

# Chapter 1

It's strange how everything you know about the world — and yourself — can change in a fraction of a second.

Just moments ago, I was being rescued from an Alliance prison where I was actually being brainwashed into becoming my own enemy.

Then I was in a van with my friends, hurtling toward the rest of our group. And I was given a piece of information that flipped everything upside down.

*The Hornet is Madeleine Frye's mother.*

The leader of the Resistance. My mom.

You see, I've always been ordinary. Ordinary Madeleine Frye. I was timid and cautious, a girl known

mostly for her wild, curly hair . . . while the rest of me was tame.

But everything is different now.

Now I stand in an empty lot with my friends: Louisa, Rosie, Evelyn, Ryan, and Jonah. They are looking at the smoldering pile of crumbling brick and cinder block, which, Louisa told me, was once a car wash where they'd sought shelter. But now it's gone, as is the rest of our group: Drew and Alonso. My friends are, understandably, freaking out, but I can't focus on the implications of this new disaster yet.

Instead, all I can do is turn something over and over in my hands. It's a little alabaster box in the shape of a hornet's honeycomb hive. The box was given to me by the same person who changed my life by telling me about my mother's secret identity. The box is an answer, a question, a test. Small as it is, it seems to weigh a zillion pounds.

"Who do you think did this?" I hear Louisa asking Rosie, her voice taut with anxiety and fear. She gestures to the wreckage, her blue eyes wide. "The Alliance?"