Summary

Peeta and Katniss celebrate their first anniversary. Peeta surprises her with a “hands on” experience, giving her a night she’ll never forget.

Notes

Characters and some story references all belong to Suzanne Collins. This is a tribute to her work.

Special thanks to beta Hutchabelle.

Peeta worked most of the day to ready the house for their first anniversary dinner. Katniss isn't one to celebrate silly things like birthdays and such, but it's important to Peeta to honor their first year of being together as a real married couple. The odds have not been in their favor, yet they have survived and are together in spite of their many challenges. Peeta's determined to pay tribute to their love today.

As he paints the icing on the cookies he baked just for this occasion, he grins to himself as he remembers his proposal to Katniss last year.

It was four years after Peeta returned home from the Capitol and since he and Katniss started walking the path of renewed friendship and trust. Peeta knew that many people in Panem thought...
the two were officially married, even though they were not. Their ambiguous relationship often pulled at Peeta's emotions. He knew Katniss was his once she pronounced her love for him, but he wanted more. He wanted permanence, so he took the risk.

He remembered Katniss' love for his shortbread cookies. She savored the crisp bite of butter and sugar that melted delicately on her tongue. He decided to put his plan into action by making a batch of cookies and decorating them with beautiful flowers, especially the Jonquil, the happy yellow and white flowers that had been in full bloom and would eventually be in her bridal bouquet.

On two of the cookies, he painted the words in dark icing "Will You" and "Marry Me?" He had two other cookies painted "Yes" and "Okay." Peeta was not willing to accept any other answer. His persistence was evidently successful as they exchanged vows on the meadow just one month later with a small group they had gathered for the special occasion.

Haymitch, who also served as best man, fulfilled the role of Katniss' father by giving her away. It was fitting as those three had developed a relationship beyond that of family. Just as soldiers in the military often become closer than kin, so do mentors and their victors, especially after all they endured in the revolution.

Peeta had confided in Effie about the proposal so she could start the paperwork for the marriage license. There was a small District Hall set up for District 12's Capitol business, but Peeta didn't want to stir the pot and make their nuptials known to the public. Effie knew the right people to get it done legally and quietly.

Smiling at the memory, Peeta silently thanks Effie, especially because of her help today so he could obtain the ingredients needed to make Katniss' favorite lamb stew. Effie still has connections and is able to occasionally purchase and send luxurious food from the Capitol to District 12.

Sae took on the task of making the stew so Peeta could tend to other duties. She plans to bring it over before Katniss comes home. Peeta encouraged Katniss to get out of the house today, go hunting, forage fresh berries, visit Haymitch, and take care of business she has in town. He hopes she doesn't come home early as there is much more to be done.

He looks proudly upon the cookies he baked and frosted, especially the two most important ones he created just for today. He can smell the delicious scent of rolls in the oven, perfect for dunking in the stew. He's eager to see Katniss' surprise when she walks through the door.

Peeta likes pushing Katniss when it comes to romance. She's more of a realist but still enjoys his frequent attempts to woo her by creating a sensual mood. He plans to do something nice for her tonight, something that will involve all her senses and be done solely with her in mind.

He got the idea when he was drawing in his sketch pad one afternoon. Peeta noticed that Katniss was staring, but he wasn't sure if she was daydreaming or truly watching him. He turned slightly to see that she was eyeing his hands as he drew. She broke her gaze once she realized Peeta caught her looking at him. He lifted an eyebrow and grinned.

"See something you like, sweetheart?"

She shook her head. "Okay, I'm guilty. Have I ever told you how much I love your hands?"

Peeta lifted them and turned his palms back and forth for Katniss to view. "These old things? It's the cookies I make with them, isn't it?"

Her mood became serious as she moved toward him and took them in her grip. "These are the
strongest and toughest, yet gentlest parts of your body. You can lift bags of flour and knead dough, even used a sword when you had to, but I've also seen these beautiful hands draw a person's form perfectly, paint a sunset just as it appears in the sky, and touch me ever so softly." She brought his hands to her lips and pressed them against her as she sighed a pleased moan.

Peeta was amazed by her admission. He had been oblivious to Katniss' attraction to his hands. He took them for granted even though they had proved to be useful for many tasks. That was the moment he knew the perfect gift for her on their anniversary. Combining a mixture of his hands' roughness with their strength and dexterity, he'll give her a massage she'll never forget.

He nods to himself, satisfied with his plan, and readies the house for her impending arrival. Everything is in its place when Katniss strolls through the front door. Sae already dropped off the stew and the aroma infuses the entire house. Candles flicker in the entry and lead into to the dining room and bedroom.

When Katniss passes through the front hall, she feels her stomach rumble. The scent of dinner waiting brings a smile to her face in spite of the sting in her feet and ache in her back from a long day of errands and hunting.

She tried to stay out as long as possible since she realized Peeta was up to something for their anniversary. She doesn't know what he has planned but is well aware of his romantic schemes. It crosses her mind that if he went to the lengths of making lamb stew, she might have to skip dinner and take him right to the bedroom, or better yet, have him on the kitchen table. But actually, she'll eat first, then take advantage of him.

"Peeta? I'm home," she calls, wondering where he's hiding.

"I'm in the kitchen, Katniss, dishing up the stew."

She enters the kitchen, eyes wide like a child looking at all the colors of candy in the mercantile. "Oh, Peeta. I think I love you even more, if that's possible." She gazes at the sight in front of her wondering how each day she's that much more attracted to him. His rugged handsomeness shines through his wavy blond locks and the soiled apron that he proudly wears as he cooks.

"I knew I would get you with the stew, but that's not all. I have a couple more surprises in store for you, Katniss." He lifts the apron over his head, puts it on the hook, and looks his wife in the eyes. He notices she appears tired, but content. "I missed you today. Did you overdo it? You look exhausted."

Katniss nods. "I'm a little achy from all the walking but it's nothing this meal and your attention won't cure."

Peeta places his hand at the small of her back, walks her over to the table, flashes his charming grin, and pulls out the chair for her to sit. "My lady," he teases as he motions for her to take her place at the table.

Katniss attempts her best curtsy but stumbles a bit as she sits. Rolling her eyes, she jokes, "I told you I'm not made for this fancy stuff."

"I can't argue with that, but it's still fun to watch you try. Remember the party at President Snow's mansion? I think we pulled that off really well. We had everyone fooled. You'd never know we were from District 12; let alone you being from the Seam."

She gives Peeta a playful jab in the thigh with her elbow for that comment, but the two laugh at the vision he describes.
Peeta changes his tone, standing behind Katniss' chair with his hands on her shoulders. "I want you to relax tonight. Let me do everything for you. This night is about us and how happy I am that you're my wife...for real." He swipes her long hair aside to expose her bare neck underneath.

He lowers himself to place his soft lips against her sensitive skin. He whispers as his hot breath lingers above her, "I love you, Katniss. Are you ready for dinner?"

Katniss nods but is silently overwhelmed by everything Peeta has done for her. She's used to being the one in control, the girl that makes the rules, but Peeta is asking her to follow his lead. She doesn't like giving up her authority or allowing herself to be putty in someone else's hands, except maybe with Peeta. She trusts his hands. She knows he's always going to protect her and care for her. She's never felt more vulnerable but completely safe at the same time.

Peeta serves dinner and sits across from her, the candles flickering a dim glow that causes shadows to dance across their features. Peeta tears off a piece of bread and offers it to Katniss. Her lips turn up slightly into a smile as she recognizes the man who used to be that boy. The boy who, many years ago, risked bodily harm in order to feed her.

He is the same person but more mature, more comfortable in his own skin. She admires who he has become in spite of all they had to endure. His blue eyes have not changed, nor has his generosity of spirit and selflessness. He's shown multiple times that he is willing to sacrifice himself for Katniss, and she recognizes that as she gazes upon him.

Once they're finished, Peeta removes the plates and takes them into the kitchen for cleaning. Katniss notices he has a slight limp to his gait. She rises from the table to follow right behind him.

"Peeta, you're limping. You shouldn't have done all this for me. Are you hurt?" Katniss' worried expression amuses Peeta, but she doesn't find it one bit funny. "I'm serious, Peeta! It's not a laughing matter if you injure yourself, especially over something like making me dinner."

He can't help but cherish what she says. This is the same girl that put her life in danger by helping him when his leg was so infected he almost died. She faced almost certain death to obtain the medicine needed to heal his leg, and he has never forgotten that. If she hadn't cared, she would have left him by the river to perish. Instead, she protected him like he was family, and for that, he will always be grateful.

"I'm fine, I'm fine. C'mon, I have a surprise for you. We'll have dessert a little later." Peeta takes a little bottle from the counter, places a quick kiss on Katniss' nose and spins her around to face the opposite direction toward their bedroom. Katniss is puzzled, not certain what Peeta has in store for her.

"What's in the bottle? What's the surprise?"

"Now, it wouldn't be a surprise if I told you. Are you going to trust me?" He pushes her lightly to keep her moving forward, even though Katniss is so stubborn that she stops several times to turn to face him. "Move it, Katniss. If you fight me, you won't get to feel these hands all over you."

He places his hands on her bottom and scoots her forward again. Peeta notes a little smile form on her lips and her obvious attempt to keep it to herself.

"Okay, I won't fight it." Secretly, Katniss is aroused when Peeta takes charge. And if he's threatening not to use his hands on her, then that's simply out of the question. She'll do everything he says, for tonight at least.

"I can tell you what's in the bottle, but let's get you undressed first." Peeta follows Katniss into
their candle-lit room. He sets the bottle on the nightstand and wraps his arms around her waist. His hips press against her back as his arousal stirs. He murmurs in her ear as he nips at the lobe, "Take off your blouse."

Katniss closes her eyes and flicks the first button loose. She works her way down as Peeta's hands move against her bare skin searching to unlatch her bra. He succeeds and Katniss shrugs her shirt off her shoulders. Peeta takes it and the bra in his grasp and places them aside.

He spins her hair up into a bun, holding it on her head while he kisses the nape of her neck softly. "Remove your pants now, Katniss. I want you completely naked." His lips move along the curve of her shoulders, wandering to either side, before they trail down her spine.

As Katniss slips off her pants and tugs off her boots, she is overcome by her body's responsiveness to Peeta's hands. As his lips and hands glide down her back, she's already throbbing for him, her wetness evidence that his seduction is working.

"Lie on your stomach, Katniss, and I'll tell you about the oil in the bottle."

"It's oil?" She's curious what he plans to do with oil. He mostly uses it for cooking and baking but never in the bedroom.

"Mmm...hmm," Peeta hums, enjoying the sight of Katniss in all her nudity lying prone on their bed. He removes his shirt to make the work easier. "I concocted a mixture of almond oil, vanilla, and a pinch of cinnamon so I can massage you. It's edible, so I can remove it easily." He licks her from the base of her spine up the slope of her low back.

She quivers as he sits atop her, straddling her bottom. She had not expected this tonight, but her senses are alive, anticipating the moment his hands make contact. Katniss is certain she has every ridge and scar of Peeta's hands memorized since she stares at them incessantly.

She hears him open the bottle and pour before setting it back down and then his two palms squishing together to share the oil. The fragrance of the vanilla, almond, and cinnamon is heavenly. It reminds her of Peeta's cinnamon buns. He only makes them on special occasions because the spices and vanilla beans are very difficult to obtain.

"Ah, Peeta, mmm. So good." The feel of his hands dispersing the warm, slick oil along her low back gives her such pleasure she fears she may fall asleep from the calming movements alone.

He uses the heel of his hands to rub into her low back, just above the curve of her bottom. As his hands sweep up, his thick thumbs apply gentle tension onto the pressure points adjacent to her spine. She remains quiet and enjoys the sensation as her mind drifts off to the moment she knew she wanted to spend the rest of her life with him.

It wasn't the kiss that changed her mind but the thought of living without him that spoke volumes to Katniss in the Quarter Quell. When Peeta told her that nobody needed him, reality crashed around her. She finally realized that she indeed needed him, and when she made that confession, the thought of only one of them coming out of the arena alive was too much to bear.

She would have never admitted it to anyone at the time, but that was the moment she realized she did not want to die and leave Peeta. She wanted both of them to live, somehow, someway. She never knew there was a plan for revolution, never thought of Peeta being held prisoner and tortured while she was in her own mental hell. She loved him, she recognized it, and her motivations changed after that kiss on the beach.

Peeta's hands slow when he sees a single tear trickling down Katniss' cheek. "Katniss, what's
wrong? Want me to lighten up?"

She quickly wipes the tear with her fingers and turns to look over her shoulder. "No, Peeta, it's perfect. This whole night has been like a dream. I was just thinking about how happy I am that we're together. Keep going. Your hands feel wonderful."

Peeta applies more of the aromatic oil to his palms, repositions himself at the end of the bed, and works his thumbs up her legs, starting from her ankles and up her calves. As he approaches her thighs, he leans forward and kneads her muscles like he does bread. His hands slide up to her glutes, his long fingers massaging those and her hips too.

"Mmm…Peeta. Don't stop. It feels incredible…" Blissfully, Katniss savors Peeta's large warm hands touching every one of her muscles. He works them to the point of relaxation then moves on to the next until her body seems made of jelly.

Her heightened state of pleasure is apparent as Peeta decides he's ready to take it one step further. He walks his fingers up to her entrance, coats them in her natural wetness, and slides one in.

She gasps, then smirks at him over her shoulder. "I like your methods, Peeta, but you know I can handle more." They hold each other's gaze as he adds one more finger causing her jaw to drop and her hips to jerk with the pressure.

"Is that all you've got?" She teases, knowing how turned on he gets when she coaxes him.

He shakes his head, but before adding a third long finger to her opening, he removes them and massages her little bundle of nerves sitting just above. Peeta watches Katniss writhe as she brings her ass up to him and arches her back in ecstasy. He takes three fingers and fills her, wiggling them inside as he thrusts in and out. She loses control of her movements. Her moans tell Peeta that he's doing exactly as she wishes.

As he watches his bride get off from his ministrations, he feels his pants tighten uncomfortably. He uses all his will to resist pulling himself out and taking her right then. He distracts himself by focusing on her pleasure, just how this night is supposed to be.

While he continues to work her bud and finger her center, he takes a lick of the oil off her hip, then her back. He tastes her skin with his tongue and mouth, cleaning the delicious oil off her body.

All of Katniss' nerve endings are alive with pleasure. She hovers so close to climax that she has difficulty speaking and breathing. She exhales a loud moan and quickly takes air back in, her body on the verge but unable to hit the mark. She wants to scream at the top of her lungs, but she's mute as the impending climax takes over her senses.

Peeta recognizes that Katniss is holding her breath and teetering on the edge. He stops what he's doing for a moment to get more oil on his fingers.

"Katniss, look at me." She huffs and turns her head to meet his blue eyes. He notes her grey eyes appear charcoal black since she's in the midst of heightened arousal. "Watch me make you come, my darling."

She nods and watches, her breathing becoming more evenly paced with her focus on Peeta. He shows her his fingers dripping with oil. He moves his hand to place it right at her center, slowly moving up her slit, circling around her button, then moving back down, and massaging the entire area.

"Oh fuck, Peeta. That's it. Yes! Yes! This feels so gooooood."
Peeta is proud he has the ability to reel her back in when she's losing control, especially in the bedroom. "Keep watching, Katniss. Don't lose focus."

She nods and remains intent on his actions. As his hand continues to work her, he leans down and gently bites her bottom. She moans and arches, moving her ass closer to him for more. He does it again on the other side but less gently this time.

That's what it takes for Katniss to lose it. She screams his name, uttering words Peeta can't understand, as her body tremors then collapses forward onto the bed. Peeta feels her climax cover his hand, and he smiles at his ability to orchestrate her response.

He's practically delirious from smelling the vanilla and cinnamon mixed with her sex. His dick throbs, captive in his pants, wanting to break loose, but he wants to smell her, be right there to catch any of her sweetness that still drips from her. He lies onto his back and buries himself under her, raising her hips so he can lap her up. His tongue finds everything his fingers just pulsed.

"You're so delicious, Katniss. I want to stay under here all night."

Katniss, euphoric and wild-eyed, sits up to move onto his face. Peeta always sets out to please her in bed, but this is the ultimate pleasure. She doesn't know what to do with her hands while Peeta's mouth sucks and nibbles her clit as his tongue probes inside her. She randomly pinches her nipples, twists her hair above her head, and rests back on her arms all while riding Peeta's mouth.

"Katniss, give me the oil."

Panting now and so close to coming again, she takes the bottle and drops it next to him while trying to remain upright. He's able to continue licking, nibbling, and probing while he blindly pours some oil onto Katniss' low back, just above the crease of her bottom. He caps the bottle and tosses it aside, then dips his fingers in the oil.

He trails the oil down her crease and traces further in to give her even more stimulation. He brings her bottom forward so he can circle her with his tongue. She chants his name repeatedly, "Peeta, Peeta, oh Peeta," as her body dances above him.

Her sweet, musky scent covers him fully now so that Peeta can't hold back anymore. He removes his pants quickly and takes his hardened length in his hand. He strokes himself as Katniss writhes on top of him while spouting off words he only hears from her during sex. Her body quakes and more fluid rains in his mouth.

The intensity of their lovemaking increases as her eyes shut tightly with only sporadic looks down to watch Peeta giving her orgasm after orgasm. Katniss is close to exhaustion when her final wave hits. She feels her stomach tighten and clench, the nerves between her legs throb, and her entrance has nothing to squeeze. Her pussy feels like a vise with nothing to grip.

"I need you, Peeta, now!"

He knows exactly what she means and he wants to act quickly. Peeta can tell she's spent, so he rolls her onto her back quickly and slides in.

She smiles and sighs, "Ah, that's it, just what I need."

*I need you.*

Peeta remembers Katniss' words spoken so long ago. At the time when he felt his life was disposable, Katniss stepped up. She needed Peeta. She admitted it. At the time, Peeta wasn't sure
if she was caught up in the moment or trying to please him, but now he knows better. They need each other and always have.

Katniss wants him to come undone with her. She is wrapped up in his love tonight and wants him to feel what she feels. She tightens her legs around his waist and raises her hips to take more of him. His thrusts slow to a moderate pace. He hovers over her by supporting himself on his forearms so that his face is only an inch above hers.

"You are my world, Katniss."

She gasps as she feels his length enter her slowly. He hits her at all the right spots, lighting her insides up as if she's aflame. His gaze intensifies as he readies himself for orgasm. He buries his face into the crook of her neck and groans as he comes inside her. The feeling of her ignited walls squeezing him tightly as he pulsates within is beyond compare.

They hold their embrace for some time before releasing, and Peeta flops onto his back. They're both tired and sweaty but smiling wide grins as they gaze at one another.

Still on her high, Katniss rolls to her side and strokes Peeta's strong chest. "I love you. You know that, right?"

He reaches up to push the stray hairs from her face. "I know you do. But do you know why you'll love me even more?"

She shakes her head, a grin forming as she wonders what other surprises he has in store for her.

"I made you shortbread cookies for dessert. Give me a minute." Peeta jumps out of bed, puts on his pajama bottoms, and heads to the kitchen to make some tea.

Katniss, covered in her silky robe, joins Peeta in the kitchen and pushes herself onto the counter while they wait for the water to boil. "Can I have a cookie while we wait? You made me work up an appetite for something sweet." She winks and takes the cookies from his hand.

She gives the cookies a second glance as she reads what's painted on them. The cookies he hands her are not the beautiful floral ones. They have words painted on them, just like his wedding proposal cookies. She chuckles to herself wondering how he was able to wait so long before asking her the big question she knew he had to be thinking about all day.

"Real" and "Not Real" the cookies read. "Are we still playing this game, Peeta?" She laughs, trying to delay the inevitable answer he's dying to know.

He moves in front of her, his hands circling her back as she looks down to him from her high perch on the counter. "Well, I know one of your appointments today was a visit to the medic. Are you going to tell me, or do I have to pry it out of you?"

Katniss inspects the cookies in her hands and asks, "Should I eat the wrong one and show you the correct one or the other way around?"

"However you want. I'll leave it to you." Peeta has anticipated this conversation all day, but now he's a nervous wreck. "Just tell me already, Katniss."

She pops a cookie in her mouth and lifts the other one for him to see. Her wide grin should be his answer, but he wants to see it with his own eyes.

"Real? Real!" Peeta exclaims as he reads the cookie his wife holds out for him. "Oh, Katniss, baby, I'm so happy." He bends forward and kisses her stomach. "I can't wait to see if it's a girl or a
boy. Are you okay with this?"

Katniss becomes quieter, shifting to a more serious mood. "I'm terrified, but excited. We need to create a new family, just for us. And we're in this together, right?"

Peeta closes on her lips, gives a soft kiss, and murmurs, "Yes, together."

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