Chapter 3

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The rest of the day flies by. Me and Avia are sitting in our room
talking.
"What do you think the Alphdanians are like?" I ask her.
"The bald man said it! They just want war!" Avia says.
"You don't actually believe that, do you? I mean, they can't be like
that. They are just humans." I reason.
"They aren't human, they're Alphdanians." Avia corrects.
"But they are just humans with sources. We just gave them another
name to separate them from us. Think about it, what if we are the
bad guys? I mean, we are the ones who tried to drive them o our
planet when they had no where else to go." I stare at the roof as I talk.
"But they tried to start a war with us!" Avia turns in her bed to face
me.
"No one wantswar. There was just a disagreement." I say.
"I guess that makes sense. I mean, I guess you're right." She says
confused but getting it.
    "Iris."
"Iris."
"Irissssssss"
"Iris!"
"Whaaat?" I open my eyes, annoyed.
"Yay! You're awake!" Avia smiles at me. I glare at her.
"What? You have to get up eventually! You can't just sleep all day..."
Avia frowns.
"Fine." I say, pulling myself out of bed. A er I'm done getting dressed,
we head to the cafeteria to get our schedule for the day.
"Finally, what took you two so long?" Milos says angrily.
"We were too busy thinking of excuses to avoid seeing your ugly
face." I say sarcastically. He scowls at me and shoves my schedule at
my chest. He passes Avia's to her before walking away.
"What's your first post?" I ask Avia, while still looking at my paper.
"I have west corridor." She starts. "You?"
"I have the commander's o ice." I frown at her.
"Darn..." She mutters.
"Oh well, we can still see each other at the learning unit, breakfast,
lunch, and dinner." I try to comfort her.
"It's okay. See you then!" She skips o to her post. I walk the opposite
direction.
     "Oh, Iris, nice to see you again. I'm sorry again about you having
to join the military." Aspen says.
"It's fine." I say quietly.
"Are you alright?" He signs a piece of paperwork, then looks up at me.
"Yeah, I'm fine." I smile at him.
"Alright." He says not believing me. "Come here." He waves for me to
come. I walk over to him and stand beside him.
"Yes?" I ask.
"Look." He pulls out a piece of paper from his desk. "What is 'the
lab'?" He points to the piece of paper. It's a report. A report of what
happened that day.
"It's a lab that our father ran. He experimented on kids there. Me and
my siblings." I explain.
"Alright. Are there still kids there?" He questions.
"Yes, I believe so." I answer.
"Alright, I will send a mission out to go investigate it. Thank you." He
smiles at me.
"Thank you!" I feel hopeful.
Maybe they will find Azi!
"There's a girl... Um, she looks like me but a little dierent. She has
curlier hair-" I start.
"Your sister?" He asks. I nod. I'm about to start talking again when
someone knocks.
"Breakfast time!" They say. I look at the door, then back at Aspen.
Something in his face changes.
"Are you okay?" I ask him. His face goes back to normal, then he nods.
"You sure?" My eyebrows furrow. He simply nods. Then he pulls out a
piece of paper.
"Do you know when the mission will go to the lab?" I ask. He doesn't
respond. He simply writes on the piece of paper. I lean over him to
see what he's writing.
"Morse code?" I mutter under my breath.
Good thing father made me learn it...
'I have problems speaking sometimes. Sorry.'
"Huh?" I look at Aspen confused.
'Semi-verbal.'
"Oh..." I mutter.
'I will send them out tomorrow at dawn.' He writes, answering my
question from before.
"Thank you!" I say, accidentally raising my voice. Me and Aspen talk-
well, I talk, he writes, for a little while longer. By the time I'm leaving
his o ice, I realize I've missed breakfast.
~At lunch~
     "Irissssss!" Avia comes running at me. "Why weren't you at
breakfast?"
"I was talking to Aspen." I look past her. "Hey Samantha." I great the
blonde.
"Heya!!!" She beams.
"Samantha!" Avia turns around to face the girl. I sit down at a table
and save a spot for them. Once they finally sit down we start talking.
"What were you talking to Aspen about?" Avia leans closer to me,
curious.
"He's sending a team to the lab." I smile at her.
"Really?!" She shouts. A few kids near us look over.
"Shhh!" I shush her.
"The what?" Samantha asks.
"Oh, nothing, just the place we grew up, it's a loooong story." Avia
says, looking over at her.
~The next day~
    "May I see Aspen?" I ask the guard.
"Name and business?" He eyes me suspiciously.
"Iris Moon, and I need to ask him about a mission." I answer.
"Fine." He says opening the door for me a er checking me for
weapons.
"Did they find anything?" I burst into the room. He waves me over.
He must be mute right now.
He writes on a piece of paper.
'They found a few kids, but they were... Not in the best condition.
They are in the hospital right now. None of them looked to be related
to you.' He writes. 'I'm sorry.'
"It's okay..." I hold back tears.
     "Did they find them?!" Avia asks me excitedly.
"He said they found a few kids but they didn't look like they were
related to us. We can go visit them in the hospital to confirm though."
I look at her sadly.
"Oh..." Avia looks down at the table
"I'm sorry." I avoid her gaze.
"Let's go." She looks at me.
"Huh?" I look back at her.
"Let's go check." She stands up.
"Right now?" I look at her confused.
"Yes." She starts to walk away.
"But it's dinner and then bedtime! We can't go check now." I argue.
"Check what now?" Samantha walks over to us holding a tray.
"Long story. Let's go." Avia smiles, grabbing Samantha's arm. She
drags Samantha out of the room and I follow. We exit the building
a er explaining to the guard that we have permission from the acting
Commander.
  We arrive at the hospital and tell them that we are looking for
patients that came in today and came in with the military. The nurse
leads us to a few rooms. The first few have kids that we don't
recognize.
"Must be A2 or B1..." I whisper to Avia.
"Yeah." She whispers back.
We get to the last room. I'm holding my breath. Avia looks defeated.
The nurse opens the door.
"Aster?!" Avia's face lights up.
"Holy shit!" I exclaim. Me and Avia run up to her and hug her.
"Ow ow ow!" She adjusts uncomfortably.
"Careful!" The nurse shouts.
"Sorry!" Avia says.
"Who is Aster?" Samantha tilts her head to the right.
"It's our sister!" Avia smiles.
"Who's this?" Aster asks.
"My friend!" Avia turns to face Aster.
"Okay visiting hours are almost over." The nurse warns.
"What? But we just got here!" Avia frowns.
"It's okay, we can always come back tomorrow." I reassure her.
"Fine..." She looks at the floor. We all say goodbye before walking out.
We head back to the base.
     I undress and step into the shower. The cold water makes me
shiver. I'm still not quite used to it.
I wonder what happened to the rest of the kids? How did they not
find them? They must have not checked hard enough. Stupid
soldiers! I just miss her... How am I supposed to live without Azi? I
need her... She can't be gone. We were only at home for two days. It
was my first time so far away from her ever, and now I don't even
know if she's alive...
    Once I'm done in the shower, I put on fresh clothes, dry my hair
with a towel, then brush it. I walk out of the bathroom and lay down
in my bed.
"You awake?" I call out into the quiet room.
"Yeah, you?" Avia jokes.
"No." I joke back.
"Rude." She giggles.
"Know what's rude?" I pause for dramatic e ect. "Your face."
"Wha- Meanie!" She shouts.
"Shhhh, It's like 10 pm." I laugh.
"Fine." She turns over in her bed to face me. There's a moment of
silence.
"What do you think happened to the others?" I ask her.
"I don't know..." She mutters, looking at the floor.
"I wish we weren't stuck here so we could go check on them
ourselves." I frown.
"Me too... Wait! Why can't we? When we escape we can check
ourselves!" Avia smiles, looking back at me.
"You're right!" I beam back at her.
"Then that's the plan!" She turns over.
"Goodnight." I say a er another moment of silence.
"Goodnight." She says. I can tell she's smiling, and it makes me smile
too. Sleep soon consumes me.
    Me and Avia go to the hospital in the morning. This time without
Samantha. When we get there we talk to the nurse.
"Can we see Aster again?" Avia asks smiling.
"I'm sorry but she got discharged. Didn't you know?" She
asks sympathetically.
"What? No, that can't be true! You're lying!" Avia denies.
"What... But her injuries...?" I mumble.
"They were healed by a doctor." The nurse says.
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others." I tell Avia. We are talking in our bathroom. "Guard rotation!" A guard shouts, banging on our door. "Coming!" I shout. ~A few weeks later.~ "Your eye should be mostly healed by now. I won't put a new patch on. You should be able to see, it might be a little blurry though." The nurse tells me. "Okay." I say, trying to open my eye. It's not swollen anymore, and I can see out of it. Sort of. It's all blurry like the nurse said it would be. "Whoa!" Avia points to my eye. "It's blue!" "Huh?" I ask. The nurse passes me a mirror. Sure enough, my le eye was blue, with a nasty scar over it. "That is odd..." The nurse mutters. "Oh well, it's probably fine." I brush it o , taking another look around the room. My vision is slowly clearing. "It's a little blurry... But it's getting better." I comment. "Well, you're free to go." She says. "Okay!" Avia grabs my arm and basically drags me out of the room. "You look so cool!" She nearly shouts. "Heh, thanks." I smile. "Whoa! I always wondered what was under that eyepatch of yours! You look awesome!" Samantha comes skipping down the hall. We all head to lunch together. "I like y'all a lot! Y'all are so nice to me and so cool." Samantha smiles at me and Avia. "I like you too!" Avia says, hugging her. "You're very nice Samantha." I admit. Avia pulls me into the hug. We head down the hall and go to the cafeteria. Once there, we find a seat

and sit down together. We start talking about nothing important.

A er breakfast, I go to my post in Aspens o ice.

"How are you?" He asks me as I walk into his o ice.

"I'm good, look, I got my eyepatch o!" I point at my eye.

"I'm good, I haven't had an episode in a few days." He smiles.

"How could she a ord that?" I ask.

"Some man paid for it." The nurse replies.

"Let's just go Avia..." I say. She shakes her head.

out of the hospital and head back to the base.

"This can't be possible! No!" She starts to cry. I comfort her. We walk

"Let's just focus on escaping. Then we can look for Aster and the

mostly silent besides some small talk for the rest of my shi . A er my shi , we have our learning unit. I head to the classroom and sit down next to Avia and Samantha. "The test." The half balding man, our teacher, smacks the board

"That's good news!" I smile back. "Yeah." He says before looking down and doing paperwork. We are

"Very cool." He says.

"How are you doing?" I ask.

with 'test' written across it. "It is something all of you will have to take. Pretty soon actually. As you all know, everyone above the age of 13 has to join the military, but not everyone is cut out for it. So we have a test. You have three tries to pass it. Once you pass it, you

become an o icial soldier, not just a trainee."

says coldly. Kids exchanged looks of fear.

"Some of you will be taking the test today."

"What if we fail it all three times?" A kid in the front asks.

"You will be executed. We don't have room for the weak." The teacher

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