The Lucky Ones
by Michelleleahhh

Summary

“This,” Peeta points to the gold ring still, even after all this time, on his hand, “This… Katniss, you, were it for the rest of my life, there would be and will be no one after you. That’s what this meant, and you just threw it away for ‘independence’”

Divorce is Never Final
Rating: M, for mature and explicit content.

I signed the divorce papers tonight. The ink barely dried before I chugged the rest of the bottle of red wine that stained my scowl, and if I were sentimental I’d admit it stained my mind to the point where my vision blurred. The wine, similar to my idiotic stubbornness, made me forget about what mattered. But I wouldn’t go there. Not tonight. Not on the night where I severed all ties to the past ten years of my life as Katniss Mellark. So instead, I chugged my Pinot Noir until my mind was besotted and blotched over.

I remember the first time we met, his ridiculous confession of a crush he had on me for years, when he watched me patiently like the stalker I accused him of being. I remember our first kiss, behind the brick slab of his bakery; him smelling of dill and my scent one of forest greenery. I remember the first intimacy, bearing not only our bare bodies but our engaged hearts.

Of all the things I remember, none of it can answer why this, or why now. How did we end up like this. How did we end up an unfixable mess like drunken scholars’ impressing their astute professors at a college bar. It cannot work.

And just when I put my red wine down, ready to slip the papers in a manilla folder so it can go to my
attorney in the morning, I look down at the signatures. I flip through the pages staring at the different conditions he signed off, but then I get through the last page and my temper flashes.

Mine is there and his is not. He signed every document but the last one as if hoping to send a big fuck you. He was not unfamiliar to stubborn and quiet aggression, but I was. I take the papers in my hand, flustered and angry at his blind, or maybe purposeful, mistake. I stagger to my purse, scramble my iPhone out of a pocket and heatedly slam my passcode onto the glass screen.

And then I call him. It’s an accident really, or so a quiet voice advises me it is. It’s such a mishap that the same hushed voice blames it on the wine that made me see a violent red.

“Umpffhello,” he answers groggy from sleep.

“You didn’t sign the fucking papers,” I snap through the phone.

“Huh”

“What the fuck. Peeta, you promised me you would do this for me, you would give me my independence, and you didn’t even sign the last paper.” Not that he can see me but I’m flailing my arms like a madwomen, punctuating my words with my gestures and snarling my mouth.

“What time is it,” he asks, his voice more alert but still sounding like the smokey gravel that once made my stomach flip with anticipation. I slump to the couch. I won’t answer him, he knows I won’t. “Jesus it’s two in the morning, what are you doing awake?”

“Trying to enjoy the freedom that you promised me.” I cover my eyes with my forearm, everything is spinning so roughly.

“Are you drunk?” He accused

“Hmm?” I bolt upright once his words slip through my consciousness. How dare he judge me.

“What? No. Are you drunk? Because you forgot to sign your fucking name.”

He’s silent. The phone is silent. I check my phone, shake it even, maybe the airwaves are being caught by the government and that’s why I can’t hear.

I wait. Maybe the FBI intercepted to call to tell him that we have to remain together like pawns in their own torturous games.

“Are you still there?”

He takes his time answering, slowly, but he eventually hums. I hear ruffling and puffs of air and the slamming of a screen door. I imagine him padding onto our deck, barefooted in those faded grey slacks and his pale chest bathed in moonlight. His short blonde curls flows through the wind and his eyes are shut, he’s just silently formulating thoughts.

I’m about to hang up this nonsensical call and resume my date with Pinot, but he answers. His voice is slow, even, and barely a whisper that still leaves me winded and gasping like hitting the ground after falling from the highest tree. “Is this something you really want Katniss? It’s not just you giving up on us?”

I bite my lip because he sounds so tragic, so done and given up. I take a deep breath because I know this is exactly what he needs to hear. “Yes. I need this,” I answer.

He sighs, it’s a ragged breath, and he coughs. “I’ll come to the apartment and sign the papers then.”
“Don’t think that by coming here I’ll change my mind Peeta, because I can’t, I won’t. I can’t,” shit. I’m drunk. I know this and I hyperventilate I am not about to cry, no I’m just catching my breath because I got up from the couch too quickly and the blood rushed to my head.

“I won’t.”

“Ok.”

“Ok, I’ll get dressed and come now.”

“See you soon.” I whisper

“Bye,” he responds in his own hushed tones.

“Peeta,” I harshly murmur, “Drive safe.”

“See you soon.”

I hang up and throw my phone on the marble kitchen counter and open a new bottle of wine. I typically would hide the finished bottle underneath the boxes in the recycling bin, because he hated when I drank, but I leave it out. I’m no longer his and he no longer has a right to tell me what I can do.

I pour a new dauntingly large glass and sit on one of the barstools around the kitchen counter. I casually sip on my wine as my mind slips in and out of memories with him, like when he made me my favorite grained bread and brought it to me in bed for days on end to comfort me in my comatose state.

Or before that, like when he said I’d be the worst food taster. It’s like his voice is sitting next to me, recalling the scene as I slip into this frightful and formidable memory.

We’re in our living room, resting on the couch. I’m gobbling down his treats from the bakery, only taking a break from swallowing the chocolate cookies to take a sip from my glass of milk. My back rests against his chest, my legs are encased in his, and his callused hands slowly rub circles on my bloated belly.

“You wouldn’t be able to tell chocolate chip cookies from sugar cookie,” he lightheartedly jokes into my hair, his nose takes a deep breath and lips slowly kiss my crown as I gulp down the milk.

I chuckle at him and some of the milk dribbles down my chin, “Is that a challenge bread boy?”

“It is bow girl.”

“Then blindfold me and lets find this out.”

He was right. I was the worst taste tester, but to my dying breath I will swear he switched the cookies on me.

Minutes must have trickled by because suddenly there’s a rustling outside the apartment. I open my eyes when the lock is being opened, there’s a jerked push, the door opens and my stomach falls, out of habit; like the time I stood there with a burden of news on my shoulders.

“You need to get that door fixed.” He says glancing at the wine in my hand and turns to shut the door. He walks over to me, and stands on the opposite side of the counter.

“Want a glass?”
“No that’s ok.” I roll my eyes. Saint Peeta, ever the perfect man to never fall to the wiles of alcohol.
“Where is the paper you’re so concerned about?”

I gulp the rest of my wine down, not even tasting it as I clunk the glass down and stumble gracefully over to the coffee table where I sat them. I ignore the spinning and concentrate on my feet pounding the floor.

I grab the papers, that are folded over to his missing signature, and bring them back to him only to find his eyebrows raised and a small smirk on his lips.

“What,” I grumble.

“Nothing,” he chuckles and plucks a pen from one of the draws in front of him.

Suddenly his frown is gone and raised eyebrows become knit and tense across his forehead. I put the paper down in front of him and slide back onto the stool. He coughs and moves his pen down the paper reading through each line.

It takes a while, but he eventually looks at me wearily and says, “I’ll take that glass of wine now.”

I point to the cabinet that is behind his head, he pulls a large glass over and I fill it, quite generously. He reads the document slowly, his concentrating face is on, the one where his tongue slips through his lips and rests to the left. I study his hands, they’re strong and capable of so many things. My cheeks flush, I don’t know whether to admit that its from the wine or other hand related memories of white sheets and circling fingers in between my thighs. His hands that created murals in vacant rooms in our house.

He sighs and looks at me, he’s at the bottom and reaches for the glass. Without taking his eyes off of mine he gulps the glass down and plumps it back on the counter.

“Liquid courage?”

“I just take these things seriously.” His voice ricochets off the wall and only comes back to slap me in the face.

An irrational heat flushes my hollow cheeks. “You take these things seriously? Seriously?” I grunt, my voice filled with a venom that sounds foreign to my own ears. It’s like I’m watching some other person inhabit my body. “And I don’t. I don’t take this seriously?” I gesture to the papers on the counter.

He shakes his head, not like he’s disagreeing, but like he’s clearing his mind. In one final moment he floats the pen across the line. It was so fast, so pointed and steady that I couldn’t believe he did it. It was just so final in that moment.

And I thought I would be elated, but instead the hole in my heart just gapes larger. He puts the pen down, takes the bottle, fills his glass again and chugs it.

There is silence again, just like the phone only this time I can see that his blue eyes are dark with regret and doubt. I can see that they are engulfed in black bags that were not meant to be there. Then I realize, this is my first time seeing him in six weeks. Six whole weeks without looking at Peeta Mellark. His shoulders are slumped, defeated and he glances at the paper, his eyes drooped with emotions.

“Well,” he coughs awkwardly. “Goodbye Katniss,” he says and turns around.
“Uh uh, you just chugged wine and you think you’re getting behind a car, you’re crazy.” I walk after him slithering between him and the door and post my body against it.

“I think I’ll be ok with some wine,” he takes me by the shoulders and moves me, but I stay planted firm in my spot.

I jut my chin out and my scowl thickens. “You never answered me.”

“I don’t need to anymore, wasn’t that the point of this?” He asks, genuine, and soft.

“No, that’s not what this was about Peeta.” I argue, the alcohol blurred everything. Why did I want this? “I want my freedom.”

He chuckles and shakes his head. “Goodbye Katniss.”

“No. Answer me.” I push him back and lock the door behind me.

“No.” he reaches behind and unlocks it.

This is how we meet. A tree that won’t bow and the wind that howls against its branches.

“No. Answer. Me.” I grunge out, eyes aflame and dark.

“No,” He slams the door next to my head. “You want the truth Katniss? No I don’t think you took this serious. This,” he points between us, “was a vow. It was a vow I made before God”

“I don’t believe in God.” I mumble in between his breath and under my own.

“This,” he looks at me and grabs my face. “This meant something. It was a promise that for the rest of my life I would bow at your feet, that I would worship you until the day I died. This,” Peeta points to the gold ring, still after all this time, on his hand, “This, you, were it for the rest of my life, there would be and will be no one after you, Katniss. That’s what this meant, and you just threw it away for ‘independence’”

Before I can push his hands from my face he steps back like the wounded man he is.

I follow him into the living room, “I never wanted this, you married me because I got pregnant.”

He turns to me, “No Katniss, you married me because you were pregnant. I married you because when I looked into my future, at 50 all I saw was you.” Suddenly his eyes were cold like crisp ice water.

Maybe its the wine, but soon water is pouring out of my eyes and I wipe them away harshly, but that only makes them come harder because now I remember why I wanted this. The times he said things like that used to make me uncomfortable and awkward. I never believed that he actually thought them, because the only people who said those kind of things belonged in romantic comedies with Channing Tatum.

“I can’t make you happy Peeta. I can’t,” I whisper and hug myself because I’m the only one that can comfort me. He looks tortured, like he wants to run to me, but knows that I won’t let him get close.

“Yes, yes you can Katniss,” he says running his hands through his blonde hair tousling it up more.

“You-” I gasp, “You deserve a family Peeta. You deserve a boat load of kids and, and-”

He kicks the end table over and I jolt back. “How many times. How many times until you believe
that I will not have them if it isn’t with you. You’re it Katniss.”

“You say that now, but what about in ten years?”

Fuck Wine.

“Ten years,” he spits, “I’ll be empty after this Katniss. Life with you is all I’ve ever wanted. Because it’s the only thing that kept me sane.”

I peer at the kitchen and zero in on the papers there. This was it, all that I wanted for so long, but now it’s just dread and holes and darkness covering everything. He needs to go. He needs to leave so I can sit in the darkness and just leave this place.

I swallow my tears and wipe my nose. I was better than this. “I can’t have kids, but then I was having one. I never wanted to be married, and then we were. Then I lost her, and there was distance and I can’t do it Peeta. Because when I see you, all I see are hospital beds and machines and still beating hearts on sonogram screens.”

I’m not good with words. He knows this, but in this instant, I feel like the words can’t stop because for once I know this is the right thing. That we don’t want the divorce but the death can’t outweigh us.

“You should go,” I say and leave to go to the kitchen, but before I can take a step, Peeta comes to me and swings me around. I open my mouth to object but instead his lips slant over mine, violently and angrily, as if searching for the happy ending we can’t have.

He backs me up into the wall, aggressively taking possession of me. His lips trace my own, fighting for entrance and the domination that had eluded him for so long. He never took charge like this before, Peeta was never this controlling.

I tried to push him away, but when my fingers contact his chest they clutch his white cotton tee. Instead of propelling him off me, I pull him closer and wind my arms around his. I open my lips letting his tongue explore my mouth, its hot and searing, leaving a trail of hope in its wake.

Eventually his lips leave my mouth and sweeps down my jaw and throat, imprinting kisses along my skin. I take a ragged breath in and close my eyes. This is wrong, this can’t happen, but here I am, the back of my head resting against the wall while my hands pull on his hair. His lips suck and bite at the point where my neck and shoulder. I pant and push him off.

He opens his mouth but I throw myself at him. I shrug off my cardigan and push him on the couch. I straddle him. His hands find my breast, and he kneads it in his hand as our mouths dance. My hands tug on his shirt and he only leaves my lips to pulls it over his head. I follow his lead and do the same, only to discard my black shirt in a heap on the floor.

Then there’s grinding, as our mouths find one another again. Swift motions that just causes a fire to swell. It’s desperate and needy and sloppy, all of the things we always were. Then reality hits and it’s like a moment of pure clarity.

I pull my mouth away and open my eyes. “What are we doing?”

Instead of answering he pulls down the cup of my bra and takes my swelling nipple into his mouth. His other hand finds its way to my behind and grips it tightly. “I’m about to fuck you, roughly. Just how you like it.” he grounds out between his teeth.

Before I can get a word in he lifts me up, and out of habit or maybe out of pure want, I hook my
thighs around his hips. He unclasps my bra, throws it across the room, and lays me on the carpeted floor.

His shoes are lost and his socks with them. He pulls his jeans down, then his boxers and cocks an eyebrow at me. “Tell me you don’t want this.”

I say nothing and come up on my forearms. He takes my silence as an answer, and to be honest I do too, because I need this. Even if this is just one time more. “Take your pants off.”

I go tortuously slow, because its how he likes it. I play with the clasp of my jeans and slowly unhinge them. I lift my hips and drag the pants down my thighs. I leave my thong on, slowly move it to the side and let my fingers glide along its seem.

He whispers, “fuck.” and before I know it he’s over me, his hips cradled between my thighs. Soon those glorious hands find themselves underneath my black lace panty. There’s swift circular motions and I can’t help the gasps that escape me. My head falls to the floor and his lips find my ear. He bites it.

In a needy breath, in between the sucking and flicking of his tongue, he says, “You’re so fucking wet.” He bites my ear hard and I moan because it feels so good.

A fire builds in the pit of my stomach and I push my chest towards his. The rug below me burns but I feel nothing because it’s just so good. My fingers tug on my nipple and my mouth opens, causing swift pants. “You love this. Don’t you.” I bite my lower lip. “Tell me. Tell me how much you like it.” His fingers rub harder and I scrunch my eyes closed.

But I can’t answer because there’s pressure building, and his mouth sweeps to my breast forcing my hand away. He grasps my braid in his fingers and pulls on it. It feels so good, the sucking, the pulling, the circles.

Just when I’m at the edge of this building frenzy, he tears off my thong and his fingers enter me. I thrash, bow my back off the carpet, and fall off the edge I teetered on. The wine has heightened everything. Before I can settle, take a breath in, he sheaths himself in side me. It’s so hard.

But he doesn’t move, he looks at me, waiting. “Tell me.”

I manage to choke out, “Fuck. Yes I love it.” I’m reduced to a mess, because I want more friction. The hunger has swelled, not nearly sedating by my orgasm. He pulls out and slams back in.

“Harder,” I gasp.

Then he’s slamming against me, slick sounds with pants fill the air. I’m so close again, his relentless thrusts penetrating my thoughts, but he rolls us over. Suddenly I’m on top, kneeling on either side of him, with his swelled member still inside of me. I look at him confused, but his hands are behind his head. “Show me,” He says, looking at my breasts instead of my eyes. “Show me how bad you want it.”

This causes a deep spark in my gut, and I slowly rise then slam back down on him. I fall with a grunt and my hands find his chest. I repeat the rising and falling on him. “You feel so good.” Up and down, “So good.” I shake my head from side to side, and his hands come up to my chest. He pinches my nipple. “Peeta,” I gasp.

“God, you’re so tight.” He says, thrusting up inside me. “Touch yourself,” he demands, pulling on my breasts. I do as he commands and look at him. His eyes are focused on where we’re meeting and I lose it, I am treading that edge again, my nails dig into his chest. I circle, slowly, deliberately and
his eyes meet mine. I take my fingers from me and bring them to my lips. His eyes boar into mine and he says, “Shit.”

He grabs my hips and lifts me from him, before I can ask what he’s doing his hips meet mine. He thrusts up into me. “Yes,” I gasp. “Keep going, keep going.” Keep going. It becomes a mantra in my head and he doesn’t stop. Relentlessly he thrusts up to me. I lose it, and become a bumbling mess, my hands fly to my face as he keeps me in place.

“Fuck Katniss, you should see your tits.” I bounce giving him a show, but my instincts have taken over because I’m flying, soaring, off that cliff. “That’s it babe. Bounce, fuck, you feel so good.”

I can’t hold myself up and fall on top of him. He turns me onto my back and continues his relentless hard thrusting. But I’m sedated and perfectly a mold of jelly. His thrusts become ragged and off beat, I know he’s close. “Come for me,” I whisper, our eyes gazing at each other.

He finishes inside me and I watch him as he comes undone. There’s never been a more beautiful sight I’ve beheld. His head rests on my chest, I can hear his ragged breaths. I’m sure he can hear my thumping heart.

Minutes slowly slip by and he chuckles, lifting his head to look at me. He picks me up and lays me on the couch on top of his chest. He reaches behind me and pulls the throw blanket that rested on the sofa’s back on top of us.

“Well fuck,” he says once his breathing returns to normal. “We should have divorced a long time ago.” I throw my head back and laugh, loudly, unladylike laughter that women were not supposed to make according to Peeta’s disgraceful mother.

But I can’t stop the sinking feeling I get when I realize this divorce is real.

I bite my lip and rest my head back on his chest. His hands rub circles on my back, soothing loops that almost make me fall asleep. And just when sleep is about to take me I hear him whisper, “I built a grave. In the primrose garden.”

I pick my head up and look at him. “Yeah?” I ask quietly.

“Yeah.” He responds, unweaving my hair out of its confined braid. He runs his hands through it as I stare at him. I rest my head back down on his chest and he takes a deep breath in. “Katniss?”

I hmm in response.

“Come home.” I bite my lip and furrow deeper in his chest.

“Peeta…” I start, but he cuts me off.

“I can’t sleep without you, and judging by your being awake at 3 in the morning, I know you can’t either.” He reasons, “We can rip the divorce papers. I can’t be without you. I don’t need children, I need my wife. We can do this together, you and me. It won’t be perfect, but I know that we’ll make it work…” I pick myself up, hugging the blanket to my body, and look at him. “Just… come home,” he repeats. “Please.”

I bite my lip and glance around this dreadful apartment, this isn’t home it’s an escape. My eyes water when I look at him, that’s when I realize he’s home.

I nod, “ok.” I whisper.
His smile returns, the first real one I’ve seen in such a long time. “Yeah?” he asks.

“Yeah.” I smile, and for the first time all night I know the wine has no longer drugged my thoughts; it clarified them.

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