won’t be the first. I pry my fingers from the handle and stare at the rooftop and push off as hard as I can.

The impact shudders through me, and I fall forward onto my hands and knees, the gravel on the roof digging into my wounded palm. I stare at my fingers. I feel like time just lurched forward, the actual jump disappearing from sight and memory.

“Damn,” someone behind me says. “I was hoping we would get to scrape some Stiff pancake off the pavement later.”

I glare at the ground and sit back on my heels. The roof is tilting and bobbing beneath me—I didn’t know a person could be dizzy with fear.

Still, I know I just passed two initiation tests: I got on a moving train, and I made it to the roof. Now the question is, how do the Dauntless get *off* the roof?

A moment later Amar steps up on the ledge, and I have my answer:

They're going to make us jump.

I close my eyes and pretend that I'm not here, kneeling on this gravel with these insane ink-marked people surrounding me. I came here to escape, but this is not an escape, it's just a different kind of torture and it's too late to escape it. My only hope, then, is to survive it.

"Welcome to Dauntless!" Amar shouts. "Where you either face your fears and try not to die in the process, or you leave a coward. We've got a record low of faction transfers this year, unsurprisingly."

The Dauntless around Amar punch the air and whoop, bearing the fact that no one wants to join them as a banner of pride.

"The only way to get into the Dauntless compound from this rooftop is to jump off this ledge," Amar says, opening his arms wide to indicate the empty space around him. He tilts back on his heels and waves his arms around, like he's about to fall, then catches himself and grins. I pull a deep breath in through my nose and hold it.

"As usual, I offer the opportunity to go first to our initiates, Dauntless-born or not." He hops down from the ledge and gestures to it, eyebrows raised.

The cluster of young Dauntless near the roof exchange looks. Standing off to the side are the Erudite boy from before, an Amity girl, two Candor boys, and a Candor girl. There are only six of us.

One of the Dauntless steps up, a dark-skinned boy who beckons cheers from his friends with his hands.

"Go, Zeke!" one of the girls shouts.

Zeke hops onto the ledge but misjudges the jump and tips forward right away, losing his balance. He yells something unintelligible and disappears. The Candor girl nearby gasps, covering her mouth with one hand, but Zeke's Dauntless friends burst into laughter. I don't think that was the dramatic, heroic moment he had in mind.

Amar, grinning, gestures to the ledge again. The Dauntless-borns line up behind it, and so do the Erudite boy and the Amity girl. I know I have to join them, I have to jump, it doesn't matter how I feel about it. I move

toward the line, stiff like my joints are rusted bolts. Amar looks at his watch and cues each jumper at thirty-second intervals.

The line is shrinking, dissolving.

Suddenly it's gone, and I am all that is left. I step onto the ledge and wait for Amar's cue. The sun is setting behind the buildings in the distance, their jagged line unfamiliar from this angle. The light glows gold near the horizon, and wind rushes up the side of the building, lifting my clothes away from my body.

"Go ahead," Amar says.

I close my eyes, and I'm frozen; I can't even push myself off the roof. All I can do is tilt and fall. My stomach drops and my limbs fumble in the air for something, anything to hold on to, but there is nothing, only the drop, the air, the frantic search for the ground.

Then I hit a net.

It curls around me, wrapping me in strong threads. Hands beckon to me from the edge. I hook my fingers in the net and pull myself toward them. I land on my feet on a wooden platform, and a man with dark brown skin and bruised knuckles grins at me. Max.

"The Stiff!" He claps me on the back, making me flinch. "Nice to see you made it this far. Go join your fellow initiates. Amar will be down in a second, I'm sure."

Behind him is a dark tunnel with rock walls. The Dauntless compound is underground—I assumed it would be dangling from a high building from a series of flimsy ropes, a manifestation of my worst nightmares.

I try to walk down the steps and over to the other transfers. My legs seem to be working again. The Amity girl smiles at me. "That was surprisingly fun," she says. "I'm Mia. You okay?"

"It looks like he's trying not to throw up," one of the Candor boys says.

"Just let it happen, man," the other Candor boy adds. "We'd love to see a show."

My response comes out of nowhere. "Shut up," I snap.

To my surprise, they do. I guess they haven't been told to shut up by many of the Abnegation.

A few seconds later, I see Amar rolling over the edge of the net. He descends the steps, looking wild and rumpled and ready for the next insane

stunt. He beckons all the initiates closer to him, and we gather at the opening of the yawning tunnel in a semicircle.

Amar brings his hands together in front of him.

“My name is Amar,” he says. “I’m your initiation instructor. I grew up here, and three years ago, I passed initiation with flying colors, which means I get to be in charge of the newcomers for as long as I want. Lucky you.

“Dauntless-borns and transfers do most physical training separately, so that the Dauntless-borns don’t break the transfers in half right away—” At this, the Dauntless-borns on the other side of the semicircle grin. “But we’re trying something different this year. The Dauntless leaders and I want to see if knowing your fears before you begin training will better prepare you for the rest of initiation. So before we even let you into the dining hall to have dinner, we’re going to do some self-discovery. Follow me.”

“What if I don’t want to discover myself?” Zeke asks.

All Amar has to do is look at him for him to sink back into the group of Dauntless-borns again. Amar is like no one I’ve ever met—affable one minute and stern the next, and sometimes both at once.

He leads the way down the tunnel, then stops at a door built into the wall and shoves it open with his shoulder. We follow him into a dank room with a giant window in the back wall. Above us the fluorescent lights flicker and twitch, and Amar busies himself at a machine that looks a lot like the one used to administer my aptitude test. I hear a dripping sound—the ceiling is leaking into a puddle in the corner.

Another large, empty room stretches out beyond the window. There are cameras in each corner—are there cameras all over the Dauntless compound?

“This is the fear landscape room,” Amar announces without looking up. “A fear landscape is a simulation in which you confront your worst fears.”

Arranged on the table next to the machine is a line of syringes. They look sinister to me in the flickering light, like they might as well be instruments of torture, knives and blades and hot pokers.

“How is that possible?” the Erudite boy says. “You don’t know our worst fears.”

“Eric, right?” Amar says. “You’re correct, I don’t know your worst fears, but the serum I am going to inject you with will stimulate the parts of your

brain that process fear, and you will come up with the simulation obstacles yourself, so to speak. In this simulation, unlike in the aptitude test simulation, you will be aware that what you are seeing is not real. Meanwhile, I will be in this room, controlling the simulation, and I get to tell the program embedded in the simulation serum to move on to the next obstacle once your heart rate reaches a particular level—once you calm down, in other words, or face your fear in a significant way. When you run out of fears, the program will terminate and you will ‘wake up’ in that room again with a greater awareness of your own fears.”

He picks up one of the syringes and beckons to Eric.

“Allow me to satisfy your Erudite curiosity,” he says. “You get to go first.”

“But—”

“But,” Amar says smoothly, “I am your initiation instructor, and it’s in your best interest to do as I say.”

Eric stands still for a moment, then removes his blue jacket, folds it in half, and drapes it over the back of a chair. His movements are slow and deliberate—designed, I suspect, to irritate Amar as much as possible. Eric approaches Amar, who sticks the needle almost savagely into the side of Eric’s neck. Then he steers Eric toward the next room.

Once Eric is standing in the middle of the room behind the glass, Amar attaches himself to the simulation machine with electrodes and presses something on the computer screen behind it to start the program.

Eric is still, his hands by his sides. He stares at us through the window, and a moment later, though he hasn’t moved, it looks like he’s staring at something else, like the simulation has begun. But he doesn’t scream or thrash or cry like I would expect of someone who is staring down his worst fears. His heart rate, recorded on the monitor in front of Amar, rises and rises, like a bird taking flight.

He’s afraid. He’s afraid, but he’s not even moving.

“What’s going on?” Mia asks me. “Is the serum working?”

I nod.

I watch Eric take a deep breath into his gut and release it through his nose. His body shakes, shivers, like the ground is rumbling beneath him, but his breaths are slow and even, his muscles clenching and then relaxing every few seconds, like he keeps tensing up by accident and then correcting

his mistake. I watch his heart rate on the monitor in front of Amar, watch it slow down more and more until Amar taps the screen, forcing the program to move on.

This happens over and over again with each new fear. I count the fears as they pass in silence, ten, eleven, twelve. Then Amar taps the screen one last time, and Eric's body relaxes. He blinks, slowly, then smirks at the window.

I notice that the Dauntless-borns, usually so quick to comment on everything, are silent. That must mean that what I'm feeling is correct—that Eric is someone to watch out for. Maybe even someone to be afraid of.

For more than an hour I watch the other initiates face their fears, running and jumping and aiming invisible guns and, in some cases, lying facedown on the floor, sobbing. Sometimes I get a sense of what they see, of the crawling, creeping fears that torment them, but most of the time the villains they're warding off are private ones, known only to them and Amar.

I stay near the back of the room, shrinking down every time he calls on the next person. But then I'm the last one in the room, and Mia is just finishing, pulled out of her fear landscape when she's crouching against the back wall, her head in her hands. She stands, looking worn, and shuffles out of the room without waiting for Amar to dismiss her. He glances at the last syringe on the table, then at me.

"Just you and me, Stiff," he says. "Come on, let's get this over with."

I stand in front of him. I barely feel the needle go in; I've never had a problem with shots, though some of the other initiates got teary-eyed before the injection. I walk into the next room and face the window, which looks like a mirror on this side. In the moment before the simulation takes effect, I can see myself the way the others must have seen me, slouched and buried in fabric, tall and bony and bleeding. I try to straighten up, and I'm surprised by the difference it makes, surprised by the shadow of strength I see in myself right before the room disappears.

Images fill the space in pieces, the skyline of our city, the hole in the pavement seven stories below me, the line of the ledge beneath my feet. Wind rushes up the side of the building, stronger than it was when I was here in real life, whipping my clothes so hard they snap, and pushing against me from all angles. Then the building grows with me on top of it,

moving me far away from the ground. The hole seals up, and hard pavement covers it.

I cringe away from the edge, but the wind won't let me move backward. My heart pounds harder and faster as I confront the reality of what I have to do; I have to jump again, this time not trusting that there won't be pain when I slam into the ground.

A Stiff pancake.

I shake out my hands, squeeze my eyes shut, and scream into my teeth. Then I follow the push of the wind and I drop, fast. I hit the ground.

Searing, white-hot pain rushes through me, just for a second.

I stand up, wiping dust from my cheek, and wait for the next obstacle. I have no idea what it will be. I haven't taken much time to consider my fears, or even what it would mean to be free from fear, to conquer it. It occurs to me that without fear, I might be strong, powerful, unstoppable. The idea seduces me for just a second before something hits my back, hard.

Then something hits my left side, and my right side, and I'm enclosed in a box large enough only for my body. Shock protects me from panic, at first, and then I breathe the close air and stare into the empty darkness, and my insides squeeze tighter and tighter. I can't breathe anymore. I can't breathe.

I bite down on my lip to keep from sobbing—I don't want Amar to see me cry, don't want him to tell the Dauntless that I'm a coward. I have to think, can't think, through the suffocation of this box. The wall against my back here is the same as the one in my memory, from when I was young, shut in the darkness in the upstairs hallway as punishment. I was never sure when it would end, how many hours I would be stuck there with imaginary monsters creeping up on me in the dark, with the sound of my mother's sobs leaking through the walls.

I slam my hands against the wall in front of me, again and again, then claw at it, though the splinters stab the skin under my fingernails. I put up my forearms and hit the box with the full weight of my body, again and again, closing my eyes so I can pretend I'm not in here, I'm not in here. *Let me out let me out let me out let me out.*

"Think it through, Stiff!" a voice shouts, and I go still. I remember that this is a simulation.

*Think it through.* What do I need to get out of this box? I need a tool, something stronger than I am. I nudge something with my toes and reach down to pick it up. But when I reach down, the top of the box moves with me, and I can't straighten again. I swallow a scream and find the pointy end of a crowbar with my fingers. I wedge it between the boards that form the left corner of the box and push as hard as I can.

All the boards spring apart at once and fall on the ground around me. I breathe the fresh air, relieved.

Then a woman appears in front of me. I don't recognize her face, and her clothes are white, not belonging to any faction. I move toward her, and a table springs up in front of me, with a gun and a bullet on it. I frown at it.

Is this a fear?

"Who are you?" I ask her, and she doesn't answer.

It's clear what I'm supposed to do—load the gun, fire the bullet. Dread builds inside of me, as powerful as any fear. My mouth goes dry, and I fumble for the bullet and the gun. I've never held a gun before, so it takes me a few seconds to figure out how to open the chamber of the pistol. In those seconds I think of the light leaving her eyes, this woman I don't know, don't know enough to care about her.

I am afraid—I am afraid of what I will be asked to do in Dauntless, of what I will want to do.

Afraid of some kind of hidden violence inside of me, wrought by my father and by the years of silence my faction forced on me.

I slide the bullet into the chamber, then hold the gun in both hands, the cut in my palm throbbing. I look at the woman's face. Her lower lip wobbles, and her eyes fill with tears.

"I'm sorry," I say, and I pull the trigger.

I see the dark hole the bullet creates in her body, and she falls to the floor, evaporating into a cloud of dust on contact.

But the dread doesn't go away. I know that something's coming; I can feel it building inside me. Marcus has not appeared yet, and he will, I know it as surely as I know my own name. Our name.

A circle of light envelops me, and at its edge, I see worn gray shoes pacing. Marcus Eaton steps into the edge of the light, but not the Marcus Eaton I know. This one has pits for eyes and a gaping black maw instead of a mouth.

Another Marcus Eaton stands beside him, and slowly, all around the circle, more and more monstrous versions of my father step forward to surround me, their yawning, toothless mouths open wide, their heads tilting at odd angles. I squeeze my hands into fists. It's not real. It's obviously not real.

The first Marcus undoes his belt and then slides it out from around his waist, loop by loop, and as he does, so do the other Marcuses. As they do, the belts turn into ropes made of metal, barbed at the ends. They drag their belts in lines across the floor, their oily black tongues sliding over the edges of their dark mouths. At once they draw back the metal ropes, and I scream at the top of my lungs, wrapping my arms around my head.

"This is for your own good," the Marcuses say in metallic, united voices, like a choir.

I feel pain, tearing, ripping, shredding. I fall to my knees and squeeze my arms against my ears like they can protect me, but nothing can protect me, nothing. I scream again and again but the pain continues, and so does his voice. "I will not have self-indulgent behavior in my house!" "I did not raise my son to be a liar!"

I can't hear, I won't hear.

An image of the sculpture my mother gave me rises into my mind, unbidden. I see it where I placed it on my desk, and the pain starts to recede. I focus all my thoughts on it and the other objects scattered around my room, broken, the top of the trunk loose from its hinges. I remember my mother's hands, with their slim fingers, closing the trunk and locking it and handing me the key.

One by one, the voices disappear, until there are none left.

I let my arms fall to the ground, waiting for the next obstacle. My knuckles brush the stone floor, which is cold and grainy with dirt. I hear footsteps and brace myself for what's coming, but then I hear Amar's voice:

"That's it?" he says. "That's all there is? God, Stiff."

He stops next to me and offers me his hand. I take it and let him pull me to my feet. I don't look at him. I don't want to see his expression. I don't want him to know what he knows, don't want to become the pathetic initiate with the messed-up childhood.

"We should come up with another name for you," he says casually. "Something tougher than 'Stiff.' Like 'Blade' or 'Killer' or something."

At that I do look at him. He's smiling a little. I do see some pity in that smile, but not as much as I thought I would.

"I wouldn't want to tell people my name either," he says. "Come on, let's get some food."

Amar walks me over to the initiates' table once we're in the dining hall. There are a few Dauntless already sitting at the surrounding tables, eyeing the other side of the room, where pierced and tattooed chefs are still setting out the food. The dining hall is a cavern lit from beneath by blue-white lamps, giving everything an eerie glow.

I sit down in one of the empty chairs.

"Jeez, Stiff. You look like you're about to faint," Eric says, and one of the Candor boys grins.

"You all made it out alive," Amar says. "Congratulations. You made it through the first day of initiation, with varying degrees of success." He looks at Eric. "None of you did as well as Four over here, though."

He points at me as he speaks. I frown—four? Is he talking about my fears?

"Hey, Tori," Amar calls over his shoulder. "You ever hear of anyone having only four fears in their fear landscape?"

"Last I heard, the record was seven or eight. Why?" Tori calls back.

"I've got a transfer over here with only four fears."

Tori points at me, and Amar nods.

"That's gotta be a new record," Tori says.

"Well done," Amar says to me. Then he turns and walks toward Tori's table.

All the other initiates stare at me, wide-eyed and quiet. Before the fear landscape, I was just someone they could step on, on their way to Dauntless membership. Now I'm like Eric—someone worth watching out for, maybe even someone worth being afraid of.

Amar gave me more than a new name. He gave me power.

"What's your real name, again? Starts with an *E* . . . ?" Eric asks me, narrowing his eyes. Like he knows something but isn't sure that now is the time to share it.

The others might remember my name too, vaguely, from the Choosing Ceremony, the way I remember theirs—just letters in an alphabet, buried under a nervous haze as I anticipated my own choice. If I strike at their memories now, as hard as I can, become as memorable as my Dauntless self as possible, I can maybe save myself.

I hesitate for a moment, then put my elbows on the table and raise an eyebrow at him.

“My name is Four,” I say. “Call me ‘Stiff’ again and you and I will have a problem.”

He rolls his eyes, but I know I’ve made myself clear. I have a new name, which means I can be a new person. Someone who doesn’t put up with cutting comments from Erudite know-it-alls. Someone who can cut back.

Someone who’s finally ready to fight.

Four.

## About the Author



Photo © Nelson Fitch

**VERONICA ROTH** is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Divergent* and *Insurgent*, the first two books in the Divergent series. Now a full-time writer, Ms. Roth and her husband live near Chicago.

You can visit her online at [www.veronicarothbooks.com](http://www.veronicarothbooks.com)

Visit [www.AuthorTracker.com](http://www.AuthorTracker.com) for exclusive information on your favorite HarperCollins authors and artists.

# **Books by Veronica Roth**

DIVERGENT

INSURGENT

ALLEGIANT

THE DIVERGENT SERIES  
2-BOOK COLLECTION

THE DIVERGENT SERIES  
COMPLETE COLLECTION

THE TRANSFER: A DIVERGENT STORY

THE INITIATE: A DIVERGENT STORY

THE SON: A DIVERGENT STORY

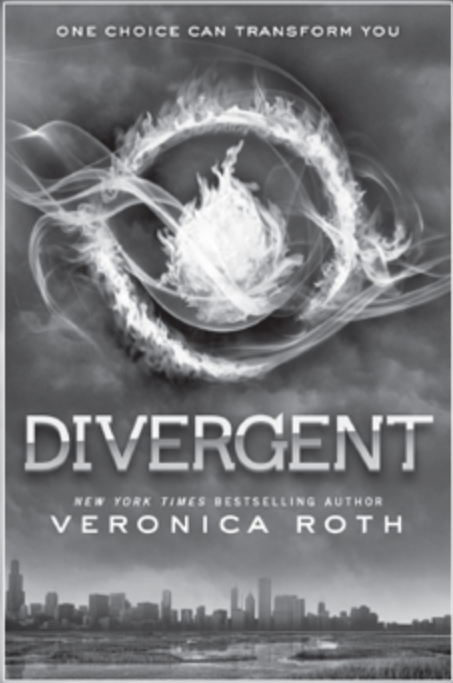
THE TRAITOR: A DIVERGENT STORY

FREE FOUR

## Back Ads


**“WHAT’S YOUR NAME?”**  
“UM . . .” I DON’T KNOW WHY I HESITATE. BUT  
“BEATRICE” JUST DOESN’T SOUND RIGHT ANYMORE.  
A NEW PLACE, A NEW NAME. I CAN BE REMADE HERE.  
**“TRIS,” I SAY FIRMLY.**


ONE CHOICE CAN TRANSFORM YOU



**DIVERGENT**  
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR  
VERONICA ROTH

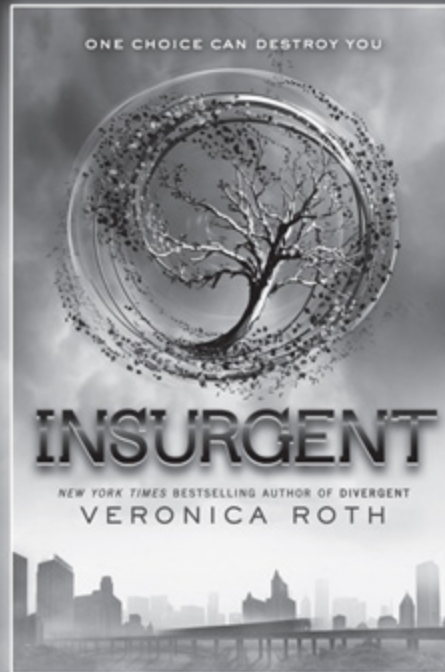
DON'T MISS THE STORY—  
AND THE CHOICE—THAT STARTED IT ALL.

 LIKE DIVERGENT ON FACEBOOK

 KATHERINE TEGEN BOOKS  
An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

WWW.EPICREADS.COM

"WE BOTH HAVE WAR INSIDE OF US.  
SOMETIMES IT KEEPS US ALIVE.  
SOMETIMES IT THREATENS  
TO DESTROY US."



THE SECOND BOOK IN THE THRILLING  
DIVERGENT TRILOGY



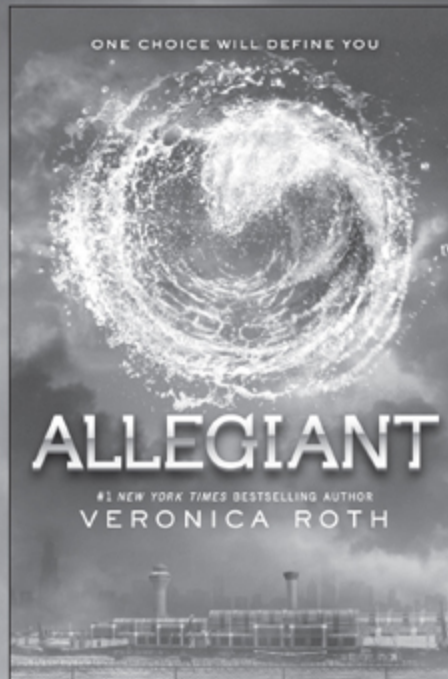
FIND DIVERGENT ON FACEBOOK  
[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DIVERGENTSERIES](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DIVERGENTSERIES)



KATHERINE TEGEN BOOKS  
An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers


[WWW.EPICREADS.COM](http://WWW.EPICREADS.COM)

FROM #1 NEW YORK TIMES  
BESTSELLING AUTHOR  
**VERONICA ROTH**



THE EXPLOSIVE CONCLUSION TO THE  
**DIVERGENT SERIES**

 /DIVERGENTSERIES  
DIVERGENTOFFICIAL.COM

 KATHERINE TEGEN BOOKS  
An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF FOUR?

FROM #1 *NEW YORK TIMES*  
BESTSELLING AUTHOR  
VERONICA ROTH

FOUR:  
A DIVERGENT  
STORY  
COLLECTION

Featuring five short stories told from Four's perspective:

THE TRANSFER

THE INITIATE

THE SON

THE TRAITOR

FREE FOUR

ALSO AVAILABLE AS EBOOKS.

[DIVERGENTOFFICIAL.COM](http://DIVERGENTOFFICIAL.COM)



KATHERINE TEGEN BOOKS  
An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers



[/DIVERGENTSERIES](https://www.facebook.com/DIVERGENTSERIES)

**JOIN**

**THE COMMUNITY AT**

**Epic Reads**

Your World. Your Books.

**FIND**

the latest  
books

**DISCUSS**

what's on  
your reading  
wish list

**CREATE**

your own book  
news and  
activities to share  
with Friends

**ACCESS**

exclusive  
contests and  
videos

**Don't miss out on any upcoming  
EPIC READS!**

**Visit the site and browse the  
categories to find out more.**

**[www.epicreads.com](http://www.epicreads.com)**

**HARPER TEEN**  
An imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

# Copyright

Katherine Tegen Books is an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

THE TRANSFER: A DIVERGENT STORY. Copyright © 2013 by Veronica Roth. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted the nonexclusive, nontransferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, downloaded, decompiled, reverse-engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of HarperCollins e-books.

EPub Edition August 2013 ISBN 9780062285638

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

FIRST EDITION

# About the Publisher

## **Australia**

HarperCollins Publishers (Australia) Pty. Ltd.  
Level 13, 201 Elizabeth Street  
Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia  
<http://www.harpercollins.com.au/ebooks>

## **Canada**

HarperCollins Canada  
2 Bloor Street East - 20th Floor  
Toronto, ON, M4W, 1A8, Canada  
<http://www.harpercollins.ca>

## **New Zealand**

HarperCollins Publishers (New Zealand) Limited  
P.O. Box 1  
Auckland, New Zealand  
<http://www.harpercollins.co.nz>

## **United Kingdom**

HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.  
77-85 Fulham Palace Road  
London, W6 8JB, UK  
<http://www.harpercollins.co.uk>

## **United States**

HarperCollins Publishers Inc.

10 East 53rd Street

New York, NY 10022

<http://www.harpercollins.com>



*Your gateway to knowledge and culture. Accessible for everyone.*



[z-library.se](http://z-library.se)

[singlelogin.re](http://singlelogin.re)

[go-to-zlibrary.se](http://go-to-zlibrary.se)

[single-login.ru](http://single-login.ru)



[Official Telegram channel](#)



[Z-Access](#)



<https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Z-Library>