### Her Mortal Love

**Summary**

She saved his life, that was how it began. Katniss had smelled his blood from miles away and happened upon his body, left behind after a hit and run. She had intended to drink him, put him out of his misery, but when she saw his face, she couldn't. He was too beautiful.

That was how she fell in love with a mortal. And a mortal fell in love with her.

Being a vampire in love with a mortal boy was never going to be easy. Both Katniss and Peeta knew that. Eventually, Katniss' people would try to involve themselves, try to separate them, and when that day came they would have to show they were willing to give up everything for each other. No matter what the cost.

**Notes**

See the end of the work for notes.
the face of beauty and couldn't bring herself to do it. She took him to the hospital, instead. Stayed by his side until dawn, where she hid inside the cupboard in the corner of the room, safe in the shadows from the sun's brutal glare.

She couldn't leave until she knew he was okay. Or it would have stayed on her conscious forever.

He eventually woke up. Even though she had sat with him for several nights, she feared what he would think of her when he was awake and well. So she stayed hidden. For days she stayed under the cover of the cupboard or beneath his bed, simply listening to his breathing and occasionally, his voice, when he had the strength to speak. It soon became unbearable. Why didn't she just leave, let him get on with his life with the security that he was okay?

She had to look upon the face of the man who'd stayed her hand. Speak to him and hear him speak back.

So one night, when the nurses had done their rounds and his tests had been completed, she stood in the corner of the room. Still in the shadows, but not hidden in the cupboard. When he woke up, revealing two sapphires as bright as the sun itself, he saw her. He did not cower or scream. He did not make the sign of the cross or threaten to throw holy water at her. He asked her questions and, upon realizing that she had saved his life, felt incredibly in debt to her. This was how they grew to know each other.

This was how they fell in love.

It took a while for Katniss to tell Peeta what she really was. It was hard to keep it secret for very long, however, because she couldn't go out in the sunlight and did not eat ordinary food. When she eventually had to relent and tell him everything, he was understanding but unsure. Katniss understood why. It was hardly something to believe right off the bat. Coming to terms took a while but it didn't take long for Peeta's weariness to widdle away and his love for Katniss to conquer it all.

It wasn't long after that that he became her food source.

Katniss had been unwell, and hadn't been able to eat any of the refrigerated bags of blood she got at the hospital. She needed something warm. Fresh and living blood to boost her immunity again. And when her darling Peeta offered himself to her, it was difficult to resist. Ever since they had started seeing each other, she had been craving a taste of her lover's blood. The thought of having him running through her veins was thrilling. So many nights where they shared a bed where Katniss had nearly bitten him just to have a drink . . . But she would never have done it without his permission.

Their relationship had difficulties, as all relationships do, but it was positively extraordinary how normal their relationship could be at times. Almost like they were two completely normal people . . . not at all like a vampire and her mortal love.

~xXx~

Katniss woke up at seven o'clock in the evening. Stretching her arms above her head, she climbed out of bed and padded out of the room to see if Peeta was around. Sometimes he worked late at the bakery. She hated it when this happened because it would mean he wouldn't have the energy to stay awake with her. He'd try, but he'd always lose the battle of exhaustion that his body would wage.
She hopped down the stairs, her still heart lifting as she heard the muffled voices coming from what sounded like the television. She found Peeta in the living room, watching a television programme of some sort. It was clear that he wasn't particularly invested in whatever it was and was only staring at the screen for something to do. When Katniss reached the bottom of the stairs, he looked her way and smiled.

"Hey, sweetheart," he said, "sleep well?"

"Mmhm," Katniss replied. She crossed the room and sat beside him on the sofa, throwing her feet up onto the cushions and leaning against him for support. "I can't wait until it gets darker earlier again. Then I can come out for longer and we won't have to try to schedule around each other."

"Only a few weeks now," Peeta smiled, sounding fond of the idea himself. He tugged his sleeve up and handed Katniss his wrist. She gratefully accepted and traced her fingernail along the faint blue vein that she could see beneath the skin.

The fact that his blood was so uncommon was the reason Katniss had smelled it from so far away when he had been hit by the car. If it had been A positive or another common type like that, she mightn't have bothered. However, not every vampire can say they've drank AB negative blood, let alone say that their life partner was such type and offered them their blood for every meal of the day, like Katniss could.

"It's always creeped me out the way you do that," said Peeta, flicking the channels over onto something else.

"Why? Do I make you nervous?" Katniss teased.

Peeta scoffed. "Oh yeah, totally," he said sarcastically. "I'm quaking with fear."

"I'm sorry if I like to savour my meals," Katniss said petulantly, crossing her legs on the sofa so she sat on the cushions comfortably.

"Putting it like that doesn't do anything to diminishing the creepiness," Peeta grinned.

Katniss grinned back. There were serrated scars marked into Peeta's wrist, never having healed due to her reopening the wounds at least three times a day, not including snacks and treats. There were scars like these everywhere, most not as deep as the wrist marks. Different situations dictated different areas to drink from.

The wrist was for regular drinking. Such as breakfast, lunch and dinner. This is why the wrist scars were the deepest. Katniss' teeth had sunk into his wrist the most of all and yet every time felt like the first. That was the thing about AB negative blood. Because it was so rare, it tasted amazing every single time. Like when you don't eat for ages and put food into your mouth for the first time in forever and it creates a little orgasmic explosion inside your mouth.

Peeta had grown an immunity to the pain of being bitten. Katniss was glad that it no longer hurt him. Even though he had insisted that it wasn't painful, Katniss had known for the first few months it was agony for him. She had told him that she didn't want to hurt him but he insisted that he wanted her to do it and that it was better than having to kill people just to eat or make herself ill by drinking bagged blood.

If she got hungry while Peeta was sleeping, she'd feed from his arm or shoulder. It was an easier solution as opposed to waking him in the middle of the night by tugging his wrist out from underneath his sleeping body just for a drink. Never would Katniss admit this to him but on the nights where he couldn't help but fall asleep out of fatigue, she would pull his shirt sleeve down
just for an excuse to trace her fingers along his defined biceps, sometimes without even sinking her teeth in at all.

In sexual situations, she would drink from Peeta's neck. Then and only then would she ever let her teeth anywhere near his neck. In any other scenario, she didn't trust herself not to drink him completely dry. The most vital blood is always the most delicious. The only time she would let herself have it would be when she wasn't hungry and therefore wouldn't lose control and kill him. In those situations, her hunger was for something completely different.

"They've been putting so much crap on t.v nowadays," Peeta muttered, trying to find something decent to put on. Katniss hummed in agreement over his wrist, leaning her head on his shoulder as she fed. Five to ten minutes was her time limit. Any longer and Peeta would pass out. And given the limited amount of time they could spend together, she couldn't allow that to happen.

"Night time isn't as bad, you're lucky you don't have to suffer daytime television," Peeta continued. He winced when Katniss' teeth slipped in through a little too far. She apologized by blindly tapping his head. Once she started, she couldn't stop until she was finished so vague noises as responses and single handed gestures were all she could give at the moment.

Peeta snickered and when Katniss' eyes drifted to the television, she saw that he had put on Dracula. She scowled and lightly smacked him, which only made him laugh harder. Katniss tugged her teeth out as she finished up, taking a moment to lick the remnants of blood off of Peeta's skin. "Don't make me hurt you," she warned teasingly.

Peeta pulled a face, pretending to be terrified, and threw his now re-injured hand over his face in a faux dramatic swoon. Katniss laughed and lurched forward, biting the side of his hand with her fangs. Peeta yelped in surprise and looked at his hand, mildly baffled. "Never been bit there before," he said, examining the fang wounds curiously.

"You also haven't been bitten in the ass, but there's a first time for everything," Katniss warned.

Peeta raised his eyebrows. "Don't tempt me," he said.

Katniss grinned and leaned forward, briefly connecting their lips. When they pulled apart, her grin widened as she said, "It's your birthday next week." Where she expected Peeta to be happy the same way she was, he actually turned quite sombre. "What? What is it?"

"It's my birthday," said Peeta.

"Yeah, and?"

"I'm going to be twenty four."

Katniss raised her eyebrows in confusion. "Your point being?"

"I'm going to be two years older than you."

This made Katniss burst out laughing. "What?!" she exclaimed. "I'm over three hundred years old! I was turned in the 1700s! Just because I was turned when I was twenty two doesn't mean that you're older than me now that you're twenty four. What are you talking about you silly man?"

"I'm going to turn into an old, decrepit man," Peeta insisted. "You won't want that. When I'm old and wrinkly and can barely remember my own name"-

"I will love you just like I do now," Katniss interrupted.
Peeta shook his head. "I won't let you. I'll hold you back. You don't want to be weighed down by me when I'm old," he insisted. He brushed his fingers through his hair and said, "I've already found a few greys."

"Don't be stupid," scolded Katniss. "You're going to be twenty four not eighty four." She frowned and traced the bite marks on his neck thoughtfully. "Why are you starting to think like this now? You're still young. It's not like you're going to have a walking stick and hearing aid in the oncoming months. What's making you so worried?"

Peeta shivered beneath Katniss' fingertips, the bite zones on his body always having been a sensitive area ever since she started feeding from and biting him. "This conversation was always going to come up," he reminded her.

Katniss straightened up as she realized what he was trying to say. She stood up and switched the t.v off, shaking her head the entire time. "No. I'm sorry but no. Not going to happen," she said.

"You haven't even given me a chance to explain myself," said Peeta.

"You don't need to," Katniss practically barked back. "I'm not doing that to you! Haven't you been with me long enough to know that this was not the path I had chosen for myself? What I am was forced upon me, I'm not putting you through the hell that I went through. I love you too much for that."

"But I'm asking you to," Peeta pressed. "I don't want to grow old without you, Katniss. Nor do I want to die with the knowledge that you are going to carry on without me. It's not fair on either of us."

Katniss could see the desperation in her lover's eyes. He didn't understand. She would spend eternity with him if she could. However, her lifestyle was not an easy one to lead. The changing process was brutal and nothing short of agonising. Never mind the difficulties that would follow, the pain she would have to put him through was something she couldn't do.

"You don't want to be like me," she said, her voice trembling.

"I will be, say or do anything if it meant getting to spend the rest of my life with you, Katniss," Peeta said firmly, standing up and giving her a little shake. "If you can't see that at this point then I obviously haven't been showing you just how much I love you."

"I know you love me," Katniss answered. "But if you can't see why I can't put you through that then you clearly don't realize the extent of my love."

Peeta's blue eyes shone with desperation. If Katniss turned him, those baby blue iris' would glow like wildfire. A part of her wanted to do it, wanted to turn him into a vampire so they could continue through eternity together. Living forever was not a gift, though. The things she had seen; done; witnessed, ever since she had been turned were nothing short of devastating. Sure, there were the good points but the bad outweighed them by miles. It seemed that every life that had been born, every event that brought a smile to somebody's face, every firework exploding in the sky, was partnered with a death, an attack, and destruction of some shape or form. Katniss had seen many thing but she would never put Peeta through that. No.

"I love you," Katniss said firmly. "And that's why I can't turn you." She attacked him in a sudden kiss, open mouthed and fiery and rabid. He responded with equal enthusiasm, strong hands finding her waist and sliding up her back to meet at the blades. Katniss' body leaned towards his, automatically drawn to Peeta's like a magnet. Curling her fingers into the loops of Peeta's jeans, she drew him closer-if that were possible-and gently nipped his bottom lip with her fangs,
knowing that it drove him crazy.

"Do you want to go upstairs?" Peeta asked breathlessly, voice rough from lack of oxygen. A trickle of blood dripped from his mouth, a result of the bite on his lip.

Katniss grabbed the back of his neck and pulled his face back to hers, licking the blood from his face and allowing its sweet taste to overwhelm her taste buds. She couldn't help it. She had grown so used to drinking his blood, whenever it was exposed to her it was too tempting to resist. It was safe to say that accidents in their house were always a drama.

"No," she decided, licking her lips seductively. She smirked when Peeta's eyes darkened a fraction at the sight. "Let's do it here. The carpet is soft enough."

Peeta opened his mouth to answer, but there was a loud tap at their front door. Someone had put something through the mail slot. Katniss groaned, annoyed at being disturbed during such an intimate moment. She went to look and found a small purple envelope sitting on the rug by the door.

"What is it?" Peeta called from the living room.

"I don't know," she answered, stooping over and picking it up. She sliced the top of the envelope open with her fingernail and pulled the contents out.

A piece of card with elaborate printing weaving around the front and back. Katniss flipped it over, to where there was writing etched into the middle.

Midnight Masquerade
Tonight
Be There or else.

Katniss was about to put the card into her pocket, intent on hiding it from Peeta and figuring out what it meant alone. Someday, she knew, the vampires would question her choice to stay in the company of a mortal. When that day came, a fight would arise, that would put not only herself but Peeta into the firing line. She feared that the day might have finally came. She couldn't allow Peeta to see because he would insist to come along, as the invite dictated. Katniss may not have been able to ignore the vampires but she could certainly keep the knowledge from Peeta.

Except he was too quick for her.

Peeta had walked up behind her-the only person who could manage to do it without making her alert because she was so used to having him around-and snatched the card right out of her hands. "Bring the mortal," he repeated after studying the card for a moment. "I'm guessing that's me?"

"You aren't going," Katniss immediately said, turning around and grabbing the invite back. "I don't know who this is from but if they're referring to you as 'the mortal' then it's clearly a message from my people. They want me, not you. I don't know what it's about but I'll find out. You stay here."

She moved to head to the stairs but was stopped by Peeta, who grabbed her arm and held her firmly. "You're not going alone," he said.

"Peeta," Katniss said firmly, "I can handle myself. I've been dealing with my people for years."
"It's about me, isn't it?" said Peeta. "Your people have finally realized what's going on between us." Katniss glared at him. She tried to force him not to test her on this with her gaze alone. If it were about something smaller, maybe it would have worked, but somehow Peeta could see through the layers of the vampire's hardened expression. "You told me it would happen someday."

"And what did I say you were to do when that day came?" asked Katniss.

Peeta smiled. "Did you honestly think I was going to let you take care of it alone?"

"It's too dangerous," Katniss said.

"Hence why I'm going with you."

Katniss scowled and yanked her arm away. She stormed off, thumping up the stairs angrily. She had to find something to wear to the Masquerade party so she didn't stand out. However, when she stood in front of the wardrobe, her eyes fell onto Peeta's side, where his clothes were hung up. As childish as it was of her, she needed some excuse for Peeta not to go with her, so she grabbed all of his good clothes and stuffed them under their bed.

"You're seriously hiding my clothes?" Peeta laughed from the doorway.

"Shut up," Katniss snapped, using her foot to stuff them underneath. "They're all wrinkly now. You can't go or you'll stand out like a sore thumb."

"You've known me for years, Katniss. Do I look like the kind of guy who cares about standing out?" Peeta challenged.

Katniss pointed at him, finger trembling with anger, and snapped, "Don't test me, Mellark. I've been dealing with my people for over four hundred years, I know how dangerous they are, especially to mortals like you. You're staying at home."

She was overwrought with fear. The fear of losing Peeta. Having relationships with mortals was illegal in the eyes of the vampires. In the beginning, when their relationship had only just started, she had thought that she could ditch him if her people didn't like it. But Peeta was just too damn genuine and beautiful and kind and loving... It grew to be too difficult.

Maybe the vampires hadn't cared as much in the past because they thought maybe Katniss was just treating him as a... snack. Someone she kept on hand to feed from when she was hungry. It must have only come to their attention recently that it was deeper than that. That Katniss had become smitten with a mortal. With Peeta. And they didn't like it.

"And you honestly believe that telling me that you're going to go off into the night to meet up with these extremely dangerous vampires is going to make me any less eager to go with you?" asked Peeta. He stepped into the room and shut the door. "You can't shield me forever."

Katniss glowered at him. When her anger reached a certain point, the more savage side of her spilled out. It had happened before. Peeta had wounds that would never heal from times they had argued and Katniss had gone feral. It was a miracle he still loved her, after the amount of times she had fanged him because she simply couldn't control herself.

This time, she had some sort of handle on herself. She pushed him against the wall by the door and kept her hands curled into his shirt, trying to breathe it out by staring at the floor and keeping him pressed there firmly.
"You're okay," Peeta said softly, his hands enclosing over hers. "Don't get worked up."

"You cannot get hurt," Katniss told the floor. "I will not let that happen."

"And you think I will let it happen to you?" Peeta asked back.

"I have stood over your broken body once, Peeta, I refuse to do it again," Katniss snapped. She pushed up on her toes and kissed him, pouring everything she was trying to communicate to him into the action. It was wild and uncontrollable and desperate. He framed her face, gentle hands stroking her cheekbones tenderly. Katniss could hear his heart picking up, feel his blood thrumming beneath her palms. She wanted him to understand but her love was stubborn, and would refuse to see reason.

He was coming with her.

Whether she liked it or not.

"I owe my life to you," Peeta murmured. "Now it's my turn to return the favour."

"You return the favour every day," Katniss muttered, her fingers finding the bite wounds in his wrists. "You stopped me from killing people. Yet sometimes I still hurt you. Sometimes I tear your flesh . . . when I'm angry or confused. When I have no right to. I will forever be in your debt and I will forever be trying to protect you, no matter what you say."

"Katniss"-

"Shut up," Katniss interrupted. "Try all the fancy words that you wish but what I just said is my truth and you cannot change that. I am yours until the day you die and even beyond those years, I will be the guardian of your graveside, for when you are gone I will have no reason to do anything else."

Peeta snatched Katniss' hands and held them to his chest, where she could feel his heart beating. "I am alive now," he reminded her. "That's all that matters. Please. I have to protect you Katniss. That determination you have for protecting me? I have that too. For you. Don't push me away. Not now."

He kissed her, the gesture soft and gentle. Katniss let her weight fall against him, so they both lay against the wall, letting herself be vulnerable and weak in his arms. She loved him. She trusted him.

When they parted, Katniss stepped back and sighed. Brushing her hand through her hair, she returned to the bed and pulled his clothes out from underneath. She tossed them to him and said, "Iron those while I get my make up on."

Peeta saluted her with that sexy, goofy grin of his. "Yes, ma'am."

"When this is over you better bet that we're going to fuck on that damn carpet," she muttered. "Gotcha!"

~HML~

The Midnight Masquerade was a hotbed for vampires. Katniss knew as soon as she set foot inside that at least half of the people waltzing in the ballroom where her people. She didn't have any ball gowns herself and instead opted for the next best thing: an emerald green silk dress that clung to her frame in just the right places with draped fabric that exposed her back. She left her hair in its
usual braid, never having been that talented at doing anything else with it.

The building that the ball was taking place in was out in the woods, a mansion that most of the District believed was empty. Katniss had always known that some of her people dwelled within there, however she had never thought it had been kept in such good condition or that parties where held there on a regular basis. Sometimes a human would wander too close to the mansion and disappear, never to return.

Peeta was gorgeous. She couldn't help glancing at him every few seconds out of the corner of her eye, able to do so discreetly with her white mask placed on her face. They didn't go out often, so she didn't get to see what he looked like dressed up, and now that she had she couldn't look away. It was ludicrous, especially since he was only wearing a white dress shirt with a black jacket and pants. Yet . . . somehow he made them look sexy. Damn him.

The masks were easy to acquire. Katniss still had the first mask her mother had ever given her, back in 1776 when she was to attend her first Masquerade Ball. It was sculpted specifically for her face and could sit on her cheekbones and cover her eyes perfectly without needing a piece of string at the back. Peeta's mask belonged to her father. She took it before she left her family for good, there being no way she could have stayed after being turned.

The first thing Katniss noticed when she entered the ballroom with her hand resting in the crook of Peeta's elbow was the man sitting at the top of the room, on the throne seated on top of a small staircase.

Gale.

Katniss' eyes locked with the Head Vampire's, her harsh glare matched by his smug gaze. He quirked an eyebrow at her and she knew in that moment, even from the other side of the room, that this had been the man who had sent the invite.

The elegant music that had been filtering away in the background reached its end. With a final twirl, the vampires dragged their mortal partners to their bodies and bit into their necks. The humans did not protest, obviously fleshies who had allowed themselves to be put into such a position, and allowed the vampires to slowly kill them.

Katniss placed a hand on Peeta's shoulder and stepped back, concerned for his welfare more than hers. Peeta had never seen vampires kill before and now he had to witness it so swiftly, so suddenly, and in such huge numbers. "Please go," Katniss whispered.

"Not a chance," Peeta replied, voice hard with determination.

When the humans were dead, the vampires dropped them to the floor like they were nothing but trash. Katniss now knew that the room was 100% vampire. She had thought they would be dealing with just the one vampire, not multiple vampires. With Peeta now being the only human in the room-with the rare, AB negative blood that he had-Katniss was more anxious than ever. She was tempted to force him out, but her instinct told her it was too late.

"Katniss!" Gale boomed, his voice travelling far from the other side of the room. "Welcome to the party! I didn't think you'd show, certainly not with your mortal!"

"What do you want?" Katniss asked, her hand still clutching Peeta's shoulder. She was sure her fingernails were digging into his skin but he wasn't complaining. Maybe he knew it was keeping her comforted.

"Tactful as ever," Gale tutted. "Don't just stand there, come in! You were invited, after all, don't
just stand there like an orphan left in the cold."

Katniss’ eyes fell on the vampires below her, down the staircase on the dance floor. They were all looking at her. No, not her. At Peeta. They could smell his blood from where they stood. They would maul him alive if they tried to cross through. "No," she said firmly.

Gale rolled his eyes. "Don't be so stupid. I want to talk to you both. If any of my friends here dare lay a finger on the mortal then I will lock them in a glasshouse so they can burn at dawn. Besides, they've been fed."

The vampires didn't seem to be too happy about this but didn't disagree. AB negative blood was like a vintage wine—rare but worth it—and the fact that Gale was denying them the blessing of tasting it clearly wasn't going down well. However, Gale was the head vampire. What he said, went.

"Stay by my side," Katniss muttered to Peeta.

"Don't worry, I'm not going anywhere," Peeta replied. His heartbeat had accelerated. Katniss guessed it was from the way the many, many vampires below were staring at him like he was a happy meal. When she looped her arm through his again, his pulse slowed down, clearly calmed by the fact she was so close.

Lifting her dress, Katniss descended the staircase with Peeta. It was the longest ten seconds of her life and reaching the bottom wasn't any relief. As soon as their feet touched the ground again, the vampires parted, creating a straight path through to the steps leading up to Gale's throne. Katniss drew herself up taller, and curled back her top lip to reveal her fangs. She hissed at anyone who got too close as they passed, a clear sign to back the fuck off.

It felt like a millennia had passed before they reached Gale. A blonde girl sat at his feet, draped in barely any clothes at all. Her tanned arm was wrapped around his leg, fingernails digging into his calf almost protectively. She was clearly his partner. Love worked differently for vampires. Really, it didn't exist. Vampires partnered up, but it was merely for protection and company. Katniss' case was rare and very, very wrong.

"What do you want?" Katniss repeated, peeling her mask from her face. Peeta was going to do the same but she stopped him. If they got out of here alive, she didn't want the vampires to know what his face looked like. It was bad enough they knew what his blood smelled like.

"You know what I want," Gale grinned. "I want an explanation."

"For what?"

"For your atrocity."

Katniss glowered. "You mean my love," she corrected.

"If that's what you can call it!" the blonde woman spat.

"How rude of me," said Gale, "Katniss, Katniss'... Mortal, this is Glimmer, my partner for nearly a century now."

"My name is Peeta, not mortal," Peeta answered, voice not friendly but not exactly unfriendly either. "I don't believe we've been introduced."

"I'm Gale Hawthorne. Leader of the Panem Vampire Pack and ex-lover of your... girlfriend."

Gale spat the final word, like he didn't believe it could be really called that. Katniss was tempted to
correct him, and tell him that they had married each other long ago, but she feared it wouldn't help their case of escape.

"I was not your lover," Katniss scowled. "We kissed once. It's not my fault you're still hung up on me."

"I don't understand," Glimmer frowned, leaning forward to rest her elbow on her knee. Her dress exposed more cleavage than Katniss cared to see and she rolled her eyes. That could have been her if she had let Gale hypnotise her. "Why go from the Leader of the Panem Pack to a mortal?"

"Because a title doesn't exactly give a person substance," Katniss answered. She smoothed her fingers along the porcelain of her mask and demanded, "Now why have you demanded my presence so suddenly?"

"Why let someone as boring as her drink from you?" Glimmer asked, ignoring Katniss and focusing her attention on Peeta instead. Katniss tensed when Gale's familiar stood up, descended the stairs and stalked closer to them. Her fangs were visible between her ruby red lips, further unsettling Katniss and making her draw closer to Peeta.

Glimmer was the brand of vampire that flaunted herself and the almost unnatural good looks her genes gave her. Many fell for it, as if Glimmer cast some sort of spell, almost like she was an enchantress.

Peeta, however, watched Glimmer approach, completely unfazed by her looks and the usually 'mesmerizing' way she carried herself. Katniss wanted to wedge herself between them but coming off as an overprotective mama bear would not help Peeta at all. It would simply give Gale more cause for concern.

Glimmer only stopped when she was inches away from Peeta and Katniss had to fight every instinct not to make the bimbo back the fuck up.

"You should-if you desire to sell away your blood-choose to give it to someone with more . . ." Glimmer quirked an eyebrow and licked her fangs, choosing to mimic Katniss' own words "... substance."

"Like you?" Peeta laughed. Glimmer's eyes darkened angrily, not having expected such a reaction from him.

"He doesn't traffic his blood to me," Katniss snarled.

"I give it to her because she needs it," Peeta explained.

Glimmer's eyes sparkled with mischief. "What if I say I need it?"

"Back up, blondie," Katniss growled, pushing Glimmer back by the chest.

"Who is your blood boy anyway?" Gale smirked.

"Like I'm going to tell you," Katniss answered.

Peeta's calm demeanour was something to be admired but he was clearly getting tired of being called nicknames that would insinuate that he was nothing but a blood bank. "What would you do with the information?" he asked.

Gale slouched in his throne, entertained by the mortal's question. "Nothing and everything. Many vampires would be fascinated by your identity and would most likely come after you to get your
rare blood"

"If you dare, Gale," Katniss threatened, "I'll kill your twink."

"Twink?!!" Glimmer spat.

"Hush, Glimmer," said Gale. "There's still the case of you hiding a specimen of AB negative, Katniss. You don't hide stuff like that from your family."

"Family?" Katniss scowled. "My family died centuries ago."

Glimmer tutted and glanced over her shoulder at Gale, who barely acknowledged her presence. "I'm impressed by your rebellion," the blonde admitted reluctantly, clearly peeved that Gale's attention wasn't on her. "But you're the one with the twink."

"I'm willing to come to an ultimatum," Gale said, ignoring his partner's childish jibes.

Katniss narrowed her eyes. "I'm listening." Gale's obvious amusement made her feel unseated. She exchanged a look with Peeta, who raised his eyebrows with interest.

"Let me have some," said Gale.

"Some . . . ?" Katniss repeated slowly.

"Of the blood," Glimmer purred.

"No," Katniss said immediately. She was surprised when Peeta had stepped forward, all but ready to give Gale a taste. Katniss jumped forward to stop him. "I know you, Gale, you'll kill him."

Gale parted his white dress shirt, baring his tanned chest, and scraped an 'X' into his skin with his fingernail. "You have my word. I just want a drink of the rarity that is your mortal's blood type."

This was what Katniss had wanted to keep Peeta away from. The vampires would want to drink his rare blood, like Katniss did minus the love and affection she healed the wounds with. To her people, Peeta was nothing but a bag of blood. This was why she had wanted to hide her love from them for so long.

"If you let me, I promise I'll drop whatever charges that could be made against you, Katniss," said Gale.

"I'll do it," Peeta answered.

"No you won't!" Katniss barked.

Peeta shook his head. "It's a risk I'm willing to take."

Katniss grabbed his head. "It's a risk I'm willing to take."

Glimmer reached her hand out and Peeta smiled reassuringly at Katniss before taking it, allowing the blonde bimbo to tug him over to the staircase. The Head Vampire's familiar was a bit too grabby for Katniss' liking, pushing his sleeve up his arm as they walked and examining the scars on his wrist from when Katniss fed from him.

"Wow, pretty deep," she commented as they ascended the stairs. "How haven't you bled out by now?"

"Katniss makes sure not to take too much," Peeta answered, confused as to why Glimmer would
even care. Glimmer seemed like the gossipy type, the sort who wanted to know as much as possible to tell her friends later on.

"Does she feed from you every day?" Gale asked.

"Each night, yes."

Katniss, deciding that she wasn't going to linger around at the bottom of the stairs, marched up behind them, climbing the steps and following them to the top. "You can't stop me from being here," she said once she joined them at the very top. "If you're going to have Peeta's blood, then I'm going to supervise it. Head Vampire or not, I'll snap you in half if I think you're going to kill him, do I make myself clear?"

Gale smirked, smug in his own conceited fashion. "Crystal."

Glimmer, still having a hold of Peeta's wrist, handed it over Gale. Katniss didn't like how it reminded her of the way Peeta would give her his wrist at each mealtime, how the familiar action was being tainted by the Vampire Community and their stupid rules.

When Katniss glanced over her shoulder, at the hundreds of vampires on the dancefloor below, she realized that they were all watching them. "Do they have to be here?" she asked. For them, watching Gale drink from Peeta would be like porn.

"Of course," Glimmer answered. "They're council members, how else will they know that justice was carried out?"

"I don't want them watching this," Katniss declared.

"Grow up, Katniss," Gale smirked. "It's hardly jarring for you."

Katniss' eyes met Peeta's. His baby blues were tinted slightly with nerves, his hand trembling a little in Glimmer's grasp. Gale hadn't taken it from her yet and was instead taking a moment to taunt Katniss and the overprotective streak she'd developed since they had last met.

"Worried they might get off on it?" Gale teased.

"You know they fucking will," Katniss snapped.

"It's fine, Katniss, really," Peeta said, voice matching that of his hands and shaking just a bit with anxiety. He inhaled uneasily when Gale finally took his wrist and stroked his pulse point with his thumb to coax the blood closer to the skin. "I just want this to be over with quickly."

Katniss tried to step closer to her love, to hold his hand and assure him he'd be okay, but Glimmer wedged herself between them, flashing a shit eating smirk in her direction. The brunette was at the end of her tether and was about to club the bitch when Gale brought their attention back to him.

"Since letting you off your crimes is such a huge feat, I want to choose where I feed from," Gale informed them.

"What do you mean?" Peeta asked, glad to be able to take his wrist back from the Head Vampire, even if it was only to be for a short period of time.

"The blood from the wrist is nice but not the most satisfying that can be provided," Glimmer took the liberty to explain, understanding what her partner wanted immediately. Her green eyes locked with Katniss' and she smirked evilly. "Gale wants to feed from his neck."
Katniss fiercely pushed Glimmer out of her way, anger having taken over her and causing her to turn feral. She growled at Gale, teeth bared, and snapped, "You're pushing your luck, asshole."

Gale regarded Katniss with a cool, calm, almost bored expression. "I can sentence you to death for your crimes if that's what you choose. Your mortal would then be subjected to . . . well . . . them." Gale flicked his hand in the direction of the ballroom floor, at the vampires who were goggling at them like a school of fish. They certainly liked the idea of Katniss being sentenced, because then they could have 'the mortal' all to themselves for their supper.

"No," Peeta said firmly, laying a strong hand on Katniss' shoulder. "You can do what you want to me, as long as you leave Katniss alone."

"He'll kill you!" Katniss snapped, not taking her eyes off of Gale.

"No, he won't," Peeta said calmly. "And if he does . . ." He smiled and kissed Katniss' forehead gently. "I can trust you to show him what it means to cross us."

Katniss would damn right show him.

Peeta stepped closer to Gale's throne and quirked an eyebrow. "You going to do it or are you just going to sit there?" he asked.

"You can sit right here." Gale patted the arm of his chair with a self-satisfied smirk. "I would say don't be shy because I don't bite but then I'd be a liar, wouldn't I?"

Rolling his eyes, Peeta did as he was told. Katniss hovered beside them nervously, gripping Peeta's hand tight in hers. She was slightly worried about how Gale was going to do this. Another thing that wasn't that important in the vampire world was sexuality and Gale had a habit of going for anything that had two legs and two arms. Vampires could have sex with humans, as long as it didn't lead to emotional compromise. Katniss didn't want Gale to take a shine to the taste of Peeta's blood and decide that he would be his next partner. Glimmer would surely be annoyed, Katniss would stake the fucker for such a suggestion, and Peeta would be horrified.

Gale pressed his fingers against Peeta's jugular, feeling the blood beating beneath his skin. Peeta's head remained inclined towards Katniss, their eyes never leaving each other. The shining blue orbs were flickering nervously, no longer able to hide the fear that encompassed them. Katniss stroked the top of her husband's hand, wishing that there was some way she could comfort him. Usually she'd sing, or stroke his forehead, or kiss him, but she didn't feel in the position to do any of those things with Glimmer standing over her like a prison warden and the rest of the vampire council gawking at them.

When Gale's teeth sunk into Peeta's neck, however, his eyes fluttered disjointedly-unable to hold the eye contact any longer-and he groaned in pain.

Katniss kept a watchful eye on Gale. The Head of the Vampires clearly hadn't been prepared for just how good AB negative tasted and practically jolted with surprise, his eyes rolling up behind his head in ecstasy. This caused a not entirely intentional, instinctive reaction within the older creature which consisted of him pulling his victim closer to him for more room to drink. Katniss recognized the reaction. When she used to kill people, she did the same thing but on a smaller scale. However, in Gale having the same reaction, it meant trying to tug Peeta out of her grasp, which she wasn't having.

"Watch it Hawthorne," she warned, threading her fingers through Peeta's and squeezing his hand tight, making sure that Gale wasn't able to pull him away from her.
Peeta didn't really know what was going on around him anyway. By this point, the pain mixed with the tiniest piece of pleasure he had grown to associate with being bitten on his neck had pushed him off the point of conscious sanity and he relied entirely on Katniss to make sure that Gale didn't try to kill him. He was so drowsy, he wouldn't notice if the entire ballroom went up in flames.

Katniss didn't like how quickly Peeta was losing consciousness. She slapped the top of Gale's head to get his attention. "Stop," she ordered. The Head Vampire ignored her, intending to get his full fill. "I said stop! He isn't used to being fed on from there, let alone for this long!"

"Oh grow up, Everdeen," Glimmer scoffed. "I'm sure he can take a few more minutes, especially considering the amount of time you've been feeding on him."

"I don't feed on him from there!" Katniss hissed back. She lightly slapped Peeta's face, causing him to groan and his eyes to flutter again. "Peeta, honey, stay with me now. Gale is nearly finished, okay?" She glared at Glimmer, an obvious message to get her partner to stop.

Remembering Katniss' warning from earlier, Glimmer nervously said, "Um, Gale, maybe you should stop now . . ."

Gale raised his hand. Katniss briefly wondered if he was trying to tell them something without having to remove his teeth from Peeta's neck when suddenly he acted. Katniss didn't have time to stop him. She barely processed it as it happened. Gale's hand snatched the mask off of Peeta's face, tossing it away down the steps again. Katniss' heart plummeted, horror masking her features as Gale finally stopped what he was doing and pulled away to discover Peeta's identity.

Glimmer gaped. "It's the baker's son?" she blanched.

Gale got off his throne, causing Peeta's body to slide onto his throne, the mortal too heavy with a mixture of exhaustion and blood loss. Still a bit out of it, Peeta rubbed the holes in his neck, only succeeding in slathering his skin with the blood that was leaking out due to Gale's aversion to actually cleaning up after himself. It didn't really help the situation as the smell filled Katniss' senses, and Glimmer's too, and it took a lot of Katniss' strength to stop herself from licking Peeta's hand like a dog to get rid of the residue blood.

"You fell in love with the baker's boy?" Gale snorted.

"You say that like it's an insult!" Katniss hissed back. She perched on the arm of the throne and rolled Peeta's head towards her, so she could assess the damage. He was still bleeding, the scent arousing the interest of the remaining council members. Gale ordered them out, clearly able to tell that any longer in the room and they were going to lose their control.

Glimmer, who had stood behind the throne observing until now, rounded the throne and teetered on the edge of sanity. Her eyes were locked on where Katniss' hand was pressed to Peeta's neck, desperately trying to staunch the blood flow. "Gale," she said faintly, "can I . . .?"

"No," Gale answered. "Let Katniss lose control first."

Katniss felt dizzy. Her hands were covered in blood and she wasn't sure how much Peeta had lost. He needed to heal, fast, but she didn't know how to make it happen. "Patch him up, Gale, please," she begged. "We let you drink from him, now let us live in peace." Even as she spoke, her mouth was drawing closer to the wounds, because she knew that she could keep the blood in if her teeth plugged the holes. But could she trust herself not to drink?

"Is he even still alive?" Glimmer snorted.
"Peeta," Katniss murmured, desperation in her tone. "Are you with me?"

Peeta groaned, eyes forcing themselves open and focusing on Katniss. "Still here," he smiled.

Relieved, Katniss brushed his hair away from his face, not caring that she was covering him in blood. "Are you in pain?" she whispered.

"No," Peeta croaked.

Katniss chuckled. "Liar."

Peeta coughed and heaved himself off the throne. Katniss stood up immediately, looping her arm underneath his to support him as he walked. "Was it satisfactory enough for you?" Peeta asked Gale, his voice weakened and hoarse.

Gale grinned with self-satisfaction and nodded. "Your services were extremely satisfactory," he said, licking the blood from his lips and teeth as if to emphasize the point.

"Can we go?" Katniss asked.

The Head of the Vampires nodded, not the least bit bothered by having to let them go. This entire exercise had been more of a taunting than anything else, as he had been 100% sure that both Katniss and Peeta would do whatever it took to look after each other. That was what love did to people.

"I'm sorry, I can't. I have to." Glimmer suddenly pushed her way forward and, grabbing Peeta by the head and dragging him down to her level, licked away the blood that had been accidentally rubbed onto his neck. Peeta cringed and Katniss scowled but the familiar did no harm to him. She simply wanted a taste.

Katniss helped Peeta down the stairs, ignoring Glimmer and Gale as they laughed and cat called to them about coming back soon and considering opening a blood bank. They struggled home together, Katniss having to keep her instincts smothered or else she was going to do something she regretted to Peeta because of his blood being exposed to her.

They got home and Katniss laid him down on the sofa, immediately going off in search of medical supplies.

"Katniss," Peeta called faintly. She didn't hear him, at first, and he had to repeat himself. "Katniss."

"What?" she answered, rummaging through the cupboards for some sort of medical kit. They had one somewhere, she used it to patch him up when she bit him during sex, she just couldn't remember where she had last left it.

"You need to drink."

"I'm fine." Katniss found the kit at the back of the cupboard. She grinned and grabbed it, practically dragging out the remaining contents of the cupboard with her as she ran back into the living room. Peeta had his jacket wadded up in his hand, the material pressed tight against his neck. His blood smelt so good, so tempting, that she could barely focus on opening the medical kit.

"Katniss, you're hungry," Peeta murmured. He reached out and cupped her face, forcing her to meet his eyes. "You need to eat."
"No, I don't. I need to patch you up," Katniss answered. She peeled back the jacket that Peeta held to the wound, relived that the blood flow was less severe as it had been before. She opened the kit and cleaned the bite with a piece of cotton wool. "I'm never going to let this happen to you again."

"Katniss, you can't protect me forever," said Peeta. "It was my decision to go with you. I convinced you to let me go. Everything that happened was on my head."

"More like on your neck," Katniss muttered angrily.

"You didn't honestly see this coming?" asked Peeta. "We were walking into a vampire den . . ."

"Which meant that I, as the vampire in this partnership, I had a duty of care," Katniss insisted. She picked the plastic wrapping off the bandage but when she went to cover the cleaned wound, Peeta grabbed her hand and stopped her. She met his gaze with confusion, his blue eyes causing her heart to flutter in her chest.

"Don't cover it yet," he said.

"Why not?" she asked back.

Peeta threaded his fingers through Katniss', holding their hands between them. He winced and adjusted his position on the sofa, so his bite wound wasn't being tugged as much by the cushions as much. "Gale drank from my neck," he said. "You always told me that that wasn't possible."

Katniss looked away, feeling guilty. "It isn't possible," she admitted.

"If that were true then why am I still alive?" Peeta asked.

Katniss sighed. She reached out and brushed the blood stained hair back from his face. Peeta smiled and touched her hair, cradling her head in his hand as he waited patiently for her to answer him. "It isn't possible for me," she admitted to him. "I cannot guarantee that when I start, I will be able to stop."

Peeta considered this. "I trust you," he reminded her.

Katniss chuckled. "I know," she said. "But it's not a matter of trust. It's a matter of the fact that I am a greedy bitch who can't stop once she starts."

This made Peeta laugh. "Okay, right," he chuckled. He quirked an eyebrow at Katniss, the tempting action causing an exquisite shiver to jitter through her body. Damn him. "You are hungry though, right?"

Katniss growled, that voracious part of herself not allowing her to confirm or deny this question. The fact that she didn't say anything, however, caused Peeta to sigh. "Before you patch me up then, you should have a drink."

"From your neck?!" Katniss exclaimed incredulously.

Peeta nodded fervently. "Out of everyone who bit me tonight, you are the one I want the most. Glimmer said that the blood that comes from the neck is the most delicious. I don't think it's fair that those assholes got to have it and you didn't."

"It's not a competition, you know!" Katniss laughed.

"I know!" Peeta smiled back. "But my point still stands."
"Are you sure that you aren't just feeling a bit amorous and remember my promise about the carpet?" Katniss teased. She pushed her fingers through the soft material of the carpet below her knees.

"So I express my concern about your hunger and you accuse me of being horny?" Peeta scoffed, acting offended. "Wow, Katniss, really, you do know how to flatter a guy."

Katniss propped her chin up on her hand and laid it on the sofa cushions by Peeta's side. "Well," she drawled, "am I right?" Peeta shook his head, but didn't stop smiling. Katniss leaned forward so her lips were inches away from his, always having a knack for being a tease. "Should I take that as a yes?"

"I'm going to chalk your attitude down to the stressful night," Peeta purred, closing the tiny distance to connect their lips.

Katniss edged closer to the sofa where he lay, her fingers finding his pulse point and feeling it beat gently beneath his skin. Despite being bitten by Gale, his heart was still beating. Her Peeta was a fighter. "I love you," she said.

"I love you too," Peeta smiled.

When Katniss pushed her teeth through his skin, reopening the wounds Gale had previously made, her taste buds sang with relief when the familiar taste of Peeta's blood filled her mouth. Peeta himself moaned, no longer having to hide how being bitten on the neck reminded him of having sex with his wife. Katniss moaned herself, her hands fisting his hair desperately as she stretched his head back and further exposed his neck to her.

"Ah-argh, K-Katniss," Peeta stammered, his hand finding her hair and threading his fingers through the strands. She pushed her fingers through his hair in what she hoped was a comforting gesture as now that she had started she physically couldn't stop herself until she was satisfied. Each breath Peeta took made his body shudder and Katniss couldn't help feeling utterly aroused by how she had the control over his life.

Tearing herself away was the hardest part. She tried to pysch herself up, but it didn't work, and multiple times to failed to remove her teeth from Peeta's skin. She was taking too much, and it was scaring her, and she knew she shouldn't have done this in the first place.

Was this what he had wanted? Did Peeta want her to lose control? Would he rather die than let himself be dirtied by Gale Hawthorne's fangs? Or was it a strategic move? Katniss' heart plummeted. Of course it was. It was a trick. Peeta knew she wouldn't be able to stop and in not being able to stop she would kill him by draining him dry. If she drained him dry . . . The only way to save him would be to . . .

Turn him.

It was like Peeta realised that Katniss had found out what he had done. He laughed breathily, the hand which had been in her hand trailing down to caress her cheek. Katniss ripped her fangs out with a pained gasp, screaming in horror when she saw how pale he had become. "You tricked me!" Katniss yelled at him.

Peeta, despite being on death's door, smiled weakly at her. "You've been protecting me for so long," he choked, "now it's my turn to do the same. Please. Turn me. It's what I want."

"There are more like Gale out there," Katniss cried. "People who will not take too kindly to me turning you into one of us."
"From what I've seen tonight" - Peeta gulped, gasping for breath as his life hung in the balance. Katniss gripped his hand tight in hers, conflicted over whether she should do what he asked for or not-"They are angrier about the fact that I am a mortal. If you turn me, we can live in peace. Forever."

Katniss could not lost Peeta. She had thought there would be a day where she would be prepared for his death, where she would be able to cope with the loss of him by her side, but as she watched the blood pour from his neck, taking his life with it, she realized that she was never going to be ready. She needed him forever, just like he needed her. But there was only one way for that to happen.

Peeta placed his hand on Katniss' shoulder, drawing him towards her. When their faces were inches apart, he placed a loving kiss on her lips, pouring every piece of affection he had for her into that one gesture. "I love you," he murmured.

"And I you," Katniss whispered back. "I want to be with you forever but . . . I'm afraid. What if you grow bored of me?"

Peeta laughed. "You silly woman, how could you ever believe I would grow tired of you? You are like the sunset to me, Katniss. I know you will always be there, and no matter what happens you will always come, and you astound me every day by just how magnificent you are."

Katniss' free hand, which pressed against the bleeding wound in his neck, was getting coated in a thick layer of bright red blood. "Eternity will be ours," she whispered, a smile breaking out on her face.

Peeta nodded, blue eyes sparkling. "Always."

Katniss' lips moved down to Peeta's neck, her teeth reattaching themselves to the bleeding wounds. With a pained gasp, Peeta fist the back of her shirt in his hand. It didn't take long, however, for the grip to loosen as she drank whatever was left from his system.

When it was all gone, Katniss bit into her wrist, causing blood to surface from the wounds. She straightened up, her eyes filling with water at the sight of her love so weak and frail looking. Pushing her fingers through his hair, she swiped her pointer finger along the pool of her blood and held it over his open mouth, so a single drop fell into his system.

The remainder of the night was painful. Turning was a horrific process, one which Katniss had barely been able to handle herself. Seeing someone she loved so dearly suffer through it was tenfold worse, especially since she had always told herself that she would never allow him to experience such pain. In a way, she felt weak for giving in. They were lucky they had no neighbours, for Peeta screamed his way through the night. Katniss had to hold him down while he seized and shook. Her blood was slowly replacing that of his own, turning him into her fledgling.

Just before the sun rose the next morning, the seizing stopped. Katniss loosened her grip on him and blinked away the tears in her eyes. "Peeta?" she whispered hopefully.

His eyes snapped open. The beautiful blue glowed like wildfire. Peeta smiled, revealing two fangs along the top row of his teeth. Katniss smiled with relief and they met in a passionate kiss.

Eternity was theirs.

End Notes
Happy New Year everybody!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!