Felinity

by ForestFairy

Summary

Katniss feels a bit under the weather lately. A visit from the green-eyed monster helps to face a new chapter of her life head on.

Notes

Felinity is my submission for Prompts in Panem - Peeta's Paint Box - Day Four: Green

"Minou! Minou, where are you?" A shrill female voice cuts through the soothing silence of a summer afternoon in District 12.

Katniss returns from a prolonged but unsuccessful hunting trip to the woods. She sets a foot on the meadow, breathing in the peacefulness of the day. Small white butterflies are dancing in the sunlight, searching for the sweetest scented flowers they can find. The deep green meadow in full bloom is a rare sight to behold at the end of August. During these last months District 12 has seen unusual amounts of rain - a season with no draught made the lush nature flourish this year.

Miriam Graniter, clothed in dark pants and a tight fitting black shirt, appears like an intruder in that scenery, a trespasser who doesn't understand the unspoken rules of the woods and the meadow. This is a place that should always be silent. Not a place for high pitched screaming.
"Hello Mrs. Mellark," the girl shouts when she makes out Katniss in the distance. 'Took her long enough to realize she isn't alone' Katniss suppresses the urge to press both hands over her ears when she walks silently over to Miriam. Anything to stop that shouting.

"Have you seen Minou? The kitten of my little brother? We last saw her yesterday and he is in tears - panicking that something happened to her! Oh, her short hair is silver-colored and she has a small scar over her left eye."

Miriam wears her black curly hair in a braid, her complexion dark. Her grey eyes however, appear pale and ghostly.

Katniss shakes her head. "Haven't seen her, Miriam." This girl reminds her of someone who is long lost.....

Miriam looks around the meadow. "She couldn't have gone into the woods, right? If she did, I'm afraid I'll never find her again."

"I checked all the snares recently," Katniss says and points to the lone rabbit she is carrying. "There was no cat. I think focusing on town might be your best bet. Sometimes even cats need a bit of time to themselves."

Katniss moves again in the direction of the former Victor's Village, leaving Miriam and her issues behind. She feels another headache coming. Lately she has been feeling unwell and it affects her hunting.

It seems that Peeta has to put up with another rabbit-based meal again. "When you're used to squirrel, rabbit is quite the feast," he had told her a couple of days ago. They hadn't eaten squirrel since the rebellion - there had been no need to return to the scrawny animal as their meat resource. Her game bag is getting lighter with each passing hunt and that Peeta cracked that joke about squirrel made it clear how tough it must be for him and a knot of familiar guilt settles in her stomach. Peeta works hard physically and needs his strength.

There is a sense of belonging when it comes to feeding Peeta. It is her job to hunt fresh game and cook for him and she gladly took over these responsibilities after they moved in together. It invariably satisfies her when Peeta comes home after a long day at the bakery to a well cooked meal. He sits at their kitchen table, smiles and tells her stories about his day. Looks genuinely happy about whatever she dishes up. He makes sure to eat every last bite - and she loves watching him eat.

Nowadays, she is tired all the time, especially out in her woods, her natural environment. Being outdoors always had a relaxing effect on Katniss but feeling fatigue after a day of ineffective hunting is new. There is a lot of game in the woods during this time of the year. She just doesn't find the energy to track a deer or shoot a pheasant. So every day she checks her snares - and rabbit it is.

Peeta would never complain about the lack of variety in their food. Him and her, they both remember those days vividly - when food was scarce. On a night a few years ago when they were lying in bed together - naked and baring their souls to each other - Peeta had told her that he went to bed with a growling stomach most nights. He dreamed about his father's bread and cakes. Seeing them - even making them - but not being allowed to eat, that had been the story of Peeta growing up.

She had told Peeta a horror story of her own, shared one of her deepest secrets. Katniss had been so hungry after her father died that she had eaten mud. She had been a bit ashamed to admit
it, but that was before Peeta threw her the bread, made her find hope again. She had regretted that meal dearly when she got very bad stomach cramps later. Hoping her mother would realize why her daughter had been sick was a hope held in vain. Mrs. Everdeen didn't lift a finger to get any sort of work for her starving daughters sake.

Katniss sighs and enters their house in the former Victor's Village through the back door. Buttercup is lying on the windowsill in their sitting room, following her movements with indifferent, cloudy eyes. She walks over to the cat and caresses him lightly, scratching a spot behind his right ear. Buttercup loves this particular way of petting and should be purring, but tonight something seems off. Buttercup looks like Katniss feels. Old, shriveled, done. Old? Yes, Buttercup is an old cat. A grandfather cat. He had been Prim's cat and Prim died 15 years ago. When the little duck first brought Buttercup to their small home in the Seam he had been a kitten. But maybe, after all these years it is simply time to go for old Buttercup? How long do cats live anyway? Unable to even look at those sad eyes anymore Katniss walks into the kitchen.

Blinking away a few drops of dry tears she starts to skin the rabbit in the sink and prepares the ingredients needed for a hearty rabbit stew, hurrying because Peeta will be home soon. From the kitchen window she can overlook the street of the former Victor's Village. Katniss opens the window and listens to the quacking of Haymitch's geese. She should buy one from Haymitch - roast goose sounds more appealing than another week of rabbit - so she goes into the cellar where they store some white liquor. Haymitch still drinks, but not as much as he used to. When Katniss wants something from him a bottle of his favourite drink works wonders.

She returns to the kitchen - planning a short check on the pot of stew simmering on the stove before she leaves for Haymitch's - when she hears a girlish laugh through the open window. Surprised she looks up and sure - out there on the street before her house stands Miriam, holding a grey kitten in her arms. In front of her, with his back to the kitchen window, the steady figure of a blonde man can be seen - Peeta is home.

She wants to call out a greeting and lifts her fist to knock on the window when he starts to talk in a low, husky voice, good and simply Peeta...

"Look at you! You're such a pretty pussy, right? Yes, you are! Aww....I can't help it, I just have to pet you, little kitty cat."

He laughs deeply and gently scratches the small animal resting in Miriam's arms under the chin.

Katniss' mouth falls open, fist stopping in mid-motion. She can't help but stare through the window, unable to cope with what she just heard, her cheeks flaming red - even though nobody is present to witness her embarrassment.

Peeta is using that voice. The voice nobody is allowed to hear, nobody but Katniss ever gets to hear - or so she thought. His bedroom voice. His voice only gets like this when Peeta is hard for her, when he is incredibly turned on and he wants her to get soaking wet. Wants her to lose control, to thrash and moan. When he lies between her legs and he opens them up to get her ready, licks his lips, makes eye contact and shortly before he takes that last step, that first tentative taste with the tip of his ton...

"Thank you for getting her out, Mr. Mellark, you're a life saver! My brother will be so happy to have Minou back. I still can't see how she managed to get stuck in Mr. Abernathy's old tool shed."

Katniss almost forgot that Miriam is present and is having a conversation with Peeta. She shifts uncomfortably to the left side of the window, pressing her legs together. The girl looks at Peeta with adoration shining in her youthful face, a faint pink blush tinting her cheeks.

Remembering how she knows Miriam, the feeling of familiarity is back. She is the daughter of a
coal miner. A real Seam girl. But Miriam never lived in the Seam as she was born in District Thirteen during the rebellion. Gale got her family out in the woods. Katniss revokes the image of Miriam's heavily pregnant mother, who'd been about twenty when District 12 was destroyed. The family returned and helped to rebuild the town, where they reside now. 'She could be my daughter,' she thinks. If she'd been pregnant in the Quell for real.

Miriam looks like a younger, healthier version of herself. And from behind Peeta passes as a sixteen year old. This scene Katniss is witnessing out there seems like a rerun of the famous last moments of the 74th Hunger Games that are shown on TV every year. Thanks to Plutarch Heavensbee Katniss knows the pictures of her and Peeta's interaction in the first arena by heart. One thing to be thankful for is that they never show Katniss' mortifying moment of hesitation after the rule change. That short instant where she nearly shot Peeta in his heart, that second she will never not feel deeply ashamed for. They had been filmed from a total of seven camera perspectives, including one that filmed Peeta from behind.

There is one difference. Teenage Katniss never looked at Peeta like a lovesick little girl. But now someone does.

A young, darling girl. A girl whose body isn't a battlefield, criss crossed with ugly scars. A girl who is not worn out, her features gaunt, because she tortured herself too many long nights about useless 'what-if' scenarios in her head, scared to let go and unable to move forward. A girl that doesn't know the harsh reality of war, pain and depression. A girl that would never hurt the one she loves and lash out brutally, denying to even acknowledge him for days.

An ill-favoured feeling, similar to loathing builds up in Katniss. Directed towards that girl out there, who has done nothing wrong, only searched for her little brother's lost kitten. What is this?

"Did the green eyed monster visit you tonight, my baby?"

Katniss turns around in shock. The kitchen is empty. Distressed, she loses her grip on the white liquor bottle which crashes loudly on the floor, alcohol and shards scattering as far as the kitchen table. It's been over twenty years since she had a visit from her father's ghost. She needs to get away, away from the kitchen so she runs upstairs, to the bedroom and slams the door behind herself. They do have locks in here, but the keys are downstairs, so she cannot lock the door.

Panicking she makes for the adjacent bathroom, shedding her clothes as she goes. Opening the tap she lets warm water in the tub, then sits down on the toilet seat. Every instinct in her told her to flee, so undressing and drawing a bath doesn't make sense. Why did she go into the bathroom instead of leaving the house for the woods?

Because the woods are her father's woods. Through all those years and the death of Prim the memory of Katniss' father had faded from year to year. His voice, his face, his smell - all the memories seemed so pale - almost gone. Katniss' mother insists that she looks like him, but Katniss can't see it when she sees her reflection in the mirror. Her father had been in his thirties when the mine explosion occured. The same age she is now, she shockingly realizes.

She remembers a few things about her father quite vividly, mostly the things he taught her about the woods and hunting. But there is another little conversation she had with him that never left her. She had been quite young back then, a first grader. There had been this girl in her class, she cannot even remember the name now, and that girl had arrived in school with the most amazing satchel she had ever seen a child possess in District 12. It had been beautifully crafted from dark green leather and adorned with an embroidery of small red flowers. The girl must've been a Merchant girl, no Seam family could have afforded a visit to the tanner. Little Katniss had felt irritated whenever she looked at that girl and her nice satchel. Her own satchel had been a hand-me-down from her father, old with a broken latch. She caught herself thinking about pushing the
girl into one of the mud puddles in the school yard, ruining her satchel and wiping that happy smile of her face.

Her father had a fine perception of his daughter's moods and she had grudgingly admitted what had her so worked up and told him, ashamed and in tears, how she had wanted the other girl to suffer. That was the first and only time he told her about the green-eyed monster. "Katniss," he had said. "Don't ever be ashamed of your feelings. Dry your tears, little one. You did want to hurt her, but you didn't act on these feelings. That was the wise thing to do. Let me tell you something. The green-eyed monster, it does visit all of us from time to time."

"Even you?" she had asked.

"Even me," he had said. "It shows itself when we feel unhappy because other people seem to have something that we want for ourselves. That could be a beautiful green satchel, an ability or even the love of another person."

"What can I do to stop these feelings? I don't like them."

Her father had smiled at her. "Be confident in your own self. Remind yourself of everything you have instead of begrudging others. You have a beautiful voice, a talent for song. The girl might wish for nothing more than to sing like you, but she never will, because she doesn't have your voice. Think about it, Katniss. Aren't there so many wonderful things you have?"

"I have Prim. I love her more than anything," she answered. Her father gave her a hug.

"See? Your little sister loves you dearly. There are many who would wish for a sibling like that, believe me. Think about it whenever the green-eyed monster visits you, that's the best weapon against this fiend."

And she did. Katniss' jealous streak vanished with that conversation. She had never been the possessive type and while she had felt envious sometimes, the feelings usually didn't fester and disappeared quickly. Until this afternoon came around. Trembling Katniss stands up and walks slowly over to enter the tub. She feels bloated, alien in her own skin, but sinking down in the warm water has a soothing effect. Closing her eyes she tries to relax when she hears Peeta coming up the stairs. She hasn't locked the bathroom door so he enters the room and she opens her eyes to look at him. He looks worried.

"What happened in the kitchen, Katniss?" he asks. She just shrugs.

"Tell me. I come home from work and to see a broken bottle of white liquor on the floor! Did Haymitch come by and threw it at you? I swear, I'll give him a piece of my mind. I don't want him to take out his drunken frustrations on you." Peeta is angry.

"No, it wasn't Haymitch. Well, the bottle was for Haymitch, I slipped and lost my grip on it. Sorry, I'll clean it up later."

"I already did that," Peeta says and sits on the edge of the tub, looking at her face. "Please tell me what's bothering you. You left the stew on the stove without turning it off to take a bath? That's unusual."

She wants to deny her fears, lie to him, but feels that she simply cannot do it tonight. Instead she closes her eyes again and starts,

"Don't you ever think of how...of..." She swallows. Talking about her feelings is still one of the hardest things.
"Think of what?" He tries to help, she knows, tries to coax it out of her.

"You're...just...You're inconsiderate, Peeta. I mean, you just don't think of...Buttercup's feelings at all, do you?"

She groans inwardly at her lack of skill when it comes to this. That came out all wrong. She opens her eyes to look at Peeta's face, expecting him to laugh or look like she lost her mind. Instead he looks serious.

"That's not true. I can see that Buttercup is distressed. I just haven't figured out what exactly is bothering him, although I have a few ideas. Do you have any theories you'd like to share?" Peeta's voice is thoughtful, no hint of teasing can be heard. He has a way of making things easier for her.

"Buttercup isn't getting any younger. I fear he is not going to be with us much longer," she answers in a small voice.

Peeta's blue eyes seem to shimmer when they meet her gaze. He holds out his hand and caresses her cheek. "Can I wash you?" he asks.

What? Why is he asking to do that now? Intimacy, specifically sex, hasn't been on Katniss' mind for weeks. During their marriage there always had been days when one of them wasn't in the mood. Strangely enough Peeta sensed when she didn't want to do it, so she didn't have to outright deny him often. The last time she had swatted his wandering hands away had been a week ago, when they were cuddling on the couch. They had been kissing for some time and Peeta's hand had found her right breast, cupping it firmly. It hadn't been a gentle soft squeeze, more of a possessive gesture. Knowing that she enjoyed it when he was a bit rougher with her, their passionate kissing had indicated that she was okay with the direction he had chosen that night. But it had hurt. Surprised that she couldn't stand the sensation of his strong hands on her tender breasts she became irritated with herself, pushed him away and told him she wasn't in the mood. He had accepted that and didn't pressure her for an explanation. That she wasn't horny didn't mean that Peeta felt the same, but he didn't let it show and never went cross with her.

"Okay," she says, feeling bad. He smiles happily and takes her green washcloth, dampens it in the bath water, puts a bit of soap on it and gently begins to rub her back.

"I want to make you feel good," he says and presses a soft kiss on her shoulder, while he continues to work on her body.

And he does. It's been too long, far too long. She feels that wonderful swelling between her legs. Arousal had been drowsing in her since she overheard his conversation with Miriam. Thinking of the girl and her stupid kitten makes her uneasy again. She had missed that low voice of his, aware that this was entirely her own fault, too shy to tell him that she needs to be the only one who gets to hear it.

"You didn't think, did you? About Buttercup and how he would feel when he heard you talking to that Mir - Minou. Can't you see how that must've hurt him? He thought he was special but then you go and tease and pet another cat without a second thought. As if he isn't important. As if he means nothing to you. Buttercup hurts, dammit." She lets her fist connect with the water, drops splashing around, her voice hoarse with uncried tears.

He stops his ministration of her body and lets the washcloth slip into the water. Their eyes meet and she sees understanding dawning in his. She feels small, petty and so unworthy of him that her heart aches physically. Turning away she wonders if he finally has enough of her sullen moods.
She is acting like the first grader who had just met the green-eyed monster for the first time.

Peeta still wears his white working garment, but seems to pay that no mind when he pushes one arm under her legs and puts the other at the small of her back, lifting her body out of the bathtub as if she weighs nothing. Water is dripping down his clothes and the bathroom floor when Katniss looks at him shocked, gripping his neck so she won't lose her balance. He just stands there, holding her and looks into her eyes without saying a word. The air in the bathroom is humid, too warm.

"Kiss me," he demands, sounding almost angry. She feels weirdly vulnerable lying in his arms, bared and dripping wet, while he is dressed. When she tries to wriggle out of his arms he holds on even tighter.

"Kiss me," he growls again and then she complies, tired of fighting him. As soon as their lips meet hotness pools between her legs and spreads out to the tips of her nipples, transforming them into hard little nubs. Peeta is an expert at kissing and she missed him so much that she doesn't even feel ashamed when she bucks her hips, trying to rub herself against his stomach. He keeps her hips steady so she's not succeeding in her desperate attempts of getting friction. He stops kissing her and starts to move towards the door, carrying her over the threshold like he did the night after their toasting. He gently places her in the middle of their bed, his soft treatment of her body in stark contrast to his earlier actions. Wandering to the foot of the bed he starts to undress while she follows his movements in wonder, never breaking eye contact.

He pulls down his pants and underwear and Katniss gasps. She expected him to be semi erect - she hasn't touched him yet - but he looks like he is ready to come any moment. Peeta takes in her body, crawls on the bed, covering her up with his hulking form. Hopefully he won't waste much time with foreplay, she is so wet that she won't need it. Pushing her legs apart he settles in between and gives her a long kiss. She returns the kiss eagerly. Then Peeta starts to talk and she nearly comes, listening to his wonderful voice.

"Listen to me," he says. "Buttercup has nothing to worry about." He nips at her neck and positions the tip of his hardness at her entrance.

"There is only one kitten in District 12 that gets to feel..." he pushes into her, "...this."

"Uh..." Katniss moans. "Peeta..." She feels so full, so happy, so at home that she isn't mad when he thrusts hard, two or three times, and comes with a low moan, spilling his seed deeply inside of her a few seconds later. Only raises her eyebrows at him as a bit of liquid is leaking on the mattress when he slips out - he spent a lot more than usually. Peeta sighs blissfully and settles his body beside hers.

"I'm sorry. I've had a hard on for what felt like hours. I wanted to come home as fast as possible to get rid of it when I heard a cat's meow from Haymitch's shed. I rescued Minou and fortunately her owner just walked into the Victor's Village. The whole town is searching for this kitten, can you believe it? So gladly I didn't have to go back and gave the cat to the kid. She probably thinks I'm a creepy pervert, by the way I talked. Gosh, that's so embarrassing." He chuckles.

"You really had a hard on all this time?" she asks and he nods.

"How did you plan to get rid of it?"

"I tried hard to control myself these last weeks. But I haven't jerked off in a while, so I planned to do it in the shower or, maybe..." He hesitates, a faint blush visible on his ruddy cheeks.

Maybe have sex again. Katniss feels horrible for not realizing how much he must've suffered. He
never complained, not once.

"Oh, no. Peeta, I'm so sorry."

"Don't be sorry. I understand. You're not feeling good, so there is no need to apologize to me. Today I couldn't hold myself back any longer. Seeing you so jealous was a real turn on. I nearly came in my pants when you were grinding against me in the bathroom."

Katniss flushes red. "I wasn't feeling jealous. I mean, Buttercup."

He groans. "Can we stop using Buttercup metaphors now? This is getting weird."

"Oh, okay." She feels stupid and a bit ashamed.

Peeta grins at her then and says "Or maybe not. I could work with some more cat analogies."

"Huh?" He slowly begins to crawl backwards to the foot of the bed, and then settles down, kneeling on the floor positioning his prosthetic leg carefully and then looks up, patting the mattress.

"Come down here, to the brink." She obeys by sliding down and looks at him, curiously.

"Open your legs, Katniss." His hands are caressing her calves and she feels a happy pinch of anticipation in her stomach. But then it'll be nicer for him if...

"Peeta, I'm going to the bathroom for a second, okay?"

She starts to get up but he grips her ankles tighter, pulling her back and says deeply, "No, you won't. You stay here, like this. I want to see your pussy."

The way he says *pussy* creates a sensation of scalding hot arrows that hit the core of her body repeatedly. Her nipples pucker up in an instance and her clit throbs in response to his words. She opens up her legs without hesitation and he hums appreciatively.

"There you are," he moans, obviously enjoying the view, taking her all in while licking his lips like a cat in front of a cream-bowl. "Such a sweet little pussy. So beautiful."

"Peeta...no...ahh. It's a mess down there," she whimpers, feeling embarrassed and turned on at the same time. The urge to press her thighs together is getting stronger, but Peeta holds them apart.

"Not true. There is nothing more lovely than the sight of your pretty pussy, freshly fucked by me." He grins up at her impishly and she knows he is trying to make her come through talking only. It happened before, he is definitely capable of making it happen again. Her Peeta always had a way with words.

She wants more than his words tonight, the desire for his tongue on her is overwhelmingly strong. Hoping he won't tease, she spreads her legs wider and says, "Take responsibility, Peeta. You have to clean...ahh...up the mess you made."

She's gripping his hair, trying to push him closer to her core, and starts to moan when his nose almost touches her clit. He moves even closer, nuzzles her slightly with his chin and she groans when he begins to gently stroke her stomach with one hand while the other grips around her thigh, holding her in place.

"I will," he says, his voice slightly hushed by her pubes. "In true cat fashion, I will lap you up. Lick your pussy clean and make you come."
And then he does as promised. Licks, nips and sucks as if his life is depending on it, makes her come and scream so loud that every cat in the Victor's Village hisses angrily in response.

Later they go down to the kitchen to warm up the forgotten rabbit stew and Katniss tells Peeta the story of the green-eyed monster. He even remembers the name of the girl with the green satchel, a friend of Delly's who survived the bombing to Katniss' great surprise, but never returned to District 12, opting to stay in Thirteen.

"Your father sounds wise. He must've been a great dad," Peeta says. "My father was more withdrawn. He didn't talk much and I mostly remember conversations about the trade. Long lectures on how to make sure that batter won't cling to the pan. Stuff like this."

"My father seldom talked about the mines with us. He did sing songs for me and Prim before bedtime. I remember being proud that such a wonderful man was my father. We were a happy family, even in poverty," Katniss answers, feeling nostalgic and then they don't talk for a few moments. Muted meowing can be heard from beneath the table and Peeta takes Buttercup into his arms, combing through the cat's orange fur. After a while Katniss breaks the silence.

"What I told you earlier about Buttercup, I didn't make that up. He is dying," she says, her voice exhausted. Peeta nods dejectedly. There is nothing they can do to stop the inevitable.

"Let's make his last days with us as nice as possible then. We'll prepare his favourite food and take him to bed with us, things like that. We will simply show him that we love him as much as we can."

"That's a good idea." More silence follows. "Peeta, listen I have to apologize about the way I acted these last few weeks. My emotions are off-kilter and I can't seem to find the energy to even hunt properly! Making you suffer, I wasn't being fair," she sighs and continues, "Please believe me, I don't mean to be so weird. You deserve so much more, really it is almost as if I'm coming down..." 'with a sickness' she wants to say, but stops.

No, something is wrong here. When was the last time she bled? Katniss stares at Peeta in amazement and he looks back at her, his blue eyes twinkling.

"You're pregnant," he says.

"I'm pregnant," she answers, wonder evident in her voice. They are going to be parents. He smiles sweetly at her, still petting Buttercup, seemingly at peace with the world and content with the moment. Why isn't he acting more surprised?

"Wait a minute. You knew! You knew and didn't tell me!" Her voice is laced with accusation.

"Did not," he chuckles. "I had an inkling, but I wasn't sure and I wanted to wait until you told me yourself. I don't know your body as well as you do, you know that."

And that's the simple truth. That she had known, in the deepest corner of her mind, before Peeta even suspected a thing. She had been afraid to admit what was really going on and ignored all the obvious signs.

"That's so you, Katniss," Peeta laughs and she smirks. She reads like an open book to him. He lifts up Buttercup's chin and scratches him there, obtaining a low purr in the process.

"It's natural. You were scared. Fortunately green-eyed Buttercup here came to the rescue. He
just knew what to do in helping you face the challenge of impending motherhood.

He grins at her so widely that she can't help but grin back at him and then she starts to laugh, a high, elated laugh and she can barely stop. Peeta joins in the laughter and all the anxiety and worries feel insignificant and gratuitous. They will return, as they always do. But this moment here in their kitchen is perfect and she can't help but think that their baby will surely be born under a lucky star. For the first time in her life she feels truly invincible.

The love Peeta and her have for each other is still getting stronger each day. Katniss does not doubt that it is here to stay - for eternity.

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