When Two Worlds Collide

by Lovebeauty01

Summary

My outtake of CF. Mostly Canon Divergent with some Canon Compliant. Peeta and Katniss have returned from the 74th Hunger Games alive. When two strangers show up in their world, things began to change and secrets that should have stayed secrets start to come out. Will they be able to survive the changes, especially Peeta, or will they crash and burn? LOTS of LEMON/SMUT.

Eventually this will contain Black Dagger Brotherhood Characters. It will be many many chapters before they are mentioned in the first half and they should be prominent in the second half of the storyline.

Notes

I do not own The Hunger Games or works herein of Suzanne Collins.

I do not own Black Dagger Brotherhood or works herein of J.R. Ward.

There...I can't be sued.
It was decided. They were going to split us up; even after we had protested. Hearing Johanna call to me, I turned my back to him and obediently followed her with the coil in hand. I never turned around. I never knew that this would be the last time I'd see him.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, I was roughly pushed to the ground. Searing pain shot through my arm like fire. My world blinded by pain, I barely registered the words, “Stay down.”. Upon believing my attackers words, I diligently stayed put until I remembered something important. Peeta!

Struggling to stand, I ungracefully made my way through the large boulders that had been meticulously place to keep me from running. Slowly, I reached the top and looked around. Taking two steps forward, I was so tired. It had amazed me that we had been in the arena for less than two weeks. Two weeks and I had watched Peeta nearly die from electrocution. My heart had stopped when he wasn’t moving. I know in my heart that things were different now, but I couldn’t shake off the impending doom that something bad was gonna happen.

I should have never left him standing there. His eyes searching mine as I backed away from him. I could feel his lips still warm on mine. He tasted faintly of saltwater. He would never know the secret I carried. The secret that could change who we are. Even though, I know his love for me would never change as mine wouldn’t.

See I, Katniss Everdeen, the Girl on Fire; was pregnant with Peeta’s child. A child he would probably never see. Never become a father too. Our lives were rapidly changing and I wasn’t sure if we were ready.

Life was about to change....
The stakes were higher....
The cards are drawn......
It was now or never.....
Because for us the Game wasn’t over yet......
Prolouge

Chapter Notes

I do not own The Hunger Games herein the works of Suzanne Collins. Some parts of each chapter will be Canon Compliant. There. I. Said. It

Prologue

This all started long before the Victory Tour, I think. Things tend to become fuzzy after a while; well at least for me, it does. Peeta and I had been dancing around one another since we arrived home from the Games. I knew his declaration of love for me was real. I, on the other hand, wasn’t so sure. Don’t get me wrong, I don’t think I could ever stand to lose him, but my heart wasn’t completely there.

I’m diverting myself from the topic....... 

Things were quiet on the home front. Peeta had his baking, I had my hunting. Though it’s not like we need the meat anymore. Just a quiet reminder of days I used to have. Something to keep me occupied, my mother had said. When Gale wasn’t working in the mines; which was every day but Sunday, he was with me. There had been a few times while hunting I would catch glimpses of those I had killed. The fear that shattered through me was something he could never understand. Poor Gale....I suspected he loved me. And proved it when he kissed me. It took me by surprise. His kiss was warm upon my lips. Foreign. I had kissed Peeta so many times beforehand that tasting Gale was foreign. He tasted like warm spring water and tree bark. Like the forest I had grown up in. The one I would cherish for the rest of my days. I never knew if I could return the love he professed for me.

“I had to do it one time....” He had whispered before disappearing from me. I was going to wait till next Sunday to speak with him again, but he never brought it back up. I soon forgot about it. I had too or it would drive me insane; well more insane than I already was.

Even at home, the new home at Victor’s Village, we settled into a routine. Prim had her schooling but was learning from our mother her art of healing. She was becoming quite proficient. I was happy for her, at least she wasn’t pulled into the world of my madness.

The day everything began to change was when our handlers arrived. At first I thought they were spies from the Capital to keep an eye on me. In case I wanted to start a rebellion like President Snow had accused me of. Which was absurd. I never wanted a war with anyone. Maybe live a normal life in my District for the rest of my life.

My handler’s name was Charlotte and looked to be in her early twenties. Not much older than me. Her partner, Henry, was her mate, as she called him. He was assigned to Peeta. They were an interesting pair. She had made an offhand comment how they were government experiments gone wrong.....whatever that meant. They didn’t speak or act the way we did in District 12. When I asked them where they would be living at she just laughed and said “Two houses down from you.”

I shook my head at her but accepted her answer. Little did I know they were there to keep an eye on me and Peeta, as well as push me and him together.....
Chapter Summary

All my sections are 20+ pages long so I will be splitting the up as I go along. This is part 1 of Changing the Tides....

Chapter Notes

Done said it. I. Don't. Own. It.

The nightmares started shortly after I returned home. Seeing the faces of the ones I killed haunted me. Seeing Rue’s face haunted me even more. At first the dreams didn’t bother me much. I explained them to Charlotte and she told me it reminded her of PTSD. I wasn’t sure what it meant until she described the symptoms to me.

“Maybe one day you’ll get past it. Most don’t, but taking comfort with people who have experienced something similar will help you mentally recover.” She told me one afternoon while we were taking a walk through the woods.

She and I had become accustomed to walking and I had learned to open up to her and talk. It was strange the things you would tell someone after knowing them a short time. Believe me, when I say it’s weird for me to talk, it’s weird. What I didn’t know was that she knew, I think, that my nightmares were going to progressively get worse and that she told my family to never intervene.

My screams shattered the night. My breathing erratic. Holding my head in my hands I couldn’t shake the images. The screams in my head echoed the ones coming from my corporeal body. It wasn’t just those I had killed, it was all the victims of the last Hunger Games. The faces I didn’t pair a name too. Accusing me of killing them. Accusing me of not saving them.

I heard someone banging on my door, calling out to me, but couldn’t move myself to leave my bed. The tears flowed down my face. Making me a sopping mess I’m sure. In my quiet hysteria, I felt a pair of strong arms wrap around me. Pulling me into a sea of comfort and calm. I could smell an array of spices. Of dillweed and rosemary. I felt safe.

“Shhh...Katniss. It’s all over. It’s just a nightmare.” I heard Peeta whisper in my ear as he held me close. I looked up into his eyes and I sincerely believed him.

“Will you stay till I fall asleep?” I asked not trusting myself to tell him anything about my nightmares. He nodded and settled back into my bed. Closing my eyes, I breathed him in deeply before falling asleep.

He wasn’t there the next morning.

Coming down the stairs after my bath, I saw my mother in the kitchen. Her faint smile let me know she hadn’t slept well in my nightmare waking. Taking a seat, she offered me breakfast, which I wholeheartedly accepted. Sipping something in her mug, she looked at me.
“Nightmares are getting worse, aren’t they?” She asked tentatively. I nodded softly, not meeting her eyes.

“How did Peeta end up in my room last night?” I asked dying to know.

“You wouldn’t open your door. It was like it had something barred against it. Prim and I fought against the door, but we gave up when we couldn’t budge it. I waited close by while she ran to get Peeta.” She paused explaining. “Did you want Gale instead?”

Gale. He wouldn’t understand what haunted me at night. Shaking my head at her, “No, Peeta understands better than Gale would.” I confessed.

She arched an eyebrow at me but didn’t ask any other questions. Excusing myself, I put my shoes on and left the house. Was I crazy for barring my door against my family? I knew they couldn’t help me. I didn’t want to wake them every night, but my screams would pierce the night sky as if I were a lost soul. I hated Snow, I hated the Games, I even hated Peeta for knowing my weakness.

“Katniss!” I slowed my walk hearing my name being called. Turning, I saw Peeta coming from the village. He must have visited his parents. I waited for him to catch up. My instincts told me to run. Run from him and his questions. His smoldering gaze as he looked through me. Like he knew me better than I knew myself.

“How are you?” He asked innocently enough for any passerby, but he was really asking if I had recovered from last night.

“I’m....all right, I suppose. You?”

“A bit tired, but I’ll live.” He said simply without any stretch of accusation. Peeta, always putting others before himself. Including me. Making sure I was OK at all times.

“Katniss...I...” he started stepping toward me. His hand coming to touch my face gently. I weakened at his touch.

“I’m headed for a walk past the fence.” I interrupted hoping he wouldn’t follow. He never did. Always left me in my solitude.

“I’m headed home...” He said looking a bit deflated. Like last night had opened a crack between the two of us. I never asked for him to come to my rescue, but he had and deep down I was grateful.

“I guess I’ll see you. Might drop by and see Henry for training.” He turned to walk away from me. My mind screaming silently for him to stay and scare away all the horrors. “You know, Katniss, you really should talk to someone about your nightmares. I know Charlotte might listen.” Between the lines he was saying ‘since you won’t talk to me....’

I nodded mutely and turned away from him. Desperate to distance myself before I lost control. What he didn’t realize was that I did talk to Charlotte. She listened, but she couldn’t give the insight that I was looking for. Climbing through the fence, I made my way to a small clearing where I could sit and think.

I’m not sure how long I sat there. Hiding in the daylight, but nightfall was coming soon. Prim would be home from school. I was eager to listen to her talk about her day. Always more interesting than the sinkhole of my scattered emotions. Dusting off my pants, I climbed back through the fence. Passing our old house, and into the village. Gale wouldn’t be done for the day until late. So I couldn’t hide behind him. Making my way home, my mind ignoring the sounds of nature. My feet leading me down the path to the house. I paused ever so briefly in front of Peeta’s
house before moving on.

The night passed fruitlessly for me. I was so discontented since last night that I barely acknowledged everyone scattering off to bed. Laying down in mine, I sipped the mug mother had left for me. Never noticing the sleep syrup in it, I drifted off to a deep sleep.

Waking the next morning, I woke up in the mood to hunt. Most of the time, I never took the shot but it felt good to have a bow in my hands. Dressing in my old hunting clothes, I snuck out of the house not wanting a run in with my mother.

Halfway there, I heard my name again. Sighing, I recognized the female voice. Turning around I saw Charlotte running. “Where do you think you are headed too?” She asked me coming to a stop.

“Hunting....Or at least the illusion of hunting.” I replied.

“I’m coming with you.” She told me giving me the look like I better not argue with her. I had once and didn’t like the outcome. Nodding in defeat, I let her follow. She wasn’t dressed for hunting but I knew she could be as silent as a deer. Charlotte had skills she never talked about. She was better with a bow than I was.

We wandered aimlessly for several hours, only stopping long enough to eat lightly before trekking onward. Unfortunately, for us, it was hot but Charlotte didn’t break a sweat unlike myself. I had removed my jacket, rolling up my sleeves to catch a break.

“I miss the country...” She muttered stretching in the soft grass.

I looked at her sharply. “You do?”

Smiling sheepishly, she nodded. “I do. We have a home in the country in New Britain. I’ve missed the quietness. The noisiness from the Capital is overwhelming but here in District 12; it's nice to be out here.”

“New Britain? It’s not in Panem, is it?”

“No, it isn’t. Henry and I are from across the sea. When the world started to crumble. Our home, Great Britain, was swallowed by the sea. Most of the culture was lost. Saddening, don’t you think?” she paused looking at me. “For us, we had learned long ago that something like this was going to happen and we, along with the Queen and Parliament, worked to move the country elsewhere. Took us nearly a decade but we managed to move before everything was lost.”

I turned looking at the clouds, wondering if I could survive if I lost my home. The thought saddened me greatly, but looking at Charlotte, I knew that if she could do it, so could I. The overflowing sounds of nature in perfect symphony would naturally send me to sleep but since we weren’t allowed to be out here; I kept my guard up.

“My nightmare was horrible the other night that my mother brought Peeta to take care of me.”

“Oh, did he?” She asked curiously. “How did it go?”

I shrugged lightly, “It went as well as expected. Though he must have snuck out while I was sleeping. I’m sure my mother had something to do with it.”

I turned back to her and opened my mouth to say something when something on Charlotte beeped. Sighing, she looked at her wrist. “I need to go. Henry’s paging me. You’re coming back to the village before people start wondering where you are...” I started to protest, but the look she gave me changed my mind.
“Fine, I’ll tag along..” I sighed looking at her before getting to my feet. “You know we walked quite a ways away from the fence.”

“I know and this is why you’re gonna hang onto me.” She said smugly. Grabbing ahold my arm, she moved. I literally mean it too. The world flew around in such a blur that I could hardly catch my breath. The colors blended together in an amazing way that Peeta would have loved it. I’m not the creative type, I couldn’t tell you the differences between the colors.

In seconds, we were back at the fence. To this day, I will never know how she did it. I was informed of what she and Henry were but never understood. Letting go of my arm softly, she grinned at me.

"Mmm.....it's been so long since I could stretch like that. You have no idea how much I've missed it." She said looking quite pleased with herself. I, on the other hand, fought to steady myself. It was fun but I'd rather walk a slow pace.

"I think from here on out, I'll walk a slow pace if you don't mind?" I could hear her laughing as I stumbled away from her. Intent on getting back home before I fainted. I quietly made my way home. Never stopping to look at anyone, I stole a glance toward Peeta's noticing he was outside with Henry.

I had to stop and admire how Peeta put up with Henry. He stood before him, almost yelling strange things to Peeta. Charlotte suddenly appeared startling Peeta. I had to laugh as he tripped over himself. As Henry turned to Charlotte, he kissed her heavenly before admonishing her for scaring Peeta. She didn't look the least bit sorry. Leaving them alone, I turned back to my house. Heading in, I went to my room to lay in a hot bath before dinner. Laying there, I could hearing my mother cooking something delicious. A few minutes later, I heard a subtle knock on my bathroom door.

"Come in..” I called.

Prim's head poked through the door, "Hey, when you're done, I'll braid your hair for you...” she offered. Smiling, I told her that it would be nice of her to do so. Seeing the door close, I closed my eyes and breathed deeply. Soon the water started to become cold and I shivered. Getting out, I dressed quickly and my feet led me to the dining room. Both my mother and sister looked up at me and smiled.

It was nice to have them, I realized. It was nice to be alive and sitting down to dinner. We made small talk about our day and somehow in the middle of my daze, dinner was over and plates were being cleared. What was on my mind so much that I would daze? It had to be my nightmares or it could be that I was still reeling from what Charlotte had put me through earlier. Excusing myself to bed, I slipped gently into sleep. I hoped that I would be able to sleep all night. With no nightmares or screams; maybe something nice for once. Dreams I had before the Games....Boy was I wrong again.
Changing the Tides Pt 2

Chapter Notes

Will always try to warn if there's fluffiness or smut. You have been warned.

Blood. It was everywhere. The whole world around me seemed to be drenched in it. Like you could swim in it and never drown. I begin to swim, hoping I could find my way to shoreline. The farther I got the more disturbing things became. All of a sudden, my hand touched something. Grasping it, I pulled it toward me. The horror that laid in my hand forced me to scream like a banshee. It was a head. The boy from District 4. As I threw it, more heads begin to pop up; surrounding me. I couldn't think, I couldn't move, I couldn't breathe.....

Thrashing in my bed, I couldn't scream. Choking, I fought trying to free myself of my entrapment. Lunging to my side, I felt something solid beneath me. Clawing at it, I scrambled to get to the safety of something .....anything.... Fear raced through me as I struggled to breathe.

As I fought to save myself from my nightmare, something grabbed me. Held me tightly. Whispering words that I couldn't understand. Finally after minutes of struggling, I could make out words like...'breathe Katniss...' 'I'm here, you're OK....' The voice was comforting, strong, and for me, very patient.

Trusting myself, I opened my eyes and my room surrounded me. The soft hues of my walls gave comfort that I wasn't in sea of blood. A hand stroking my hair, I twisted my head to see my rescuer. Peeta. Again? Sighing in relief, I smiled at his presence.

"It's OK Katniss....the nightmare is over, I'm here." I heard him whisper. I don't know if he knew I was looking at him, but his arms around me felt right. He rocked us gently for a few more minutes before he stopped to check on me. His smile spelled relief.

"Hey...." he whispered.

"Hey..." I whispered back gently.

"Are you OK?" he asked me worriedly.

I nodded sitting myself up a little. "I am....I think. Though my dream was horrible. More-so than the last one I had. How did you get here?"

"Your mom came and got me. She said you were having another nightmare. I think she was afraid you would hurt yourself. Do you want to tell me about it?" He asked tentatively.

I chewed my lower lip, but nodded. "I was in a sea of blood. I was trying to swim to shore when I felt something. I looked at my hand and it was a head, the kid from District 4. I threw it back but then more heads started to pop up. I couldn't breathe or move. I was scared out of my mind Peeta." I explained to him shuddering.

He nodded quietly, his own shudder raced through him, "So that's why you were choking for air?"
I nodded burying my head into his shoulder like his scent and presence could chase away my nightmare. Holding me gently, I sighed looking up at him. We were both gonna be exhausted tomorrow, but right now, I couldn't sleep. Turning my head toward him, his eyes were closed. As they opened, he begin to move. "I need to get you into your bed and myself home before your mom gets suspicious...." He said with resignation.

Letting me go, he held his hand out for me. Taking it, our bodies collided easily. Waiting with baited breath, his hand coming to caress my cheek, I felt myself melt against him.

"Katniss...." he breathed before his lips touched mine. It was a feather kiss. Intimate. Like he was afraid I would bolt. When I didn't run, he pressed a bit harder bringing us closer together. The heat from his body wrapping me into his warm embrace. Pushing me slowly into the wall, we steadied ourselves. A hunger begin to grow within me, the same one that I had started to feel in the cave, and I knew it was going to be hard to contain ourselves if we let go. Resting my hands on his broad chest, it was quite a while before he broke the kiss.

We didn't say anything, but he took me by the hand and led me to my bed. After I climbed in, I ached to kiss him again. Tugging him down to sit, our fingers caressing, I leaned forward as he captured my lips again. This time with more gusto; like he wanted it more. Pulling him closer to me, my mouth parted. As our tongues touched, gentle moans escaped us. A fire shooting down our spines, a hunger that was clawing its way to the surface. Giving into it, Peeta pushed us back onto my bed, hovering gently over me. Inching his way on top of me, his hands coming to rest on my hips, my hands playing in his hair. As the kiss deepened, breathing became a bit harder to control. I had never felt like this. Not even when Gale kissed me, nor any of the times Peeta and I have kissed for the cameras.

His hands began trailing my hips till I felt his fingers brush skin. My body electrified around us and it was destined to consume us. My body arched into him as I felt every inch of him tremble. Reaching under his shirt, my fingers skimmed his upper back. I wanted more but hesitation swept over me. Breaking the kiss, I felt his lips trail down my neck slowly. Leaving me breathless.

"Peeta!" I gasped lightly feeling his tongue sweep my pulse point. My heart racing as he continued to kiss my neck.

"Katniss....." I heard him moan my name, "we.... have....to stop."

I didn't want to. Goodness knows I didn't. I wanted to feel his hands on me. Touching me everywhere before he took me. Kissing me one last time, he lifted himself off me, the warmth of his body gone. Leaving me cold and alone. He didn't looked at me for a minute. Like he was trying to get himself under control.

"I need to get home." He sighed as if he didn't want to leave. I nodded at him, not trusting my voice. Afraid if I opened my mouth, I would ask him to stay. Stay in my bed, keeping me warm, safe and incredibly vulnerable to his touch.

He nodded at me and started to leave. Leaping off the bed, I followed him to my door. With one last look he disappeared from my sight. Sighing, I closed the door, my body trembling, my lips swollen and bruised from his kiss. How was I gonna handle seeing him later? We had training in the morning and I'm not sure if I could ignore him.

Laying back into bed, I knew it was going to be hard to sleep. As I laid there my mind wandered to earlier. How his lips and hands felt on me; how I craved for his touch. Rolling over, I tried to shut my brain down and force myself to sleep.

"Katniss, it's time for you to get up." I heard my mother whisper as she gently nudged me awake.
Grudgingly, I nodded and pushed myself into sitting position. Handing me a cup of hot chocolate, I nodded at her gratefully before she left. Never saying a word about last night. Did she know what happened? I don't think she knew, I hoped.

Taking a sip, the caffeine startling my senses awake. My brain clearing away the fog. I sat there for a moment, thinking about the day ahead. Consisting of running for several miles, practice with my bow, and who knows what other things our handlers had in mind. Closing my eyes, my mind drifted back to last night. Peeta kissing me, touching me, chasing away all my fears. My body trembled as I stood up to find clothes.

Slipping them on, I had to steady myself as a wave of desire raced down my spine. My thoughts were consumed of him. How in the Hell was I gonna get through today? Sunlight peeking through my window reminding me that I was late. Cursing softly to myself, I raced down the stairs and out of the house without saying goodbye to anyone. Catching up with everyone, who were already stretching, I quickly made my apologies and begin stretching.

Minutes went by and soon we were running. Peeta and I keeping the same stride. I kept my eyes averted from his. I couldn’t face him after last night. Once this was over today, I was going to hide away from him.....like forever. Of course, Charlotte knew something was up when I kept missing easy shots with my bow. I managed to scale the hard ones but the easy ones seemed to elude me. I noticed that Peeta seemed to keep his stride all morning. I hated him for that.

When training finally came to a close, I skipped out on the conversation and hurried to my house like a scared mouse. It was easier to face my fears during the Games than it was outside the arena. Here, life was real; not some concoction made up by psychotic game-makers.

Showering quickly, I idly moseyed my way around the house, then through the Hob.....where I knew I wouldn’t find Peeta.

My days went like this for several days. I smothered what I could of my nightmares the best I could. All just to avoid Peeta and his kisses. I think he knew I was having them by the look in his eyes, but he didn’t make another move to try and care for me. Like that night never happened. Charlotte approached me several days after the kiss, trying to squeeze information out of me. I wasn’t sure if I wanted to tell her. I knew she would try to push me further with Peeta, but it that kind of closeness to someone left me ambivalent. I craved it, but the thought of it terrified me. So, I didn’t tell her. My moment of solitude was coming to a close, I knew it.

As the seasons changed, the game in the woods started to become sparse. It didn't matter to me, but each haul I brought in made the difference in someone's day. Children and adults starving each and every day was a disgrace to how the Capital treated its citizens. I would leave a bag with Hazelle and send the rest to the Hob or for those in town that wanted meats.

Hiding away in the woods kept me busy. Kept me away from Peeta. Kept me away from all the feelings that were dangerously close to erupting. No one bothered me. Gale would occasionally try to coax a smile from me. My surly demeanor was evident to those closest to me. After a couple of Sundays with him, he gave up trying.

“I don't know why I try Katniss....." he started

“I didn't know you were trying Gale." I said snidely. He would just sigh and leave me alone. Even Charlotte knew something was amiss with me. Unlike everyone else, she pestered me until I yelled at her to leave me alone. I will never forget the look she gave me before she stormed off too.
This is the part where I tell you that this is partly Canon Compliant and rest is Canon Divergent.... As always (and like most of us) we do not own anything that belongs to Suzanne Collins. Oh and some fluffy smut

Peeta POV

“I want her Henry....” I said after Katniss and Charlotte left from training. It had been almost a month since I had kissed her in her room. I know, I know....taking advantage of her after a horrible nightmare, but having her that close to me had me stir crazy.

“If you want her, go get her.” Henry replied simply. He didn’t know her like I did. She would bolt if I go too close to her again.

“It’s not that easy....” I began to protest.

“Of course it is. Yes, I know Katniss is worse than a stubborn mule who can’t compartmentalize her feelings and thoughts, but it is easy. You just have to know how to reach her." he affirmed me. I knew it wasn’t going to be a easy task.

I could tell she was having nightmares every night. I could see the light flip on, could see her shadow as she walked back and forth. I never slept at night anymore after the Games. My body ached to be near her. To hold her, caress her, my mouth upon hers as our clothes came off......

But I knew he was right. Only problem was catching her alone. Which it seemed she was avoiding me. Even when we were running or training. She felt like a robot to me. Going through the motions. Every day she would sneak off to the woods. Rising early and coming back even later.

I was going to have to sneak upon her. Catch her alone, vulnerable, it didn’t matter where to me. What she never thought about was that I knew when she was watching me. When she would stop in front of my house, I could feel her sigh before she turned herself away. We would be leaving for the Victory Tour in a few weeks and I knew I couldn’t keep up the pretense on the train. Pretending to be in love with her on camera, but painfully desperate for her to be in my arms off camera.

It was snowing....I normally loved this time of year. Call me foolish, but it’s the artist in me. I was staring out the window, my eyes trained on the horizon, when I saw her. Coming from the village. Her boots crunching in the snow. Her head tucked in trying to protect herself from the cold gust. Her mother and sister weren’t home, they had left some time before.

Before I could stop myself, my feet were hurdling down the stairs toward my front door. My hand grasping the knob, bracing myself for the incoming cold gust, I jerked it open to find that she had stopped again in front of my house.

“Katniss!” I called to her treading carefully through the snow. My socked feet freezing from the snow. Her head whipped around at the sound of my voice. I could see a faint smile ghost her face.
Coming to her, I forced my teeth from chattering.

“Peeta, you’re freezing! What are you doing outside?” She exclaimed coming close to me so I could hear her.

“Come inside with me? No one is at your house.” I asked her gently. My ridiculous ass freezing to death. I saw a clear hesitation cross her face, her eyes frantically looking back toward her house, hoping I had I lied to her. Which I didn’t because she turned and gave the briefest of nods. Taking her hand, I easily led her inside my house.

The instant warmth of my house thawing me out was a welcomed gesture. I watched as she removed her coat, hanging it up. She rubbed her hands up and down her arms as she sat down on my couch. Her nerves were escalating the longer she sat with me.

“Are you OK?” I asked her quietly. I hadn’t meant to be the martyr, but she was avoiding me.

“I’m good. Tired, alot here lately.” she confessed to me. I was right. Nightmares were back.

“Want to talk about your nightmares?”

She shook her head at me. Blocking me. “No, I....” she looked at me. Her body subconsciously scooting closer to me. .....“it’s....” her voice dropping down to a whisper

“It’s what?” I asked her coming closer to her. Trying my damnedest not to scare her.

“It’s nothing.” she said trying to pull away.

“No, tell me Katniss...” I demanded making her look at me. Forget trying to be all nice about her situation, I wanted her to say it.

Her eyes widened at my sharp tone. I honestly didn’t care if it bothered her. I was in love with her and beyond tired of waiting for her to come around to me. She was going to talk, confess....do something. Throw me a bone and tell me what she wanted. Her eyes searched mine for a moment before I could see her give up. Give up fighting me, herself, and her feelings.

“They’ve been steadily getting worse.” she confessed. “My nightmares. I can’t sleep. I can’t think. Mother has given me sleep syrup three times this week, just so I can sleep. Even after I’ve awaken, I’m still plagued by the nightmares.” I watched her chew her lip, those lips I wanted to kiss again.

“The only time I could get back to sleep was when....was when....” she began to stutter... “you came to comfort me.”

Finally!! A confession from her. Confessions were hard to come by. It was like winning the Games without killing someone. Almost impossible. The clock struck four PM, the sky had darkened that it seemed like night time already. Hunger was growling at me. Reminding me that I needed to eat soon.

“Peeta.....” I heard her whisper.... “can you hold me?” Her eyes looked at me expectantly. Hoping I wasn’t angry at her. That I had forgiven her for all she had done to me in the past and the present. Opening my arms to her, I felt her collapse into me. Her head resting against my chest, I could swear she had fallen asleep on me.

Looking down at her, I saw a smile cross her face. I must have stared for too long because she looked up at me. Our eyes locking, I didn’t want to break away. I watched as she leaned up toward me, her lips catching mine. I had to stop myself from moaning, but traced my fingers
through her hair; drawing us even closer. This kiss, yet tender, was intimate. Desire rushed through me and I knew I was going to have to stop.

A part of me hating myself, a part of me rejoicing that I still had some self control. I began to pull away from her luscious lips, when I heard her breathe on my lips, “Please, don’t stop.....” I heard a roar in my ears as I pulled her roughly into my lap. My kisses lacking finesse but she didn’t seem to care. Tangling my fingers in her hair, I heard her moan as I parted her lips to taste her mouth.

Her deft hands came to rest on my chest, sliding up and down causing a warm friction to grow within me. Her hips rotating in my lap as our kiss became more intense, I knew I had to move us or she could really feel how excited I truly was. Pushing her back onto my couch, my body hovering over hers, I tried to keep my hands in an appropriate place but my body seemed to have other plans.

Coming to cup her breast through her shirt, I felt her body arch under mine. Her moans shattered the silence in my room. Our bodies entangled with one another, I kissed her deeply, praying she didn’t run. Soon, the heat from our bodies consumed us. Our shirts were torn off in earnest. The skin to skin contact driving us insane We laid on my couch kissing and lightly touching one another until it was way past dark. Finally, when we came up for air, I could barely see her smile in the dark. Shadows dancing in my room from the street lights.

I could feel her breath tickling my ear, “Peeta, what time is it?”

Nuzzling her bare neck, “I don’t frankly care what time it is....as long as I’m with you.” I whispered in her ear before nipping it. Hearing her gasp, a ghost of a smile played my lips.

Sucking on her neck, I intended to leave my mark. A feral growl grew in me as I thought about marking her as my own. “You know they’re gonna start to worry about me.....” I heard her trail off. “but this is so much better.”

Grinning, I bit down gently emitting a yelp from her. My hands coming to play on her thighs holding her close to me. “Peeta! Please don’t leave any marks” I heard her beg quietly.

“I’m sorry Katniss....you taste so delicious.” I mummered. I felt her grin but start to wiggle out from underneath me. Her hips danced across my strained cock and I groaned. It had been Hell for me to keep myself as restrained as I possibly could. I wanted to bed her that badly.

As she stood, she just then realized, that she was shirtless. Shrieking, I laughed as she tried to cover herself. Giving me the most hateful look she could muster. I couldn’t help but keep laughing. Coming to my feet, I reached out pulling her close to me, kissing me deeply.

“Maybe I’ll see you tomorrow.” I turned to look at the blistering snow, “Ok, well maybe not.” No one but the mine workers would be going anywhere tomorrow. Curled up on the couch far from

Katniss’s hand , I tried my hardest to make myself presentable but every time I adjusted, Peeta would try to help mess it up. Sighing, I looked into his eyes and gave up. I didn’t want to leave but the impending thought of me missing and food was calling me home. Backing me up into the wall in the foyer, I’m not sure how I managed to put my boots back on. His hands all over me, touching me, feeling me. His mouth tasting my skin, I think I moaned his name to stop so I could leave. Hell I’m not sure how I got my coat on...... Opening the door for me, I felt him caress my face before pulling me to him kissing me deeply.
his touch seemed like torture. Maybe I’d talk to Charlotte. She always seemed to have something to entertain with. Trudging my way to the house, I caught myself before I slipped on ice. Laughing, I pushed through until I reached the steps.

Opening the door, a gust of warm air hit me like a freight train. Sighing in relief, I heard my mother in the kitchen. Maybe she and Prim had went to the market earlier.

“Katniss? Is that you? How was your walk?”

“My walk?” I asked puzzled. I mean I went walking but I had been with Peeta for the past several hours. She looked flushed. Like something was wrong...Like I was in a lot of trouble. Dread overcame me. Fear trembled down my spine. I knew I should have stayed with Peeta.

Just then two Peacekeepers intruded my space. “Miss Everdeen....this way.” One said formally. I gulped but I nodded anyway and followed.

I smelled him before I saw him. Standing before me was President Snow. He was watching the last scene of the Hunger Games where Peeta and I were prepared to eat the poisonous berries. Until Gamemaker Crane stopped us, declaring us winners.

“I think this would be best if we don’t lie Miss Everdeen.” He said through his snake lips before sitting down in my mother’s chair.

I only could nod. What was he doing here? Seeing him smile at my answer, he began to ramble on about what I had done and the fragile structure of Panem. I don’t remember any of the conversation until he threatened to kill Gale.

“You know I never wanted this. Never wanted any of it....”

“I know and I believe you but many in the other districts don’t. They don’t, like myself, believe in your love for Peeta.”

Just then someone came in and brought tea and cookies. Watching him smile about this made me sick. I looked at the cookies and realized they were Peeta’s design. How I wish I was still with him.

“How lovely...these cookies are exquisite. Your mother’s?” Snow asked me holding a cookie up to see the design.

“No...Peeta’s.” I blurted out before I could think. I mentally kicked myself for mentioning him.

“He’s great.” I said quickly trying to end the conversation before I gave too much.

“So when did he realize your indifference to his feelings?”

“I’m not indifferent.....” I wasn’t, was I? I wanted him in ways that I didn’t understand. Down inside I knew I cared but didn’t know if I loved him.

“I’m sure.....” was all I heard. “You know Miss Everdeen, you will need to do a better job of convincing me and Panem. This I promise you...” he finished as he got up to leave the room.

Before he closed the door on my mother’s study, he turned and faced me, “Oh and I know about the kiss...”

I sat there frozen. Fear sweeping me like a hurdling comet. Ready to smash me into a million...
pieces leaving a hole where I once stood. The door opened and I jumped so high I grazed the ceiling. Realizing it was my mother, I sighed. “Is everything OK?” I just nodded at her, not trusting my voice.

“May I run you a bath? You look cold....” she asked quietly. I nodded again and embraced her. I think I startled her but she smiled and left the room. After I had survived the Games, I had tried to make things easier between us. Returning hugs instead of blocking them. Letting her handle my accounts. Small things, but they made a difference. I stood there frozen before my brain figured out to function. Following behind her, I walked slowly up the stairs to my room. Entering it, I quickly slipped out of my clothes. I could smell the perfumed odor coming from the bathroom.

Easing my way into the hot bath, I closed my eyes and tried to relax. The heat seeping into my cold limbs. Sighing, I tried to think my way out of this situation with President Snow. I wondered who I could tell? Haymitch? Maybe, but in his ever drunken state it wouldn’t be smart. Peeta? Definitely not, I didn’t need him to worry more about me. Charlotte or Henry would be my best options. Somehow, I knew one or both of them had been in my situation before.

Happy that I had a plan, I let myself enjoy a few minutes. I hadn’t been out of the bath long enough for my skin to chill before there was a knock on my door. Grimacing, I pulled myself from my bed and opened the door. There stood Charlotte. She breezed past me without smiling.

“Snow was here...why?” She demanded before I closed the door.

“Hi, how are you too Charlotte....” I replied snidely. I had wanted to go speak with her, but not like this. She just glared at me. Sighing, I gave. “Well lets see....” I started to tick off on my fingers. “He threatened to kill Gale. Rambled on about a rebellion and the fragile state of Panem, my indifference to Peeta’s affections and how I need to convince him and the districts we are in love and no rebellion is gonna happen.”

She didn’t say anything. Just stood there and listened quietly while I talked. I couldn’t read her emotions at all. She was like a statue. Nothing. When I wound down, she nodded. “And what did you say?”

“What could I say but to tell him nothing was gonna happen and that are ‘in love’.” I countered. “Was I supposed to tell him different?”

She shook her head at me. “No, you weren’t. You did good. Now....” she smiled impishly, “where were you this afternoon?”

I blushed down to my roots. The feel of his kisses were coming back to me and I felt aroused. Excited. Burning. I could faintly feel his hands still on me. “Oh, with Peeta.” I mumbled looking at my hands.

“In this cold weather, I’m sure you two just weren’t.....cozying by the fire. I know this because I didn’t see his chimney smoking.”

“Ugh....I hate when you do that.” I groused. She smirked sticking her tongue out. We...were...kissing. A lot.”

“Did things get out of hand?”

“I’m not sure what you mean.....”

“Like, did clothes come off? Did you do something other than kissing?”

I know she watched me blush again. My inexperience showing on so many levels. Ones that I
didn’t want to face. “Our, uh, shirts came off. He might have gotten a little touchy feely.” I watched Charlotte’s eyebrow raise. “Nothing that I didn’t want him to do! I promise!”

She nodded at me. Checking her watch, she sighed. “I have to feed and I smell dinner downstairs for you; I suggest you finally eat something.” Leaving my room a few minutes later, I sighed and followed her out.

In the kitchen, mother had made beef stew. Smiling at her and Prim, I sat down and enjoyed a meal with them. It might as well been my last. I already felt like I was walking to my death; with Snow showing up at my house. Spending all the time I could with them was precious moments that I knew I would never get back if Snow had his way.

And Gale. I needed to spend time with him. Remember everything about him before things went sour for me. I didn’t love him like he loved me, but I cared about him. Cared about him more than I thought I did. My longing was for Peeta, not Gale.

But I knew that Peeta would fight for me. Try to keep me alive if he knew what was going on. He would put himself in the line of fire to protect me. Stupidly, I thought; but she knew I would do the same for him. Making my way back up to my room, my thoughts on Peeta, I had to stop and lean against the railing as a wave of desire rode my senses.

I wanted to be back at his place. Feeling his arms hold me; pinning me down while he kissed every inch of me. I wanted to feel again. And somehow, Peeta was the reason I felt. The reason why my body lit up like electricity. A true pessimist at heart, but the feel of his hands on my skin made everything seem to go away. Seem better. I’m not sure how I made it to my room, but leaning against door I barely closed my eyes when I could feel his hands upon me. “Peeta...” I moaned gently. What had he done to me?
The next several days flew by in a blur. A white blur. Snow fell across District 12 on heaping piles that it was almost impossible to get out of the front door. Let alone try to make it to town. We had to settle inside but I ached to be with Peeta again. Calling him on the phone seemed silly to me. We lived barely forty feet from one another. Of course, I did sneak out a few times. Braving the cold, I always found him with open arms and a very eager mouth to kiss. Over the course of the snow days we had a chance to talk.

He pulled away from me slowly. I wish he would keep kissing me, but he said he wanted to talk. Snuggling myself into his warm chest I closed my eyes enjoying his body. His fingers played with my hair relaxing me to a lull that I knew I had fallen asleep.

“Katniss, wake up. We still need to talk.” I heard him whisper in my ear waking me slowly. Opening my eyes, I twisted my head to look at him.

“I fell asleep, didn’t I?” He nodded and I sighed. Scooting myself around, I looked at him. He seemed so far away from me. Playing with the hem of his shirt, I waited for him to speak. I could tell that his mind was working overtime. Maybe he was trying to figure out how to tell me?

“Katniss, I know we’ve had a rocky beginning but since the night I kissed you, held you in my arms; I knew I wanted to be with you. I actually knew it from long before we were teamed up for the Games. I just never knew how much I did love you. I know I’m sounding like a sap, but the bottom line is that I want you. I want us to be together....exclusively.”

I stared at him. His words slowly processing through my stubborn mind. I had told Gale long ago I didn’t want to be with anyone. Didn’t want a boyfriend. Didn’t want to get married and have children. But Peeta, sitting before me, telling me the things I had an idea of but never fully realized. That deep down inside, I wanted to be with him. Don’t get me wrong, I loved Gale, but Peeta made me burn. Made my body and mind feel alive. Gale gave me comfort; not passion. And passion....like fire burned deep into me.

Leaning forward to kiss his mouth, I stifled a moan before pulling back. I had to answer him before things got out of hand. “I know things didn’t start out perfect. I always had said I didn’t want to be with anyone because of how our lives are, but since we had started to charade around...pretending to be in love. I became confused until we survived.....then I became more confused until you....not Gale showed up at my house comforting me from my nightmares. He would never understand the horrors we faced....the decisions we made....” I hesitated chewing on my lip and nervously looking him in the eyes. Taking a breath, I continued, “But I think I want to try this. Try being with you. I don’t know how relationships work or what I’m supposed to do...”

“Just be yourself...” he interrupted before kissing my palm. “That’s all I’ll ever ask of you. Always?”

“Always....” I smiled.

Katniss POV
Even though today was Sunday and I would be leaving by tomorrow, I wanted to see him and Gale before I left. Rushing upstairs, I hunted down my warmest clothes. Dressing quickly, I snuck out. Not wanting to hear lecture from my mother about freezing. Stepping out of the house, I let my feet lead me around. I knew where I wanted to go.

Suddenly through the light wind, I heard my name being called. Turning around I saw Peeta. He was covered in snow and I had to admit, I laughed. Waiting on him to catch up, I shifted from one foot to the next trying to keep myself warm.

Giving me a long slow kiss, he caressed my cheek before muttering against my lips, “What on Earth are you doing out here?”

“I could ask you the same thing,” I muttered against his mouth before capturing his warm lips. I think I startled him but he quickly recovered. We stood there kissing for a few minutes trying to keep ourselves warm.

“So where are you going?” he asked burying his face into my scarf.

“To the fence. I’m meeting Gale”

He looked at me sharply. A frown crossing his face.

Uh oh, I thought to myself.

“It’s Sunday. We always meet. He may not even be there...” I protested. He kept frowning at me. The wind whipped around us and I shivered roughly. I wish he would quit glaring at me. We had only started our relationship the night he convinced me to come over. Then confirmed it after a long talk. Gale still didn’t know. I hadn’t the courage to tell him.

He paused like he was remembering something from a previous conversation, but he nodded. “All right. Just be careful, will you?” He asked incredulously. “I don’t need you in trouble before we leave on the Victory Tour. Let me walk you.” He asked grabbing my hand and leading me before I could say no.

We walked slowly. Our heads bent to keep us from freezing. Our gloved hands never breaking apart. Finally, halfway there, the wind died down and the sun popped out. Talking about how we hoped the tour would fly by and how I was dreading meeting prep team tomorrow. All he could do was laugh.

“You don’t understand....they do awful things to me!” I exclaimed laughing softly. I hadn’t realized we had made it to the fence until he pushed me back into a tree. Capturing my lips, he pulled me close to him. My body melting into his as we kissed. Long, slow, the hunger building inside me. His hands weaving into my coat keeping himself warm but enticing me. Moaning in his mouth, he took the opportunity to deepen the kiss.

“I want to feel your skin,” He mumbled nipping my lower lip, “But we’re going to have to stop....before we freeze to death.”

I groaned but nodded anyway. Chuckling, I kissed the snow off his lips. I felt him smile. “You have snow on your lips,” I explained.

“Be at my house tonight. I want to cook for you. Something Henry gave me...”

“I...well...” I started to protest.
He silenced me with a kiss..."Say you’ll come. I promise you won’t be disappointed. I’ll have cheese buns."

“You know I can’t turn that down.” I chuckled kissing him back. “I’ll be there.”

“Good.” He gave me one more kiss and left. I watched him leave. Disappointment settling over me. Crawling my way under the fence, I trekked carefully to a spot I know Gale would meet me Freezing, I wished for a fire to keep me warm. Sitting for less than five minutes, he arrived. He didn’t look happy. My stomach flip flopped when his face turned from stone to anger.

“Hey...is everything OK?” I asked standing to greet him.

“I saw you.” He said. “Kissing Peeta. Is that for practice or are you kissing him for real?”

The question threw me off. Was he watching us? Spying on me. Anger rolled down my spine making it's way to the pit of my stomach. I felt disgusted. “Were you spying on me?” I demanded.

“Didn’t have too. You were pretty public with your display. I came upon you two.” He snarled. Aghast, I turned away from him. I didn’t have to explain myself to him. We were dating now. It didn’t seem like it was a big deal to me. Hands roughly grabbed me, spinning me around. “What the Hell Gale?!”

“Don’t you walk away from me, I want to know!” He all but shouted at me. His fingers digging into my flesh. I knew I was going to have bruises.

“Let me go Gale...” I pleaded on deaf ears.

“No! You will talk....”

“You and I are NOT together Gale! Peeta and I are!” I gasped as the words flew out of my mouth.

“So that’s how it is? I profess how I feel to you....I’m always there for you when you need it. But you choose him. You barely know him Katniss! Wow, you survived the Games with him.....”

“You don’t understand.....my nightmares, the decisions I had to make to survive. Gale, I killed people!” I stumbled to find the words. The words that, hopefully, would help Gale see...help me help him understand.

“You killed to survive Katniss...You could have came home to me. But I see how it is...” he squeezed my arms tighter, bringing me closer to him. The pain in my arms searing down to my fingers. “You ‘care’ about me but you can’t live without him.”

"Let me go now!” My shout startled him enough to let me go. Turning away from him, I fled. Running back my old house. I burst in sitting down in the cold room. Tears flowing freely, I couldn’t stop crying. Gale had hurt me. More than the Games ever would. His distrust and lack of respect killed me on the inside. Rocking myself to keep warm, I never noticed it was getting dark.

Steeling myself, I stood up slowly. My body aching from sitting stiff for far too long. Walking slowly, I rubbed the kinks out before leaving my old home. Even though my home was in the Victor’s Village...this would always be my home. Where I fit in the best. Trekking slowly, I made my way to the Victor’s Village. Mine and Peeta’s house aglow but Haymitch’s darkened. My breath coming out in icy puffs, the temperature dropping dramatically, I marched toward Peeta’s. Hopefully, he had phoned my mother, letting her know I’d be eating at his house.
No reason to knock, I let myself in. The warmth of his house comforting me. Thawing me out. Slipping off my jacket and scarf, I hung them up before removing my boots. It was nice to be sock feet. “Peeta?” I called out walking down the hallway.

The closer I got to the kitchen, the aroma of spices hit me and my traitorous stomach let out a growl. Reminding me that I hadn’t eaten since early this morning. Leaning against the door, I watched him cook. Of course he could cook. Years in the bakery must have taught him the basics. Amazed by his skillful hands, I couldn’t help but to watch him for a minute longer. Braving it up, I stepped into the kitchen and took a seat.

“I was wondering when you were gonna make it. Your cheese buns are getting cold.” He said coming around the counter; a glass in his hand. Handing it to me, he leaned in for a kiss. A kiss I gladly returned. Setting the drink down, I pulled him in between my legs; his hands coming to rest on my hips. My mouth opened to him as he pulled us close bumping our bodies. Curling in fingers in his hair, his hands slid up my sides to my shoulders. As they trailed my down my arms, I hissed in pain.

Damn! I had forgotten about my bruises. He broke the kiss quick concern flooding his face. “Are you alright?”

I nodded mutely. The pain of Gale from earlier became fresh in my mind. He must have not believed me because he frowned. “I don’t believe you Katniss. What happened?”

I could have lied to him, but I hated lying. Plus, I was horrible at it. So I stalled. Chewing on my lip, I didn’t want to look at him. Getting frustrated at me, he pulled the sleeves of my shirt up. The ugly bruises dark against my skin. Growling, he stepped back from me.

“Who did this?” He choked. “Who hurt you? I can see handprints so don’t lie and say it was you....”

I barely glanced at him, but I could feel anger pouring off him in waves. Standing up to face him, he looked like he was going to explode. Placing my hands on his chest, I tried to downplay it. “It was nothing....a misunderstanding.”

“A misunderstanding!!” He all but shouted at me. I recoiled from him and he instantly pulled me into a hug. “I don’t mean to yell, but who did this?”

“Gale....” I whispered against his shoulder. Pulling me back, he stared at me.

“What happened?”

“He caught us kissing by the tree. He yelled at me, asking if it was real or for show. He grabbed me and demanded to know what was going on. I shouted at him to let go and leave me be before running off from him....” I said in a rush.

He didn’t speak. Just turned away from me and stormed out of the kitchen. I heard rustling as he threw his boots on. Running after him, I barely had time to throw my boots on before booking it out the door.

**Peeta POV**

He hurt her! Bruised her. My mind was a raging storm. I was going to kill him. I stood there as she explained to me what happened and the more she talked the angrier I got. Placating me wasn’t her best choice, but I know she tried.
Throwing my boots on, I stormed out my house planning on hurting him. The snow and wind whipped around me. I was impervious to the cold...I could barely feel it. I didn’t have to go far because he stepped out of the shadows. Like he was waiting on Katniss. Waiting for her to come out my house and do what with her. The thought enraged and sickened me. Growling, I stalked over to his towering figure. I didn’t care if he was taller than me at this point.

“What in the Hell do you think you’re doing hurting Katniss?”

“What are you talking about? She cry about the argument we had?” He sneered at me.

It took all my strength to not tackle him, “She’s bruised. Both of her arms. From where you grabbed her...wouldn’t let go of her.”

“And you believe that...?”

I didn’t think but I swung. Catching him the jaw, I jumped him. My hands trying to beat his face in. He recovered quickly and managed to hit me a few times. Rolling around in the snow, we fought. My hatred for him swimming in my veins. I vague heard Katniss screaming my name, but felt two strong arms pull me off Gale.

Fighting my rescuer, I was dropped on the ground. Pinned into the cold snow, I tried fighting back. My vision hazy, I couldn’t tell who it was.

“How would you fucking stop trying to fight me Peeta?” I heard a male voice. Forcing myself to calm down, I let my vision clear. It was Henry. His eyes were black and his teeth elongated. He looked terrifying. Maybe I clocked him too?

I panted heavily. My vision still swimming. The snow and wind finally seeping into my bones. Giving me a few minutes to catch my bearings, I sighed coming back down to Earth.

“Are you good?” He growled. His eyes changing back to blue.

“Yea, I’m good.” I grumbled. Taking his offered hand, I stood up and looking around. Katniss was standing by Charlotte. She was holding her, I could see tears flowing down her face. Sulking, I walked over to her, holding out my arms; she collapsed in them. Holding her, I hated myself for scaring her.

“So someone mind telling me what the fuck happened?” I heard Henry ask. He pulled Gale to a standing position. He was rubbing his jaw. His face scrunched up in pain. His nose bleeding and probably broken. Good. Let him hurt. He wasn’t going to talk. I glared at him, my arms tightening around Katniss.

“Well?” Henry asked again. “I don’t care whose dick is bigger here, I want answers.”

“He hurt Katniss.” I said menacingly.

Charlotte’s head whipped around to look at Katniss, “He did what? How?”

I looked down at Katniss. Cupping my hands around her face, I glimpsed her eyes. She didn’t want to tell. “Katniss, show them.” I demanded gently.

She nodded and stepped out of my arms. Rolling her sleeves up, the ugly bruises shined bright in the dark. I growled again, but didn’t move. Charlotte came over and inspected. I heard her sigh in exasperation.
“Do they hurt?”
“Just a little....”

“She hissed in pain when I touched her arms!” I exclaimed.

“Peeta, please?” I heard Katniss plea with me. I instantly shut my mouth. I didn’t want to add further injury.

“So that’s why I found you and Gale trying to make a snowman?” Henry glared at me.

“Yea....that’s why.”

“I’m all for defending a female, but you two have the Tour starting tomorrow. Couldn’t it have waited?” He shook his head at me. “And you...I don’t care what you think of me, but you will not hurt her again.” He threatened Gale.

“Now run along Gale. Leave us be.” Charlotte said trying to shoo Gale away. I could tell he didn’t want to leave. His eyes bore into Katniss, but she refused to look at him. When he left, she turned to us. “God help me because of you two....” she shook her head laughing. “Go in before you freeze.”

I nudged Katniss to go in. Giving me a look, she nodded and disappeared into the house. “You scared her, Peeta.”

“I know I did. Rage overcame me and I didn’t think about anything else.”

She nodded, kissed Henry, and disappeared. This wasn’t her territory. It was Henry’s and I would have to face him. I wasn’t looking forward to it.

“Has this ever happened to you?” He asked quietly.

“No, but I think something is off about me.” He looked at me sharply. “Ever since Katniss and I decided to, uh, further things.....I’ve been feeling possessive. We were necking the other day and I had the urge to mark her. I can’t keep my hands off her. I want her so bad I can’t stand it. I don’t know if it hormones or something else....”

He sighed and ran his hands through his hair. Apparently whatever was happening to me wasn’t good. Or he wouldn’t look so stressed. “It’s happening too soon. He’s too young.” I barely heard him mumble.

“You know what’s going on with me, don’t you?” When he nodded, I braced myself.

“Well....what is it?”

“Tonight is not a good time to talk Peeta. I will tell you what’s happening to you. We can speak after the Victory Tour. I promise you’re not dying or going crazy.” He said trying to assure me. I tried to fight him, but he was firm, “Not tonight. Go inside and take care of your female. She’s gonna need you tonight. That’s an order.”

I nodded resigned. I turned to look at my house where I knew Katniss was waiting on me. I felt a breeze and he was gone. Shaking my head, I headed to my door. Stepping inside, I went to hunt for Katniss.

Katniss POV
The fight was over as quickly as it started. Henry pulled Peeta off Gale before he could beat him to death. I've never seen him like that. Enraged. Uncontrollable. Like something had taken ahold of him and wouldn't let go. When he sent me back inside I knew it was for my benefit. He stayed outside talking to Henry. A conversation I knew he wouldn’t divulge to me.

Just like when I talked to Charlotte. I never spoke about the things she and I shared. Looking out the window, I knew it was going to be awhile before he returned to me. Walking into the kitchen, I had turned off the food when I returned. Taking the glass from earlier, I took a long sip of it. Blanching, I gulped it back but wondered what it was. Some kind of spirit, maybe? It wasn’t something I was used too. Drinking more of it, the world seemed to become a bit blurry. Setting it down, I swore no more till Peeta came back inside.

I heard the door open and close. The conversation must be over. Thunks of boots falling had me giggling. I must have drank too much. My eyes trained on the door, I watched him walk in. “Peeta!” I exclaimed trying to stand up. Falling forward, he caught me while I giggled.

“I see that you’ve tried the wine. I hope you left me some.” He said smiling down at me.

“I did....and what kind of drink is it again?”

“Its wine. Fermented grapes.” He explained helping me sit down and taking a drink himself. Choking less than I did, he went to the stove and flipped it back on.

“It’s good, but not something I’d drink all the time.”

“Henry gave me a bottle. Said it would be good with the food. I’m not sure how old it is. Never asked.” He said shrugging. Soon the aroma was back, reminding me that I was quite hungry. Of course the longer the wine sat in me, and the longer I stared at Peeta; my hunger grew for something else. Something that involved male.

I felt it crawling down my spine, wrapping around every bone. Ensnaring me; trapping me into its intrinsic design. I laid my head down on the cool marble top. Flush skin seemed to boil hot. “Are you alright Katniss?” I heard Peeta ask. A hand running down my spine. I let out a soft moan. Arousal beating at me from every corner of my body. Sitting back up, my body fell into his.

“I’m sorry about earlier. I lost control. I didn’t mean to scare you.” I heard him apologize. His breath hot on my neck. I didn’t realize he had moved that close to me. He thought I was upset about the fight. It was the last thing on my mind. Closing my eyes, I let myself enjoy the feel of his hands on my shirt....wishing they were on my skin.

Turning to face him, his eyes dark with desire, “Katniss...” he moaned my name; his eyes finding my lips.

“What’s happening to us?” I asked. “I want you to kiss and touch me all the time. So much it scares me.”

“I don’t know and I don’t care. Maybe it's our attraction. Maybe it's the circumstances of which we put ourselves into. Maybe it's hormones...”

My lips didn’t let him finish. Pulling him roughly to me, we kissed with fervor. Our tongues clashed against one another emitting moans from each of us. Wrapping my legs around his waist, I could feel him pressing against me. When he broke the kiss, trailing his mouth down my neck, I
threw my head back exposing my neck to him. His kisses hot on my skin, I moaned his name, “Peeta....” Helping him out of his shirt, he tossed it aside before working on mine. Getting it off, he pulled me out of the chair walked me back to the wall; his mouth never leaving mine.

Running my hands down his back, I could feel the muscle tighten every so often. When my fingers grazed his belt, I knew things were getting out of hand. I wasn’t ready for this. My body didn’t listen to my mind because they continued to work their way toward the front of his pants. Suddenly, my hands were blocked by shuffling of our bodies. He had pulled my leg close to wrap around his hip. Preventing me from touching him.

Breaking the kiss his breathing heavy against my lips, he held my grinding hips still, “Katniss if we don’t stop and you don’t leave.....I will not be able to stop. I will take you upstairs to my bed and I don’t think you’re ready for that.” The finality of his words pulled me from my lust induced haze. Nodding in defeat, he let me go.

He didn’t look at me while I hunted down my shirt. Didn’t try and tease me to keep it off. He didn’t even try to kiss me. He stood there in the same spot I had left him in. He was as still as a statue. Walking down the hallway, I jumped hearing something hit the wall. I didn’t turn around. Realizing I wasn’t going to get anywhere with him tonight, I slipped my warm clothes back on and I left silently.

Entering my house, I slowly made my way to my room where I collapsed in my bed. Not caring to change my clothes or even bathe. Crying softly in my pillow, I almost wish I had the courage to do what I wanted with him.

Peeta POV

I watched her nod in defeat. Desire still flooding her eyes, but her mind telling her something else. Reluctantly, I let her go. From the corner of my eye, I watched her find her shirt. Watched her get dressed. I stood there even as she left my house.

Fighting the immense waves of desire that rode me. I couldn’t breathe. I choked on air. I wanted to take her. The need for her far greater than my own mind could handle. Clenching my fist, I punched the wall again in anger. The pain rippling through me, clouding the desire in my veins. She was going to hate me. We were going to have to stop. Each time....each time I kissed her or touched her; I was losing more and more control.

Turning around, I looked around my kitchen. What a wasted night! Snatching the glass she had been drinking from, I hurled it across the counter. The tinkling sounds of breaking glass reverberated throughout the room. Storming upstairs, I slammed the bedroom door. Unknown anger coursed through me. I was never an angry person, but tonight’s action pushed me too far.

First Gale hurting her. Then me trying my damnedest to not kill him. Henry’s little ‘I’ve got a secret’. Which, I think, annoyed me more than it angered me. Then lastly, me telling Katniss to leave my house before I took her to my bed.

Standing in my room, my head tilted back with the images of us in my bed floating through my brain. I had to suppress a moan and grabbing myself. Control! I was starting to lose. Of course, even after moments like this I was fine around her the next day. Pulling my clothes off, I climbed my ass into bed. Seriously wishing she was with me.

The pounding of my front door woke me up. Today was the start of the Victory Tour. I was dreading it. The longer I laid there the louder the pounding became. Sighing, I rolled myself out
of bed. Stumbling down the stairs, I ripped the door open. Squinting as the sun blinded me, Henry stood before me.

“Are you finally awake? I’ve been waiting for almost fifteen minutes...”

Shaking my head, I stepped aside to let him in. He walked in and looked around. When he looked at me, he frowned. “Your prep team will be here shortly. You need to get ready.”

He was dressed in camouflage pants and a black shirt. Quite imposing for someone who was my trainer. I had to look twice....Did he have guns on him? “I guess make yourself at home. I’ll be back.” I turned to go upstairs, but stopped, “You know you still owe me an explanation from last night. I made Katniss go home last night.....”

Mutely, he nodded at me. I headed to my room and showered. Heading down twenty minutes later, I made it just in time for my prep team to arrive. While they worked on me, Henry stood like a statue keeping an eye on everything.
Katniss POV

I awoke to the sounds of my mother tapping gently on the door. Fully dressed, I never found the energy to put my pajamas on last night. “Katniss... your prep team is here. I hope you’re awake.” I heard her say through the door. She had watched me come inside last night, almost in tears, but didn’t say anything.

Groaning, I rolled out of my bed. In about thirty seconds my prep team would burst through my door and see the mess that I had become. I sat there and waited. Waited for my door to break down. Instead, Charlotte poked her head, “May I come in?” she asked me gently. When she saw me nod, she turned and quietly said something. I heard my prep team whine about something but they backed off.

“You look like Hell Katniss...” Leave it to Charlotte to be blunt.

“Yea, well, I didn’t sleep well last night.” I muttered tiredly.

“In your clothes from last night, no less....”

”And you...” I nodded toward her. ”look like you’re ready for battle.” Her black jumpsuit made her look fierce. Guns strapped to each thigh, her hair pulled back in a tight braid.

“I’m your detail. You’ve always known this Katniss. You’ve just never seen me in full armor.” She pointed out. ”You need to pull yourself out of rumple before your prep team loses their minds.”

“Well, you know me, variety is the spice of life....” I drawled. She must not have liked my attitude because her eyes narrowed. “All right! I’ll shower. Geez get off my back.”
I disappeared into the bathroom and showered quickly. Drying off, I heard voices in my room. Plastering a fake smile, I threw my robe on and opened the door. Shrieks followed by the faces of my prep team pulling me through the door.

Venia crying over my eyebrows while Octavia moans over my nails. I had a serious nail biting problem but only when I was stressed but never thought how it would affect my team even though I had thought about quitting. Flavius playing with my hair, the dripping wet tangle he held, he inspected thoroughly.

“Has anyone touched your hair?” He asked sternly. “We specifically asked no one to bother with it.”

“Yes! I mean, no...No one has bothered it.” I could hear Charlotte snicker from her perch.

Shooting her an annoyed glare, I turned back to my prep team. My prep team immediately assaulting me..... the ring of torture began. Charlotte standing by, her eyes keeping watch. Every so often, I’d see her smile in the distance.

She was standing by my window, her eyes trained on Peeta’s house. I assumed Henry was with him. “Where’s Henry?”

“What....huh?” I heard her stutter as she turned to look at me. I smirked. “He’s with Peeta doing detail as well.” I nodded which provoked an angry response from Flavius.

Almost half an hour later, my mother came in to teach them in braid I had worn during the reaping. Their awe in learning something new made me smile. When they were done, I was led downstairs. Seeing Cinna, he immediately embraced. “I heard you have a whole design ready for me. How did I do?”

“You mean, how did I do?” He smirked and tossed clothes at me. “Now get dressed you worthless thing.” He laughed as I scowled at him. Returning to my room, I dressed quickly avoiding Charlotte who had yet to move. Once dressed, she followed me downstairs. Looking at Effie, who was trying to coordinate the interview for Peeta and I, she checked around the room. I’m not sure what dangers she was looking for.

Cinna placed a set of earmuffs on my head and I scowled. I hated earmuffs. “You’re bringing them back...” I heard him tell me through muffled ears. The door opened and bright light shined outside. Almost lighting the yard up. It was the Capital’s camera crew. Across the way, I barely
caught a glimpse of Peeta coming out of his house. Desire washed me and I had to take a step back.

Effie pushed me forward, thinking I couldn’t handle the cameras but Charlotte eyed me suspiciously. Walking out, I was indifferent to how I needed to act, so I did what Snow wanted me to. Act in love. Though, by now, I think my feelings for Peeta were coming through to me. Putting on a brave face, I gave a big smile and ran toward him.

He must have picked up on my idea and ran toward me. We slipped laughing. Falling roughly on the ground, he leaned up and kissed me. It was a slow kiss, but short. Burning desire raced down my spine and I had to stop myself. We heard someone getting our attention and looked up. Caesar Flickerman was waiting patiently for us.

“So how are things with the two lovebirds?” He asked us. We stood up awkwardly, like we planned.

“They’re good.” Peeta said quickly.

“Just good? I know there has to be more...Katniss?”

“We’ve never been more in love.” I said smiling brightly. Oh how he knew. How all of Panem wished they knew how Peeta could actually make me feel. Nodding at us, he realized he wasn’t getting anything else. Ending our interview, the lights around us dimmed.


Hearing Effie call us, I turned and followed her and the rest of the team toward the train station. Charlotte and Henry falling behind. Were they coming? It seemed so until a guard stopped them from entering the train with us. I didn’t hear what was being said, but moments later, the guard stepped aside and let them on.

Looking around the train, Peeta had taken a seat staring out the window. Henry was quite imposing to me. Looking like he was ready to kill anything that got in his way. “We’ll be around....” Henry said before he and Charlotte disappeared.
Leaving us alone, I stood in the car feeling the lurch of the train start. Once Henry and Charlotte had left, Peeta didn’t waste any time and stormed out of the car. Barely brushing past me, leaving a cold wake. His anger toward me was unheard of. Excusing myself, I went to my room. Sitting down, I laid down. Rolling over, I closed my eyes and fell asleep.

Later on, I heard a knocking at my door. Effie calling me to dinner. Groaning, I sat up and shook the cobwebs out of my head. Getting to my feet, I slowly made my way out of the room and down the hall. Entering the dining car, I saw everyone but Peeta. When everyone looked at me, I squirmed but reached for food. The staff had out done themselves to please me. All my favorites lined up.

Digging in, I had a forkful of food when Peeta walked in. Seeing me, I sat my fork down and looked at him. His eyes weren’t accusing, weren’t full of hate but of confusion and longing. I wondered what was going through his mind. His eyes asking me to follow him. Wiping my face, I excused myself from the table.

I didn’t see him disappear, but followed his footsteps through the next car. He had stopped only briefly before moving forward into a vacant room. Opening the door, I saw him standing close to the window. His back turned to me. Creeping slowly toward him, I stopped right behind him. Spinning around, he grabbed me and pulled me into a deep kiss. Instantly a moan escaped me. A hand coming to cup the side of my face while the other traced shivers down my spine.

We stood there kissing for several long minutes before he broke the kiss. Breathing gently against my lips, my body ached again for him. I don’t know if it ever would stop. Reaching for another kiss, he dodged me. Confusion set on my face.

“We can’t.....it’s not safe. You and I. Each time I’m around you, I lose control.” He paused as I chewed my lower lip contemplating his words. He groaned, his eyes closing. I watched as his breathing changed. From erratic to slow as if he were trying to calm down.

“What’s wrong?” I asked him.

“I think for these two weeks, while we do this Tour.....we need to try and keep distance.” I started to protest, but he cut me off, “I mean it. We’ll play the part the Capitol wants us to play, but to have you this close to me, it’s killing me.”

I thought about his words. Everyone was expecting two people in love, not hormonally fueled teenagers. “Not even to sneak around, like we are now?” The words popped out of my mouth before I had time to react. He leaned back to look at me. Astonishment plastered all over his face.
“Didn’t you hear what I said?” He asked getting upset. Letting me go, he tried to leave but I grabbed him again.

“I did and I’m sorry Peeta. I really am.” He stopped and looked at me. Like he was accepting my apology. Nodding at me, I sighed in relief. I didn’t want him mad at me.

“I know us not sneaking around is going to be hard on us, but we can try to stay platonic, can’t we?”

“No one knows about us except for Charlotte...”

“.....And Henry.” He concluded. Of course, why wouldn’t he talk to Henry.

“Speaking of which....what’s with their outfits?” I asked him curiously. I had the urge to hug him but even though, he had put a halt on us fooling around; a hug can be platonic.

“Henry said he was on detail....” He said stroking my hair.

“Charlotte said the same thing....What does it mean?”

“Not sure but they remind me of bodyguards....so I’m going with that.” I nodded into his shirt smelling the spices that became his signature perfume.

I sighed gently, “So being platonic....how is this going to work when we’re in front of camera?”

“I’m not sure but maybe keep the kissing chaste....simple. Like this....” He leaned forward and kissed me gently on the lips. I knew it was a bad idea because as soon as he did another moan escaped me and he pulled me in tighter. Then the kiss grew hot. Urgent...like we were afraid we would never kiss again.

Breaking it suddenly, he stepped away from me. Running his fingers through his hair, he closed his eyes. “You...you can’t weaken to me. I know you crave my touch. I know you’re struggling right now but I can’t lose control.”
“Peeta....I...” I closed the distance between us. My hand coming to caress his face. I watched him lean into me. Talk about me weakening to his touch! “I don’t know how we’re going to manage, but I’m going to try.”

“You could always pretend you’re indifferent to me again. Like you were during the Games...” He joked but grew serious. “Do that....we might just get through the week.”

“What then? What happens to us after the Tour?” I asked him.

He shrugged and ran his fingers through his hair again. “Pick up where we left off?”

I blushed remembering what happened last time he and I were together. Kissing me on the forehead, “We need to go before everyone gets suspicious.”

I nodded at him and watched him leave me alone in the room. Turning around, I stared out the window watching the world go by. The soft lull of the train making me tired. Yawning, I figured it would be late enough to try and sleep. Our first stop would be District 11.

About an hour later and after I had showered, I climbed into bed. Part of me wished Peeta would spend the night with me, but like he had declared earlier....it would be hard on us. Closing my eyes, I drifted off to a restless sleep.

I was back in the Arena. Peeta was standing in front of me. The nightlock berries in his hands. Before I could stop him, he swallowed them all. Even the ones that I had in my hands. Clinging to him, the tears started, “I never lied when I said I love you Katniss..... I wish I had never said for us to stop being with each other...” He gasped blood gurgling from his mouth. Spilling all over me. Screams left my mouth as he laid there dead in my arms. I couldn’t stop them. I couldn’t stop....

Screaming, I sat up in bed. Grasping the sheets, I wildly looked around hoping I wasn’t in the arena but in the bed on the train. When my breathing came too I recognized the room and instantly sighed. Jumping as my door opened, Peeta rushed in.

“Are you alright?” I barely heard him ask before I plowed him over. Holding onto him like he was my life raft. Clinging to him, praying he was truly alive, and not a figment of my imagination. Sobbing in his arms, he held me close but backed us to my bed. He tried letting me go but I held
“No.....no....please don’t let me go! Please don’t leave me!” I cried. Suddenly he turned his head around and motioned for someone to leave.

“Katniss....what was the nightmare about?” He asked me gently. I couldn’t answer. I was too scared even with him standing in front of me.

“I watched you die....” I whispered. “In the arena. You ate all the nightlock berries. Told me you loved me and died in my arms.” I started sobbing again. He held and rocked me gently like I was a delicate piece of glass. When I finally calmed, I looked at him.

“So that is what had you screaming? God, Katniss.....” He sighed and buried his head in my hair.

“Please stay with me tonight.....” I begged quietly.

“I...Katniss...Just to sleep?”

I nodded at him. Fooling around was the last thing on my mind. I wanted comfort. When he nodded at me, I smiled. As we climbed into bed, he scooted down but closer to me. Pulling me into his body we laid there snuggling. Within minutes we were both asleep.

I stirred in my sleep. Opening my eyes, I realized we hadn’t moved all night. Our bodies pressed tightly to one another that when I moved, my butt brushed his front and he groaned. His hand coming to cup my breast through my tank top. Gasping, his hand began massaging the breast and he grinded himself into my body. Moaning quietly as I could, I pushed back teasingly.

Suddenly, his eyes flew open and he pulled himself back from me. “Katniss....” he groaned when I rolled over to try and give him a chaste kiss. I didn’t know aroused he was but I broke the kiss so he didn’t yell at me. Whatever happened between us happened naturally.

He started to get up and walk out but I grabbed his arm. “Don’t let this morning run you out of my bed. I’m sorry.”

He gently touched my face, “I’m not mad. I promise. I know none of this was anyone’s fault, but our prep teams will be tearing down the doors. I don’t want gossip.”
I had to laugh. His smile reassured me that everything alright between us. Disappearing from my sight, I had awoke with an uneasy feeling that today wasn’t going to be a good day. Just as he predicted my prep team showed up. They had glopped, gooked, and waxed me down yesterday; I hoped they would go easy today.

Luckily, for me they did. Handing me a dress that was covered in autumn leaves. The orange color, I know Peeta would love. I almost felt pretty. Charlotte was close by. She hadn’t even changed clothes or guns. I hadn’t even asked her what dangers she thought were lurking. Chewing on my lower lip, I instantly knew.

The talk with President Snow....how I told only her; which means she told Henry. So all this wasn’t for show. I hadn’t even told Peeta. What was he going to think when he found out? Mistrust, anger, and a sharp realization of betrayal that I knew I couldn’t handle from Peeta. Couldn’t handle the look that would be on his face. Aghast, I clutched my stomach and sat down.

I couldn’t handle it no longer, I sprinted through the room and down the hall to Peeta’s room. I forgot to knock as I burst into the room. There stood Peeta naked before me, “Whoa!” I exclaimed. Clapping my hands over my eyes, I whirled around. A blush creeping on my face.

“You know Katniss if you wanted to see me naked all you had to do was ask....” I heard him saying. He was laughing at me. I scowled but stood my ground no matter how curious I was. When he got the hint that he wasn’t being funny to me, I heard him sigh.

“You can turn around. I do have pants on now.” I hesitated but slowly turned around. He did have pants on but was shirtless. I blushed again. Damn it. Amusement crossed his face and I almost forgot why I came to him.

Thinking rather hard and averting my eyes, I remembered. “I have something to tell you....It’s important..” He must have noticed my seriousness because he came over to me and sat me down. Sitting across from me, he took my hands in his.

“What’s wrong?” He asked quietly.

“Snow came to my house a few days ago. He threatened to kill Gale. Then rambled on about a rebellion....that apparently I’ve started, the fragile state of Panem, my “indifference” to your affections and how I need to convince him and the districts we are in love and no rebellion is never gonna happen.” I said in a rush. “I’ve been scared Peeta. I told Charlotte because she stormed into my room demanding to know why he was there. I’m pretty sure she’s told Henry and that’s why they’re all combat style today.” My voice becoming panicky as I kept rambling on. I knew I was going wild eyed on him because he grabbed me and looked at me. “And I knew I had
to tell you before something bad happened and you got mad at me for not telling you...”

“Katniss...breathe. Breathe for me. Everything is going to be all right. Have you told Haymitch about this?” I shook my head frantically. “Then he needs to be told before we leave the train. Stay right here. Don't’ move.” He threw his shirt on and left the room. It took him a while but he finally returned with Haymitch.

“Now Katniss tell him what you told me.” He asked me gently. Nodding, I took a breath and reiterated my story. Haymitch didn’t say much. Well he didn’t say anything at all. When I finished, we looked at him for some sort of guidance.

Finally, he sighed. “Then do as Snow said. He doesn’t want an uprising and you both have people you don’t want to lose as well as your own lives...” he took a breath looking me squarely in the eyes. “Just get yourself through this week. Get back home and keep your head down as best you can.”

We both nodded at him. Disappearing from our sight, we felt the train come to a stop. A knock on the door startled us. “I guess we’ve made it to District 11.” Peeta said, “I’ll do the talking, if you want me too...”

I nodded at him gratefully. I wasn’t good with words like he was. I don’t think I ever would be. He took my hand and we opened the door to see Effie. “Well...we’re here. Are you two ready?” Come...come...let’s not keep anyone waiting.”

She ushered us out of the train and I had to squint against the bright sun. It was balmy and warm. Unlike District 12, where it was cold and snowing; here the temperature was like being in late Spring. How far south had we come? I wondered as we were loaded into an armored truck. A commotion outside let me know that Henry and Charlotte were being demanded to hand over their weapons before they could enter the district. I heard Henry grumbled, but handed his over. Looking at Charlotte, he gave her a look like I’ve never seen before. Quickly she bowed down to his authority and handed hers over.

I believe they were far more dangerous than a gun or a Peacekeeper could handle. Climbing in the truck with us, she sat beside me. “I hate when they take my toys. I better get it back.” She complained.

“Char, love, you have three sets of them in District 12 and more at the safehouse. I think you’ll be fine....” Henry grumbled but smiled at her.

“I know! But I was going to name them. You know me....I gotta name all my guns.”
“I thought that was a very male thing to do. Name things....” Peeta interrupted.

“Oh, it is....I’m just strange like that.” Charlotte beamed at him.

On the other side of me Effie was having a fit. Her orange hair looking a bit more frazzled than normal, she turned to us. “Being treated like criminals....this is outrageously rude! You two barely get to see any of the District this way.”

It was true. The metal slats on the sides of the truck illuminated the truck only enough. Peeking out, I saw vast fields of something. It was flat. No trees in sight. How odd. I thought to myself. The ride to the center of the District wasn’t much fun either. Bumpy and dusty. I resisted the urge to sneeze. Lucky for me, Peeta gave me a pained smile.

As we came closer to the center of the District, the back of the Justice Building loomed ahead. When the truck finally stopped, the dread in my grew even more so. Peeta took my hand and we were led to the building back entrance. The stage in the front with the people of 11...waiting for us. My nerves must have shown because Peeta squeezed my hand while Effie handed me note cards.

‘Now, just read these. I’m sure you have them memorized but they will help you in case you forget. Smile, the both of you. Act like you’re happy to be here.” She said sternly pointedly looking at me. Instead of sighing, I nodded and plastered a fake smile for her. When she nodded in approval, she left us be.

Charlotte and Henry came up to us. “We’ll be around. Keeping an eye on things. Just don’t say or do anything stupid.”

I nearly rolled my eyes. Why must we be subjugated to “not do something stupid”? Of course we were young but we did have brains about us. Besides. Peeta was going to be doing all the talking; not me. Being escorted through the building, I barely had time to look around.

Shoving us out the front double doors, the bright sunlight glaring at me; I nearly tripped over my heels. Thankfully, Peeta had ahold of me and helped me to the microphone. As my eyes adjusted, I saw two platforms. One held Thresh’s family and the other Rue’s. I couldn’t look at Rue’s. All the siblings....the crying mother. It was killing me to be there. Losing focus, I almost dropped the flowers a small girl handed me.
I barely heard Peeta’s speech. The speech for both of us. The offering of food for each family forever perked my ears up. Leaning up, I kissed him quickly. I didn’t know if he could do that but he did. It was very Peeta. Taking my hand, he started to lead me away, but I broke free.

Looking at Thresh’s family, “I never knew Thresh, but he saved my life. Just the once. I appreciate his strength and unwillingness to play the games but on his own terms.” I turned to Rue’s family, blinking back tears, “But I did know Rue. I see her in the flowers. I see her in my sister. She was an ally....a friend. I truly miss her?”

As the last words fell off my lips, I heard the same tune whistled. It signaled the end of the workday. From the tune an old man kissed three fingers and held them in salute. I paled....I would have cried, but the threat of Snow’s words hung on my shoulders.

Rough hands grabbed my arm, leading through the double doors. I didn’t mind much. I wanted out of there. Looking down, I noticed Peeta had his flowers and I didn’t. “You forgot your flowers...I’ll get them.” He said heading back to the door.

“No, I will...” I said following him. As we opened the door, the man who whistled was being dragged upon the stage. Seconds later, he was pulled to his knees and shot in the head. O could barely contain my screams as Peeta pulled me back. More hands grabbed me as Haymitch found his way toward us. Pulling Peeta and I away from the commotion.

Leading down winding hallways, I’m surprised that he remembered his way around. Great memory for someone who led his life in heavy drink. Coming to a flight of stairs, we followed him until it opened to a hatch that he lifted. Crawling through, we were in the bell tower. An attic?

“What the Hell was that?” He rounded on us.

“I don’t know. I just offered them a lifetime of food.....”

“And it was recommended that we give a personal speech, if we could.....”

“Can’t either of you ever follow simple directions!? He all but shouted at us. I winced at his words. We looked at each other. Having the good graces to look embarrassed, I looked down through the window seeing two more bodies being dragged away from the platform. Tears slipped from my eyes, but I refused to look at Haymitch.

“Next time Effie tells you to read from the cards, I suggest you do it.” With that, he stormed out of the attic.
Turning to Peeta, he shrugged, “Are you alright?” He asked me gently. A hand caressed my face gently. I barely got a nod out before I leaned into him for a hug. “Today has been a disaster, hasn’t it.” When I nodded, he laughed softly. “Are you ready to eat? I can’t believe I’m saying it, but I’m actually hungry.....”

Taking my hand, he led me downstairs to the banquet hall. Where we would be treated with a scrumptious meal. Part of me wasn’t hungry but the smells lured me in. Effie was angry about something...Something about the Peacekeeper manhandling her; telling her to go back to the banquet hall. I gave her my best horror face and condolences. She smiled and said, “All part of the job....” Of course, I believe she couldn’t wait until we got back on the train.

Finally, it was time to wrap up the dinner. Standing up, Effie ushered us back into the truck and within minutes we were loaded back onto the train. Sitting in the dining car, we all sipped hot tea. No one talking about what happened earlier. Finishing mine, I stood up slowly. I wanted out of these clothes, into a hot shower; then bed. I could feel Peeta’s eyes on me as I sauntered out. Shivers ran down my spine knowing exactly how he could make me feel.

Entering my room, undressing as I headed to my shower; I climbed into the steamy goodness and sighed. This was what I was looking forward too all day...well except maybe Peeta and I having some alone time. But now that we’ve set out boundaries this week, I wasn’t sure how long we would last without kissing or touching. He was adamant about keeping distance, lest we let on the relationship we were building. I had no clue what was happening to us. Or even how it happened but when he looked at me, touched my skin; I lost all inhibitions. I had never resorted to pleasuring myself when I was alone and my thoughts crossed to him.

Soon the water became too cold for me and I knew I had to get out. Grabbing a towel I dried myself off. Walking into my room, I crawled myself in bed not caring to put on pajamas. Falling asleep, I prayed no nightmares would befall me.
Katniss POV

The next day I awoke, I learned we were almost to District 10. Heading backwards was disconjoining. I’m not sure how I liked it. I couldn’t remember who were the tributes, but I’m sure Peeta would know. With yesterday’s disaster looming on our heads, I was positive about letting Peeta do all the talking for now on unless my voice was required.

Slipping out of my room quietly, I ran into Peeta. Giving him a smile, I really wished he would kiss me and tell me that it was all a bad dream. Unfortunately for me, he just smiled back and took my hand. Kissing the back of it, I melted and the world, for a split second, seemed a little brighter. Entering the dining car, we took a seat.

Before I could put hot chocolate to my mouth, Effie thrust new cards at us. “I expect both of you to just read the cards only.....no more personal stuff.” She said exasperatedly. I nodded and sat my cards beside me. Peeta scanned his and nodded. I couldn’t wait for this to be done. One district down, eleven more to go. With a huge party to attended to once we reached the Capital.

The days would became a blur. Get up, eat, be carted around to each district, give a speech and eat again. The only thing that was different was instead of keeping the people happy like Snow wanted, our attitudes toward the Capital seemed to enrage them. Every time we stopped, underneath all the elation that we had survived was fury. I could hear the shouts from the people. Those people would be pulled from the crowd by Peacekeepers and never heard from again.

Peeta and I has chosen to ignore this in public but my nightmares were getting worse. Each night, I would see people being dragged away....People being killed.....I could see them blaming me. Accusing me of not taking a stand. Not fighting for them. I would wake up screaming every night. I looked horrible. Effie gave me sleeping pills but they only helped keep me in the nightmares that I was trying to escape. It would swallow me whole. Leaving me in the clutches of those that depended on me to save them when I couldn’t save myself. Nothing worked.

The night after District 6, Charlotte came running in, her gun ready to kill whatever was after me. I watched her check every space in my room. Even listening through the walls. When I finally got her attention and told her that it was a nightmare, she just looked at me.

“I know you haven’t been sleeping well.....why haven’t you told me?”

“I don’t know. You’ve been busy with security...among other things and I didn’t think to bother you.”

“What about Peeta? I haven’t seen him coming running in. I know this because I make my rounds and he’s up wandering the train. I know he’s an insomniac, but I figured he would be in here with

The Victory Tour Pt 2
“Yea, see, that’s not gonna happen. He’s pretty well stated his boundaries while we’re on the tour. We tried platonic kissing the first day we were here and things got a little heated. He spent the night once and woke up the next morning.....well ya know.” I told her quietly. She didn’t know how much I ached for him. I didn’t care what happened as long as he was with me.

“I have noticed you two a bit distant but I didn’t know why. Did he say why he wanted to keep this distance?”

“He said when he was around me he would lose control. He all but told me to go home the night he and Gale got into that fight.” I paused and fixed my blanket, “You would think he and I are rushing things but for some reason it seems.....I don’t know....right.”

“I’m not here to judge you. I’m here to keep an eye on you. I’m not your mom Katniss..”

“See that’s the thing, I could never talk to my mom about this. I don’t think she would get it.” I interrupted.

“That is a typical teenager thing to say. I’m just a bit....” I watched her hesitate... “older than you so I get it. I can’t tell you what to do with Peeta except if that’s his reasoning, then follow it until ya’ll get home. Figure it out from there.” She said. ”It’s late and you need to finish sleeping. Tomorrow means we’re halfway done with this pony show. Goodnight Katniss…”

She turned and walked out. I knew Charlotte was right, but I didn’t care. Climbing out bed, I threw my robe on and went in search of Peeta. She had messed up when she told me that he roamed the train at night. I had no clue where to go but I figured I would check his room. Padding my way softly through the train corridor, I passed by a room with screens. Screens that showed riots in other Districts. Suddenly a door was closed on me and I pretended to move along my way. So this is what a rebellion felt like? I was scared, yet elated.

Finding Peeta’s door, I listened quietly to see if he was there. No sounds coming from the room. Meaning he was elsewhere. Damn, I had hoped this would be easy. Apparently, nothing is ever easy. Turning around, I knew there were other cars. Accessible ones that I could walk into. Passing by my room, I headed toward our dining car. Maybe he was there? Entering it, it was softly lit up. Squinting my eyes to re-adjust, I scanned the room. He wasn’t in here either..

I highly doubted he would be in the bar car, but it never hurt to look. Making my way slowly there, I knew questions would be raised if I was questioned as to why I was there. Wrapping my robe tighter around me, I stepped through to the car. No one was around. It seemed as if the bar was shut down.

“Looking for someone?” I heard a male voice. Catching a scream in my throat, shivers ran down my spine until I realized it was Haymitch. Rolling my eyes, I stalked over to him.

“If you really must know, I’m looking for Peeta. It’s about tomorrow....” I lied.

“No one here....except me.” He slurred. I didn’t have time for this.

“Well goodnight.....” I said as I left the bar car. I didn’t hear him if he spoke to me. I was running out of places to hunt him down. Sighing, exhaustion settled over me and I decided to head back to my room. Sneaking my way back, I had to pass Peeta’s room again. I stopped one more time but didn’t hear anything. Taking the few steps down the hall to my room, I barely opened the door when it was flung open.

I swallowed another scream as a strong hand pulled me into the room. There stood the person I
had been searching all over the train for. A sigh of relief washed me, but annoyance replaced it. He pushed me gently against the door, holding me close; I could almost feel his breath tickling my lips. God, I wish he would kiss me.

“I heard you scream...what happened?” his voice low and dangerous

“Just another nightmare. I...talked to Charlotte.” The proximity of our bodies was driving me insane. I could feel the heat radiating off him. Burning me. Enveloping me with desire that even rain couldn’t parch. I couldn’t see his eyes, but I knew he was watching me. Gauging my reaction to him. It had been nearly a week without us touching. If I wasn’t plagued with nightmares then I was fantasizing about Peeta.

“Are you alright?” He inquired. His lips barely brushed mine and I had to stifle a moan that threatened to escape. A hand came to rest on the side of my neck. His fingers tickling my skin.

“I...I...think so. I walked around to clear my head.” I mumbled against his lips. Arousal raced through me so hard, I became lightheaded. My eyes closed as my breathing became erratic.

“I need to kiss you...” I heard him moan softly.

“Then please do it...” I practically begged.

Closing the minute distance between us, his lips fully found mine. Soft moans escaped us, opening us up to each other. Surrendering to his kiss, I lost myself. The softness of his lips, the way his tongue danced in my mouth; I wanted more of him. It wasn’t desperate or rushed but slow. Building desire that couldn’t be eclipsed. My hands coming in contact with bare chest, I eased him out of his own robe.

In seconds, I could feel my shirt being tugged off. My hands coming to trace his back while his eased their way up my back. Walking us backwards, I held to him; his feet remembering their way to my bed. The cold bed that I wished every night he would occupy. Taking a seat, he pulled me into his lap. He broke the kiss and trailed his lips down the side of my neck. Hands slowly tracing my butt, he gripped it pushing me further into his lap. His hardness pressing into the apex of my thighs.

I moaned, not caring how loud I was. Apparently, I was too loud because he silenced me with his mouth. “We don’t need people coming in and finding us...” he whispered.

Spinning us around, I landed on my back. Letting out a yelp he nipped the side of my neck, “I told you we need to be quiet....” Easing his way over me, his mouth started at my neck; sucking and nipping gently. Trailing lower, they followed down the valley of my breast and down my stomach to my belly button. Stopping there, I knew he wanted to go further, but was waiting on me.

Kissing back up my stomach—which elicit a giggle from me—his mouth hovered over my bare breast. The way he was making me feel, I would almost give into him tonight. Pulling his head up, I captured his lips. Our bodies rubbing against each other, creating an overwhelming friction that had me arching my back and deepening his moans.

It was he who broke the kiss. Resting his forehead on mine, his breath tickling my lips again, “Katniss...I want you but not like this. Not on a train, but in my bed. I’ve been thinking about you constantly. Us, like this....” He made a point by caressing the side of my breast. When I moaned, he smiled down at me. “But, I need to know where the boundaries are.”

I chewed my lower lip and thought, “The way you make me feel, I almost want to give into you.”
I paused hearing him growl. His hips bucked with approval, but continued, “But you’re right....a train isn’t where this need to happen. I don’t know where my boundaries lie with you. You touch me and I forget if there are boundaries.”

Peeta POV

I heard her scream. Like a banshee piercing the night sky. Sitting up from my spot on the back of the train, I hesitated. Running to her would break the boundaries we had set the second day we arrived. Well....the boundaries, I had set. I had been a fool to make those stipulations on her. Knowing full well that it would be torture for us to not touch for two weeks. I had already been going crazy these past few days.

The nightmares that had once plagued me had been replaced by fantasies of Katniss. Making it incredibly hard to sleep at night. Stroking myself only eased the hunger temporarily, and it was slowly not becoming enough to sate my desire for her. Roaming the train, making late night training sessions with Henry, or hiding myself was all I was limited too. The nights I trained with Henry, I came back to my room exhausted. Then I could sleep. It would be fortuitous to train every night but he had Charlotte to take care of. Time he wanted to spend with her.

I was insanely jealous.

I almost hated him.

Laying in bed every night, knowing she was barely ten feet from me was agonizing. When we sat by one another while eating was the closest I could be to her, but even that, started to become too much for me. But tonight...tonight was different. I heard her scream. In terror. Charlotte knew I roamed around every night but I never knew she would give away my secret. Watching as Katniss left her room....I presume in search of me; which was confirmed when she stopped in front of my room. I felt elation come over me.

She was gone ten minutes. Ten long minutes contemplating if I should sneak back to my room. Pretend I was asleep or sneak into her room and do what I longed to do with her. Sneaking out of the room, I braved it and snuck into the room. Looking around as I waited patiently, I breathed in her scent that lingered in the room. My cock becoming heavy the longer I paced the room. The sheets in a tangled mess, pillows and blankets askew.

Hearing soft footfalls, my head whipped around as I heard the click of the door. She was back! So soon? I thought she might persisted in searching longer for me. Coming to the door, I gently grabbed her wrist, pulling her through the door. She gasped seeing me. Was that relief flooding her face or annoyance? Pushing her gently into the door, I inhaled her scent. My steel resolve collapsing.

Inching my lips close to hers, I asked her why she screamed. I nailed it when she said nightmare and to her confession to speaking to Charlotte. I could feel her body pressed into mine. My senses in overload with her this close to me. I couldn’t think. At least about nothing except taking her to my bed. I wanted her underneath me. I wanted her moans in my ears.

“I need to kiss you....” I heard my voice betray me. I could feel her weaken against me. Against my demand of her body. When she begged me to do it, I swallowed a moan but my body caved. Tasting her lips, I heard us moan in unison. Sliding my tongue in her opened mouth, I caressed every inch of her mouth. Slowly, but steadily, the kiss wound its way through my body. My arousal beating at me with every stroke of her tongue.
I felt her hand slide my robe off my shoulders. The sudden cool air sending shivers down my back...or maybe that was her delicate hands tracing the skin....? I wasn’t so sure. My feet moved us back toward her bed. When I touched the fabric, I sat down abruptly bringing Katniss into my lap. We were heading down a path that we had barely begun to scratch. Rolling her hips further into my lap, my cock pressing firmly into her, I had to roll us over. It would be almost too easy to ease her pants and panties off.

When she yelped, I nipped her neck but my mouth trailed down her chest; my mouth and tongue leaving a hot trail between her breasts. The breasts I wanted my mouth around. I wanted my tongue tasting one of her nipples. Swirling my tongue in her belly button, I ached to travel further down. But boundaries needed to be discussed. So, instead, I kissed back up her delicious body.

When she pulled me back into a searing kiss, her body arched into mine. A heat...a friction that escalated our desires for one another. Pushing my hips into her, breathing in her heady scent, I knew I needed to stop. Breaking the kiss, I rested my forehead against hers. Desire clouding my thoughts. I barely remember the conversation but growled when she said she couldn’t say no to me. By that point, I couldn’t concentrate.

“We need to sleep.....” I said feebly.

“You could always stay...” I heard her say.

Katniss POV

You could always stay.. I heard myself say to him..After what just happened, I expect him to stay? In a matter of minutes, he would likely bolt from my room and not touch me again for another week. Or at least till we got home.... I sighed happily when his lips descended mine.

“You know how hard it will be for me if I stayed with you tonight.....” he complained breaking the sweet kiss.

“I know, but just to feel your body close to mine. Seeing you there when I wake up. It’s not like I’m asking you to shower with me.” I said abruptly.

He groaned and closed his eyes for a second. I could feel a shudder pass through him. Rolling off me, he held me close. Feeling his heartbeat through my palm, I closed my eyes. I had missed this embrace. It was normally how we would sleep....if he ever snuck back into my bed again.

“You have no idea how tempting you are to me, do you?” he muttered.

“I would ask you to show me, but we would be crossing boundaries we aren’t—-OK, well I’m not—ready for.” I reminded him when he gave me a shocked face. My leg brushed something hard and he hissed. Quickly, I looked. His erection was still quite alive. Averting my eyes, I scoot my leg slowly away.

He was already trying to stay with me and I wasn’t helping when I brushed him. Anymore movements like that and he would bolt. My bed would be cold and I would lay awake till dawn frustrated and annoyed. I would have to hear it from the prep team about how awful I looked. I did lie to him when I said I wasn’t ready for him. I was, but like him, the train wasn’t the way to go.

“Maybe, I will shower.....” I mentioned. It would help me sleep. Which probably wasn’t my best idea because his eyes flew open. Eyeing me warily, he rolled to his side facing me. His eyes dark
with desire. His face was flush from his own arousal. The one I knew was beating at him. The same one my own body matched.

Caressing the side of my breast, I bit my lower lip. If I moved his hand over my breast, things could get out of control fast. So I stayed put letting him touch me. When his thumb brushed my nipple, I gasped; my body going into overdrive. For two people who didn’t want the first time on a train we were perceivable close to the edge of losing. I felt a tightening beginning to form low in me and I had to squeeze my legs tighter.

His eyes weren’t on mine but looking at my breast as he stroked my nipple again. This time I couldn’t stop the moan from escaping me. My breathing became hard and erratic. I know he would touch me in ways no other man could ever do for me. I couldn’t believe my body was so responsive to him and all he was doing was caressing my skin. My nerve endings were on fire. I had to stop my hips from rolling into his erection.

I had to get out of there before I wiggled out of my pants and told him to take me right then, “Peeta....I’m going to shower.” I barely got out. He nodded and scooted away from me. I didn’t ask him to join. I knew he wouldn’t. It was OK this time. This time I was far far too vulnerable to him. Climbing out bed, I didn’t risk kissing or looking at him. Entering the shower, I climbed in once I saw steam.

Moaning as the hot water hit me, I could finally let myself relax. I don’t know how long I stood in there but soon the water became cold. Getting out, I dried off. As I opened the door to my room, I realized it was too quiet. Vacant.

Peeta had left.

The next few days flew by in a blur. If someone asked me twenty years from now what I remember about the Districts, I couldn’t tell you. Physically I was here; mentally, I wasn’t. I couldn’t remember a time when I had spaced out so much that I couldn’t tell you what day it was. The boundaries that Peeta and I had set up fragmented in my mind. I think we had set some up. I know that neither he nor I wanted to make love while on the train. It would seem to noticeable.

I wasn’t angry that he had left me in my room the other night. It was probably best for the both of us. Days after we had broken our rules I could still feel his hands on me. My night times were of him now. Nightmares seemed to have taken a vacation from my mind. For once, I was relieved.

The day before we were to reach the Capital, I was staring out the window watching the world go by. Lost in my own thoughts, I didn’t hear Peeta come in the room. Jumping as I felt lips brush the side of my neck, I whirled around only to find lips waiting on me. The kiss was far to short for my taste, but when Peeta pulled back he smiled at me. Snuggling into his warm body, we laid there not speaking. The silence was actually nice.

Just then the door opened and Haymitch, Charlotte, and Henry walked in. All seemed to have grave faces. Like we had done something wrong again. I wanted to pull away from Peeta, but I figured Haymitch wouldn’t say anything. He took a seat across from us and sighed. Charlotte and Henry were stone face. Their expressions now unreadable.

“Can someone please tell me what’s wrong?” I asked getting agitated. The longer the silence..the worse my mood became. I felt Peeta squeeze my side but I ignored it.
Henry was the first to talk. “It seems that several Districts are rebelling. They don’t either don’t believe you or they do.”

“In which case....it means that Snow is going to throw blame at the both of you....” Charlotte continued.

“It also means that he doesn’t believe in the love story anymore. With uprisings in several Districts.....how could he? Your job was to try and show everyone, including Snow that you two were madly in love. What happened?” Haymitch demanded. His words surprised me because since District 11, he had hardly spoken to either of us.

“We kept up the pretense that we are in love.....Just after District 11, we decided to not have a repeat.” Peeta explained for us. I was actually quite irritated at Haymitch for cornering us like this.

“Listen we’ve all heard you two....in private. Everyone here knows the truth, why not play it for the Districts?” He asked. I was truly horrified. My breathing must have stopped because Peeta squeezed me again to remind me to breath. Burying my head in Peeta’s chest, I tried blocking out the world. I didn’t want to look at anyone.

“Because what we do privately is our own business Haymitch. The Districts and Snow will see us as two in love but I will not give them ‘behind the scenes’.” Peeta stated becoming heated. I could barely see the slight nod of Henry’s head. Like he was agreeing with Peeta.

I squeezed his arm slightly, hoping it would cool him down a bit. I knew he liked things between us to be private. It was personal; not something I’d want to broadcast. When he sighed and kissed my hair, I knew he’d be fine.

“All right......all right. I won’t push again but something drastic needs to happen.”

“What if we get married?” I regretted saying it as soon as it came out of my mouth. I felt Peeta stiffen behind me. His entire being becoming like a statue.

“That could work....”Haymitch started. Peeta pushed away from me and stormed out of the cabin. I almost cried. His anger rolling off him was choking me. Putting my head between my legs, I didn’t hear anyone leave until I heard a shuffling sound.

“You know Katniss he wants something like that to be real between you and him. Marriage shouldn’t be grossly displayed like that.” My sobs muffled by my hair, I barely registered her touch, “I know you didn’t mean it that way and I already know he’s forgiven you. You have a terrible foot-in-mouth disease.” Charlotte offered her and I took it hesitantly. Holding me into a hug, which she seemed to be scared of, she let me cry for a few minutes.

When I had regained most of my senses, I cleaned my face off and sighed. “I’ve made a big muck up, haven’t I?”

She shook her head, “No, you didn’t but let him fully cool off before you bring it up. Before you start groveling. Maybe once you returned home. I know he’ll go through with it.....”

“I just hate that I’ve cornered him like that.” I whined.

“Well after this is over...fix it” She stated simply. I nodded and sat back down as she left the room. I knew he and I were in this for life, but why did I have to ruin it this way? Sighing, I laid back down and pretended that none of this existed.
Same ol' same ol'. I'll never be the one to ask, but how is the story going so far?

"Curiosity killed the cat...but at least she died informed"

When I awoke several mornings later, I looked out the window and saw it. We had finally arrived. My stomach felt like lead and I wanted to barf. It was a gleaming beauty of white marble surrounded by mountains and a huge lake. It was a place of life but also a place of death. A place where one person decided the fate of thousands. A shudder ran through me.

Looking at the clock, I realized I had ten minutes before my prep team would start hunting for me. Being here was a bigger deal than being in all the other Districts. I would have to be re-scrubbed and cleaned up again. Getting up, I went back to my room. I didn’t even pause when I passed Peeta’s room.

As I stepped into my room, small cries of happiness greeted me. Putting on a fake smile, I endured two hours of beautifying torture. I think we were to have an interview with Caesar Flickerman tonight and I had to look my best. It was probably also the same time Peeta would have to propose.

Sure to her word, Peeta went through it. Before the whole interviewing had started, he fell onto one knee and professed his love for me, asking me to marry him. I didn’t see any consternation in his face when he looked up at me. On the outside, I went through the happy ‘in love’ emotions that needed to be shown. Inside, I was screaming. Hating myself for this. As he slipped the ring on my finger, his light kiss upon my lips seemed real. I wondered how much of it really was. How much of him was all an act?

When the President showed up to congratulate us, I plastered a smile that hid the disgust I felt. The smell of roses reeked from him almost enough to make me sick. He made a comment about how we were gonna have to persuade my mother to let me marry. I told him he would have to pass a law to convince her. Looking at him my mind screamed the words my mouth counted. Did I do it? Did I convince everyone--including you--that my love is serious? With the tiniest shake of his head, I knew we were all doomed.

I didn’t remember the interview. I barely remember being asked questions and answering them. When I came too, I was sitting on my bed, in the training building. They had moved us earlier that day. I hated it. Hated being here. My memories weren’t happy of this place. The ring felt heavy upon my right finger. Foreign. When my blurry haze became clear, it was Peeta trying to get my attention.

“You don’t have to wear it Katniss...”

“Wear what?” I asked still quite dazed.

“The ring. If you find it offensive please don’t wear it. I’d hate for you too...” My lips silenced his words. I didn’t care if my dress got wrinkled or shredded, I just wanted to kiss him. When my tongue touched his, I heard him moan and pull me closer to him. His fingers weaving into my
elaborated hairstyle. We kissed for several long minutes before I broke it.

Burying my face in his neck, my lips grazed his skin. I felt him shudder, “I’m sorry I put you through this. I wasn’t thinking......”

“It’s OK Katniss. I know I handled things wrong. I know you’re doing it to protect us.” He gently eased my head away from him so I could look at him. Cupping my face, he kissed my mouth gently before he said, “You have nothing to be sorry for. I’m sorry I handled it wrong. I have missed you terribly...” His mouth mumbled against my lips. I ached to kiss him again. Ached for him to help me out of this dress and put his hands on me.

He must have felt my need because he sighed and pulled away from me, “My need for you is too great...I don’t want to push it tonight. Besides your prep team will find it offensive if I shred your beautiful dress..” ‘HA’ my brain shouted. I could have helped him undress me. No shredding necessary.

“At least stay with me tonight. I know you don’t want things to progress here, but just let us sleep and hold one another?” I could see the thought appealed to him. It’s not like anyone could say anything now. We were engaged.

“I suppose I can. I’ve missed your body close to mine.” He caved.

A smile crept along my face. I watched him stand to his feet. Kicking his shoes off, I stood as well and pulled my hair to the side. I was going to have to shower. Looking back at him, I smiled, “Can you unzip me?” I asked with a bit of playfulness to my voice.

I heard him groan as he took the zipper and pulled it down. My bare back exposed to him and the cool air. I shivered slightly. When his lips found the base of my neck, I moaned. His fingers grazing the bare skin of my back. “You’re not playing fair....”

“Neither are you.” I breathed. “I need to shower.”

“Please don’t ask me to follow you.” He begged me quietly. Part of me wanted too. I had been wondering what it would be like showering with him.

“And if I did.....”

“I wouldn’t be able to resist...”

I nodded in defeat, “Then I will be back shortly. Please don’t leave.” Like you did last time.

“Not even to get clothes?” I shook my head. “All right, I will be right here.”

When I returned, he was still there. Stripped down to nothing but a pair of PJ pants I had coveted. I chewed my lower lip seeing him in his slight state of undress.

“I see where my shirt had disappeared too....” He smiled at me noticing I was wearing one of his shirts I had stolen.

“It’s comfortable.” I argued. “but if you want it back...” I reached to pull it over my head when he stopped me.

“No! Please leave it on. It looks good on you.” I knew he was being sincere but restraining himself. I had to smile. Taking my hand, he led me back to my bed. Climbing in, I did a small victory dance in my head as he eased himself beside me. Pulling me close, I laid my head on his chest, hearing his heartbeat; I instantly sighed with happiness.
In the dark I could hear him breath. He wasn’t asleep like I thought he was. Pushing myself up, I traced circles on his chest. Even though, it was covered with thin cotton I could feel the contours of his muscles under my fingers.

“Did you really want to marry me?” I heard him ask in a small voice. That voice full of being rejected, of insecure fear. My heart stopped in my throat. A stray tear falling from my eye, I barely felt it splash on my hand. Resting my head in his chest I breathed in his scent hoping it would calm me.

“I do...I just didn’t know it would be this soon. I had hoped it would be several years from now not when we’re barely out of our teens.” I confessed with my heart breaking.

I felt him nod, “I wanted to ask you the right way. With no Capital, no cameras, nothing like that to take away the romance of it.”

I felt emboldened by his words. He really did love me. Though the words hadn’t come from our lips yet, I knew I did love him. More than I had loved anyone else, except Prim. “Then why don’t you ask me again?”

He stilled. He stopped breathing. I think my words shocked him to the core. But he regained quickly. Rolling to his side, I could barely see his face, but I could feel it as I touched it. Kissing my knuckles, I could barely hear him, “I love you, will you marry me?”

Tears slipped from my eye this time. Ones of happiness. The Capital could do what it wanted to us but it couldn’t take away our private moments. “Yes, I will. I love you too.” My words were barely acknowledged when he pulled me into a deep kiss. I moaned into the kiss as he cupped the side of my face.

“You have no idea how happy you’ve made me. I know we’re young but damn our youth.” he whispered against my lips. Laying back down, I snuggled into him and soon the happiness led me to the best sleep I’ve ever had.

No one was surprised when they came into wake me up. Seeing Peeta in my bed only increased their excitement for our love. Sure, they could have figured out that we were trying hard not to make love but their cloudless heads almost made me smile.

“Up the both of you! Today is the big day. The party at President Snow’s mansion. It is going to be the talk of the year and with the both of you as center stage everyone will be dying to meet you.” Effie beamed from the other side of my room. Her slight glare at Peeta, who hadn’t moved from his spot, rolled his eyes but got up anyway.

“Now Peeta...your team will take care of you later this afternoon, since the party doesn’t start till late. But you Katniss...” She rounded on me, “Yours are about to break down the door.” She said it like she was preparing me for battle. I glanced at Peeta who was nearly being shoved out of my room, his eyes a barest hint of pity. But maybe I will come out of this beautiful enough to knock him out.

Like vultures poaching on a dead animal, my prep team attacked me without mercy. It was plucked, lotioned, waxed, shaved, pushed and pulled for the better part of the day. I only managed to escape long enough claiming hunger as my only ally. Charlotte was there watching in amusement again. Her clothing somewhat relaxed today. Eating food was a chore. I couldn’t mess up my nails, my hair or my makeup.

I glared at Charlotte who collapsed in laughter as they walked out of my room. My skin felt raw to me. Foreign, but soft. “You know.....you are horrible.” I told her without malice.
Laughter crossed her face again, “Oh, I know! But seeing you experimented on was just too much for me.”

“What about you? Are you dressing up?”

“I am but it doesn’t and will never take me this long to beautify myself.” she said smugly.

“It’s because you’re already beautiful...” I protested.

“Just a matter of doing body maintenance Katniss....If you tried it, you wouldn’t be subjugated to this torture. I assure you. I know your team takes great pride in their work so be nice to them.” She left me at that and didn’t return until it was almost time to go.

Entering my room, I guess to make sure I didn’t bolt for the border, she stood before me in delicate one shoulder dress that had a long slit in the front. Black was her color but I hated how she made me looked dwarfish. My team had decided that sequins were what I needed to sparkle. It was long, red and too low cut for my taste, but I didn’t argue. Not after how Charlotte berated me for my actions earlier.

Following her out, I wasn’t sure how to not trip over my dress. When I bumped into the wall, she sighed and rolled her eyes. Reaching down my dress, she grabbed what looked like a bracelet. Hooking it around my wrist, I figured out that it was a way to hold my dress up without tripping.

Reaching Henry and Peeta a few minutes later, I watched Henry eye Charlotte with approval. His kiss to her made me ache. Turning to Peeta, a blush crept on my face. He was handsome in his suit. Coming up to me, he made sure he didn’t step on my dress.

“You look beautiful Katniss,” I heard him whisper in my ear. Kissing my mouth, he took my hand and followed Charlotte and Henry to where we would be meeting everyone else. Everyone talked about how great we all looked. After this charade, we would be heading back home.

Getting into the elevator a few minutes later, “Well everyone....” I heard Charlotte trying to get everyone’s attention. “Let’s get this pony show over.”

“Char, really?” Henry bemused looking at her with unconditional love. “You used to love these kinds of gatherings, remember?”

She smiled serenely at him, “That was long before these parties were laced with death. You know how much that smell bothers me. It’s worse after it's been lingering there for decades. Musty....” she wrinkled her nose in distaste.

He chuckled and kissed her palm....”Well then, let’s get this over with and head back to cleaner air.”

Effie led us out of the building and into a private car. Peeta and I rode with Effie and Haymitch who didn’t glance once at us the entire ride. As we pulled up, I was in complete awe of Snow’s mansion. It was huge on the outside that made me wonder what the inside looked like. From Effie’s excitement it must be ghastly. Stepping out of the car, Peeta squeezed my hand in reassurance. Henry and Charlotte were close by that I felt somewhat safe.

The party--if you can call it that--would never have an equal. Stepping into his banquet hall, the forty foot ceiling looked like the night sky. I wondered how they knew what the night sky actually looked like here. All the lights in the city seemed to blur out nature’s beauty. I could hear music playing but when I looked around, I couldn’t find musicians. Several feet above me, they float in what looked like fluffy white clouds. I’m not sure how they stayed aloof. Instead of tables and
chairs, sofas and quite comfortable looking chairs replaced them. All of them surrounded by fireplaces, ponds, flowers. It was a utopia, but disgusting as well.

“It looks like an overdone Prom....” I heard Charlotte whisper to Henry.

The real star of this evening was all the food. Tables upon tables of delicacies---some of which I’ve never heard of--adorned the room. It seemed like it was a never ending parade of food that could feed my District for months.

“I want to try everything!” I tried to sound excited. If I was doomed already, why not enjoy what was left of my year? My excitement doesn’t go unnoticed. Both Henry and Charlotte look at me sharply but Peeta, my lovely Peeta, is clueless.

“Then you better pace yourself.” He cautioned smiling since we’re on camera.

“Okay, no more than one bite of each dish.” I promised him. The first table I come across is filled with numerous soups. From creamy pumpkin to a clear green broth that tasted like springtime to a dessert like soup of frothy pink dotted with raspberries.

I was introduced to many people but after a while the names as well as the faces became a blur to me. I was having too much fun eating and being chased by Peeta. Peeta and I make no effort to talk to people other than Charlotte and Henry but everyone sought us out. The life of the party it seemed was to be around us. I act as delighted as I can but what I really want was to be away from all this cozying up to Peeta.

Every table we come across is excruciating delicious. Tasting samples of duck to vegetables in buttery sauces to creamy decadent desserts left me full fast. When seeking Charlotte or Henry, I found them dancing away to something I’m sure no one has ever heard of. Just then my prep team shows their faces for the first time tonight. Each of them loud and overly excited from all the alcohol they’ve consumed. To me, they sound quite exhausting.

After a small round of pleasantries, we were both asked why we weren’t eating. “I’m full. I can’t even fathom to eat another bite,” I say. I’m instantly laughed at. When Flavius hands Peeta a small wineglass filled with clear liquid, I could see the confusion set upon his face.

“Drink this!” he exclaims loudly. When Peeta went to take a sip, all of my prep team about lost it.

“You have to drink them in there...” Venia pointed to to the toilets. I realize what they are and so did Peeta. Setting the glass down, he takes my hand and leads me to the the dance floor. We only know a few dances from home but Effie had shown a few that seem to be popular in the Capital. Even then, all I want to do is hold Peeta close to me.

Thankfully for us this song was slow. Pulling me into his arms, Peeta holds me close to him. His scent filling my nostrils is soothing enough to ignore the ridiculous charade that’s going on around us. Closing my eyes, never realizing that he was muttering to himself.

“You know...you see all these people eating and vomiting and you can’t help but wonder about the people at home. It’s disgusting.” I had to agree with him. The whole idea had me nauseous.

“They bring us here to die for entertainment. Really it’s nothing by comparison.” I shrugged my shoulder.

“I know that but sometimes I can’t stand it anymore. Sometimes, I think..” he pauses then whispers, “maybe we shouldn’t subdue the districts.”
I look at him nervously. People around us aren’t paying attention like the camera crew or everyone is to drunk to notice.

“Peeta, I wouldn’t say...” I started

“I’m sorry. I know.....”

Just then Portia brings a large man over to us. I’ve faintly remember him but she introduces him as Plutarch Heavensbee, the new Gamemaker. We exchange words the he asks Peeta if he can dance with me. “Don’t steal her away...” I hear him joke. He kissed me lightly and disappeared from my sight.

“Miss Everdeen, if you please.” he held his arms out for a dance. I didn’t want to dance with him but I didn’t want to be rude. Taking his hand he led me across the dance floor. We chitchat about several things. The party, the entertainment, my engagement. Then I realize he’s the man who fell into the punch bowl from last year during the training session.

“So you’re him....” I exclaimed.

“Yes and it’s seems I’ll never live it down.” he joked lightly. Just then the clock struck midnight...Pulling a watch out I see my mockingjay on it. Strange that he would have something like this, “It starts at midnight Miss Everdeen. Have a pleasant night....” He walks off leaving me on the dance floor by myself. Charlotte, Henry and Peeta are nowhere to be found. Sighing, I turn to hunt down Peeta.

I found him by a table full of cakes and desserts. Bakers formed a circle around him engrossed in whatever questions he was asking. As I approached, he asked one of them if he could have some to take home and study. They all tripped over themselves to acquiesce. Taking his hand, he kissed me gently and we watched as the baker's ran off.

Finally having a minute of alone time, he pulled me close and kissed me with a touch more passion. “Have I told you that you are beyond beautiful tonight?” his voice husky against my lips.

“Maybe, but I don’t remember...” I teased lightly. I closed my eyes anticipating another kiss, but we were interrupted by Charlotte and Henry. They both looked a little flushed and there were bite marks on Charlotte’s neck.

“There you two are. Effie has sent us to hunt you down. Didn’t think we would find you so easily. We have to be on the train at one.” Henry reported. I nodded but tugged on Peeta’s hand. The quicker we were out of here the better off I was.

Finding Effie seemed to be easy. “Time to say thank you and goodbye!” trills Effie at my elbow. I had almost forgotten how loud she can be. We collect Cinna and the team and she takes around to say goodbye to all the important people she can find to say farewell, then pushes us to the door. When Peeta asks about Snow, I warily looked at him.

“Don’t worry about it. He’s not a big one for parties. Too busy. I’ve arranged for all the notes and gifts to be sent tomorrow.’ She explains clapping her hands at two attendants who have found a drunken Haymitch. Loading us all in the car, including the drunk Haymitch, we slowly edge our way through the immense crowd of people, but somehow Effie has this down to a science because by one AM we are on the train as it’s pulling out of the station. Haymitch dropped off in his room, everyone else takes a seat as tea is being served. Yawning, I can’t wait to be home and in my own bed.
“There’s still the Harvest Festival to look forward too so I suggest we all drink our tea and head to
bed.” Effie reminds us gently. Grateful for her suggestion, I down mine and I’m the first one out
of the room with Peeta following on my trail.
The Capitol Party & Back Home Pt 2

Chapter Summary

Note to all the readers of said fanfic: I will post this chapter tonight and will not return until December 27th. I'm taking a much needed break from writing to spend time over Christmas with my kids and hubby. I've already pushed over 130 pages and I'm far far far from done.

As usual: I Don't Own It. Same notes different day. And it will have more smuttiness as our two lovely characters get more acquainted with one another. We will be returning home to District 12.

And Merry Christmas to all!

Entering my room, I slip my shoes off and sigh gratefully for my free toes. I hadn’t realized Peeta had followed me into my room until I turned around to close the door. His eyes were dark as he approached me. Kissing my mouth before I could breathe, I moaned as quietly as I could. Tangling my fingers in his hair, I deepened the kiss. My whole body lit up like fireworks. Thankfully there wasn’t a slit in my dress or his hands would have found it. Breaking away from me he smothered my neck with kisses.

“You have no idea how much I’ve wanted to do that tonight....Keeping myself in control has been hard.” he whispered huskily in my ear. “Let me help you undress...” he offered.

Spinning me around, I didn’t have the chance to protest when his fingers found the zipper to my dress. “Be careful Peeta.” I moaned as his fingers touched my skin, helping me out of my dress. He was out of his jacket and already starting to undo his shirt when I had a thought. “Are you showering with me tonight?”

He paused mid-button. “You always seem to ask me this, why?”

“Because I like to shower before bed and you’re in here before I go to bed. It just seems nice to ask if you want to shower as well.” My answered seemed innocent enough to me, but he rolled his eyes.

“Are you sure you just want to see me naked?” he asked playfully. I blushed to my core. I had been caught. I wanted him naked in my shower as well as in bed, but I didn’t dare confess it. “Because if you do, all you have to do is ask.” He mummered against my waiting lips.

“I do, but you’ve been saying that we shouldn’t do anything while we’re on the train. That it’s too dangerous for the both of us......” I protested.

“We’re almost done with the train ride.” He said trying to persuade me. I chewed on my lower lip contemplating his words. Nodding at him, I took his hand and led him to the bathroom. Turning on the spray, the room started to steam immediately. He had already taken his pants and shoes off when I turned around to face him.

Reaching for me, he helped me out of my dress. Letting it fall to the floor, I could hear him groan.
I blushed in my nearly half naked state. Unclipping the bra, it fell to the floor as well. Hooking his fingers into my panties he eased them off. His own boxers coming off next. Climbing into the shower, I was acutely aware of a very naked Peeta standing behind me. This would be the closets and the most vulnerable I’ve been around him. Hot water from the spray startled me as it hit me in the face. Normally I would relish a hot shower.

**Peeta POV**

She had asked me to join her in the shower for the umpteeth time and I was going to call her bluff. “If you wanted to see me naked, all you had to do was ask....” I murmured against her lips. When she nodded and took my hand, my head began to spin. She was serious! Following her, I waited patiently for her to start the shower. While I waited, I slipped off my shoes and discarded my pants. Tossing them to the side of the room, she then turned around.

Reaching toward her, I helped her out if her dress. A groan escaped me as it fell gently to the floor. She was only in her panties and bra. Unhooking her bra, I had to remind myself how to breathe. Her breasts that ached for my touch was within reach. Committing myself to follow through with her bluff, I squat down and my fingers found the hem of her panties. Sucking in a breath, I hoped she didn’t hear, I eased them down her luscious legs. Removing my underwear was a bit more complicated with my cock already hard and waiting but I managed.

Climbing into the shower after her, I could sense her nervousness. It would have been endearing if I hadn’t been nervous too. This was a first for the both of us. I don’t think even Gale got this far. Just thinking about him and Katniss like this made my eyes go red. Putting my hands on her hips, I leaned down and kissed her bare shoulder. I didn’t know what she had expected from this shower but I needed to touch her.

Feeling her relax against me, I smiled a little. I didn’t know if she wanted to actually shower, but I took the incentive and spun her around to face me. Her eyes were wide and love and innocence spilled from them. Kissing her gently, I tipped her head back letting the water drenched her hair. The hair I loved to feel when we kissed. Soaping her hair a few minutes later, my cock had been brushing her skin but she finally stopped squirming. Which was a relief. As the bubbles washed down her body, I fought to push her against the wall. My hardest job would be washing her. But she surprised me as she began soaping my hair.

A bemused smile crossed her face at my startled reaction “Peeta, I’m not going to hurt you....” She giggled softly. She was laughing at me! When I had tried my hardest to not laugh at her for her startled reactions. Growling, I pushed her against the wall anyway. My mouth coming to nip her throat. Her hands froze in my hair as I heard her moan my name. I was dizzy from my cock straining, pushing against her body. I knew she felt it too.

Kissing along her neck, her body arched into mine arousing me further. Biting down, my hands coming to cup her breasts while the free hand slide down her body caressing her thigh; bringing us closer. Tugging on her lower lip, her mouth opened to me. Our tongues danced as I explored every crevice of her incredible mouth. Our hips rubbing against each others. The friction making my head swim. Making my blood hoy in my veins. My body was in overdrive. I wanted her so badly. It would be so easy to slip inside her, take her, and claim her as mine before we arrived back in District 12. Letting Gale know that he couldn’t touch her again. That he would never have another chance with her.

“I want to be inside you.....” a moan slipped from me. My voice husky in her ear. She stilled her
body against mine; I had expected this from her. Freeing her from my grasp, her eyes searching mine. I think she knew I was serious. I had to remove myself from her. Pressing myself against the cool wall, shivers ran down my spine instantly chilling me. I watched as she chewed her lip and a glint of mischievousness danced in her eyes. Confusion spread across my face until I felt a hand grasp my thick cock.

My knees buckled underneath me as her fingers gripped me harder. My eyes flew open as she nipped my collarbone. “I’m not sure what to do....” I heard her whisper. A beautiful blush graced her and I reached down to help her. Words strangled in my throat when my hand touched hers. Sliding our hands up and down. The friction of our hands making me lightheaded. Loosening my grip, part of me prayed she would get on her knees and take me in her mouth. Just as this was a first for her it was a first for me. Someone else touching me so intimately.

I felt my orgasm coming as my balls tightened painfully. Her deft fingers working my shaft like she had been doing it for years instead of minutes. “Oh...fuck Katniss....” I moaned as my cum shot out of me hitting her leg and down into the swirling hot water. Startling her, she let go of me suddenly. Like my cock would eat her.

Once the lustful heady feeling dissipated, I remembered it was she, not I, who brought me to an incredible orgasm. “Katniss......I didn’t mean too! I swear it.” She nodded at me with uncertainty. Her eyes glazed over slightly.

Katniss POV

When he let go of me, I was still uncertain about what to do, but curiosity got the best of me. Tracing my hands down his wet body, I gripped his member. The look on his face enamored me. Of course I had no clue what I was doing. This being a first for me. The silken skin under my fingers amazed me.

“I’m not sure what to do...” I whispered in his ear. Taking my hand he led me through a simple gesture that had me aching to please him. When he let go of my hand several minutes later, I kept my pace. I wasn’t sure to slow down, but Peeta never complained. His moans were an incredible song to my ears. Suddenly, something hot hit my leg as Peeta’s body shudder in ecstasy. Snatching my hand away from his member, he took a slow breath before apologizing to me.

I was unsure how to handle this, but I leaned forward and kissed him quickly. Charlotte had informed me about what happened when men orgasmed. I grabbed a loofah and started to soap up. Peeta followed suit and soon we were both climbing out of the shower. The steamy air thick around us. He pulled me into a slow kiss and turned to leave the room.

“You were supposed to spend the night.....” I called after him as I followed.

He grabbed a robe and turned to me, “I’m just going to find PJs Katniss. I will be back for you.”

I nodded and watched him walk out of my room. Exhaustion set in as I sat on my bed still in my towel. Water dripping down my towel, hitting the sheets. I wasn’t sure how long I sat there but Peeta came back to me. He was dressed for bed, apparently.

“Katniss, are you alright?” Concern dripped from his voice. Peeta always caring about others. I sighed and looked at him. My dark eyes contrasting with his blue. Light and dark. Maybe it’s why we fit so well together.
“I’m all right. Exhausted though. I zoned out after you left. I’m sorry.” Realizing I was still in a state if undressed, I blushed to my feet. Shifting my body around, I tried to keep myself decent in front of him. Ironic since he was considered my fiancee and I just showered with him.

His eyes widened as he took in my words and actions. “I’ve already seen you naked, please don’t shy away from me.” I heard him whisper to me. Nodding, I moved to stand up as he took a seat on my bed. I’m sure sitting in my wet spot wasn’t enjoyable but he didn’t seem to care. Strolling over to my dresser, I opened it up and began searching. Pulling out a silk camisole I sighed and searched. My fingers grazed soft fabric. Pulling them out, I really did growl. Shorts! Charlotte must have pilfered through my things.

I knew Peeta was waiting on me so we could sleep and his proclamation about nudity swam through my mind but I knew he was right. So, I dropped my towel. We had come so far anyway. I turned around, about ready to protest about Charlotte, when Peeta’s eyes raked over my naked body. Sending hot coils of desire between my legs. My breath hitch in my throat as I watched him stand up. I could tell he was fully erect from the unmistakable tent in his pajama pants. Slowly he came to me. Like a hunter finally catching his prey. His naturally blue eyes had darkened and I felt trapped in his gaze. Unable to break away. When he was mere inches from me, I shuddered deliciously from the intense heat that radiated off him. I hadn’t realized I was cold. I felt fingers skim my cool skin and a low moan escaped me.

“Peeta.....” Lust and confusion swept me.

“Get dressed before I take you like a wild animal....” he growled in my ear and to prove his point he bit down on the soft flesh of my shoulder and sucked hard. My flight or fight kicked in but I knew he wouldn’t hurt me. The quick intense pain was replaced by the gentle sucking of his mouth. I’m not sure how long he sucked on my neck but I brought him closer to me. I was lost in him. Heat pooled between my legs again furthering my need of him. When he released me, my eyes on him as I hurriedly put my clothes on. Right now I didn’t care what I was wearing.

Crouching before him, I could feel his body trembling. His head was buried in his hands. “I don’t think it’s a good idea for me to sleep over....” He mused quietly from his palms. I began to panic. “No, see....” I tugged his hands from his face, “I’m dressed. Please can we go to bed?” I felt like I was pleading with him. Begging him to warm my cold bed. Warm my body that was aching for his touch. His eyes roamed my body except this time I was fully clothed. When he nodded, I gave an inward sigh of relief. Taking hand, I clicked off the light and crawled myself into bed dragging him along with me. Cuddling close beside him, I closed my eyes and drifted to sleep.

Our next two days on the train were quiet. Both of us were dreading home but relished that we would see our families again. I know that Peeta wasn’t looking forward to being back at the bakery with his own mother. He would stare out the window for hours until I would nudge him to eat. Even at night as we laid together, he was distracted. A gnawing pit was growing in my stomach as well. My distraction ran deep as well.

Because in within a few days, he wouldn’t be in my bed at night. The closeness that we had become accustom was about to be ripped from us.

A knock on our door woke me from a good dream. Shifting my body around, I reached blindly for a light. Finding it, I flipped it on and turned to Peeta. He was wide awake. How long had he been up?
“Awhile.” he answered me before I could open my mouth. How did he know what I was thinking? Frowning, I nodded anyway. Getting out of bed, I moseyed my way to the door; Peeta’s eyes on my backside. I grinned and sashayed before pushing the button to open the sliding door. I heard a distinct growl come from the bed and I knew I had his attention.

Pushing the button, the door slide open and Charlotte smirked. I’m pretty sure she could feel the intensity in the room. I heard Peeta sigh and a rustling of sheets. Making himself presentable. Always a gentlemen, even to a woman that wasn’t his.

“I hate to interrupt.....unless you were sleeping.”

“Which we was...” I interrupted her before she could embarrass us to death.

“Ah, well...” she cleared her throat. “we’ll be in District 12 in less than two hours and Effie wants the both of you.” she gave a pointed look to me which I rolled my eyes in return. “ready and presentable. Clear?”

We both nodded and she left. Turning back to Peeta, I gave a strained smile before sighing. He looked incredible sitting shirtless in my bed. He had almost been pantless last night but he had stopped us from going any further. The burning inferno that blazed through us since the night of the shower had yet to be contained. He beckoned me forward to him. Sitting in his lap, he pulled me into a slow kiss. His tongue gracefully tasting mine. Tangling his fingers in my messy braid, I let out a small whimper, but I knew we had to get ready. Neither of us were wanting an apoplectic fit from Effie.

Pulling from him, I kissed him quickly but eased myself from his lap. I wished I was still in his lap.

“I’m going to shower and get ready...” he said regretfully. We both know if he joined me, we would be late today. I nodded mutely. I didn’t want him to go. My feet rooted to the floor of the train, I only moved when he had finally left my room. My feet felt they were being dragged.

Today we would be home. Home to District 12. To my mother and Prim. To Gale. Sickness coiled my my stomach. What would he think about the engagement? We didn’t speak before Peeta and I left for the tour. For all I knew he hated me. Ever since the confrontation that led to him and Peeta fighting, he had kept his distance. Or at least that’s what Prim told me. Hazelle had stopped by a few times, as well as Gale’s brother Rory. But never Gale. I wasn’t too surprised. There were things I could tell him. Uprisings in the Districts, what Snow had done to us, how we had no choice but to prove to him.....Prove that we could keep the Districts placated long enough for them to forget about a rebellion.

Knowing him he would laugh at me. Dig me for more information. Information that I couldn’t give. He would rejoice about the uprisings. For it was old news that Gale hated the Capital and everything it stood for. I stood there until the water became too cold for me to bear. Stepping out, I dried off only to find a sky blue frock waiting on me. A hurried knock on my door indicating it was one of my prep team to glam me up before we entered the District.

Letting them in, it was a whirlwind of makeup and hair products. I frowned each time my hair was pulled or plucked but I knew to keep my mouth quiet because last time I spoke out Flavius made my life hell. Even after two days, the bite mark bruise had yet to disappear...I smiled inwardly knowing how it became on my skin. The others weren’t so thrilled.

I woke up the next morning with Peeta pushing into me. Arousal ached through me before I could
fully shake the cobwebs out of my head. I smiled and turned over to kiss him quickly before escaping to the bathroom. Once there, I used the toilet and proceeded to brush my teeth. Braiding my hair, my eyes zeroed in on a bitemark bruise that had formed overnight. Touching it gingerly with a finger, I winced at the sting. Then I remembered last night before bed. His words searing through my brain ‘Get dressed before I take you like a wild animal.’ I nearly came undone.

Closing my eyes, I could feel my hands tremble underneath the cool sink. I wondered briefly who would be the first to freak out on me. Effie surely would be. Everyone else would smirk or laugh. Steeling my resolve, I opened the door and Peeta stood in my way. Kissing me hotly on the mouth, he pushed us back into the bathroom. My warm body touching the cool sink making me moan before him. His hands slid down my body to cup my butt lifting me up to have me sit on the sink. My entire being thrummed for him.

His body engulfed me as he pressed himself into me. Creating a friction that had my back arching as he placed open mouth kisses down my neck. When his wonderful mouth kissed the tender spot, I whimpered. Stopping his ministrations, his fingers brushed the bruise.

“I really left my mark, didn’t I?” he mused sounding regretful but his face clearly showed triumph. Like he wanted to mark me up.

“Yes, you did...Effie and my prep team are going to lose their minds.” I tried to reprimand him but failing as he smiled at me. His smile sent waves of pleasure through me. That smile that would always be my undoing. “I see you aren’t quite remorseful, are you?”

“Of course not!” he replied helping me down which I was thankful for because my butt was starting to hurt. Hearing a knock on the door, I realized it had to be Charlotte or Henry. No one else knocked. Trying to make myself look appropriate, I realized it was futile. Charlotte would only tease me further. Opening it a second later, I saw both of them waiting for us.

I blushed as her eyes zeroed in on the flush in my face. Smirking, she didn’t say anything...yet. It would come. Peeta came up behind me suddenly and nodded at Henry. I had noticed their relationship had seemed strained and every time they were around each other, Henry would avoid Peeta’s stare. I never asked what was going on I figured Peeta would tell me eventually.

“So, we’re arriving back at District 12 in a couple of days and we want to let you know that we’ll be gone for a few days.” I raised my eyebrow quizzically at her. “It’s nothing. We just have a few things to do.” she shrugged her shoulders lightly. I nodded at her maybe getting an explanation without teasing. The whole time she was talking Henry avoided Peeta. Now it was starting to annoy me.

He turned to leave but Peeta called out, “Henry we still need to have that talk.....” Henry nodded and disappeared.

“Now, loverboy, I want my girl alone...” Charlotte beamed at us and he laughed.

“I will see you soon...” he kissed my mouth and left as quickly as Henry. I watched him leave. Part of me hating him for leaving me in Charlotte’s evil clutches. Motioning for her to come in, she sat down on my bed grinning foolishly. I groaned inwardly.

“Soooooo.....what did you two do last night?” that evil twinkle in her eye was back. I always wondered why she always wanted to know.

“Why do you want to know?” I asked.
“Oh, come on! I don’t have any females here to talk too. I sure as shit won’t talk to my daughters about this stuff!” She had kids? It was a first for me to hear about it. Suddenly, she saw the bruise on my neck. Bolting to her feet, she pulled me to my feet. Ignoring my cries of protest, she examined it.

“He marked you last night didn’t he?” she demanded

“Yea...I think I teased him a bit too far.” I barely confessed leaving much to be imagined.

“I’ve got to go.....” She all but fled my room. I stood there confused but not long enough. A squeal from the opened door startled me out of my reverie. Effie standing before me. I tuned her out but picked up her dissatisfaction for what happened. I nodded and agreed to whatever she was fussing about. Something about covering it up before we get home? When she was satisfied she turned on her purple heels and left.

As we pulled into the train station, I felt like I needed to tiptoe through the train. Charlotte seemed pretty angry at me. I didn’t do anything but to give into my desires for Peeta. Well, not all of my desires. The dress and leggings, which I wish I was in something else, wouldn’t keep me warm from the Districts harsh winters. Cinna should have known better. Unfortunately, I had to wear an evening gown tonight for the banquet. I briefly wondered if Madge would be there.

She and I had been somewhat friends before the Games but when we came home alive, but not unscathed, she and I had renewed our friendship. We weren’t gossipy like a lot of the girls but she could play piano. Poor girl tried to teach me, but I screwed up so bad that I was happy to listen to her play. After a few mishaps, I discovered she was itching to go into the woods. So, I took her and tried to teach her how to use a bow. Needless to say, it had been interesting.

Sometimes we would eat at each other’s houses. Madge seems to like mine better. Her parents seem nice but I don’t think she sees them much. Her father has a District to run and her mother normally laid up in bed with intense headaches.

Ignoring the staff that scrambled around to pack us up and out the train it would go. Passing by Charlotte and Henry’s room, I stopped overhearing my name. Stopping and waiting with baited breath, I had to listen. It must have been something secretive.

“He’s marked her Henry. I’m surprised you didn’t notice....”

“I’ve been distracted since we got on this train.”

“I know you have. You haven’t talked to Peeta yet, have you?”

I could hear movement in the room stop as if Henry had stopped breathing. Or was it me that had stopped breathing?

“No, I haven’t.....”

“Henry!” I heard her exclaim. I had never known Charlotte to get mad at Henry.

...”I promised him I’d talk to him after the tour. He’s already made a mention of having the desire to mark her anyway.”

“He’s too young, isn’t he?”

“Yea, he is. But it’s here and here we are. He loves her too much.....he dove to deep in with her
and she followed his desires. For fuck’s sake, we both can hear them in her compartment. No one else can, but we can. It’s his first, but it won’t be his last especially when he transitions and his hunger consumes him.”

I couldn’t hear anymore than that. What they were saying was insane. I couldn’t breath. I had to get off this damned train. I couldn’t wait to get back to my woods. They didn’t have secrets. Fumbling my way, I found the door that held my freedom. As I reached to open it, I heard Effie behind me.

“So you’re ready? Excellent! If you’ll wait around for another ten minutes we’ll leave the train and head to Mayor Undersee’s house.” she chirped. I could only nod at her. Pacing the room, I didn’t hear Peeta come in. Giving him a faint smile, he gave me a questioning look. When I shook my head, he must have understood the underlying hint because he didn’t ask but kiss me gently. A conversation we would be having soon.

Soon enough the room was filled with everyone. Taking my hand, we followed Effie off the train. Charlotte and Henry filing out last. Stopping only long enough to wave at people, giving smiles I hoped were happy enough, we were escorted into our car. I’m glad it was at Mayor Undersee’s house. I hated the Justice Building. I never had a good feel for this place because last time I was here it was to have a memorial of my father after he died.

Our agenda, from what Effie has told us, is a dinner at the Mayor’s house tonight and a victory rally in the square during the Harvest Festival. This year it will be a public affair, since the Capital is sponsoring it, everyone in the district will have a full belly. Something that makes me smile. An actual genuine smile.

Most of our prepping will be on the third floor of Madge’s house so all I get to do is give her a quick hug before they take me upstairs to get ready. Once finished I’m donned in a silver floor length gown. I have an hour to kill so I go hunting for her. When I pass her father’s study, I poke my head in hoping to say hello to him. But it was empty the television was o Clips from the party last night, Of Peeta and me dancing, eating kissing blasted all over the screen. I was sick of seeing it even though, off screen, I couldn’t get enough of him.

Just as I was about to leave a beeping distracted me. Seeing the screen go black on the T.V. UPDATE ON DISTRICT 8 flashed across the screen. Instinctively, I know I’m not supposed to be in here seeing this. This is for Mayor’s eyes only. But I can’t pull myself from it. I know it’s the same District because I recognize the banners of my face floating on poles. A woman appears with greying hair and a hoarse authoritative voice saying that conditions are worsening and all textile productions have ceased. A mob scene below my banners is what catches my eye. The square’s packed with screaming people, their faces hidden from sight, throwing bricks. Peacekeeper killing people at random. This is what Snow calls an uprising.

The banquet is a festive affair. The only person missing was Gale. Hazelle had said he was home sick. That I didn’t believe. Peeta and I sat by one another his hand resting on my thigh the entire time. Every so often, he squeeze just to illicit a response from me. I was too in thought about too many things. The uprising in District 8 to Charlotte, Henry, and quite possibly Peeta keeping a secret from me. The food was wonderful as well as the company but like the last party, I didn’t want to be there. After I had said my goodbyes to everyone, I asked to leave early. I just wasn’t aware that Peeta would follow me.

“OK, so what’s been bothering you?” he asked coming to kiss my neck. We had arrived at his house a few minutes ago. The warmth of the house making me appreciate being home.
I wanted to lie. To fumble and stall but I knew he wasn’t going to have any of it. Even the look he was giving me proved he wasn’t going to take shit from me. My lip trembled from all the stress I had put myself under.

“Katniss....” he whispered holding me close to him. His strength and love calming me down instantly. “Do you want to tell me?”

I wish I could say no to him, but I nodded anyway. Sitting me down on the couch, I wanted to relax in his arms to tell him but I knew I wouldn’t be able to focus. “It’s a matter of two things.....The first is I overheard Charlotte and Henry talking about us. Talking about how you ‘marked’ me the other day. About how you’re too young for a transition? I don’t know it was all confusing....” I looked at him and wished I could read him better tonight. The champagne I had induced was making it a bit fuzzy to read him. “And the second was I saw something I’m sure I shouldn’t have. There’s an uprising in District 8.” I whispered the last softly. “It was at Madge’s house earlier. I went to look for her and saw the television on in her dad’s study. I poked my head in and saw us at the President’s ball then before I left, it flashed across the screen. I didn’t mean to look, I swear!” My voice finally becoming frantic.

“Shh...it’s OK Katniss. Maybe I can help clarify one thing.” he said taking a seat down on the couch. My eyes followed him closely. There was something he was hiding from me. Taking a seat beside him I felt his warmth spread to me.

“Do you remember the fight I had with Gale?” he asked me. I instantly nodded. “Well after that Henry and I spoke. I told him I wanted you, that I was feeling possessive of you....I had the urge to mark you.” he said the last part softly. “I didn’t know if it was hormones or something else. Even tonight these feelings engulf me.” I watched him pause for a moment, like he was trying to collect his thoughts. “When I told Henry these things, he began to stress out but told me that we would have to talk about it after the Tour. He kept saying I was too young...”

“ They both said that!” I interjected.

“So I don’t know what’s up with them or if there’s actually something wrong with me. I’ve been confused and I know I’ve been pushing his patience, but I want to know what he knows.”

“Peeta, there is nothing wrong with you. I promise.” I confirmed crawling in his lap. Rolling my hips in his lap, he let out a low moan. His hands came to hold my hips still keeping me from torturing him even more. “Maybe when they get back, you’ll have the answers you want.” I murmured his ear.

“I want you to stay tonight but I know you’re mom will have a fit, won’t she?” I nod at him and sighed sadly. “I will miss you in my bed.”

“And I will miss you. This is going to suck.” I said easing myself off his lap and away from his demanding erection. “I would ask you to walk me home....”

“But then we’d be right in the same situation. Wishing for one of us to stay.” He led me to the door, his hand gripping the handle like he was afraid it was going to run off from him. Turning the knob, the door slowly opened, but he closed it abruptly. Pulling me into a kiss, I felt the familiar tug of desire weaving through my body. He pressed me into him as I tangled my fingers in his hair. When he broke it a few minutes later, both of us were breathing heavily.

His lips so close to mine, I could hardly breathe, “Say my name tonight when you come. It’ll make it much more satisfying....” I was starting to love when he talked like this. My thighs trembled from just the sheer thought of him doing it as well. My mouth was dry but I nodded anyway. His demand catching me off guard.
Leaving his embrace, I rushed the forty feet to my house where I was brightly welcomed by my mother and Prim. It was a good feeling even though my hormones were pestering me to run back to Peeta.

The next day was the Harvest Festival. Charlotte, Henry, nor Gale was present. The joy I felt seeing my District finally getting a full belly and having a good time overwhelmed me. Peeta and I kept a minimal distance both of us wanting to touch and kiss but we were here to have fun with our families and friends. Too soon it was over and the District went back the same. Days later, Henry returned without Charlotte. Maybe she needed a longer break but all he told me was that she finishing up a delayed project and would return soon.

That next day, Henry pulled Peeta into his house. I suppose it was time for that ‘talk’. While Peeta was otherwise engaged I sought out the woods and Gale’s company. I wanted to tell him what Snow said and what was happening in District 8.
Secrets and Confessions Pt 1

Chapter Summary

AH! Christmas is over and I'm back. :-) This chapter is almost 90% Divergent. We will began to learn some secrets. Enjoy all! Note again: I love BDB so I'm borrowing some of their vampire traits. Yea, I know, but it's my spin.

As usual: I. DON'T. OWN. IT.

(Katniss POV)

It was Sunday. I had left Gale a leather bag filled with food, tea and a pair of fur lined gloves. I wasn’t sure if he would meet me. Not after what happened last time. I still had bad dreams about it. I have never seen him so furious at me, but I knew persuading him with news of an uprising and Snow’s threat would bring him to me.

I had left Peeta in the hands of a reserved Henry. His hooded eyes left me with an uncertain feeling about what Peeta was going to learn today. I had decided to not tell Peeta about meeting Gale today. His attitude toward Gale boarded on rage and disrespect. He was still angry that Gale had laid his hands on me. I knew he would bring up the ‘engagement’. Peeta and I had decided to keep the real engagement a secret and let the public one play out. I knew it killed Gale to see Peeta hold me, kiss me, and now having to marry me. Imagine if we were forced to have children. The thought made my stomach coil.

It’s not like I didn’t want Peeta’s children. I had never wanted any, mind you. But the love I had for Peeta was strong. It was more than physical now. I wish I had the courage to go home to him. Crawl into his arms and feel safe. It was the only time I did feel safe.

Now I trudge through the snow to the lake that I hoped would be safer to talk too than our normal hill. I didn’t trust anywhere and if he didn’t show, I would hate to have to sneak to his home in the middle of the night. Peeta, I knew, would be furious. Gale would be quite angry that he could have used today to hunt instead of following me to the lake. When I arrived to the lake there was a little house. House is an overstatement. It was a small concrete shack that had a working fireplace. Father used to let play out here when I was a child.

After I made a fire, I sat and waited on Gale. I hoped he wouldn’t be too long. I didn’t have to wait long because there he stood in the door with my peace offerings. Unopened, of course. The gloves, I knew instantly he wouldn't wear because of his anger. His hurt flash in his eyes. The one I knew that had to do with my betrayal. Peeta’s proposal. I would be content to sit around and talk to him but I was sure it would be safer to cut to the chase.

“President Snow has threatened to kill you.” I said sitting in my same spot. I had refused to embrace him.

He looks at me without fear or astonishment. “Anyone else?”

“Well he didn’t give a copy of who but I’m sure it involves both of our families and possibly Peeta’s.” I say even though he scoffed at the sound of Peeta’s name.
“What do you intend to do?”

“I don’t know yet.” I said. We sat looking at the fire for a while. Both of us not in the mood to talk about the gloom that had settled over us. I was quite surprised he’d shown his face. After ten minutes, he sighed and stood up.

“Well, I’m gone....”

“No, wait!” I paused knowing that what I needed to tell him was on the tip of my tongue. The information that I knew wouldn’t send him running. Would keep him around even though he hated me now. I owed it to him.

“There’s more. A lot more.”

“We’ll start talking. We haven’t got all day.” He pressed ad he started pulling the food out of the bag.

So I told him. I told him that after we had been crowned victors about Haymitch’s warning of the Capitol’s fury. President’s Snow’s visit to my house. The talk and his threats toward me, Peeta and him. My skin still shivered from his unexpected visit. The murders in District 11, the tension in the crowds, and the engagement that was supposed to sway Snow and the people. Which now we know it didn’t.

He never interrupted. I knew he wouldn’t. It was so Gale like. He made use of the food in the bag. Toasting bread and the cheese. Coring apples while the chestnuts toasted in the fire. It wasn’t much but it would do in a pinch. The least I could sneak out the house, the better off I was. Not that my mother would get mad at me. I could have always told her I was bringing food to the Seam people.

As we ate, the silence around us so thick it was beginning to become hard to breath. My mind briefly wondered if Peeta’s talk with Henry was going better than mine? I’d hope so. Of course he wasn’t aware that I was here.

“You’ve made a mess of things, haven’t you?” Gale finally spoke up.

I laughed ruefully, “I supposed it couldn’t be helped. I had a plan that I would runaway. Run from the District. But I couldn’t bring myself to leave everyone.”

“Why would you want to leave on your own? What would that accomplish? Leave the rest of us here to die and starve. That’s pretty selfish Katniss.” He asked scathingly. The anger laced in his voice was evident that he wasn’t a fan of me running and leaving everyone.

“It was a thought! Granted, probably not my best idea. But it’s not like you’re offering any suggestions Gale!” I said angrily. “Yes running would be ideal but I am aware that it’s not a good plan. You know I can’t leave Prim or anyone else.” Standing up, I threw the leftovers in the fire.

“And that ‘anyone else’ would be Peeta, wouldn’t it? How far have you fallen into the Capitol’s clutches?”

“I have not!”

“What has he promised you Katniss? A Seam girl and Merchant boy....it isn’t going to work! Didn’t you learn anything from what happened to your mother?”

I wanted to slap him. He had no clue what Peeta and I had. I’ll never get used to it but I loved
him. I know my mother had married from the other side. She was a Merchant’s daughter who was destined to marry a Merchant’s son but my father’s singing voice had enraptured her and she married him. Forcing her to live in the poverty that she wasn’t accustomed too. It made me wonder why she stayed sometimes.

But it was different with me and Peeta, wasn’t it? It wasn’t what I intended, but we were strong. All I could do was glare at Gale. My mouth at a loss for words. I know that I was horrible with my emotions and he could never understand. What I could describe to him would only be a fragment of how I really felt.

“Instead of him, why not me?” he suddenly interrupted my train of thoughts.

“What do you mean?” was I that daft? I watched him step closer to me. I could tell him was still angry at me. Angry at Peeta. He would always hate Peeta for coming in whatever Gale and I used to have. But I wasn’t the same girl I was before the Games. I never would be.

“I’ve known you forever, I’ve been there for you; even when you thought you had no one. But when you were reaped my heart died. I couldn’t save you…..”

I felt the prickling of anger start to tap in the back of my brain. “Then why didn’t you volunteer?! If you wanted to save me you would have taken Peeta’s place!” I all but shouted at him.

“YOU KNOW WHY!” he shouted. “I had to stay and keep OUR families safe and fed.” I watched him take a slow breath, his composure struggling in front of me. I had never noticed we were inches apart. I could feel his body close to mine. This suddenly felt very wrong. “I’ve always loved you Katniss. I still do. Why can’t we run away together? Start over? Just you and me. Maybe we’ll take our families. I know none of them would like it but we could make it work.”

I could hear the subtle voice of plead in him. He wanted me all these years? I loved him, yes; but like a brother. Someone I knew I could rely on to be there. But I never realized his feelings for me weren’t skin deep. They went further than I wanted.

I gasped as his lips descended mine. Once again I couldn’t breathe. I didn’t feel passion but the ever same comfort that I always associated with Gale. When his tongue tried to part my lips, I pushed him away.

“What do you think you’re doing?” I screeched.

“Trying to prove to you that we are perfect together.” he stated simply.

“No we don’t. We’re too alike. Like fire. Peeta is like air to my fire. He calms me when I start to lose it. You and I would never survive.”

"I could make you happy Katniss.” he challenged. “If only you would let me in. You always talked about never being in love and having children and then you were reaped and suddenly you come home and your whole perspective changed. Yes, I know you kept your distance from him because of your mom but the I saw you kiss him. Like really kiss him and I knew you had been lying to me this whole time. You were and are capable of love. Where was those feelings before the Reaping?”

I could hear his words and they stung. What he said was true. I never gave Gale the time of day. Like I took him for granted. Which I did. Everyday. And Peeta, did I do the same to him.

“It still wouldn’t work Gale.”
“You don’t know that Katniss...”

“Yes, I do!” I had the sudden urge to stomp my foot like a petulant five year old child. “Gale, even if we wanted to leave and I chose to be with you and be happy I know you wouldn’t. It wouldn’t last long. We couldn’t hide forever.”

“Oh yea, why not?” he sneered. Already hating me for my words. Words that I knew were true. I hated that I was breaking his heart but what he wanted wasn’t going to be with me. It had to be someone who could handle him, care for him and truly love him.

“Because...because...” I fumbled with my words. I wish I could speak. “There are uprisings in District 8.” His eyes widened like saucers.

“How do you know this!”

“I saw it on the television at Mayor Undersee’s house. I didn’t mean too watch it, but it happened.”

He seemed to become excited at my words. His whole demeanor changed. Everything we had talked about earlier seemed irrelevant. “There’s been talk down at the mines. People want to fight back. I just never knew it was starting. The rebellion is upon us Katniss. I can feel it.”

“Neither of know that. I just saw a few seconds. We can’t do anything about it.”

“Yes, we can! None of us can keep doing this Katniss. None of can keep starving and sending our kids to the Reaping for sick entertainment.” He stepped away from me. His hands tossing the forgotten gloves in my face. “You’re right, I can’t leave the District, but I can’t walk away from this because I know deep down you wouldn’t leave and neither could I.” He said quickly and turned to leave me.

Alone I stood in the woods. My thoughts were my own. Sitting down, I barely felt the freeze begin to settle in around me. My mind replayed today. Where had I went wrong? I just wanted to tell him what was going and then he begs me to not leave. Begs me to choose him over Peeta. I couldn’t do that to Peeta. What I felt for him was something different than comfort. I felt passion, love and forever. Gale was temporary. Fleeting. I was right when I told him we were too alike. Sighing, I stood up and breathe. The frosty cloud swirled away from me and I realized it was now dark out. I needed to get home to Peeta before he sent a search party.

(Peeta’s POV)

We had arrived from the Tour not completely unscathed of each other’s touch. I could feel her hands on my skin even when she wasn’t around. The thought made me shudder. Alone in my shower or bed was torture. My thoughts always about her. Her declaration of her love proved a far better sweetness than a honeybee’s nectar. After the botched public marriage proposal, I barely grew the nerve to ask her again. But when she gave me a sincere yes, I felt my being float away into a strong sea of emotions that made me feel whole. Not lost any longer.

There were nights, I wished I was brave enough to sneak to her house and creep into her bed and willing arms. The eyes I could get lost into. The touch, the kiss, that electrified my entire being. Maybe it wasn’t bravery I was looking for but something else. On the train, I could feel something changing within me. Something darker, possessive, unspeakable to my gentle nature. I didn’t know what it was and frankly it scared me. The only time I felt safe was in Katniss’s bed. From my wild desire to marking her in the last days of our trip, I couldn’t fathom what was happening.
Maybe I’m tuning into my mother’s sadistic nature. Of course the only time I’ve wanted to inflict violence was when Gale had harmed Katniss. I had felt liberated. Sick, I know. My father’s gentle nature and guidance couldn’t outdo this. I wish it would. Maybe send me some kind of sign that everything would make sense. I knew instantly when Henry returned. I had dreaded this day for weeks now. Even with Katniss’s optimism, I was sure whatever he was going to tell me wasn’t good.

With an incredibly slow kiss upon her lips I watched her walk away from me. Her body had been flushed against mine. Wishing for more than what we willing to give right now. I had no clue what she was up to today except for hunting. Turning to Henry his eyes were hooded and distant.

Motioning me to come inside the house, I realized it was the first time I been here. Their place looked exactly like mine except for the coloring and the furniture. It didn’t feel like a home though.

It felt more like a hole. Everything was in its right place and even so there was an aroma of something cooking in the kitchen. I knew Charlotte was a good cook, but I didn’t think she was here. The furniture was simple enough that one could easily leave in a moment’s notice.

As I took a seat on his couch, my eyes followed him while he grabbed a decanter with amber liquid in it. The light reflecting off the liquid absorbed my thoughts until he sat the glass down in front of me. I was quite unsure of what was in the bottle. I never drank anything stronger than the wine he would occasionally send over.

“You’re gonna need this after we’re done talking.” I eyed him warily. “It’s just scotch. Nothing of that distasteful liquor that Haymitch ingests.” He informed me before taking a sip of his own for proof. I took a sip myself and swore that it did taste better than what Haymitch drank.

“Now I promised I would talk to you about what you and I spoke of before the Tour. It’s going to be quite a bit but you will have to bear with me. It’s been awhile since I’ve had to talk to another male about this. Especially one that doesn’t know his own heritage.”

“My own heritage....what on Earth are you talking about?” I paused. “I’m a baker’s son. We’ve lived in Panem before it became Panem.” That much I knew about my family.

I took a breath as he paused. I knew it was coming, I just wasn't prepared for the bombshell.

“You’re not a baker’s son.” he said simply.

“You’re lying.” I accused him. When he shook his head at me, I paled. “Then who am I?”

“You’re like me and Charlotte. Your father was one of my brethren. A friend, brother, comrade....” I listened as he trailed off. What. the. fuck. was. going. on? “You see, Peeta, Char and I are vampires. Unfortunately, for us the old Panem government, had captured Char and I and experimented on us rendering us a little different.”

“What do you mean vampires? Like the ones in stories?” I asked bewildered.

“Eh, something like that. There’s a few similarities but essentially we’re different. Our people can live up to almost fifteen hundred years, we can’t be around sunlight, but holy items don’t bother us etc etc.” he explained like he was bored of the stories of his kind.

“So, what is wrong with me? Why is my dad not my dad?” This was burning in me. If Brice Mellark wasn’t my father, then who was? I reached for the amber liquid that Henry had called scotch and downed mine. The stinging burn slide down my throat like fire. Clearing my head and
lowering my care.

“Your father, your real father’s, name is Dagger. He was a comrade. Dark, angry, bloodthirsty. He ran with the best of us. From what he told me, he was getting to the end of his lifespan and had yet to find a mate and father a child. Your uncle, who is married to your mother, was his twin. Dagger had lusted after his brother’s wife for years. He saw her as female of worth. Someone who would be a good mother. So he snuck in and bedded her one night and changed his brother’s memories so he would think he had bedded her. Unlike your uncle, who has a gentle nature; your father is the opposite coin. It’s how twins are differentiated in our kind. But he told me that when he created you he poured the last of his goodness in you. It’s why you are the way you are. Your good natured until you’re pissed off. When that happens, I see Dagger.”

Somehow, in that moment, it all made sense. But there was so many more nagging questions that rose to mind. Katniss’ face flooded my mind and I wish I was with her right now. In some made up fantasy where none of this existed. Like when we were in the caves or at my place. Alone and secluded from this incredible madness that lurked in every corner of the world.

I never realized that Henry had poured me another glass and I drank it quickly. The room became a little fuzzy as the alcohol flowed through my veins like demons marching toward freedom. I closed my eyes and let the sensations take me over as I began to count my breathing. I had never been drunk before and I wasn’t sure how Haymitch handled it every night of the week.

Taking a slow breath, I looked over at Henry expectantly. “So if my dad was a vampire, what does that make my uncle?”

“He never transitioned. He can live lifetimes as an immortal but he’ll always be human. Transitioning is just a phase of life. Where we go from being human to our true nature. It hurts and it sucks ass but for most of us it does happen.”

“So what does that make me?”

“A half-breed. You’re half human half vampire. It’s not uncommon for male vampires to mate with female humans and have children. The upside of being a half breed is that can go out in the daylight. Before and after your transition. Lucky ass....” he cleared his throat and chuckled. “Those are the ones that never transition, but I have a feeling you will. Dagger’s bloodline is strong and very old. Older than me or Char.”

“Did my mother ever find out?” I wanted to know. I wanted....no I needed to know if my mother hated me for a reason or who my father was. I know she was a cold woman who didn’t have a care in the world for me at all or even her own sons. Cruel wasn’t the word that everyone used. Hateful, abusive were more the terms everyone whispered behind our backs.

He nodded at me sadly. Like he didn’t want to tell me. “She did. It was right around the time you turned three. Your father, Char and I had shown up to see your uncle and saw you. The uncanny resemblance between you two made her blow her lid. I have never seen a woman turn so many colors. Your uncle was angry with your father for what he did. When your mother found out, she disowned you. I think Brice finally forgave Dagger of the lie. Even though your mother disowned you, Dagger made Brice promise to take care of you like his own. A few months later, your father vanished Before you ask, I don’t know how he vanished.”

“I think she had asked Dagger why didn’t he take you back to New Britain. You are his son, but she didn’t know how much longer he had. Brice swore up and down that you wouldn’t leave Panem for no reason at all. They had argued until she caved and told him that Brice had to take care of you and she was done. Of course, from all the rumors I’ve heard she wasn’t a kind mother, was she?”
I shook my head too ashamed to tell him how she really was to me, Rye, and Cadon. There were
days that I wasn’t sure if we would have survived but somehow we did. Brice had never stood up
to my mother. Let her handle all the money, discipline the kids, and run his entire dignity into the
ground. There were a lot of days I was glad I had won the Games. It just meant that I didn’t have
to live with them anymore.

“You said the transition was painful, what do you mean?”

“For males, your body changes. Trust me I wasn’t always this tall or muscular. I think mine lasted
about a day and when I woke up, I hurt all over and I was hungry. Thankfully Char was there. I
fed and bedded her that night and we’ve been together ever since.”

I didn’t want to ask let alone know the answer was going to be, but curiosity got the best of me.
“Fed as in....?”

“I’m sure you’ve seen a few bite marks on her?”

I nodded at him and gulped loudly, “You mean, drink blood?” When he nodded again I blanched.
I’m sure my color was white as cake flour. He chuckled lightly like it was some joke.

“I’ve, uh, tasted some of Katniss before. The bruise I left her. I guess I bit down a bit harder than I
thought I did. It wasn’t bad but it did feel nice over my tongue.” I confessed to him. My face
colored red and I looked down at my hands. I shouldn’t be embarrassed. According to Henry it
was natural, wasn’t it?”

“You know it should be your father, not me telling you this. It’s a father’s privilege to tell his son
of life’s changes. I told all my sons and while I understand you have no clue about who you are
they at least had an iota of who they are. I wasn’t allowed to tell you anything until you begin to
have urges.” He said to no one in particular like he was reliving the conversations he had with his
sons.

“I think I have one or two more questions and I know this is A LOT to take in and I appreciate
that you’re telling me but how can I know that this all real?” I asked apprehensively. I wanted this
to be real. It seemed like everything made sense even though it did seem ridiculous.

“I didn’t expect you to really believe me. I know it sounds incredulous but it’s how it is. Our race
has been around a lot longer than the stones and rocks of these areas. I don’t know the whole
history except we’re of the old country dating back of the Egyptians. “ He paused seeing the
confusion on my face. “If you wanted too you could ask your uncle or wait till you have an
episode. You’ll know when the urge to possess will come over you....”

I stared at him mouth gaping open. “Is that what I feel toward Katniss? Possession?”

“The urge to have her, mark her, bed her will always be at the forefront of your mind. If another
male steps in and tries to move in on her, I swear to God I’ve nearly killed over Char. If it hadn’t
been for her.....” He trailed off. “Marking her is natural. You want the world to know she’s ‘off
limits’ that she’s yours.” He shrugged like I should had known this from the beginning.

“That’s how I feel.....” I choked out. Suddenly the room seemed too small for me to comprehend.
It shrank further and I gathered my body close to me. It made sense why my mother would always
call me a monster. Rocking slowly back and forth I felt like I was being chase by the mutts from
the Games except this time I couldn’t move as they devoured me.

“Breathe Peeta. I know this is a lot for you. You will be fine. Just take slow breaths.” I managed
to nod at him and begun breathing. After a few minutes, I finally pulled my head from my knees
and looked at him. He didn’t seem very alarmed by my panic attack. Handing me water instead of scotch, I took it gratefully and emptied the contents.

“How....how old do you have to be before the transition begins?” I managed to choke out.

“it depends. Eighteen, twenty one, or twenty five. Bloodline has a lot to do with it. I was twenty one. Char was too. Dag was around eighteen, I think.”

“My eighteenth birthday is in a few months.....” I mummered. “Is there a way to transition before those ages?”

“Possibly. If you wanted it bad enough. If there was a reason.....a valid life threatening reason for you to make the transition.”

I nodded slowly. “I need to go. I need to think. Thanks Henry.” I nodded at him before I disappeared from his house. I needed to think but I couldn’t do it at the bakery. I couldn’t look at the man who I had called father all my life. If I was Katniss, I’d disappeared into the quietness of the woods. Instead my feet took me to my house and robotically I made it to the kitchen. Pulling out ingredients, I did what I did best. I’d bake. Maybe I’d make cheese buns and cookies. Of course if I wanted to get lost, I’d make bread. The kneading and pushing of dough would help me reshape myself while I made something out of nothing.

I never paid attention to the time but soon enough my kitchen was filled with the aroma of sugar, cheese, and dough. The kneading helped me think about everything that had happened since I came back from the Games, How much more assertive I was around Katniss. I was sure she was my mate. Henry never touched based with it but I could tell he figured I was smart enough to realize it myself. How I lost my damn mind when I saw the bruises on her arms. How I couldn’t think except to give Gale the same hurt he had given my woman.

My woman?

When had I come to think of her like that? Suddenly I couldn’t breathe again. The memories of her face and the pain she encountered had me seeing red. Before I knew it, I had cracked the counter from gripping it so hard. The sound reverberated through the kitchen pulling me out of my anger. Damn it! I thought to myself. I had to get a grip.

Suddenly I heard a noise and there she stood. My genuine smile met her uncertain one. I wasn’t sure what it meant but I stalked to her and pulled her into a kiss that would leave her weak for me. Pulling her into me, my hands came to play in her hair, my tongue begging for entrance that she eagerly gave me. I could feel her hands tugging on my shirt. Gripping them into an iron clench. Inside me something chuckled darkly as I deepened the kiss and stepped her back into the counter close to my sink.

“I’ve missed you and I need to tell you something.” I whispered huskily in her ear.
Chapter Summary

Sorry for the delay. New Year's and all. Here's where it's half Canon/Divergent. Things get fun for Peeta. Long chapter for you all

Enjoy!

Katniss POV

After Gale left me, I sat in the woods until it was too cold to sit any further. I stood up and slowly made my way back to town. It was a two hour trek to the lake but now it would be past dark when I would get back. Peeta would be getting worried so I stopped at his house first. My family were used to me being gone for hours at a time. Opening the door, the rush of Gale’s indiscretion left me woeful uncertain. Peeta would know or would find out. Would he try and hurt Gale again?

I could hear sounds coming from the kitchen and I followed it. Stopping at the door to the kitchen, I could see Peeta. Around him was flour, cheese buns, and assortment of cookies. He must have been here quite a long time. Maybe something was bothering him. He never baked this much. Or at least what I knew of him. But something was different about him. About how he stood there behind the counter. His eyes were closed, his hands clenching tightly around the base of the counter. Suddenly tension poured off him and he became relaxed.

Looking at him his smile was genuine compared to my uncertain one. Before I could ask him how he was he pulled me into a slow determined kiss. Like he was imprinting me with something he wanted me to have. Gripping his shirt, he led us to the counter where the coolness of the counter took my breathe away.

His breath hot on my ear sent shivers down my spine. When he pulled back from me, my eyes slowly opened to dark pools of blue. Arousal pulsed at me as my eyes lowered to his lips. Soft and pliant but they knew how to make me a puddle in his arms. The intensity between us roared like a inferno. He reached to kiss me again when we heard a knock on the back door. A low growl came from him, his posture stiff in my arms. I raised an eyebrow at him but dismissed when he gave me a lopsided grin.

Sauntering to the door, I sniffed around the cheese buns, which I was sure they were made for me, when I heard him talking. Whipping my head around it was Char and Henry. Smiling I went to embrace her.

“I’ve missed you, you annoying woman.” I told her before waving toward Henry. The look he gave Peeta spiked my curiosity. He must have given him the answers he was seeking.

“Anyone hungry? I think I got carried away.” I heard Peeta muster something that resembled hospitality. I raised my eyebrow at him again but dismissed it again when he tore off a hunk of cheese bread. Holding it to my mouth I giggled and bit down on it. I missed the gleam in his eye.

We all sat around the kitchen and nibbled on foods that he must have spent hours baking. The
conversation stayed light and Char talked about her trip. We laughed and eventually I relaxed but I could feel tension still pouring off Peeta.

“So, what did you do today Katniss?” I heard him ask me. His eyes on my lips. I remembered our kiss from earlier and a blush crept upon me.

“I went hunting.” I fumbled. I hated lying and the second the words came out of my mouth, he caught the lie.

“No, Katniss.....what did you really do?”

“I, uh....” I stammered. I knew I would have to tell him eventually. “I went to see Gale.” The scratching sounds of the chair pushing back abruptly startled me.

“You did what?” his voice was low and dangerous. His eyes had darkened but he wasn’t aroused he was angry. Backing us against the counter again, this time it wasn’t for play.

“I went to talk to him about what Snow had said and tell him about what I saw on Mayor Undersee’s television. We ate and talked.....”

“Talked about what?” he demanded. When I didn’t answer him he gripped the counter but his eyes soften as he saw the fear cross my eyes, “About what Katniss?”

“He...he tried to make me chose between him and you. About how he loved me, how he knew me best. I was a liar, I always said I’d never fall in love and be with someone before the Games. He told me that you and I would never work.....” my voice caught in my throat.

His nose brushed against the column of my throat. “I can smell him on you....what did he do?” he interrupted me.

“...and then...and then....he kissed me.” I finally said.

The growl from his sent fear down my spine. I had no idea that Peeta could sound so menacing. His hands gripped my waist tightly. His strong hands pinching the skin, making it painful.

“He did what to you?”

“He kissed me.....Peeta I swear I didn’t kiss him back! I pushed him away from me and proceeded to yell at him.”

Suddenly, his back bowed in and his head dropped. His hands letting go of my waist they gripped the counter. Letting out a painful howl, it reverberated through my soul. His whole body trembled from pain. A sweat broke over his forehead, his shoulders heaving heavily. My frantic eyes averted to Henry and Char who were placidly watching the whole scene.

“What is he doing?” I heard Char whisper to Henry

“He’s trying to force his transition....Fortunately for us his fangs will be the only thing that will appear. They will be blunt, not sharp like he will want. Biologically, his body isn’t ready for it.” He whispered back to her.

“I’m guessing you’ve talked to him? Did you tell him everything?”

“No, not everything, but close enough.”
Peeta POV

Searing pain ripped through my skull. Her words reverberating through my head. I could feel something happening to me. It was slow but when she said she had seen Gale, anger ripped through me. When she had said he kissed her, a monster craved to crawl out. The unfamiliar anger was clawing at me. I became another person to myself and in her eyes. As I stalked her, I could smell her fear. Breathing her in as I pressed her into the counter, I could smell Gale on her. The thought sickened my stomach. Bile threatened to rise.

I believed her words. They are what kept me anchored to the counter. Gripping it, I let out a howl. It felt like my face was being rearranged. Just as suddenly as it began, it stopped. I ached, I was sweaty and I felt hunger. Nuzzling my mouth into her neck, I let my instincts override my rational mind.

Biting down I was instantly gifted with the taste of blood in my mouth. As the hot liquid rolled over my tongue, my eager mouth tried to draw more blood, but couldn’t. Growling, I pulled my head back and licked my lips. Still tasting her blood on my tongue. Grasping her hips, words begin to fall out of my mouth....

“You’re mine....you’re mine....you’re mine....” The phrase becoming a mantra for me. I vaguely felt her fingers slide through my hair. Holding me close, but keeping me from collapsing. Then I remember why we were here in the first place. Letting out another low growl, I could barely contain the anger that coursed through my veins. “I’m going to kill him.”

“No you’re not.” a female voice said. Whipping my head up, I had forgotten that Char was still there.

“Then I’m going to maim him...”

“Not that either.”

“Why not?”

“Simple. Because you’d never forgive yourself.” she said quite smugly.

If it had been any other time I’d roll my eyes, but when I looked back at Katniss, the blood stain on her neck, I felt two arms pull me back. They were holding me back as hunger slammed into me.

“Let me go! Let me go Henry! LET ME GO NOW! She’s MY woman, DAMN IT!” I screamed as my wild thrashing had me pinned to the ground. My fist came in contact with the floor cracking it under my strength. I’m not sure how he had me pinned but I could feel his arms lock around me. Fighting him hard, the blood I needed was merely feet away from me. Choking and gasping for air, the haze around my eyes burned bright.

“Oh....fuck ...God make it stop...” I moaned into the floor.

“Get Katniss out of here Char....” Henry commanded over my screams. I didn’t hear them leave the room, but I knew she was gone. The longer she was gone the better I became. The easier it was for me to control myself.
“I need you to focus Peeta. Take a calming breath and focus. She’s gone from the room. There’s no need to fight me anymore. If I let you go, will you stay?”

I gave the barest hint of nod to him. I began breathing, reciting recipes in my head...anything to dull myself down. Collapsing on the floor, the cool tiles helped soothe me further. After ten minutes, I finally had calmed down enough to sit up.

“What happened to me?” I choked out my voice barely above a whisper.”

“You tried to force your transition. You bit Katniss...the first taste of blood and you flipped out.” I looked at him aghast. “Don’t worry, I’ve seen stronger men fall faster than you did.”

My thoughts flew to Katniss...Now she would see me as a monster. And she would run away. Something unstable and dangerous. “How is she?”

“A little scared but she seemed to handle it well. I don’t think she minded you biting her. Char got her out to help you focus. I’m guessing you never got the time to tell her about what we talked about. We showed up to early?”

I feebly nodded my head. “I feel horrible. Like I’ve had bags of flour thrown at me.”

“Yea, that will disappear in a day or two.”

”It will always be like this, I suppose?” I asked with a sigh of resignation.

”Nah, it will be easier when you make your transition.”

”What will happened to Katniss? I know it will take me centuries to die but what about her?”

”Well.....that all depends on you. There’s a way to do it but it’s against our laws unless you seek permission for it.”

”What is it?” my curiosity piqued. If I could let her live for centuries like me I was willing to take the risk.

”You would have to feed her your blood the night you bed her...” The air in the room disappeared but it came running back to life when I heard the door open and there she stood.

“Peeta....?” I heard a lovely sound call my name.

Katniss POV

The Peeta I knew was gone from the second I looked in his eyes. Something was different about him. The howling anger that spewed from his body left me frightened and ready to run, but I held my ground. Something told me that I needed to stay. When he nuzzled my neck, I thought he had calmed down. My lovely Peeta was coming back to me. What I didn’t expect was him trying to bite me. My fight or flight kicked in but he held me tightly that I couldn’t escape even if I wanted too.

The instant he sucked on me, I caved and moaned. But it was too short lived. He tried again and to no avail did blood come out of me. One would think that was a good thing, but it had ignited a spark in me that craved more. When he let me go for a split second I knew things were about to
get critical. His darkened blue eyes nearly became black as Henry pulled him from me. Peeta was wild. I had never seen him like this. The whole time he kept screaming at Henry, I just stood there frozen like ice. I came back to life as Char grabbed me and motioned me out the door. I could still hear him screaming and fighting Henry.

Sitting me on the couch, she ran to find clean up gauze and alcohol. I was stunned. His words, his actions replaying in my head over and over until I turned and saw Charlotte again. "Will he be OK?" I croaked.

"He will, don’t worry. This isn’t our first rodeo. Let me clean you up and by then I’m sure he will be calm.” I merely nodded and moved my head aside to let her clean me up. “Well good news, he barely broke skin. Just enough to make you bleed but not enough to enough to cause concern.” That was good news? I looked at her incredulously as she chuckled. “Yes, that’s good. My eldest, Tor, actually broke skin the first time it happened.”

The things you learn about people.....

After she cleaned me up, she let me have something she called scotch. “Drink it slow and it will help numb you down a bit. Make things a little easier to handle.” She disappeared after that. Taking one sip, I grimaced and set it down. Getting to my feet, I crept slowly toward the kitchen. Eavesdropping, I waited for the right time to poke my head in.

Apparently, Henry had told Peeta something about what had happened. I stood there listening intently all the way until Henry explained that I would have to drink Peeta’s blood for something to happen. I blanched at the thought. I couldn’t stand to see an opened wound much less than drinking blood. I was hoping to hear more but silence thickened the air and I presumed they were done.

“Peeta...?” I called out as I stepped through the door. He had changed but stayed the same. A smile broke out over his face as he struggled to stand up. With Henry’s help and his eye on him, Peeta walked over and stopped in front of me. He shifted back and forth not quite meeting my eyes lest he think I was scared of him now.

“We need to talk Katniss....about what happened.”

“Char and I will go. Let me know if you need something.”

Peeta barely nodded but took my hand. When I didn’t flinch, he led me to the living room. Taking a seat beside him, he looked down at his hands like was going to have a hard time explaining himself. The minutes ticked by and yet I stayed by him. I couldn’t leave him like this even if I needed answers.

“You were right when you said I would get answers....They just wasn’t the answers I was expecting.” He said gruffly in his hands. He sighed and looked at me. His blue eyes showed the start of tears, yet were hardened by tonight’s actions.

Peeta POV

“Don’t know how to start but I’m not quite human Katniss.” I watched as her eyes widened. “I’m not a Capitol mutt if that’s what you’re thinking. I’m like Henry and Charlotte. I’m a half breed vampire.”
She stared at me like I had grown two heads. “Okay, so what does that mean? Does it have something to do with what happened in the kitchen?”

I nodded slowly. “It does, but if you’re ready for a story?” She nodded at me and settled close. Entwining our fingers, she squeezed for reassurance.

“The man I call father isn’t my father. He’s my uncle. My real father’s name is Dagger, he’s my uncle’s twin, and he was obsessed with my mother. Long story short he bedded my mother and became pregnant with me. Unbeknownst to everyone my father was coming to the end of life and so it’s why he did what he did. Eventually, everyone found out what he done when I was three. It’s one of the main reasons why my mother hates me. She didn’t want me after she knew I wasn’t my uncle’s son.”

“According to Henry we--funny how I can say that now--can live up to fifteen hundred years. Me being a half breed means I can go out in the sunlight. But we can do the normal human functions like eating, but we are destined to always crave blood.”

“I’m in better control of myself now.” I chuckled at her discomfort of saying Gale’s name. Thinking about it didn’t make me anger just uncomfortable.

Katniss POV

“I know it was a mistake to have gone out to talk to him. I didn’t know what he was planning or what to do but I yelled at him. A lot, actually, I wanted to clear the air. Tell him what was going on. Other than you he’s the only other person I can talk too.” I mused trying to still explain myself to Peeta. Like it was worth the shot now. It was all in the open before he lost control of himself.

“What are you going to do now?” I asked him my eyes trained on our entwined hands.

“I’m not sure but keep doing what I always do. I’m not ready to face my uncle and mother. I’m sure it won’t go well.”

“If you do go, I’ll go with you. You don’t have to go at this alone.”

“Katniss....” he started to protest.

“No, I’m being serious. You and me. Always going to take care of each other. I mean it Peeta. I know things are going to be hard with them and I want to be there.”

“If you’re sure Katniss....”
“I am.” I told him firmly. To prove my point, I leaned over and pressed my lips to his. Startling him, he recovered quickly and pulled me into his lap. Our bodies pressed together his tongue running over the seam of my lips that I opened for him. The hunger was back. The one that roared in my ears. The one that fueled my fantasies. Coming to cup the side of my face I let my hands wander over his shoulders and down into the top of his shirt.

I couldn’t enough of him. Kissing across his jawline my lips left open mouthed kisses down his strong neck. Nipping the tender skin, he growled deep. I could feel the vibrations hum through his chest. “Katniss...” he rasped. I stopped what I was doing and looked at him. His mouth was open and his breathing ragged but what got my attention was how his teeth had changed.

Reaching toward his mouth, I gasped when his lips closed around a finger. I gasped again as his eyes flew open. I could feel the pointed end of two of his teeth. His tongue hot on my finger I moaned as he sucked gently. The blunted end of the teeth came in contact with my finger. Scratching it. The familiar pain flooded my senses. Taking my hand in his, he pulled my finger from his mouth.

The sight of blood made me ill but Peeta’s gaze sent shivers down my spine. Watching him as he reached out his tongue flicked over the bead of blood. He moaned as he sucked gently on my finger. The repulsion I had instantly turned to pleasure. Closing my eyes, I tried to steady my breathing. It wasn’t working. I gently pulled my finger from him and used my hands to pull off my shirt. His eyes widened and he pulled me roughly to him.

“Mmm...Peeta.” I moaned as his hands slid down to squeeze my ass. Forcing my very willing hips to roll into his lap. The friction causing my center to ache with need. Tugging his shirt off, I could feel the heat radiating off him. I ran my hands down the smooth planes of his chest. My fingers brushing lightly over his nipples. I was rewarded with a low hiss.

“I...fuck...I need you...” I heard him growl as he leaned forward and kissed me. His mouth bruising my lips, his hands rough on my hips as he continued to roll me into his hardness. My nipples were tender as they were rubbed raw from my bra. Reaching around I unhooked it and before I could toss it aside, Peeta had latched his mouth onto one of my nipples. I cried out throwing my head back.

Unlike the gentle Peeta I had experienced on the train, this one was rough, unbridled, demanding. Needless to say, I kind of liked it. It turned me on even further. Lapping my nipple with his tongue, the ache between my legs intensified. I wanted him inside me so bad, but I couldn’t bring myself to tell him.

Pushing me back onto the couch he hovered over me, his mouth never leaving mine. My body arched into him as he played with the hem of my hunting pants. His mouth leaving a scorching trail down my neck to play with my breasts. We had stopped long ago for asking permission. Sucking and tugging gently with his teeth moans left my mouth as I fumbled with the button of his jeans. Aching to get them off him, I helped tug them down. Leaving him only in his boxers. I hadn’t realized that his clever hands had already started to shimmy my own pants down. His mouth left my breasts and continued south. Running his smooth tongue over the hem of my panties, I heard him growl. “God, I can smell your arousal...”

And to prove his point he slid a finger between my legs. The cotton soaked with juices. “Fuck Katniss....you’re so wet.” Before he could slide a finger under my panties, we heard a loud knock on his door.

He froze and I froze. I was so close to something wonderful. He arched himself forward to kiss me again but the knocking became more insistent. “Whoever the fuck this is better be dying....” I heard him mutter as he put his jeans back on. Tossing me his shirt, I threw it on as well as my
pants too. Looking at him, I tried unsuccessfully to make myself look presentable, his eyes saddened seeing me dressed.

Opening the door, freezing air whooshed through the house sending chills down my arms. I shivered and I could see him step aside and let Haymitch in.

“Where the hell have you two been all day!? I’ve got your mom...” he said looking at me. “and your dad trying to find you. Of course no one looks in the one place where you might be.”

“I’ve been hunting....”

“I’ve spent half my morning with Henry then came back here to my kitchen.” we both said at the same time. He gave us a look like he didn’t believe us. I sighed and looked pointedly at him.

“All you had to do was ask around for us...or at least me. If you found me, then you would find Peeta not far behind.”

“That’s the problem, I did. Everyone asked Gale and he was tight lipped and pissed off. We asked if he had an idea and all he muttered was ‘probably fucking Peeta...’ Both of you need to contact your parents. So they get off my case.” He pointed out as he turned and left.

Peeta turned and looked at me after he closed the door. “Maybe I do need to get home.” I muttered as he stood there. Like he was fighting conflicting emotions.

“I don’t want you too. I want you to stay.”

“I want to too.” I said rising from the couch to meet him halfway, My hands came to rope around his neck as I kissed him chastely. “But if I stay, I will be in trouble and that means less time to spend with you.” I pointed out. He nodded slowly like he was hating my logic. Turning from him, I eased out of his shirt and found my bra and shirt. Putting them back on, I felt constricted and unsatisfied. Leaning forward, I tiptoed up and gave him a quick kiss. “I’ll see you soon Peeta....”

“Hopefully soon enough..” his voice was low in my ear. I had to get out and home before I was grounded. Easing myself from his grip, I opened the door and left. My feet making it back home. Hopefully, I wouldn’t be grounded from seeing him. Entering the house, mother and Prim rose from the couch.

“Where have you been all day?” she asked.

“Hunting with Gale...then over to Peeta’s for food.” I said lamely even though it was the truth. I watched her nod at my explanation.

“Next time let me know what you’re doing sometime during the day....please? I don’t care about the hunting but if you’re going to do more, let me know.”

“I will mom. I’m going to bed. I’ll see you in the morning.”

“Did you get into trouble?” he asked me as he pushed me roughly against the brick wall. His breath hot against my ear. Arching my neck for him, his tongue and teeth nipped the sensitive spot below my ear while his hands lifted me up to wrap my legs around him.

“I’m here, aren’t I?” I managed to get out before he kissed me again. The kiss was hot and demanding. It had been a few days since Henry had spilled the secret about Peeta. A few days since we almost had sex on his couch and I was looking forward to having him alone. It’s why
when I was through hunting this morning, I had immediately sought him out after trading for the day.

And here we are, making out behind bakery. His hand had finally made it up my shirt. Caressing and teasing the nipple. My moans were immediately cut off by his delicious mouth. I could feel his hardness pressing into me as he thrust his hips slowly against mine. Tangling my fingers in his hair, I pulled him back so I could look at him. He was the same but different. The most notable difference was the baby fangs peeking out. Henry had told us to be careful about fooling around, biting, and letting Peeta feed off me.

Said he wasn’t fully in control of himself yet. That it would take time and practice to get his urges under control. But I didn’t care. The blissful feeling I got was something I wasn’t ready to give up.

“Peeta, bite me....please?” I whispered then moaned as he pinched my nipple. Nuzzling my neck, I could feel his excitement and hesitation. Before I could ask him if he wanted too, he bit down. My moan got caught in my throat. Unfortunately for Peeta, his fangs weren’t sharp enough to fully bite me. But I didn’t care. I never cared.

His hips thrust into my aching center making my whole body light up in flames. The muscles in my stomach started to clenched but I tried holding off. Sucking gently, he fed off me, but soon I the blood stopped flowing. My body doing it’s best to heal the wound and he groaned. Licking wound clean, I shuddered deliciously from his warm tongue against my exposed skin.

Before we could start up again, we heard a soft ‘Ahem’ behind us. Cadon stood by the door and saw most of the whole thing. Embarrassed, I buried my head in the crook of Peeta’s shoulder. He merely stood there. Anger poured off him. I had to calm him down fast neither of us wanted a repeat. Taking his head in my hands, I pulled him to kiss me. After a few minutes, he finally calmed down.

“I hate to interrupt, but Peeta we kind of need you back in the store. Mom is about to go ballistic because nothing’s been iced.” I watched Peeta nod stiffly. Probably thankful he was in too much in a hurry to kiss me to take his apron off.

Giving me a lopsided grin and a quick kiss, he followed Cadon inside the building. I waited for a minute longer to collect myself when I heard that witch mother, Jana, screaming. I’m not sure how Peeta could have handled her. Personally, I’d kill her if she screamed at me like that.

Heading back into town, I immediately knew something was wrong. The air around me was thick with tension. Then I smelled it. Fire. Whipping my head around, I saw it coming from the Hob. I was just there this morning. Running as fast as my feet could carry me, I made it to town where a crowd had gathered. My stomach dropped as I pushed past the sea of people.

Before I could make it to the front, someone grabbed my arm. It was a miner on Gale’s team.

“Don’t do it. Don’t make a scene Katniss.”

“Get out of here."

“Don’t make a scene."

I kept hearing the same words from people in the crowd, Now I knew something was wrong. Adrenaline pumped in my veins so I can’t hear them. I just know that whatever is in the center is meant for me. When I finally break through, I see I am right.

Gale’s wrists are bound to a wooden post. A wild turkey he must have shot earlier hangs above him. His jacket has been cast aside as well as his shirt. He slumps unconscious on his knees, held
up only by the rope. What used to be his back is now a slab of meat.

The man behind him is someone I don’t recognize but I recognize the uniform. This isn’t Cray. Our head peacekeeper, no, this is someone else. Someone much worse. Two and two add up when I see him raise the whip.

“No!” I cry as I sprint to stop this madness. No matter what he’s done, he shouldn’t have to endure this. Instinctively, I know I will not be able to stop this. I don’t have the strength. Instead, I throw myself in front of Gale. I take the lash full force across my cheek.

The pain is immense. I cry out as the world around me spins. I fall to my knees the sting bringing a welt that surely will close my eye up. “Stop! You’ll kill him!” I don’t yell because I love him, I yell because his family couldn’t take the heartbeat at the loss of him.

I get a half decent look at the man with the whip. He’s cold and calculating. Gray hair with a military build and even worse temper. He throws his arm out to lash out again and this time I am prepared, but it never comes.

“Hold it!” I sigh in relief as I hear Haymitch come running from nowhere. He trips over the body of a peacekeeper. Bile rises in my throat as I hope he’s not dead. But I can see a purple lump and I know he’s knocked out. Relief washes over me. I’ve always liked Darius.

Grabbing me, he jerks my face around to look at the welt. “Just fucking great. She’s got a wedding photo shoot next week. What am I supposed to tell her stylist?”

I see a flicker of recognition from him. His eyes widen a little but it’s hard to tell its me without my excellent prep team. “She interrupted a whipping of this confessed criminal.” I shiver from his threatening tone. I wished Peeta was by my side so I could hide from all this. I couldn’t tell where this man was from and quite frankly I didn’t care. I wanted him gone.

“I don’t care what she did. Look at her face, do you think she’ll be camera ready?!”

“Not my problem....” but I could sense he had some doubts.

I finally felt the arms I wanted around me, looking up I see Peeta. His eyes have gone dark and I know he’s dangerously close to losing it. I knew it had nothing to do with Gale but with the bleeding lash on my face. No one but me noticed it. No one but me knew about it. Not even Haymitch. At least not yet. Squeezing his arm, I sense he’s relaxed a little.

“He was poaching on Capitol lands. That is punishable. What’s it to her anyway?”

“He’s her cousin and I’m her fiance. So if you want to get to him, expect to go through us too.” My head whipped up at Peeta. Incredulously I wondered what made him change his mind? He hated Gale with every fiber of his being. Why help him now?

With Peeta and Haymitch beside me, I wondered if we’re it. The only ones to make a stand against this tyranny. I know it’s temporary but at least it’s something. At the moment, my only thoughts are about keeping Gale alive for Hazelle and the kids. The new Head Peacekeeper looks to the backup squad and I realize they are familiar faces.

Just then, a woman named Purina, steps forward, “Sir, for a first offense, the required lashes have been given unless your sentence is death then it’s carried out by a firing squad.”

“Is that the standard protocol here?” He asks bewildered.

“Yes sir.” Purina says as others nod in agreement. No one has liked this show but nothing else can
be done about it. Too many are frightened and the rest, like me, are too young to remember a time when District 12 had whippings.

“Fine! Get your cousin out of here. The next time I catch him poaching off Capitol lands, I’ll assemble a firing squad. Now GO!” He strolls off like he’s late for dinner. The rest of the peacekeepers rush over to help Darius up.

“Gale.” I whisper hoping he’s not dead. Tugging on the ropes is futile for me because I can barely see myself. Someone hands Peeta knife and he easily cuts through. Catching Gale before he hits the pool of blood and mud. Someone hands us a wooden door to use as a stretcher.

“Let’s get him to your mother.” Haymitch tells me. I nodded but let a few others take Gale away. I hear Haymitch as someone to go get his mother and someone to watch her kids while she’s at my house. I don’t want to go there tonight. The smell and sight of blood will make me ill and and I’m sure it wasn’t pretty for Peeta too. Standing with Peeta in the square, I realize we are alone. Everyone else has filtered out.

“Why....why did you help save him?” It was the first thing on my mind.

“Because, like you, I knew his family couldn’t survive without him. Trust me, it wasn’t for Gale’s benefit....”

“How did you know I was here?”

“I heard you scream and I smelled your blood. As soon as I did, I ran out of the bakery. Everyone shouting at me. I didn’t care about the repercussions I just knew you were hurt.” He pulled me into his arms. I could feel him his body tremble. “Damn it Katniss....you know you could have been seriously injured?

“I know. I just didn’t think. I couldn’t let his family suffer for it.” I meekly answered him. He nodded.

“Let’s get you to your house. Let her look at you.” I nodded and tucked myself into his warm body. Walking slowly through town, we eventually made it to the Victor’s Village. Stepping into his house, he ran upstairs and quickly changed. I waited, my face still quite sore from the lashing. I felt stupid and brave at the same time. When he came thundering down , he was dressed for colder weather. Taking my hand he led us to my house.

“Wait!” I grabbed him before we went in. He stopped and turned to me. “Will you be OK in there?”

He nodded. “Yea. I’ve been practicing with Henry. As long as I don’t stay too long I’ll be fine. Plus you let me feed from you earlier. It will help.”

Chaos ensued as we walked in. They must have just arrived only minutes before we did. Mother and Prim had Gale on the counter. His oozing back toward us. I grimaced as I looked as the welts that would form raw angry scars. Ushering me into a seat, Peeta crouch down in front of me. Holding my hands, I couldn’t bare to look at the table.

Thom, Bristel, and Haymitch all stand close but it was Mother who stole the show. Telling Prim what to grab. Dried herbs, tinctures, and store bought bottles started lining up on the counter. I watched her work effortlessly. Crumbling this, adding drops of that to the basin of water. Soaking a cloth in the hot liquid before she instructs Prim to make a second brew. Looking at me she frowns deeply. “Did it cut your eye?”

“No, it’s just swelled shut.”
“Put snow on it. You should have done that by now.” she said with a hint of exasperation in her voice. My face fell. I’m not quite the priority. Peeta squeezes my hand and takes off to find snow. When he returns, he’s chuckling.

“I’m so warm, I’m melting the snow for you.” I chuckled softly and grabbed a towel. Putting the melted snow in I wrapped it up and held it to my face. The cold taking some of the sting away. Running his hands up and down my arms, I felt comforted even still in all this blood.

Bristel and Thom were piecing together what happened. Apparently, Gale had killed a wild turkey earlier today and took it by Cray’s house knowing that he always paid well for wild turkey, but when he got there he found himself face to face with the new Head. From what they overheard his name is Romulus Thread. Well Thread immediately put Gale under arrest and since he had a dead turkey in his hands, Gale couldn’t defend himself too much. When I got there, they said he had already endured forty lashes and passed out around thirty.

“If he had his usual haul it would have been a lot worse.” Bristel says.

“Gale told Thread he found the turkey in the Seam and killed it with a stick. Still a crime but Darius tried to put a stop to it after twenty lashes. Of course he wasn’t smart about it like Purina. Grabbed Thread’s arm and Thread turned around and head butt him with the end of the whip. Not a good time at all for anyone....”

Even with my mother’s expert hands it takes a long time to clean the wound and when she does, I close my eyes and steady my breathing. Funny how I can let Peeta take my blood but can’t stand the sight of it. Suddenly, Hazelle burst through my back door and hurried over to her son. Her eyes were alarmed and scared for him. I almost felt bad for Gale. I hunted and traded earlier. Was it just my rush to see Peeta that kept me from bearing the same punishment? I shuddered to think it. Now I don’t feel so embarrassed that Cadon saw us.

Haymitch pressed some coin into both Bristel and Thom’s hands and shooed them out the door. Hoping things didn’t go from bad to worse for them. Hazelle sat on the stool still and silent as mother and Prim finished cleaning Gale up. I watched him lay there in pain. Whatever she was going to give him wasn’t going to be enough. I just knew it. Prim must have noticed it too because it was she, not I, who confronted her.

“You need to give him something stronger mom.”

“It’s all I have right now. I will give him sleep syrup later on.”

She opened her mouth like she wanted to argue, but closed it. Giving me a knowing look, I knew she felt sorry for Gale.

Turning to look at Peeta, who had seized to move for quite some time, I became a little scared when I nudged him and he didn’t react. Oh God, how long have we been in here? The screeching sound of my chair startled him.

“Come on Peeta....let me get you out of here.” I whispered so no one could hear. Tugging on his hand, I pulled him outside in the fresh air. It was cold but we would stay warm. Well, at least he would. Finally away from all the blood, he leaned against my house and sighed.

“I’m so glad you got me out of there. I was trying very hard to keep it together. I didn’t want to scare anyone, especially you.” He said coming to cup my face. “I should have gotten to you sooner. You may not have been hit.” His tone filled with regret.

“I didn’t notice until I checked on you and when you didn’t move when I nudged you. I panicked
a little.” I muttered looking at him with my non swollen eye. “It’s not your fault Peeta. What matters is that you got there. This....” I touched my wound, “will go away soon. I promise.” I knew Peeta better than he thought I did. He would blame himself for this for the rest of his life if he could.

Before I could make another comment, I felt myself being dragged away from my back door and pushed against the side of the house. Away from prying eyes at least. “Peeta! What the...?” I exclaimed before I was cut off by his mouth pressed against my neck. Moaning, I let it roll to the side and felt the small sting before bliss set in. I was so wrapped up in his mouth feeding off me that I never heard footsteps.

“Do either of you mind telling me what the fuck is going on?” Both of us jumped away from one another. My eyes wild and unfocused. Peeta had the graces to turn his back and hide his face. Haymitch stood before us looking quite pissed off. When he turned around, he was ‘normal’ Peeta again.

“Well?! Anyone care to offer the first excuse?” Haymitch demanded.

“Nothing is going on.” Peeta said firmly.

Haymitch scoffed. “Yea. OK. You two are out here necking when your pal is splayed out blood oozing from him.” That’s when he must have noticed the blood on my fingers and the slight smear from Peeta’s lower lip. “Don’t lie to me!” he said taking a step forward. “Something’s going on and you’re not telling me. So talk. The both of you.”

We were busted. After a long moment of silence I struggled to come up with an excuse, but Peeta beat me to it. “Fine.” Peeta spoke up. “We’ll talk but not out here.”
Soooo sorry for delayed chapter update! I've finally gotten this work half done already but I came down with a bad food allergy over the weekend...

As always Enjoy and I don't own it.

Note! I don't know if I explained it but Peeta is NOT quite a full vampire yet. He's only in the transition period. I've yet to write that piece. Which should be interesting....

“Are you...?”

“Don’t say crazy because I’m not Katniss.” he stopped us in the middle of the Village. Snow and wind whipped around us. I couldn’t help but shiver. “We’re actually going there,” He pointed at Henry and Char’s place.

“But why?” I protested huddling into my jacket.

“Their house might not be bugged.” he whispered holding me close. Finally noticing I wasfreezing to death. Cold didn’t both him as much as it did since his vampire senses had awakened. Holding me in the snow, I instantly felt warmer.

“Come on you two! Let’s get a move on!” Haymitch called from about ten feet from his house.

“We’re not going to your house. We’re going to Henry and Charlotte’s. We don’t need anyone asking questions.”

Haymitch must have understood what Peeta meant because he nodded and headed over to Henry’s house. When we got there, Henry opened the door before Peeta could knock. Shocking Haymitch. We all stood out there in the cold for a few minutes before we heard Charlotte from the kitchen.

“Henry...who is it?” I heard her as she walked in behind him. Peeking out from his large form, her eyes lit up but soon replaced with unpleasant concern. “What happened?”

“I was about to ask them myself.” Henry said still staring at Peeta. Stepping aside he let all of us in. Entering the warm house I immediately began to thaw out. Shucking my coat, Charlotte took it from me and hung it up. She did the same to Peeta and Haymitch. Peeta and I took a seat on the couch while Haymitch stood there frowning.

Peeta POV

God, getting me out of that damned blood infused house was the best thing Katniss had done all day. Taking a lungful of fresh air I felt the blood fog start to clear from my head. The hunger, I
coming, was uncontrollable. Coming at all different times of the day and night. Sometimes worse at night when everyone was asleep and I had nothing but my mind to occupy me. Those few night so far had wound me up at Henry’s or him running to mine while panicked and locked myself in my closet. He had told me it would help if I could bed Katniss already. Her new immortal blood would sustain me longer than the snacks I’ve been graced with.

I wasn’t sure how long we had been outside but I could tell Katniss was starting to freeze. Before I offered to go back in. It hit me. Trying not to double over, the hunger came back at me.

Demanding that I feed. Pulling Katniss from the back porch, I pressed her firmly against the house my mouth instantly on her neck. Something dark grinned when her head lolled to the side. As I bit down, I had to keep myself from buckling under.

Fuck she tasted so good.

Before I could really get into it, I heard Haymitch yelling at the both of us. Fuck! We had been caught. I had been caught doing the one thing that Henry warned me about. When he demanded that we tell him what was going on I panicked and told him I’d tell him but at Henry’s. I knew it wasn’t bugged.

All the while Katniss asked me what the hell we were doing. She stood there, so lovely, but freezing. Wrapping her close, I pulled her to Henry’s. He wasn’t going to be happy with me. Thankfully, I think, it was just Haymitch. When he opened the door, I tried not to look so guilty. But I think he knew what had happened anyway. Charlotte graced us with her presence smelling like home cooked meal and my stomach growled. It had been hours since I’d last eaten.

Taking a seat on their couch, I pulled Katniss close to me. Her presence comforting for the trouble I was about to get into. Charlotte disappeared into her kitchen and continued like nothing happened.

“Well...what happened?”

“Yes, I’d like to know the same thing. They were in the house while Lily was tending to Gale. And all of a sudden they were gone. I tracked them down and found them necking.”

Henry raised an eyebrow at me. Clearly catching the reference. Both Katniss and I had the graces to look ashamed. This was almost as bad as getting caught jerking off. Well...almost.

“So, yea. I want to know what’s going on.” Haymitch demanded.

Henry sighed and looked at me. “What happened?”

“Hunger.”

“Unexpected, I presume?”

“Yea. Sitting in the house surrounded by it must have triggered it.” He nodded solemnly.

He stood up and in seconds his demeanor changed. Crossing his arms, he looked at us sternly. “I thought I had warned both of you about keeping things in control? While I understand when hunger hits, it’s hard to ignore but you will have to learn to build a tolerance!”

“It wasn’t my fault!” I growled coming to my feet. Katniss was on me in a second. How fucking dare he put all the blame on me? I was trying to control it. I did well inside the house. My control slipped when we got outside. Pulling my head down to her eye level, my eyes had gone dark because I could see every vein in her face and neck. Calling out to me. Seducing me. Clenching
my fists, I struggled to breathe. To tune out the call of her blood.

“Peeta, it’s OK. I’m here. No one’s blaming you......” I heard her whisper feverently. Her lovely voice instantly calming me. Tension evaporated off me as I unclenched my fists.

“No, I’m not blaming. I hate that I’m having to give a crash course on this now. When your transition hits, it’s gonna be worse. Being able to control it now will help tremendously. None of my boys had this much time to learn.”

“What are you talking about?” We heard Haymitch ask. Looking at him sharply we had forgotten that he was there. “What happened to Peeta?”

“Haymitch, it’s a really long story....”

“Well la di da. Good news everyone I don’t sleep at night. So please continue.” he waved his hand dramatically and took a sip from his flask.

“Long story short. Peeta’s a half breed vampire. He’s a lot like me and Charlotte but his gifts vary from ours.”

“You gotta be fucking joking me? Lover boy here gets to be all fangy? How in the fuck? I didn’t think Brice was one of ya’ll.”

Confusion set in. “Wait a minute, you know about Henry and Charlotte?” I heard Katniss ask. Her brain must be firing quicker than mine right now.

Haymitch nodded. “Yea. We’re, ah, old friends.....” was all he muttered.

"How?" I heard Katniss ask. I could tell she was getting agitated with him.

"Like it's none of your fucking business sweetheart." I growled and he conceded. "I, uh, well..." he shot Henry a panicked look.

"It's not something we can tell you right now." 

"Does anyone else know? Does the Capitol know?" I asked ignoring Henry's remark. Fear settled in my stomach at Snow knowing about us.

"Just Haymitch. And no, the Capitol doesn't know."

"For fuck's sake, if he did, I highly doubt we would be sitting here. Snow and his merry band of idiots would have us dragged back and experimented on. And sorry to tell you, I'm not getting caught and poked at again." she shuddered. Her fear evident in her manner. Henry came over and held her closely for a few minutes. Letting her calm down.

"But enough talk of doom and gloom and alien probing. Anyone hungry?"

Surprisingly, everyone but Haymitch nodded. Though some of us needed to get back home. “I would stay and eat, but I’m sure my mom is waiting on me to come home. I really don’t want to be there with Gale laid up on my kitchen counter.” Katniss said.

“What happened to him?”

“Got caught with a wild turkey with the new Head and received forty lashes for it.” Haymitch explained. Charlotte nodded at him.

“Katniss, you’re more than welcomed to crash here for the night.” Charlotte offered.
I’d rather her be in my bed....” I looked at her sharply. My hormones running buck wild in my body. At that moment all I could think about was Katniss in my bed wearing my clothes or none at all. Her body pressed into me begging me to touch her. I had to suppress a moan that threatened to escape.

Charlotte giggled and rolled her eyes, “So we’re gonna tell her mom she’s sleeping over here when she’ll be at your house? Oldest trick in the book!”

I didn’t see the humor.

“Listen Katniss, I’m not your parent, so I don’t care what you do as long as you don’t get into trouble.” she said looking at her with a bit more conviction “and besides, if she crashed here there’s a 100% chance she’d sneak out.”

Relief washed over Katniss’s face. Making all her worry disappear. Giving me a mischievous smile, she kissed my cheek and nodded to Charlotte. “I think I’ll take you up on the offer, but just so we’re clear now, I’m not sneaking out. I’ll walk myself out the front door and go to Peeta’s.”

That woman will be the death of me.

She grinned. “Well call your mom and let her know. Boys...there’s a mound of food to be devoured.....” She motioned to them. Kissing her slowly as they departed, she nibbled on my lower lip.

“I’m gonna call my mom.....” She sauntered off leaving me hungry for her.

Katniss POV

How dare Haymitch! I swear if I didn’t like the man so much, I’d kill his drunk ass. I can understand him yelling at me and Peeta but holding out information that he knows Henry and Charlotte. And how he knew that Henry and Char were vampires, but seemed completely surprised about Peeta. Like Peeta, I took Henry’s explanation to heart but I’m sure soon enough Peeta would be bugging Henry about it until he cracked.

When Charlotte offered food, my stomach growled but I knew I had to get home and soon. I didn’t want to go because of Gale. The sight and smell of blood was too much to handle for me. I’m not sure what my mother expected from me concerning Gale but whatever she thought was wrong. Part of me was glad for Peeta’s incredible distraction behind the bakery earlier or I would have witnessed Gale’s whipping.

Whoever this new Head was things were gonna go from bad to worse.

Charlotte offered to let me stay the night but laughed when Peeta wanted me at his house. I knew, being underage, mother was not going to let me spend the night with the same boy that all of Panem thought I was engaged too. Technically Peeta and I are engaged, but no one knows it. I haven’t had the courage or the time to tell Charlotte, let alone Haymitch & Effie. I told her I’d take her on the offer but I wasn’t going to sneak out of her house just to walk over to Peeta’s. That would be ridiculous. When he left for his house I’d simply walk over there myself.

Watching the boys disappear from my sight. Peeta following Henry to the dining room and a surly Haymitch stumbling his way out of the house, it left me alone to myself. Grabbing the phone, I
called my mother. She picked up after the third ring.

“Hello?” I could hear the tired in her voice. Instantly making me feel guilty for even asking.

“Mom, it’s me. Can I ask you something?”

“Sure, Katniss...”

“Is it alright if I sleep over at Charlotte’s? I really don’t want to be around all the blood. I nearly got sick earlier.”

I could hear her sigh on the other end of the line. I waited with baited breath, but I think she conceded, “Yes, you can. I know this isn’t your thing. Hazelle will send someone over so we can get some sleep. Please keep some snow on your lash. You don’t want it to scar up.”

“Thanks mom. I’ll see you in the morning.” I said softly into the receiver.

“Good night Katniss....” she mummered as she hung up. Setting the phone down in the cradle, I closed my eyes for lying to her. Well, technically lying. Entering the dining room a minute later, I took a seat beside Peeta who kissed my cheek before returning to his food. I swear on my life, he could eat. Henry too. Charlotte had explained to me that the males always ate more. She gave me a pointed look when she told me I’d have to learn to cook. Or at least the basics.

“Well, what did your mom say?” Peeta asked me taking a sip of his drink.

“She said it was fine to spend the night here.”

“Yay! Slumber party!” Charlotte interrupted laughing when Henry paled. “I’m kidding love. I swear. She’ll be at Peeta’s.”

“Thank God. I remember the slumber parties you had with the girls.” he shuddered before downing his glass of wine.

Peeta couldn’t wipe the smile off his face. It was like his birthday and Christmas happened at once. I suppressed a smile that threatened to erupt on my face. Sliding his hand up and down my thigh I bit my lower lip as his hand brushed further up. Not fair! Teasing me like this in front of others. The look on his face said he wanted to be far away from this room. Believe me I understood.

Filling my plate, I did my best to ignore his ministrations. Some were easy and others changed my breathing pattern. When we were finished, I helped Charlotte clean up while Peeta left. He would give me the signal to sneak over to his house later. An hour later, the phone rang twice and I took that as my cue to leave.

Sneaking out, I hoped Haymitch had enough sense to stay indoors for the time being. Glancing toward his house, I didn’t see him outside. Breathing a sigh of relief, I hurried to Peeta’s. I didn’t care to knock but let myself in.

“Peeta?” I called out to him. The house was silent. Tossing my boots aside and hanging up my jacket, I walked up the stairs. Maybe he was busy painting and didn’t hear me. The closer I got to his room, the more I heard the shower running. Grinning, I thought back to when I asked Peeta to shower with me. I swear I’m not sure who was more nervous.

Easily discarding my clothes, I moseyed my way into the hot bathroom. The steam thick enough that I could barely see. Stealthily, with my hunter’s feet, I climbed into his shower and immediately saw him sitting on a bench. His head was down and the water spraying around him.
Covering him. From his head, down his strong shoulders to his legs. I briefly noticed that his prosthetic leg was off.

Inching my way closer to him, I ran my fingers through his wet locks. “Mmmmm...Katniss.” I heard him moan as he leaned forward and kissed my stomach. I moaned, tilting my head back. The hot water splashing my breasts and back. Pulling me into his lap, I came into contact with his cock. His mouth finding my breast. Kissing and sucking on them, I tightened my hold onto his hair. My breaths coming in short pants; his mouth left my chest and followed it to my throat where he nipped and kissed gently.

Finding my mouth, his tongue pressed into mine. Invading me. Invading my senses. His growl sent shockwaves through my body. The heat pooling between my legs. The dominance he wanted over me aroused me further. Swiftly, he stood up. Unsteady but it seemed he had practice. Pushing me against the cool marble, his mouth found my neck again while his hands lifted my legs around his hips again.

“Katniss...please let me pleasure you.” I heard him groan. I nodded my head, giving my consent. “Not here.....In my bed. I want you under me as I please you....”

“Then you’ll have to let me down and we get cleaned up.” I replied my voice becoming hoarse as he kissed down my neck. I could feel him nod his head into my neck but he didn’t let go. Slowly he nipped my collarbone.

Easing from him, I helped him onto the bench and grabbed a washcloth. Soaping it up, I began to wash him. Starting with his broad shoulders, I worked my way down his chest. I could hear his breathing change as I kept washing. Holding out his arms, I slowly washed them until I came to his hands. Working them over I made sure every inch was cleaned. When I got to his legs, he pushed my hands away.

“I’ll take care of this leg.” he muttered pointing toward the half leg. I frowned. Even when things were this heated between us, he was always making sure I was comfortable.

“It’s fine Peeta. I’m not squeamish about it....” I promised giving him a small kiss.

I really wasn’t. It wasn’t the first time I had seen his disabled leg. During the tour, it’s all I saw when he came to my room at night. I really didn’t expect him to sleep with the prosthetic on. It always seemed to uncomfortable to me. Cleaning his legs, I did avoid his foot. I’m still not much of a foot person.

Nudging him to stand up, I re-soaped the washcloth and ran it lightly over the area that I eager to clean. When the cloth brushed his cock, he stiffened before moaning my name. Slowly cleaning him, I made sure to clean his sac with extra care. Watching as the bubbles rinsed off him, I ached to put it in my mouth. I had been curious about it for a while now. Well ever since the night on the train when we first took a shower together.

But tonight, he said, he wanted to pleasure me. Not him. Maybe another night when I was brave enough to sneak over here. I sighed and stood up. Grinning wickedly, he began to soap me up. It had been a very long time since someone had bathed me, but I was betting that this would top everything I had ever imagined about it.

He began in the same process that I had done before to him. My shoulders and arms first, but when he got to my breasts; I think he stopped breathing. The ache between my legs had intensified since we started this. As he continued to wash, he made a strangled sound when he went to clean between my legs. Dear God, his hands felt so good. My knees buckled when his finger brushed my clit. Grabbing a hold of his shoulders, my hips urged him to continue his
ministrations. But he stopped as the water got cold. Shivering, we both stepped out of the shower and dried off quickly.

Peeta POV

I never heard her sneak into my house. The hunter’s footstep she was proud of. I never heard her take her clothes off or step into my shower. Only when I felt her hands in my hair then I knew she was there. I barely suppressed a moan when her fingers tugged my locks. Reaching forward I kissed her stomach. I was glad I was sitting or my ass would be in the floor. As I pulled her into my lap, her ass brushed my cock. It begging me to take her in the shower. I resisted, but barely.

I needed to taste her and touch her. In every way possible. Dipping my head into her neck, I begged her to let me please her. Just for tonight. When she gave her consent, I heard a roar in my ears. The word ‘mine’ kept repeating in my head. Positioning myself to her entrance, I stopped myself. I didn’t want it like this. Not in my shower. Well, maybe one day in my shower.

I let her down gently and sat down on my bench. My eyes widened as she began to soap my washcloth and began to bathe me. I finally understood that the struggle was real and I begged my body to let me enjoy this. When she brushed my cock with the cloth, I nearly burst from her touch. Throwing my head back, I could feel the small sting of my fangs descending, my already sensitive body pulsating. Begging for a release. My hands gripped the side of the bench and I waited for her slow torture to be over with.

When she was done, I grinned wickedly. Two can play that game. I know down inside she had no ulterior motive, but fuck her hands were amazing on my body. Soaping up a spare washcloth, I began to clean her. Just like she did me. Slow and tantalizing. Every whimper and mewl gave me more incentive to finish the job and hurry her to the bedroom. When I reached to clean between her legs, her body nearly buckled. I grazed her clit with my finger and the sound she made was heaven to me. Her hips urged me on but I wanted to finish this in bed.

Soon the water turned too cold for us to stay in and we climbed out and dried off. Once I felt she was dry enough, I took the towel from her and hung it up. Pulling her roughly to me, I kissed her hotly on the mouth. Demanding her to open her mouth, I pushed my tongue through to taste her. Her moans echoed into my room and I slowly backed her to my bed. The one place I had wanted her to be in this whole time.

Pushing her back down, I looked down at her naked frame. I could smell her arousal for me and I nearly lost it. Growling as I leaned forward, making her lay back, I sunk to my knees. I wanted her. I wanted her before me with her legs open. Letting me feel her and taste her. When her legs relaxed, I took the opportunity to kiss along the inside of her thigh. Her whimper fueled me. My lips traveled slowly to her center and I dipped my head down and gently probed my fingers through her folds. “Fuck Katniss, you’re so wet….” I groaned. Watching her hips buck before me gave me pleasure. Inching them forward, I slid them inside her. My cock hurt so much I thought it was going to explode from watching her squirm on the bed.

Pressing my luck, I added another finger inside her and was rewarded. “Peeta!” I heard her gasp my name. Her voice low and feral. Gently thrusting my two fingers in and out of her, she propped herself up and looked at me. I could see every vein in her neck and I was hungry. Hungry for her and hungry for her blood. But I wanted to finish this. I wanted her to scream my name as she came.
Katniss POV

Pushing me back on his bed, I watched him. His eyes were black and I felt like the prey instead of
the predator. Shivers ran down my spine and I gasped as he gently pushed my legs apart. Kissing
along the inside of my thighs, he finally stopped at my center. Pushing a finger inside me, I felt a
small pinch but it was replaced with pleasure.

When he slipped another finger inside me, I thought I had left my body. “Peeta!” I cried out as he
thrust his fingers in and out of me. I could feel my stomach coiling. Heat spread through my body
like wildfire. Pushing myself up to see him. I wanted to watch him do this to me. His eyes were
black and I could tell he was hungry but he seemed more concentrated on me. As he thrusts, his
pace never slowed or got faster. My breathing ragged, my eyes rolled in the back of my head. I
wanted to come but I wanted more. More of him.

“He?” I moaned his name…….”please use your tongue on me.” I begged him. I wasn’t good with
words but I had somehow managed to get that out. He acquiesced and soon I felt a warm tongue
slide through my folds and flick over my clit. My hips bucked underneath him and he pinned them
down. His fingers continued to thrust in me as his tongue played. Soon the tightening coils of heat
in my stomach unwound and I felt my eyes roll in the back of my head. Screaming his name, my
orgasm shattered me.

Laying limp on the bed, I didn’t feel him pull himself from me. I felt the bed move as he crawled
his way upon me. His eyes still dark and trained on my neck. Rolling it to the side, he nuzzled the
skin, inhaling my scent before he bit down. Gasping, my mouth parted as bliss set in. Soon his
hips bucked and warmth covered my stomach. Pulling his mouth from me, he dropped his head on
my shoulder.

“Fuck, that was amazing….” he groaned. His lips grazing my skin. Looking down a minute later,
he breathe erratically as he saw his come all over my stomach. “I wish that was in you…..” I heard
him whisper.

“I know….and soon it will be. Just not yet.” I mummered just as quietly. He nodded like he was
satisfied with my answer. Climbing off me, he hopped his way to the bathroom and grabbed a
towel. Cleaning me up, he tossed it aside and climbed in bed with me. Holding me close, I
nuzzled my body into him and soon we were asleep.

A few mornings later, I snuck of out the house and headed my way into the woods. I had kept a
distance because of the new Head Peacekeeper. Just days after Gale’s whipping, new stocks had
been put in. Snipers on the roof of the Justice Building were added to make sure we all towed the
line. The mines shut down. People were out work and those that did illegal things were sentenced
to the stocks. People were afraid to come out of their houses. When Parcel Day arrived, the food
was spoiled and rotting.

The District was starving and no one was going to help us. I had ran into Rory and he told me that
his mom had lost work. When I questioned it, he told me that no one had laundry to wash. So I
convinced Haymitch to hire Hazelle for work. It was odd to see his house cleaned and food
cooking. Who knew Haymitch had a home underneath all the garbage.
Even mother had to stop charging for her service. Thankfully it was still cold outside and snow still fell or there would be more people dying. I couldn’t stand it anymore. I had come to sleeping over at Charlotte’s just to avoid my house. Of course, most nights I was with Peeta. Since the night we had played around after the shower, things had slowed down a little.

When the mines reopened, hours were extended and pay was cut. By then the District had been shut down for nearly two weeks. Shops had to close. No one could buy things anymore. I tried my best to spread my ‘hard earned money’ around. Mother, Prim and I would deliver food to people throughout the Seam to help out. So most days I would come home with an empty satchel. My time with Gale in the woods became non-extinct. Although, I didn’t want to be around him anymore.

Scaling under the fence after I had listened for the quiet hum that let most of know it was on. When I didn’t hear it, I must be there at the right time. Thread must not know about the power shortages that frequent the District. Traveling quietly, I kept an out for winter animals that would be in search of food.

Trekking the two hour journey to my father’s cabin, I was sure to find something. I had loaded my satchel with food because I knew I’d be gone all day. No one knew I was out here. So mother would assume I was delivering food to the poor by our depleted stocks. I know, not my smartest idea. Not telling anyone where I had gone. Finally reaching the cabin, I stopped hearing a noise. Pulling my bow to stance, I watched as two people jumped from behind a tree.

They were wearing Peacekeeper clothes but one held a cracker with my mockingjay symbol on it. What was going on here?

“Please don’t shoot! We’re not here to harm you.” one said. It sounded female. She had a gun in her hand the other seemed to have a wobbly crutch.

“Oh my goodness….You’re Katniss Everdeen.” when she said my name, I pulled the string on my bow. I didn’t know if I could trust anyone who knew my name. “We’re on your side. See.” she held the cracker closer to me.

“What does that mean to me?” I asked her. “Where are you from?”

“We’re both from District 8. I’m Bonnie and this is Twill. We’ve ran off from the uprising.” my eyebrows shot up.

“You both must be freezing. Let’s get you inside and get you warmed up.” I said taking pity on them. If they were there to kill me, they would have done it by now. Following me into the cabin, I started to make a fire while they sat down and rested. When the fire was finally roaring, I took out the food that was meant for me but gave it to them.

“So what’s happened in District 8?” I asked like I hadn’t seen the television flashing with an uprising a few weeks ago.

While they ate, they described when Peeta and I had arrived for the Victory Tour, the uprising started that night. Like it was all staged. The whole speech ceremony. Once the citizens overtook the Peacekeepers, they thought they had won. But later on, fire bombs exploded all over the District. Bonnie and Twill were some of the few that had escaped. Bonnie was a teacher and Twill a student but after school they worked in the factory where they made Peacekeeper outfits. Bonnie’s husband was supposed to come with her but he died in the fire and she took Twill and they ran. Ran and never looked back. They had been traveling for a week now and no sign of anyone except me.
“So where are you two going?” I asked.

“District 13.” Bonnie said simply while sipping on tea.

“But it doesn’t exist.” I protested.

“Yes, it does. Haven’t you ever seen the propo for the District? In the far corner there is a bird...your mockingjay that flies past it. It’s been that way forever now. None of us think the Capitol people have been there. It’s just advertisement being used over and over.” she said vehemently.

I didn’t want to fight her. Didn’t want to be the one to kill her dream. Their dream of finding something that wasn’t there. I simply nodded at them and we sat around for a while staying warm. When the sun started to set I knew I had to get back.

“Stay here tonight. No one will find you….” I told them.

They both nodded and thanked me for the food. My stomach growled and I realized I didn’t eat any of the food I had brought. Seeing the hungry changed my mind. Trekking back as quickly as I could, I hoped I could get home before the snow became too much for me. I couldn’t spend the night out here. I’d freeze to death.

When I got the the fence, I listened and I could hear the quiet hum. Thread must know I wasn’t in town today and was determined to catch me outside the fence. Frowning, I looked around to see if I could find a tree tall enough to climb and jump over. When I didn’t find one, I had to walk almost a mile before I found an old Oak that would do. It would quite the fall though. Climbing carefully, I finally made it to the top without killing myself. Peering over the edge, I reckoned a twenty foot fall. The snow maybe being five feet deep. Not a great landing idea, but I was out of them.

Tossing my bag over, it landed with a soft thump. Now, my turn. Creeping out as far as I could go, I held my breath and counted to three. Jumping, I landed roughly on my backside. Searing pain shot through my left heel and my ass hurt just as much. Standing, I realized I was going to have to limp back to the Victor’s Village.

It took me longer to get home injured. No one was around to see me stumble my way back to town. I stopped and picked up some medical supplies for mother and candies for Prim. Popping one in my mouth, I relished the first bit of food. When I arrived home, I knew I had to make up something. Like I said, I should have told someone where I was going today.

Opening the door, two Peacekeepers, a man and a woman, are waiting. Neither of them look happy to be here. They both know I was in the woods, but didn’t expect me to come home.

“Hello.” I say in a neutral tone.

My mother appears suddenly. I could see the worry lining her face, but her voice hides it well. “Here she is. Just in time for dinner.” I hate that she has to keep lying for me.
This is where things get a lil hinky for Peeta. Sorry for the lack of update, but I have added another section to the story that has been plaguing me for weeks now. I'm almost done with it and then will continue to work on getting K/P to the Quarter Quell.

More canon compliant, but paraphrased to keep the story rolling. Hope you enjoy!

As always: I Don't Own It.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

I considered taking off my boots and taking a seat, but I was in too much pain and I didn’t want to land in the stocks tonight. Shaking my hair of snow, I looked at them. They hadn’t moved. “Can I help you?” I asked as nicely as I could muster. I wasn’t liking the silent treatment.

“Head Peacekeeper Thread sends us to give you a message.” the woman says.

“They’ve been here for a few hours now.” my mother interrupts. Right. They’ve been waiting on me to not return.

“Must be an important message.” I say.

“Where have you been Miss Everdeen?” the woman asks.

I sigh at the inquiry. “It’s easier to ask where I haven’t been.” I make my way to the dining room and slung my bag on the table. Seeing Haymitch and Peeta playing chess while Prim stands stiffly by the fire. Like she’s afraid to run. I don’t know if they’re here on request of the Peacekeepers or here just to be here. Either way I’m glad to see them. Peeta gives me a questioningly look. Like he already knows what’s wrong with me. His eyes are smoldering and I can tell he needs to feed soon.

“So where haven’t you been?” Haymitch asks in a bored tone.

“Well I haven’t been talking to the Goat Man about getting Prim’s goat pregnant, because someone told me the wrong directions.” I say looking at Prim emphatically.

“No, I didn’t.” says Prim.

“You said he lives beside the west entrance to the mine.” I say

“The east entrance.” Prim corrects.

“You distinctly said the west because I said ‘Next to the slag heap?’ and you said “Yeah.” I say.

“The slag heap is next to the east entrance.” Prim says patiently. I love how she acts like I’m a simpleton.
“When did you say that?” I ask.

“Last night.” Haymitch chimes in.

“It was definitely the east.” adds Peeta. Everyone laughs on my behalf and I glare at my love. “I’m sorry.” he says chuckling, “but you never listen.”

“I bet people told you where he lived and you didn’t listen.” chuckles Haymitch.

“Shut up Haymitch.” I say, clearly indicating that he’s right. Like that would ever be correct.

“Please, have someone else knock the goat up.” I said with indigence. It makes everyone laugh again.

The male peacekeeper is smiling but the woman is frowning at me. Like I’ve done something wrong. “What’s in the bag?” She’s hoping for illegal items to mark me in the woods. Opening it up, gauze falls out and so does the bag of candy. Mother takes the cotton and Peeta opens the bag. “Oh….Peppermints!” he pops one in his mouth smiling at me.

“They’re mine!”

He tosses them to Haymitch who grabs a few and eats them. Then give the bag to a giggling Prim who sneaks one herself.

“None of you deserves candy!”

“What? Because we’re right?” Peeta asks coming to wrap his arms around me and I can’t help to let out a yelp. Now he knows something is wrong. I scowl at him like I don’t want to be held. He leans in for a kiss. One of those sweet chaste ones we had to practice on the tour. We heard a small cough and the female peacekeeper is glaring at us. Feigning interest, I remember they were here for something. “You had a message for me?”

“Head Peacekeeper Thread wants to let you know the fence surrounding the District will have twenty four hour electricity.”

“Didn’t it already?” I asked a little too innocently. I know I’m pushing my luck but I hate this interrogation.

“He wants you to pass along the information to your cousin.”

“I will let him know.” I say without adding explanation.

Her jaw clenches and I know they are done. Exiting my house, I slump against Peeta. Thankful that he’s able to hold me up.

“What happened? Are you alright?” he demands sitting me gently on the padded chair.

“Well, my left heel is painful and my backside too a horrible hit.” I explained as best I could. Mother gently prying my boots off. When she got to the sore foot, I gripped Peeta’s hand and hissed in pain.

“Ankle might be broken and your backside is bruised. How did you do this?”

“I slipped on ice.” I said looking around the room. Who knows who might be listening. I know at Charlotte’s we could have talked openly. Mother brought me food while everyone sat around and ate as well. Handing Peeta a mug, she tells him there’s sleep syrup in it and I need to drink it all.
He nods with conviction and gives me a look like I better not argue with him. Like I would tonight. I feel too damned horrible to do so.

Giving me the drink he carries me upstairs to my room. I want him to stay with me tonight but I’m dead sure mother will tell him no and I’ll have to face the night and the nightmares alone. I couldn’t fake going to Charlotte’s either. Setting me down on my bed, he goes to retrieve my night clothes.

Kissing my neck softly, I let him help me get undressed. The gleam in his eye letting me know how much he’s enjoying himself. As if the tent in his pants didn’t give it away. Good thing I was injured because I didn’t want anything but comfort from him. Helping me into my pants and top, he sat me back down on my bed and stayed crouched between my legs.

“You had me worried when you didn’t come home.” he muttered.

“I’m sorry. I went to far out.” I couldn’t tell him about Bonnie and Twill. At least not yet. Not in this house.

“I know you can’t tell me tonight, but we will talk.” he said shuddering.

“Are you alright? I asked stupidly knowing instantly what was wrong.

He looked toward my opened door and got up quickly to close it. Settling himself back between my legs, “I haven’t fed since night before last….”

“Oh!” I exclaimed pushing my hair aside. Henry had told us that the older he got the less frequent he would have to feed. Nuzzling my neck, I felt him inhale my scent before his lips touched my skin. Cupping the other side of my neck, he bit down. I closed my eyes and bliss set in. I heard him moan as he began to feed off me. Too soon he let go and pulled away from me. Bliss on his face.

I would have to hide the bite marks tomorrow if I was able to get up. Handing me the mug, I drank it quickly and Peeta helped me into bed. Grabbing his hand, I forced him to sit down.

“Please stay with me?” I knew the syrup would knock me out in a few minutes.

He smiled and kissed my hand, “Always….”

I didn’t hear anything else.

When I awoke the next morning Peeta wasn’t here so I’m assuming mother had thrown him out some time that night. Wincing as I sat up, my left heel throbbed. The sun had just begun to peek through the clouds when Mother came in bringing me food. I let her pamper me and tuck another blanket over me. She informed me it was past noon and Peeta had left after I had fallen asleep last night. Curling under the warm blankets, I fell back asleep. When I awoke again, it was dark outside.

She came back to bring me dinner and dropped the worse news. I was going to be bedridden for at least a week for my venture outside the fence. For the moment, I was fine with the sentence. I felt crummy enough. I had too much to process anyway. From Bonnie and Twill to the harsher rule in the District. I briefly wondered how Hazelle and the kids were doing. At least for me, it was going to be OK. Even with my wedding photo shoot rescheduled. Haymitch had been true to his word to Thread. As soon as he got to a phone, he called Effie and had her reschedule for me. I don’t think he told her what really happened.
Every time the doorbell rang or someone knocked I was afraid it was Peacekeepers coming to
drag me out of the house and turn me over to the Capitol. When no one broke through my room. I
started to become more relaxed. Peeta comes by daily bringing me cheese buns and causally tells
me that sections of the fence are turned off because crews are out scouring to find the hidden
opening.

He sits with me every day and we begin to work on my father’s old plant book. It’s old with
yellowing pages of parchment. It came from my mother’s side with all the herbs and medicines
that she still uses today. Father started to add the edible plants that helped us survive after he died.
I had wanted to add my own plants that I had learned from experience or from the Games but I
don’t have the eye for drawing. Peeta hands are so much more skillful than mine and he offered to
draw them as I described them. Sometimes making him draw the plant over and over until it was
right.

Some of the plants he already knew from being dried or using them in the bakery. It was helpful
but a few of the plants took time. As he drew, I watched as he lost himself. His usual easy going
expression became replaced by something more intense and removed that there is an entirely
different world locked inside his mind. Charlotte told me that Henry carried the same expression
when he wrote. She did the same when she danced.

As I watched him I became obsessed with everything about him. From his hands to his eyelashes.
I had seen both sides of him and I’m not sure which I liked best. The easy going Peeta or the
intense demanding vampire Peeta. No matter how you bend it; I was loved and safe with him at all
times.

“You know,” he said one afternoon while we lounging in my window seat. “this is the most
normal thing we’ve done.” his fingers brushing through my hair. I closed my eyes and smiled.

“I know. It’s weird. I like it.” I said glancing up at him. He smiled and leaned down to kiss my
lips. Since I had been injured he had become increasingly gentle with me. The old Peeta with me
and I wished every morning we could spend days and nights like this.

I hadn’t seen Charlotte or Henry since Haymitch found out about Peeta but he told me that he had
been over there to practice and train with Henry. Maybe it was why he hadn’t asked to feed from
me since the night I injured myself. I was itching to be close to him again. Once I was healed up I
was going to have to talk to Charlotte about it. I thought he needed me more than once in awhile.

Finally, the day came that mother proclaimed me fit and well to leave my room. I nearly
jumped for joy. Dressing quickly, I burst out of my house and headed to Charlotte. Knocking
furiously, I wanted impatiently for her. After ten minutes of waiting, I almost gave up when I
heard the door open. She was standing there tights and a tank top. Her hair was up and it didn’t
look like the same woman.

“You know it’s daylight out and why are you out of your house? I thought you were hostage?”
she asked impatiently hiding herself from the sunlight.

“I’m healed. What’s wrong?” I asked peering closely at her.

“Sunlight...Katniss. Like mother nature is my enemy right now.” she pointed out with
exasperation. “Peeta never told you?”

I shook my head at her. “No, but I’ve seen you out in the sun.”

“Yea. Henry and I have rings that help us stay out during the day. Occasionally they have to
recharge. Whatcha need?”
“I’ve, uh…” I felt silly now coming over here to ask her about Peeta. I knew I could ask him but I haven’t seen him yet. If he was at the bakery, there wasn’t a chance in hell I was going. At least not yet. I don’t know if Peeta told his mom and uncle.

“Well spit it out girl.” she yawned at me.

“Peeta hasn’t fed since the night I was injured I was just wondering if that was normal? I would ask him but I’m not sure if he knows either.” I said in a rush.

She looked at me skeptically. “Katniss, love, I swear…..He’s fine. I promise you. He’s been practicing with Henry controlling himself. It’s been fun watching. Henry’s the best teacher Peeta will ever have; with the exception of his own father. But I’m sure he wouldn’t push you away for offering a tasty snack.” she teased me. I blushed furiously.

“Does his mom and uncle know that he knows?” I asked uncertain.

She shook her head at me. “Not that I’m aware of. If he told them, I’m sure you’d know about it. I love you girl, but I need sleep.” She nodded at me and closed the door.

I stood on her doorstep and sighed. What to do now? I felt like a freed prisoner. With too much time on my hands and nothing to do. I wish I could hunt but that was a serious no go. Maybe I will sneak by the bakery and surprise Prim with something sweet. Before I could stop myself, my feet were taking me into town. It was a nice ten minute walk but it was surely needed for my mental state.

Making way into the center of town I promptly ignored the stocks and whipping post. My body shuddered remembering what happened there. Stopping in front of the bakery, I had to find my courage. This was for Prim to have. And bread. I’m sure if I asked, Peeta would bring some by later, but I wanted it there before she returned home from school. My wedding photo shoot was in a few days. I wasn’t looking forward to it. Dresses had started coming and so far I had refused to open them. I was afraid to look.

Pushing the door open, my senses were hit with all the smells that reminded me of Peeta. I smiled and waited my turn. Cadon was handling the customers and I didn’t hear Mrs. Mellark anywhere. Maybe this was a good time. I hadn’t realized the person in front of me was done and Cadon was waiting on me to make a decision.

“Is there anything I can get you Katniss?” he asked politely.

“Cookies and a couple loaves of bread.” I noticed he seemed quite tense. “Is there something wrong? Is Peeta…..” I didn’t finish when I heard shouting coming from the back. I froze from the noise. I could hear Peeta yelling back at another male.

“Dad must have found him hiding in the stockroom….” Cadon told me quietly as he locked the door. I’m sure his mom would flip if she knew it was locked. “He hasn’t been himself for weeks now and today it showed.”

“What’s wrong with him?” I asked completely concerned. I wasn’t sure if it was me or he hadn’t been feeding properly. Charlotte had said he was fine but this didn’t sound like it.

“Get back in here Peeta! You will tell me what’s going on?”

“NO! It’s none of your concern!” I heard something crack and I knew it was Peeta. His uncle didn’t have that kind of raw strength.
“You haven’t been the same since you came back from the Tour. Now I ask again. WHAT IS GOING ON?” His uncle shouted at him.

“Is it that girl?” That Seam girl?” A female voice interrupted.

“Don’t you dare say anything about her! You don’t know her!” I heard Peeta growl. He was dangerously close to losing it.

I looked at Cadon. “You need to let me back there now!” I hissed. He nodded and pulled the counter up. Rushing to the back of the store, I skidded to a stop when I saw the scene. Peeta and his uncle were nose to nose and his mother was standing near a staircase.

Wedging myself between the men, I grabbed Peeta’s face and pulled it down to my eye level. “Peeta...it’s me. Calm down, please?” his eyes were starting to turn black and I had only seconds before he lost it. I tried pushing him back toward the table, but an arm grabbed me and pushed me aside.

“Don’t touch her.” his voice was low and dangerous.

“This is none of your concern girl....” his mother hissed at me squeezing my arm painfully.

“Yes it is. Now let me go.” I tried twisting my arm away from her. Biting down a yelp from the pain.

I heard his mother gasp as I wedged my arm from her. Grabbing a hold of Peeta’s arm, he didn’t flinch nor calm down.

“So you know what you are? Don’t you boy?” his uncle asked scathingly.

“I do. I just want to know why you never told me?”

“You were a child...”

....a monster” his mother interrupted.

“Damn it Jana, please be quiet.” Brice said sternly. “You’re not helping.” Turning to look at Peeta, I had wedged myself under his arm and I could feel his hand pinch at my hip. “Who told you?”

“Henry.”

“As in Henry Huxley?”

Peeta and I nodded. How I wish Char and Henry were here to diffused the situation. Fear ripped through me. I remember I had told Peeta I would be here when this went down, but I almost regretted my decision.

“That bastard. Just like your father; my brother. So you know how your father came in and nearly ripped my family apart? MY FAMILY! Because he wanted your mother. Because he wanted a son? He knew I had fathered two and he must have known that sons follow in the family. I never forgave him. Every day I’ve had to look at you and know that you weren’t mine. Yes, we are related but you’re not mine.”

“You kept me though....”

“As a promise to our mother and she and I knew Dag had broken the law. I had to lie for him so
he wasn’t executed. Don’t worry he was punished accordingly.”

Shock registered on Peeta’s face. All this time we had thought that his father had vanished, but punished? Punished by whom and how? I shuddered at the thought of anyone being punished or tortured. Char and Henry had survived.

I could feel anger flare in Peeta. Lunging toward Brice, he almost knocked me to the ground. “Punished how?” he seethed.

“He didn’t get to keep you. He thought his heir had died after his trip.” Brice said unable to keep the hate out of his voice. Or was that triumph?

“He...he thought I was dead? Why?” Peeta asked. I could tell he was trying very hard to keep his voice from trembling. He looked at his uncle and then his mother. When no one answered him, he repeated his question.

“I asked WHY did he think I was dead?” his voice thundered throughout the bakery.

“Because it was the winter flu that had swept the District. It was after he had went back to New Britain. I wrote him and told him you had contracted it and died. He never came to visit or dispute the claim.” his mother finally explained. Her voice echoed in the deafening silence.

“Peeta, let’s go…..” I tried convincing him. When he didn’t budge, I sighed. I hope this was over.

“Why keep me? Why teach me this trade?” He kept asking clearly ignoring me. Pain washed over him. He stayed because he wanted this torture.

“Because if we had given you away or thrown you out; they would have known. Do you really think that Henry is the only vampire that’s been assigned to keep an eye out?”

I was tired of them hurting Peeta. I didn’t want us here any longer than we needed to be. “We’re leaving.”

“No, we’re not Katniss. I’m not done.” he fought me.

“We are done. What more do you want to know?” I begged him making him look me in the eyes.

“Dag never wanted him!”

“You don’t know that!” Peeta shouted.

“Yes, I do! He just wanted an heir.” Brice baited.

“You don’t know anything! How can I believe you after all the years you’ve lied to me!” Peeta thundered. Grabbing my hand, he pulled me out of the room. I had to jog to keep up with him. He was pissed off. I’ve never seen him so vicious. Hate and distrust poured off him in waves. How was I supposed to calm him down?

“Woah...Peeta!” I heard Cadon exclaim as Peeta brushed past him.

“You expect yourself to walk out there? In your state?” Brice asked dubiously. “Oh, wait! You’re a half breed. Not even a full male, are you? No full blooded female of worth is going want to you. Is that why you’ve chosen this Seam slut as your mate….”

Brice didn’t have time to prepare himself before Peeta plastered him against the wall. His fangs bared and eyes black. He was raw strength. Powerful and deadly. Cadon rushed to save his dad
when I grabbed his arm. “Please don’t….this is between them.” I whispered urgently.

Fear seemed to cross Brice’s face but he regained. “Never….and I mean NEVER insult my chosen mate like that again. I will never insult your chosen mate. I expect you to never talk about her again. Now apologize…….”

Brice struggled to breath, his eyes wide as he listened to Peeta talk. He was no match for his nephew. I watched as he grasped Peeta’s hands, trying to break the hold so he could breathe again.

“Peeta Mellark! You will let him go this instant!” his mother said finally coming between them.

“When he apologizes, I will Mother……”

“He can’t breathe you idiot!” She screamed as Peeta dropped him.

“I apologize Katniss.” I heard Brice say before forceful coughing attacked him. He didn’t look at me but kept his eyes on Peeta.

Moving away from Cadon as he ran to help his father, I took Peeta by the hand and led him over by the door. Making him look at me in the eye, I could tell the hellfire wasn’t over yet. His eyes were still black as coal and I could tell he was having a hard time controlling himself for me. Like he didn’t want to scare me any further than I already was. Though, I knew that Peeta could get this way. I was more worried about him than I was for myself or for Brice. Cadon sent me a long look like he was confused and wanted answers from someone. I made a mental note to tell Peeta to talk to his older brother. It wasn’t Cadon’s fault that this happened.

Holding himself against the wall, I watched him breath until his eyes bleed back to the shining blue that I loved so much. I could hear Brice having a hell of a time breathing. I hope that Peeta didn’t crush his throat. Taking my hand, he led me out of the bakery. My purchases forgotten until Cadon rushed out to give them to me. Nodding, I took them and kept walking.

We didn’t talk until we got to his house. The silence was deafening and uncomfortable because I knew I had seen a side of Peeta that I’m sure he never wanted me to see. But I had to see every side of him to know him. Closing the door on us, we stood in the foyer of his house. I sat my purchases on the table by the door and turned slowly to look at him.

“Peeta I…..”

“Don’t talk…..” he interrupted coming at me. Pushing me gently against the wall, I could feel his strength and passion pour off him. His hand came up to cup the side of my face. His lips close enough to mine that all I had to do was reach out and kiss him. “You weren’t supposed to see that. Not that side of me.”

“But I did…..”

“Doesn’t matter. You saw it. Why were you there?”

“Getting cookies for Prim. I heard the shouting. I couldn’t just leave Peeta. Cadon told me that you had been hiding in the stockroom. Why?”

“I was hungry. Like I am now…..” his voice was rough as his head dipped into my neck and I felt him inhale my scent. Pinning my hips with his free hand, his tongue flicked over my skin. Tasting me. Like it was the first time. The scent of cinnamon and dillweed invaded my senses. Nudging my neck over to the side, he pressed his mouth against my skin and before I could blink he had sank his fangs in my neck.
I couldn’t breath as the sting was much more painful this time. With the first pull of his mouth, bliss set in. That familiar bliss that kept me coming back for more. “Oh Peeta….” I breathed his name as he kept feeding off me. He never took much from me, but it had been a week. The growl I heard from him when I gently pushed at him confirmed a fear. It had been too long since he had human blood. Especially mine.

Mine…..it was the one that kept him strong.

Mine….the one that kept him sane.

Mine….the one that lets him know this is all real.

When he didn’t let me go, I grabbed the bracelet that Charlotte had given me in case of emergencies. I took this as an emergency. Pushing the button, I hoped they would hurry. Pushing at Peeta again, he didn’t let go. Seconds go by before I felt gentle hands pull Peeta away from me. Another set of hands help me sit down and shove a glass of water in my hands. Taking a sip, I feel a little lightheaded.

“You OK?” I heard Charlotte ask.

“Yea, a little lightheaded.”

“Ah, well...here drink this instead.” She takes my water and gives me something that looks orangey. “It will help with your blood sugar.” Sipping it, I felt an immediate disappearance of dizziness.

“Much better.” I frowned for a moment. “I thought you said Peeta was fine!” I looked at her accusingly.

“What he and Henry do is none of my business. I don’t interfere with male issues like Henry doesn’t interfere with female issues. I’m here to keep an eye on you and train you….not him.” she told me stiffly. I instantly felt bad.

“I’m sorry Charlotte. Peeta had it out with his mom and uncle today. I’m sure he’s not in the best of moods. He wasn’t pleased that I was there. Char, I saw a side of him that I’ve never seen.”

“What side?” she asked curiously.

“He was dark, dangerous, intense….Like the complete opposite of my gentle easy going Peeta.” I told her. “Don’t get me wrong, he didn’t scare me. It just wasn’t him, ya know? I’m more worried about him.” I explained.

“I know and like I told you, he’ll be fine. It’s hard adjusting to this life when all you’ve know is to be human. The hormones and urges that he’s never experienced. Imagine puberty on steroids.” she chuckled but grew serious. “Give him a day or two to cool off. I know you won’t but I’m advising you anyway.”

I just nodded and sighed. She turned to walk off and find Henry, I’m sure.

…….”Besides, you have your wedding photo shoot soon and I’m sure he will looove to see you all dolled up.” she teased as I threw a pillow at her.
I know most are wondering about the suddenly mood shift in Peeta. Remember he's a young pre-trans vampire who is just now figuring out who he is and more secrets keep falling in his lap. It's going to be a rough rollercoaster for him mentally. I love Peeta's character and instead of the happy optimist everyone does, I'm flipping his coin.
Chapter Summary

Warning! Dark Peeta!

New Chapter :)

Katniss POV

Winter, it seemed, had disappeared overnight. Which was fine with me. Peeta and I hadn’t talk about what happened the day he confronted his family. I had taken Charlotte’s advice to heart. The first time I’ve been tempted to listen to her. We spoke, but it seemed strained. His kisses, which I so desperately wanted, had ceased to be. He was on my mind constantly. I bugged Charlotte about it one rainy afternoon.

“I know I keep asking you if he’s OK, but I really mean it Charlotte.” I implored her.

“He is fine. Does he talk to you?”

I shook my head. Tears finally threatening to erupt on my face. “No, not since his falling out with his family. We talk, but it’s like he’s not there.”

“I hate to be like this Katniss, but he’s just found a out a few things that I’m sure he wished he didn’t know. I know you love and care about him, but he’s gonna need a minute. Trust me, I know Henry and I haven’t been around much since that day either. Peeta told us that Dag was punished and now we’re having to investigate.” she sighed and dumped the pot of boiling water into the sink. Noodles fell into a bowl. She was making something she called spaghetti.

“I’m trying to not be selfish. It’s just that I miss him.” I watched as she nodded absently.

“Both of you will be fine. I promise.”

I had to believe her. I just had too. After a week of intimate avoidance, I broke down. I could tell something was wrong. My mood became sour and I took it out on everyone. Including Haymitch who just threw an empty liquor bottle at me. Maybe I was seeing things wrong? Maybe he was fine and I was the total mess that he was trying to avoid. My heart couldn’t take it. Prim had found me hiding in my closet and instead of getting mother, she ran to get Charlotte. Or at least that’s what she said she was going to do.

When she returned, it was Charlotte but she was dragging a very annoyed Peeta behind her. When he saw me, something must have changed about him. I don’t know what Prim told mom, but I’m sure Charlotte helped her come up with some sort of story.

Peeta POV
After the fight with my family, I shut down. The sense of betrayal ran deep in my veins and I
couldn’t shake it. Henry had assured me that everything would be alright, but I couldn't see it.
Even the hunger staved off. I couldn’t find myself to drink blood. To do anything, really. I
avoided Katniss like the plague. I hadn’t tasted her blood since that afternoon and I didn’t even
crave it. The way her hands pushed at me, trying to escape my clutches as I fed on her, haunted
me. I hadn’t even tried to control myself. I was hungry and pissed off that I took it out on her. I
hated myself for scaring her even though she told me that I didn’t scare her. I knew better. I had
scared my own brother. He wouldn’t even look at me anymore. I knew I had to explain to him
what was going on but I wasn’t sure if he’d believe me. I knew Rye wouldn’t. He was my uncle’s
first born. Of course he wouldn’t believe me.

I didn’t know that Katniss regularly bothered Charlotte about me. Inquiring about me. Trying to
find out why I avoided her intimately. I hated myself for what I done. I couldn’t even go to the
bakery anymore. Mother had told my uncle that I wasn’t allowed there anymore. Like I was going
to be disinherited from ever having a part of the store. I didn’t care anymore. I was angry though. I
was angry that I had been lied too all these years from the people who were supposed to love and
care for me.

I had almost killed my uncle for the things he said about Katniss and my father. What replaced my
gentle nature had shocked me to the core. It was something dangerous and evil. I had wanted to
kill him. I didn’t know if I could but wanted too. And Katniss had saw that. Had saw that side of
me that I didn’t even know I had possessed.

Henry must have noticed my anger problem had escalated one night when he came over and I had
shattered half the kitchen. I was working my way into my studio to tear it down when he pulled
me back. I didn’t cry but I howled. I don’t know why he stayed there. Stayed and helped me
through this.

What I didn’t know was that my reclusion, my avoidance, was hurting Katniss. That even though
we weren’t mated we were still connected in ways that surpassed a mating. That the longer I
drowned myself in this black hole I was in the worse off she became. I would hate myself for
what I saw next.

It had been over a week and I hadn’t touched for fed from her. Hell, I barely talked to her. I didn’t
want to talk to her. I was punishing her as I was punishing myself. After the night I nearly
destroyed my kitchen Henry, quietly, helped me rebuild it. That’s where Charlotte found me. It
was raining outside. Perfect for my black mood. I knew it was going to get worse out and it suited
me fine. My back door about blew opened and I grabbed the closest thing to me and held it fast.
She walked in, anger pouring off her and disarmed me.

“You’re coming with me.” she growled and pulled me from my kitchen. Into the rain. I tried
fighting her and I knew it was useless. I might be strong but she had centuries over me. She could
incapacitate me in seconds if she wanted.

I frantically looked around and tried to stop her as I realized that we were headed to Katniss’s
house. “NO! I’m not going in there. I have nothing to say!” I shouted at her as the rain pelted
around us. She, apparently, had tuned me out but then stopped at the front door.

“You might not have nothing to say but you have something to see. Now fucking man up!” she
growled as she knocked on the door. When Prim opened it, I looked at her puzzled.

“Please hurry up,” she motioned for the both of us to follow her upstairs. I realized that we were
heading to Katniss’s room. Pushing the door open, Prim stepped aside and Charlotte pushed me
forward. What I saw brought me to my knees. Katniss laying on the floor. Curled into a tight ball
and her face was stained with tears.
"Oh, fuck. What have I done?"

“She hasn’t come out of her closet for almost two days. I told mother she was over at Charlotte’s.” Prim whispered.

I couldn’t hear what Charlotte said to Prim, but she left. Left me collapsed on the floor watching the love of my life fall apart. I was afraid to touch her. I was afraid if I did, then she would disintegrate before me. What had I done? Lost in my own selfish ways. Ignoring her, pushing her away.

“What have I done?” I whispered to no one.

“What the fuck does it look like you’ve done.” I heard Charlotte growl. “Now you need to fix it. You did this to her. Cutting her off like that....” she paused and swore. “If you’re in pain, she’s in pain. If you’re unstable, so will she. You are not mated but you are bonded. From the first moment you fed off her, it was sealed.”

“How can I fix it?” I moaned burying my hands in my hair.

“Talk to her. Hold her. Kiss her, feed off her. Do something to let her know that you haven’t forgotten her. That you need her. But I’m not gonna be here for this. This is your doing.....” she said softly as her voice became melancholy.

I barely nodded when she stormed out of the room. I looked at the body of my female and I swore in my head. Cursing myself for my selfishness. I didn’t know we were linked like that. Crawling my way over to her, I scooped her in my arms and I held her. Rocked her gently. I prayed, I apologized, I assured her I was never going to leave her again.

I don’t know how long we sat there in her closet, the storm raging outside just like it was doing to my soul. I knew she was there. I could feel her, but I couldn’t get to respond to me. The slow breathing indicated that she had fallen asleep. Relief washed over me. I couldn’t sleep, not until she woke up and saw me. Saw the one person that had hurt her far beyond anyone else. It would take lifetimes before I would forgive myself for this.

It was late, very late, and I still couldn’t sleep. My arms ached but she wasn’t leaving my side. Resting against the wall, I leaned my head back and believed that we weren’t here. I heard a rustling noise and cracked an eye open. It was Prim, she was carrying a tray. Setting it down she told me it was bread and broth for when she woke up. Nodding, she left the room with sad eyes. She must hate me too. Katniss never wanted to turn into her mother. Lost and never to be found again because she lost the love of her life.

After what seemed like more hours had passed, I felt her stir underneath me. I wanted to shout and declare that I hadn’t left her. That I was here. But I froze and watched her stir in my arms and stretch. Her eyes opened and they became wide as saucers.

“Peeta?” her voice croaked. Disbelief washed over her lovely face.

I nodded. Too stunned to answer her.

“What are you doing here?”

“Prim and Charlotte brought me here. What happened?”

“I couldn’t feel you anymore. You didn’t talk to me, love me, feed from me. If you had told me to give you time, I would have. But ignoring me like that, it was slowly killing me. Charlotte said
you would be fine, but I could tell you wouldn’t be. Finally, I couldn’t take anymore. I don’t remember how I got here, I just remember crying. Crying for you and for us.” she paused and took a breath. Her chest slowly rising and falling. I was torn. I had hurt her beyond comparison. She held out for me and I deserted her because I couldn’t handle the betrayal. Tears slipped from her eyes and I ached to wipe them away, but I was scared she would rebuke my efforts.

“I’m….so sorry Katniss. I don’t know what to say to you. I shut down. I couldn’t take what happened between me and my family. I’ve been disinherited from owning any part of the bakery. They would rather sell it than give it to me. Then I was angry with myself for how I took my anger out on you. I couldn’t face you. Call me a coward but that’s what I was….what I am.”

“No! No you’re not.” she struggled to sit up and straddle my lap. Pulling my face close to hers, her silver eyes penetrating my blue ones. Like she was trying to see my soul, however blackened it felt. “You’re not a coward. You have every right to be upset. Be angry for what they did to you. I pushed you to try and talk to me, but I was told over and over to give you space…that you would be fine. There are no words I can say to fix this, but I love you.”

“I’m so sorry…” I sobbed into her shoulder. I couldn’t hold it any longer. Here was the woman I loved telling me it was OK for me to be this way. Be lost but want to be found again. I found myself again when she told me she loved me. Her arms wrapped around me and held me closely. I was a wreck.

“Just don’t ever leave me like that again….” she pleaded in my ear. “I won’t survive.” I nodded in her shoulder. As my tears subsided, I lifted my head to look in her eyes. They were waiting patiently for me.

“I love you….” I mumbled my lips so close to hers. Hunger and desire raced through my body reminding me of a few things. I hadn’t fed in over a week, I wanted her, nay, I needed her. I had almost forgotten what it felt like to feel. Running my hands down her arms, I nuzzled my mouth into her neck, but remember that she hadn’t fed in two days.

“Prim brought you something to eat on. It’s not much but you haven’t ate in two days.”

“Two days!! Is that how long I’ve been here. Why hasn’t anyone came to me beforehand?” she asked with disbelief.

“I don’t know. I think Prim’s been covering for you. You’d have to ask her.” I told her reaching for the tray. Tearing off a piece of the bread, I dunked it in the broth and held it to her lips. She tried protesting, but I was adamant about feeding her. Something feral growled in me as she took a bite of the bread. When she had finished all the food, I picked her up and carried her to the bed. Setting her down, I kissed her lips gently. Leaning back before things got too out of hand, I watched her face. She seemed to be happy.

“ I need to bathe, Peeta.” I heard her say. “It’s been a day or two….”

“It’s alright. I can wait out here for you, if you want me too.” It pained me to say this. I wanted to be in that shower with her. She hesitated before nodding. Unsteadily, she walked to her bathroom and soon I could hear the water running. I groaned knowing what was on the other side of that damned door.

Katniss POV
Laying the dark of my closet, I could hear the footsteps. Some light and one that was incredibly heavy. It could only belong to Peeta. I always told him he’d never have a light step. It’s why I never took him hunting with me. The voices were hazy. But I didn’t care. He came back for me! I knew when Prim had left but couldn’t understand what Charlotte was saying to Peeta. He sounded horrible to me. His voice had changed. He didn’t sound like himself anymore.

Slipping back into unconsciousness, I barely felt his strong hands lift me into his lap. I was in a daze. I couldn’t believe that he had come back to me, yet left me vulnerable to my own mind. My own madness. Something dark had manifested within him and the closer he was to me the stronger it was. This is what scared me. Not the feedings, or his anger but this….This darkness. It was enough to engulf me but left everyone else around him alone. It became worse after the fight with his family.

Soon, I began to wake up and I could smell the pungent scents of cinnamon and dillweed. Two scents that made me safe and loved. I felt snug and warm in the strong arms that encased me. Looking up, I cracked an eye open and saw Peeta. His eyes were close but his body was tense. Like he was ready to fight. Ready to sprint. When I moved, his eyes flew open. His eyes were dark. Penetrating. Not the cheerful blue that I had become accustomed too.

“Peeta?” my voice croaked. Disbelief washed over my face.

He nodded at me. Too stunned to answer me. A speechless Peeta.

“What are you doing here?”

“Prim and Charlotte brought me here. What happened?”

So I told him. I laid it all out for him. I didn’t want to punish him but he had hurt me in ways I thought the love of my life wouldn’t hurt me. I expected something like this from Gale. Not Peeta. My Peeta who was the selfless one. I was the selfish one. With each word; with each sentence, I saw him crumble until he was holding me and sobbing. My heart reached out to him. I wished I could fix whatever was hurting him. He told me about his family. About how he shut down. How he was likely disinherited from the bakery. Even confessed that he was a coward.

Crawling up to straddle him, I bit my cheek from the intimate closeness. Taking his head in my hands, I stared into his eyes. “No! You are not a coward. You have every right to be angry Peeta! Be angry for what they did to you. I pushed you to try and talk to me, but I was told over and over to give you space...that you would be fine. There are no words I can say to fix this, but I love you.”

Before I got the words out, he was sobbing into my shoulder. I held him close to me. I hated his family for what they did to him. The things they said and the things I said. What I did say was true. I loved him. Desperately and forever. When his tears subsided, he looked at me. His eyes rimmed red and face blotchy.

“I love you…..” I heard him mutter. His lips so close to mine that with the next breath he could be kissing me. Nuzzling his mouth into my neck, I stifled a moan and waited for the bite. It never came. Puzzled, I looked at him. He shook his head at me. Unfortunately, I knew what he meant. He wasn’t going to feed on me. “You have been here two days and you need to eat.”

“Two days!!” I exclaimed. “Why hasn’t any came and got me?” He shrugged and looked apologetic. Like he should have come to me sooner. Like he was supposed to know I had locked myself in the closet. I watched as he reached for a tray. A simple meal of broth and bread awaited me. Tearing off a hunk of bread, he dunked it in the broth and held it to my waiting lips. I stifled a
smile but took a bite of it. I didn’t miss the look in his eyes. He repeated the process until
everything was ate. Setting the tray aside, I didn’t feel full but I did feel better. I almost protested
when he picked me up. I could walk, but the look on his face changed my mind. If it made him
feel better to do this, then I would let him.

Setting me gently down on the bed, he came between my legs and kissed me gently. Desire that
hadn’t been there for nearly a week came roaring back. I pushed into him but he pulled back. I
couldn’t hide my disappointment, but I was happy that he was back in my arms.

“I need to shower Peeta….It’s been a couple of days.” I told him.

“I can wait out here, you want me too?” I heard him say. I was stunned. He didn’t want to
shower with me? Something must be up. Or he didn’t trust himself right now with me. With
everything that had happened. I hid my confusion but I nodded in defeat. Standing, I unsteadily
made my way to the bathroom. After showering, I felt better but not like my old self. I don’t know
how in the world I had let myself fall into this mess.

Exiting my bathroom, I realized suddenly, that had left my nightclothes in the bedroom with Peeta.
It wasn’t like we haven’t seen each other naked. We had, but things seemed to be stretched with
us. Opening the door, I could feel his eyes on me. I shiver involuntarily knowing how he made me
feel. Sifting through my clothes, I found pajama pants and a tank top. Not much better, but it was
better than what Charlotte insisted I wear. Something more girly. Not likely, but I know she tried.

Still wrapped in my towel, I felt gentle hands on my hips. Spinning me around, Peeta’s eyes had
gone black. I knew this was a mistake to flaunt around. He’s a vampire who lusted after my body
and blood but he was also the boy I was in love with. Pressing me into my dresser, I felt my heart
leap into my throat. I watched as his eyes skimmed over my nearly naked body. My hands
clutching my clothes, I knew if he pulled the towel away, I’d be helpless to his kiss. To his touch.
I always was.

“Peeta…” I whispered softly.

“Shh…Katniss….I’m fighting control.” he admonished me. My eyes widened, but felt his hands
come to caress me. The fire that burned within me surfaced on my skin when his hands pushed
against the flimsy towel. It was like he was mentally fighting but physically he was losing.

“I just need to see….” he mummered to no one in particular. I wasn’t even sure if he was talking
to me. “Need to touch….” Clumsily I dropped my clothes, my hands coming to keep him from
opening my towel. Not that I would have minded but we were in my house with a nosy mother
and even nosier sister.

He tugged on my towel and it loosened slightly. “Peeta!” I gasp

“Please don’t tell me no. Let me see you Katniss.” his voice husky and needy. I knew if he bit me
I’d be done for. Heat coiled in my stomach at the simple thought. I could feel moisture start to pool
between my legs. It was amazing how we go a week of avoiding one another. Well, he avoided
me to this. I craved him, yes but I was hesitant.

“Not here…” I whispered urgently. Hoping it would snap him out of his hunger. “too many eyes,
Peeta.” It worked a little to my advantage. His head snapped up and I could see the blue start to
come back to me. He nodded distantly and stepped back. I could breathe again. Reaching down, I
grabbed my clothes and discreetly rushed back to the bathroom. When I emerged a few minutes
later, he was standing by my window. Idly looking outside.

Coming up behind him, I placed my hands on his taut back and kissed the center. He groaned
under my touch but didn’t move. I didn’t know what he was staring at but I didn’t care. Slipping in front of him, he looked down at me. His eyes were dark but he wasn’t struggling with himself. Not yet, at least.

“So, mind telling me why I fell apart? I’m sure it has a reason….”

He huffed but didn’t say a word. Arching an eyebrow at him I waited expectantly. He always told me one way or another. It was something we had agreed on, silently, that we would never have secrets. He must have known I would wait for an eternity on an answer because he took my hand and led me back to my bed.

Running a hand through his curly locks, he sighed. “Remember how I said I fell apart?”

I nodded. Waiting for him to continue. I could tell he didn’t want to tell me what happened to him. I had a feeling it wasn’t going to be good at all.

“Well…I did. I shut everyone out. Including you…which I’m sorry for. My moods were horrible. I was angry. Angry for what my family had done to me. You know that Rye and Cadon haven’t visited? There were some nights I would cry and other nights I would break things. I had shattered my kitchen and I was about to trash my studio when Henry caught me. Stopped me from doing it. All I remember from that night was howling in anger. In pain. I felt betrayed. He stayed with me the whole time and helped me rebuild my kitchen.” a clap of thunder startled us. “Tonight when Charlotte came and got me, my mood…my soul felt black. Charlotte dragged me over here against my will and told me to man up and face what I’d had done to you. I didn’t understand until I saw you. Your pain, confusion, and despair hit me like a ton of bricks. I couldn’t believe I had been so damn selfish.” he balled his fists up. Like he was ready to fight himself. His eyes darkened and I touched his arm. Taking a breath, he looked at me. “I’m sorry Katniss….”

“It’s Ok, now, but you didn’t explain everything…” I pointed out. I knew he was holding back from me.

“No, I didn’t. In my despair I asked Charlotte how I was to fix this. How I had fucked up so much. She told me that even though we haven’t mated, we share a deep bond. Deep as the ones mated couples have. We wouldn’t have to mate, but I do want you as mine.” I gasp as he explained his thumb rubbing over my knuckles. We would haven’t to mate, but I wanted too. His mood was flipping back and forth on me. Kissing his mouth, I swiftly moved to his lap. What started out a slow forgiving kiss turned heated when his tongue caressed my lips. Letting him in, I gripped his shirt as his hands cupped my ass.

We sat there for a long while kissing until I came up for air. “Do you still want to mate with me?” he asked. His voice was low and I could hear the tremble underneath it.

“I do….I just didn’t know if you wanted me anymore. After this week…..” he answered me with another kiss. We would have kissed all night but then a knock came at my door. We broke apart. A blush gracing my face while Peeta growled.

“Katniss. You’re prep team will be here in the morning. You might want to go to bed and send Peeta home.” I heard Prim say through my door. How thoughtful of her to not open the door. It wasn’t like we were indecent but I’m sure my little sister didn’t want to see me kissing all over Peeta.

I looked at him regretfully. I didn’t want him to leave after I just had got him back. But when he nodded and helped me off his lap, I knew we were done for the night. Kissing me sweetly on the mouth, he left me standing there alone in my room. Sighing, I crawled my way into bed. I tried sleep but I don’t think sleep ever came to me.
The next day, I was awaken by someone banging on my door. Seriously, who could it be? And especially at this hour. Limping my way to the door, I must have exercised my foot too much yesterday. I would have to hide the pain from my prep team when they arrived. Opening the door, I was greeted with shouts and glees.

“We’re here!” the exclaimed and I could feel the energy pouring off them. I realized it was way too early in the morning to be this cheerful. Stepping side, I let them in. Prim must have left for school already but Mother there. After I took the hit from Thread, Haymitch had called and rescheduled the photo shoot. I wasn’t expecting them for another three weeks.

After the usual theatrics about my deteriorated state of my beauty, they attacked me. Thankfully this time I won’t have to go back down to Beauty Base Zero. Just shaving and of course attacking my nails and hair. While my body was being tortured I half listened to them talk. When Octavia makes a mention that they can’t get seafood, I had to ask carefully. When she told me that no one was getting seafood because of bad weather in District 4. I had to hide my smirk. I knew what was going on. Or at least I thought I knew what was going on. By the time I am ready to be dressed, their complaints about the difficulty of getting different products—from crabmeat to music chips to ribbons—has given me a sense of which districts might actually be rebelling. When Cinna comes to check on me I can tell he doesn’t believe the story about me slipping on ice that scratched up my face.

Downstairs had been cleared away and lit up for the photo shoot. Effie’s having more fun ordering around everyone because I don’t know how I’d handle it but she seems to do it with ease. There are six gowns to try on. Which means it’s not just six gowns, but headdresses, shoes, jewelry, makeup, hair, lighting and setting. Gowns of creamy lace and pink roses, ivory satin and gold tattoos and greenery. Diamonds and jewels. Heavy white silk with sleeves that fall from my wrist to the floor.

As soon as they’re happy with one shoot, we move onto the next. Mother tries to be supportive and feed me when she can but after hours of this I’m exhausted and starving. Charlotte, diligently, stays out of the way but I can tell she’s half laughing and half pitying me. I’m hoping that she can throw them out soon. No one has been able to fight her when she sees that I’m done. She and Effie have had a row or two over it.

Prim and Peeta show up when the I’m down to the last two dresses. I light up and give Prim a hug and kiss while Effie directs her to sit down. I know she’s been eager to see me do this. Everyone has been eager. Except me. Don’t get me wrong, I love Peeta. I want to marry him one day, but this pony show—as Charlotte calls it—is almost too much for me. Peeta stands to the side, his eyes dark. Carefully watching me. I have a feeling I know what’s on his mind besides hunger. He’s envisioning us actually mating and marrying.

That thought alone is what makes me smile and keeps me from killing everyone. As much as I love them, I want them to go home. After a dark glare from Charlotte, Effie whisks everyone out of my house. Leaving me exhausted, starving and sore feet. Excusing myself, I begin to limp up the stairs, completely forgetting about my sore heel. Smiling through the intense pain, I yelped when Peeta picked me and carried me up to my room. I raised an eyebrow at him but didn’t say anything but snuggle myself into his broad chest.

Setting me down on my bed, he kissed me quickly and disappeared into my bathroom. Seconds later, I heard water running. I found myself smiling. Such a simple gesture warmed me. When he stepped out, I had eased out of my clothes wrapped in my robe that was laid over my bed. Taking my outreached hand, he helped me limp my way to the bath. Standing in front of my tub, I jumped as he reached to take my robe off.
“It’s OK Katniss. I’m trying to be a perfect gentleman….” he assured me. I spun around and smirked. After all this time, he wasn’t trying to rip my clothes off. “Don’t get me wrong. I would love to climb in this tub with you, but I don’t want your mom to catch us.” his eyes had gone dark again. Desire was clouding my mind quickly. Nodding, as I couldn’t trust my voice, I watched as he walked out of the room and and sank into the tub a minute later.

When I got out, he was there. Still in my room. I arched an eyebrow at him, but didn’t say anything. “I told your mom, I’d stick around to help you down the stairs if you needed it.” he said as innocently as he could. I knew better. Peeta had a way with words that I’m sure he made my mom think it was her idea.

Walking over to him, he pulled me into his lap. Nuzzling my neck, his hand came to squeeze my breast through my towel. I sighed happily and arched my neck for him. Inviting him, enticing him.

“You know you look beautiful in those dresses earlier. I couldn’t keep my eyes off you.” he murmured into my neck.

“Oh really?” I breathed softly. My body betraying me to his touches.

“I kept imagining me slowly taking each dress off and leaving them on the floor.” Heat rushed through me as his words embedded into my brain. He was the only one that could make me feel beautiful when he wasn’t trying. His fingers skimmed my thigh making wetness pool between my legs. “But right now, I’m hungry…” he said softly before biting into me. My fingers tangling in his curls, holding him still, as he began to feed. Each pull of his mouth drove my desire higher for him. Closing my eyes, bliss set in.

Before I could react, that idle hand slipped underneath my towel and a finger slipped in my entrance. My back arched into his chest and he began pumping into me. Enticing my orgasm to come. When his thumb brushed my nub, I bucked into him. My head swimming with thoughts only of him and what he was doing to me.

“Oh...fuck Peeta…” I moaned as quietly as I could. Didn’t need the Everdeen army breaking my door down.

He had unlatched himself from my bite mark. His breathing heavy as he continued to pump inside me. Adding another finger, I felt myself being stretched. His thumb working magic on my nub, I could feel heat spreading through my body. Starting at my navel, it traveled down my legs to my toes.

“Come for me.” he demanded into my neck. At his words, my orgasm hit me hard. Stars blinked in my eyes. I felt another pierce at my throat and realized he had bit me again. At the first pull of blood his moans echoed in my ear. Riding his fingers, my walls clenched tightly around them. Letting me ride out my orgasm.

Coming down from my high, he released my neck and letting me drop my head on his shoulder. Both of us were breathing heavily. I could feel his erection pressing painfully against his pants and I longed to release it and give him the same pleasure he had given me. Reaching between us, I ran my hand over the hard length and felt him shudder. Repeating the motion again, I was disappointed when he moved my hand away. Looking at him, I frowned with confusion.

“Not now. I’m close, but we need to get downstairs Katniss.” I grumbled at him, but he chuckled. “I know you want to take care of me too, but we’ll have too later. You’ll have to sneak out of your house.”

Easing me off his lap, I frowned but got dressed anyway. I watched, curiously, as he tried to calm
himself down. Waiting for him, I snuck in the bathroom and looked at myself in the mirror. I could see his bite marks and arousal echoed through me again. Cleaning what little bit of blood there was, I brushed my hair out and walked back into my room. Seeing that he was ready, he followed me downstairs to eat.

After an uneventful dinner, he kissed me gently and went back to his house. Later that night, I did sneak out. Creeping my way across the road, I prayed I wouldn’t run into Haymitch or Charlotte. Neither would leave me alone, and I would get Hell for it. Knocking on his door, he opened and pulled me in quickly. Kissing me heavenly, all I remember that night is that his moans echoed as mine had earlier.

The next morning, I ate breakfast with Prim and mother. Neither had noticed I had snuck back in at such a late hour. Waving Prim goodbye for the day, I went to search for someone. Peeta wasn’t home but I saw Charlotte & Henry heading over to Haymitch’s. Piquing my interest, I called out to them. When they stopped, I hurried up.

“So what brings you two out this early? I thought you couldn’t be out?” I asked casually.

“Our rings have re-charged. I’m off to piss Haymitch off while he and Henry talk.” Charlotte said.

“No, you’re not going to piss him off. I hope you will be cooperative. There’s things we have to talk about.” Henry admonished her gently. She poked her tongue out at him. I laughed but he stopped walking and looked at her. “I’ve told you to play nice with the humans, even if he’s a drunk human.”

“I know….and I promise to be a good girl.” she said almost too innocently. He raised an eyebrow at her, but nodded. I’m not sure what would happened if she didn’t listen to him. Instead of knocking, I walked in and crinkled my nose at the smell.

“I swear Haymitch…” I muttered softly. “Hey where are you?” I called out a bit louder. I heard a grunt and a chair moving. He was in the kitchen. Following the animal noises we stepped into his kitchen a minute later.

“So what brings the crew to my house?” he grumbled barely glancing at us as he tried to make tea.

“Well….I need to tell you something. I’m not sure about these two.” I pointed toward Henry and Charlotte.

“Well talk sweetheart, I don’t have all day. As you can tell, my schedules booked.” he mocked stumbling to sit down.

“Oh for fuck’s sake…..” I heard Charlotte muttered. “We told you to keep the liquor at a minimum till after we left.”

Looking at Char and Henry, I sighed and within a few minutes I’m able to update him and everyone has told me about rumors of uprisings in Districts 7 and 11 as well. What really surprises me is that both Henry and Char know so much about the uprisings. Like they have had a part in it as well. Though, with those two, I wouldn’t be surprised.

“So you think it will work here?” I ask them.

“Not yet. The other Districts are much larger. Even if half don’t join up, the rebels still can overcome. In District 12, it’s all of you or none of you.” Henry explained.
“But, could we, at some point be able to do this?” I ask with hope laced with desperation. More desperation than hope right now. Since it seems we’re staring at the end of a long tunnel that has no light at the end.

“Maybe, but the district is small. We don’t develop nuclear weapons.” says Haymitch sarcastically laced with venom. The idea that District 13 is alive and well didn’t go over so well with him. I had told Charlotte but she didn’t think me much of an idiot like Haymitch did.
Chapter Summary

OMG FINALLY! It's that time of week and good news, everyone this chapter has the SMUT everyone has been waiting on.
I don't own it..

And may the odds be ever in your favor.....

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

(A few days ago)

I knocked. At least this is the only home I would ever knock at. Peeta and Haymitch were all access walk in. I knocked again and waited. Peeta wasn’t home tonight and I’m sure he was with Henry tonight. He had been there the last three nights. We hadn’t spoken all week. But I needed to tell someone about my District 13 theory. And about Bonnie and Twill. I knew that Haymitch wouldn’t believe me but I’m sure that Charlotte would at least listen to me before dismissing the idea completely.

Another knock goes by and finally I hear shuffling of feet on the other side of the door. When it opened, Charlotte stood there in a strange swimsuit outfit. Raising my eyebrow her, I watched her shake her head at me.

“Now’s the time to not make fun of me. I was busy…”

“Wasn’t going to say anything. Just curious.”

“Whatcha need?”

“I wanna talk. Can we?”

“Not here. Peeta’s with Henry tonight and I don’t think it’s fully safe for you to be here. It’s been days since he’s fed. We can take a walk?”

I nodded mutely and watched as she grabbed a jacket. Tossing it on, we headed down her porch to the sidewalk. I prayed that Haymitch wouldn’t be outside in this weather. After a minute or two, I had formulated what I was going to say.

“I think District 13 isn’t destroyed like everyone thinks it is.” I blurted out. When she looked at me, but didn’t comment, I continued. “I know about the uprisings that are ‘supposedly’ going on. I met two people from District 8 in the woods the night I injured my heel. They had escaped as the rebels burned down a factory. They were headed to District 13, convinced that it was real.”

I could see her think carefully before she opened her mouth. Maybe she did know something about it but was unsure if she could tell me. “What makes you think they are right?”
“They told me about the mockingjay that flies past the Justice Building on the viewing. It’s always a different person but that never changes. I saw it last time the television was on.”

“And what does that prove other than they are using old footage? Isn’t it a lot simpler for them at the Capitol to press a button to edit it?”

I looked at her sharply. I couldn’t believe that she didn’t believe me. Here was the one person besides Peeta that I knew would believe me.

“But…..?”

“But what Katniss?”

“Doesn’t it seem strange to you? I don’t know if you watch any of the footage that we’ve had to watch but why not change it up after so many years?”

“Katniss….I’m not saying I don’t believe you. I believe that you believe this, but please don’t let this go to your head. Things are changing, I know you can feel that, but for your sake, please don’t worry. I’ve learned that worrying won’t get you anywhere.” she said placating me. I wanted her to believe me and tell me something. Something concrete, but she didn’t. Just gave me a diplomatic answer to my theory.

I nodded anyway at her. I would find out anyway. It was only a matter of time. Then I remembered that I was going to ask her about her outfit.

“So what’s up with the swimsuit?”

“It’s a leotard, not a swimsuit. I don’t swim in it. I dance.” I looked at her skeptically. She can dance too? This woman was full of surprises.

“What kind of dance?” I only know the District’s dances and some from the Capitol that Effie taught Peeta and I on the Victory Tour.

“Ballet.”

“Never heard of it. Is it hard?”

She nodded her head, “It can takes years of practice to become good at it. Depends on the person and their strive.” hearing a beep, she sighed. “I gotta get back. It’s my time with Henry. Peeta should be gone by now.”

“If you’re done sweetheart, my next appointment is waiting eagerly for me.” he grumbled pointing at the very patient Henry and Char. I rolled my eyes and left without being sent out. What on Earth can they be discussing that I couldn’t hear? Some sort of rebel plot, but oh, don’t let the kids know.

After wandering aimlessly through town for the better part of the day, I gave up when I passed the bakery after the third time. I didn’t even run into Peeta, but I saw his Mother staring at me as I walked past. A shudder passed through me. I really hated that woman. I hated what she said about Peeta. Keeping my eyes away from her penetrating stare, I hurried back to my house.

Entering it, I made it in time for Prim to come from school. She was more excited than normal. The teachers at school told her that there was to be a mandatory programming tonight. “I think it’s your photoshoot.” she tells me bouncing on her heels like she’s ingested a bag of sugar.

“I doubt it Prim, I just did that yesterday…”
"Well I heard about it at school," she said pointedly.

When we gather around the television that night my mind briefly wonders about Peeta. Maybe he should be here with us instead of being alone in his house tonight. Someone to give him company besides his shadow. I started to get up and call him when the program came on. Sure enough, Prim was right it was my photoshoot. Caesar Flickerman appeared on the screen. After bringing Cinna on stage they talk for a few minutes. Commenting about the dresses and how he’s risen to stardom quickly. Cinna, takes it all humbly. Even though I know he’s happy. What I did learn was that he had designed two dozen dresses and I was subjugated to only try on six. And the people of the Capitol were going to vote which dress they liked the best.

People go crazy each time they show a different dress. Cheers and boos echo throughout the Capitol I’m sure. If you listened closely I’m fairly sure that you could hear them in the outlying districts.

Before we can flip off the television, Caesar announces that he has one more big event. “That’s right everyone, this year is the 75th Hunger Games. It will be our third Quarter Quell.”

This isn’t right. The Games are months away. Why tell us about it now? I figured it has something to do that since it’s a Quarter Quell, special preparations must be made to make it much more horrific than the rest.

“And who better than to tell us about it, our very own President Snow….” Caesar says as the screen changes to President Snow standing on a podium. A box close by him. The box that will tell us what kind of horrors we should expect with this Quell. We watch as he opens the box and takes out a card. On the front of the envelope it says elegantly “75th Quarter Quell”

My heart catches in my throat. I feel ill. Like I’m going to be consumed by my own fire. I’m sure this is what Haymitch felt like 25 years ago when the 50th Quell happened. The same one that he won. The one he never talks about.

Snow briefly talks about the other two Quells before launching into this one. Fear creeps upon me. “On the 75th anniversary, as a reminder to the rebels that even the strongest among them cannot overcome the power of the Capitol, the male and female tributes will be reaped from their existing pool of victors.”

It takes me a minute to put the puzzle pieces together. Mother and Prim have already figured it out. They’re crying. Existing victors? As I think it, it dawns on me. District 12 has three victors. Two males and one female……

*I am going back into the Arena.*

I can’t stay here. I can’t breathe. I can’t think. I don’t want to feel. Hurdling out of my house, I leave my family weeping over my future dead body and run to the only place I can find comfort. Peeta. My socked feet are soaked by the time I make it to his house. I’m frantic. Banging on his door, I stand there shivering.

“PEETA! Please open the door!” I scream. My head hurts already and I’m sure to have nightmares tonight. When he finally answers the door, I can tell he’s been crying. Throwing myself into his arms, I instantly try to comfort him. Even though, unlike me, he’s got a fifty fifty chance of living where as I have none. We hold each other for as long as we can stand the cold. Pulling me into his warm house, we stand there, unable to speak. Unable to do anything but stare at each other.

“I…..” I start.
“...can’t lose you.” he finishes my sentence.

Suddenly everything between us makes sense. I want the things I’ve been denying myself for so long now. I know he’ll fight me saying it’s for comfort or that we’re going to die and I will rebut him, but right now I don’t care. It’s like a light has lit above my head. I want him. I want him in every sense of way. We’re engaged but I want to be his and only his. For however long it will be.

I think he realizes it. Looking in my eyes, I can see his turning dark as he pushes me against the door and taking my lips. This kiss isn’t sweet with comfort but desperate with need. An animalistic need.

Peeta POV

I stagger as I hear President Snow’s address. I was going back in. I wasn’t stupid. I figured it out as soon as the words left his lips. It’s like I felt his eyes on me when he said it. I couldn’t go back. I couldn’t face the Arena again. The nightmares were still too fresh. I couldn’t let Katniss go back, but I had no control over that.

Katniss!

She was going back in.

The love of my life...I was going to lose her. Lose her to a psychotic man who was bent on destroying us. Gripping the back of the chair, I felt it snap underneath the pressure of my anger. It coursed through me. Rage filled the room as I ached to tear the whole house apart. No. Breathe Peeta. Breathe. I struggled. My vision became hazy as I tried to focus my breathing as Henry had taught me.

Breathe.

Inhale.

Breathe

Exhale.

I shook my head as my hair fell into my eyes. I had forgotten to cut it. The longer I breathed and told myself to calm down the easier it became. I hadn’t realized tears had begun to fall during my rage. As I calmed out, I heard banging. It was my door. Funny, I thought it was in my head. Staggering to front door, I heard Katniss scream for me. Throwing it open in earnest, there she stood. Freezing, crying, frantic. Launching herself into my arms, I held her. Breathed her in. Her scent. Her life--as it was in my hands. I felt her fingers run through my hair like she was comforting me.
Pulling us into the house, we stood there. Only few apart. I couldn’t speak. I was at a loss for words. Which is something unusual. But then I felt it. I felt her pull at me. Her desire, her longing, her want for me. I knew I had to have her. Tonight. Before I lose the chance.

Pushing her into the door, my eyes darkening, I take her lips and feel something dark cackle inside me. I was going to mate her. Posses her. My hands run down her body feeling her come alive underneath me. Her moans are all I need to drag her upstairs to my room. There’s no preamble. There’s not stopping. No asking if she’s ready. I will have her tonight.

Kicking the door open to my room, I press her against the wall, my hand coming to squeeze her breast through her thin shirt. Snaking my tongue in her mouth we both groan as I assualt every inch of warmth. I could feel her hands working on me as my shirt comes off. Tossed to the side of the room. Forgotten. Easing her out of her shirt, it sailed the same way mine did. Her hands trailed down my back. Leaving scorch marks. Imprinting herself. As we back to my bed, I tossed her down and watched her eyes follow me.

They were dark. Dark as mine. Crouching over her, I slide my hands up the sides of her body. My eyes predatory. I was salivating over her. Hunger beat at every corner of my being and I ached to feed off her. Kissing the column of her throat, she must have sensed my hunger and tilted her head over. I growled but kissed her on the mouth instead. She wanted to touch me, but I wouldn’t be able to last if she did. Pinning her hands over her head, our tongues fought for dominance.

Leaving her delicious mouth I captured a nipple. Tugging on it painfully, I felt her back arched into me. Her cries echoing throughout the room. Using my free hand I teased the other while my mouth tortured the other. Soon, too soon, I switched. Her breathing had become haggard.

“Oh, fuck Peeta…” she groaned. Her words driving me insane. Nipping and kissing down her stomach, I urged her pants off. Using both my hands, left hers unsupervised. Pulling herself onto her knees, they reached out and tugged me roughly to her. Unclasping my belt, she helped push my own pants down. Gripping my already strained cock, I threw my head back and moaned. Her small hands began working me and I hissed. Taking her hands off me, I knew I wouldn’t last long.

Looking at me with confusion, I shook my head and pushed her back gently onto my bed. Pulling the sheets down, we crawled underneath them. Our tongue dancing, our hands touching places that we had yet to fully master. Before I knew it, my hands were sliding her panties down. My boxers long gone. My cock pressing into her body. The sweet friction driving me mad. Sweat began to form on my body as I dipped a finger inside her. Her hips bucked into me. Encouraging me.

Her body so primed for me, I couldn’t imagine anything hotter than she was right now. In this moment. Flicking my tongue over her pulse point, I added another finger inside her. Gently pumping, her hips rolling to the feel of my fingers. Kissing her mouth, our tongues danced and she yelped softly as fangs nicked her lower lip. The taste of blood flooded my mouth and I groaned loudly.

The satisfaction that I could make her feel like this pounded deep into my mind. She began riding my fingers. Trying to bring her to her own orgasm but I wasn't going to let her do it. I wasn’t going to give her the satisfaction of it. Pulling them out, she moaned in disapproval. I wanted to feel her from the inside. My whole existence right now was to be as close to her as I possibly could. As we kissed, the fever climbed until I was at her entrance. I was ready I could feel the heat pouring off her. Making the tip of my cock an inferno. I wanted to ask her if she was ready. If this was what she really wanted but her body betrayed her as she maneuvered her hips and guided me inside her.
Inch by inch, I entered her. Her tight walls flexing and stretching to accommodate my size. My eyes rolled in the back of my head as I came to the resistance. Forcing my eyes open, she nodded and pulled me back down for another kiss. Pushing, I nearly collapsed as I was fully inside her.

_Fuck...Oh my God…_

My kisses became tender as I waited on her to give the go ahead. I didn’t think I would be able to last a long time and I’m sure she didn’t care. She wanted me as much as I wanted her. Giving me the tiniest of nods, I pulled back and slid slowly back in her. Our moans matched as I began thrusting slowly inside her. She made me perfect. Made me think I was someone else. All too soon, my slow thrusts weren’t enough for her. As I picked up the pace, her body quickly found rhythm with mine.

“I’m not going to last like this Katniss…” I moaned sucking on her earlobe.

“I don’t care. I need you to feed too….” I heard her breathe.

I nodded and pushed myself. I couldn’t tell if she was close or not. In my inexperience, it was unfortunately a necessary. A few thrusts later, the tightening in my abs uncoiled and I came hard. I saw stars. Remember her words, I bit down in her soft flesh and drank deeply. When sated, I looked at her. My eyes drooped. Sweat soaked, I kissed her gently.

“I want your blood in me. Please let me feed from you….” she half moaned.

_Cue instant hard cock._ Hearing those words, I was ready to take her again. Nodding, I pushed inside her and bit down on my own wrist. Placing it over her mouth, I felt her luscious lips against the skin. My eyes that had already closed, rolled in the back of my head when she sucked. “Oh my God Katniss…” I forced my eyes open and looked at her. _Jesus..._ it was the hottest thing I had ever seen. Gently taking my wrist away from her, I watched as she licked her lips. A groan escaping me. I hadn’t realized I was still pumping into her. Her back arched as she came with me. I guess the whole situation pushed her over. Kissing her on the mouth, I tasted my own blood and I came again. Dropping my head on her shoulder, I shuddered as I struggled to breath.

**Katniss POV**

We laid there. Sweat soaked and completely sated. I had begged to taste him tonight. When Henry had explained to Peeta that this was the only way for us to become completely mated, I didn’t hesitate. The way he reacted, the way his blood tasted in my mouth, which I thought I would be grossed out, everything crashed around me and I saw stars as I orgasmed.

Holding him gently, I watched as his taut body become relax as he calmed himself down. Kissing me gently, he had gone soft as he slipped out of me. My breath catching in my throat as he rolled onto his back he brought me close to him. Resting my head on his shoulder, my fingers tracing patterns on his chest. I still couldn’t believe we had finally had sex. His fingers came to undo the last of my braid. I wanted to sleep but it was alluding me.

“Peeta…..?”

“Hmm…” I heard him mumble.

“We, uh, didn’t use anything.”

He looked at me funny but then it dawned on him. “Oh, right. On one of my many night discussions with Henry it came up. Normally the first time for a male he’s sterile until after he’s
had sex.”

“Oh.” was all I could reply. I guess it made sense. He nodded at me and leaned down for another kiss. A kiss I eagerly returned. Running my fingers through his damp curls he took the opportunity to deepen the kiss. My body was on fire again. I don’t think it ever went out, just cooled the embers that laid waiting for a return.

“I want you again, but we’ll have to have protection…” he mumbled against my lips. I nodded in affirmation.

“We could always sleep?” I suggested yawning. I didn’t want to talk about the Games or the damned Quell. I didn’t want to talk about how I was going back to the Arena. I didn’t want to face that the imminent death laid upon my doorstep again and the people that I loved the most, including the one that was laying right beside me, was going to lose me.

He nodded at me again and I sighed. Pulling me close to him again I laid there. Closing my eyes, I drifted off to a, hopeful, dreamless sleep.

When I awoke the next morning, Peeta wasn’t in bed, but I was comforted that I could smell breakfast. My stomach rumbled and I sighed. Getting out of bed, I hunted for clothes. My clothes to be exact. Not finding them except my shirt, I slipped it on and found some comfortable pants of Peeta’s. Re-braiding my hair, I trekked quietly downstairs.

Pushing the door open to the kitchen, the smell of eggs and toast greeted me. Smiling I took a seat and watched him finish. Handing me a plate a minute later, he stepped over to me and kissed me fully on the mouth. I moaned under his assault of my mouth. I yelped as he picked me up and sat me down on the table. Coming between my legs his hands gripped my thighs. Holding me steady. My hands played with the muscles on his back, learning each and everyone of them.

Stepping back from me, his eyes were dark and I could see his fangs elongated. “I’m going to have to stop before I take you back upstairs. You need to eat before I can taste you again.” he said burying his head against my shoulder. Inhaling my scent, I nodded and wiggled to get out from underneath him. He got the hint and stepped aside. Hopping down, I grabbed my plate and began eating. Following my lead a second later, we ate in happy silence.

“We should see Charlotte and Henry today.” I spoke in code hoping he’d understand. Nodding, he grabbed our empty plates and set them in the sink. I wanted more of last night. More time to learn his body and find out the things he liked during sex.

“Want to go now?” he asked placing a hand on my coat. I nodded and slipped it on. Following him out the door a minute later, he took my hand and we walked. Avoiding the gruff catcalls from Haymitch, we stopped to rest on their doorstep. Peeta knocked and I waited. It didn’t take long before the door opened.

“Ya know, I figured after last night you two wouldn’t be making it out of bed.” Char said snarkily.

I blushed chewing on my lip, “Geez, does all the District know?”

“Nooo, but we know. Congratulations by the way….”

“You know what? Having sex or finally being mated?” Peeta asked rolling his eyes.

“A bit of both actually. Come in, I’m making breakfast…..”

A commotion behind us stopped me from going on the house. Turning around, I see Gale stalking
toward us. He was coming from my house. A groan came from Charlotte. Peeta shot her a quizzical look but she deflected.

“Next time you fucking disappear Katniss, you might want to tell your mom. I’ve been up for hours searching for you!” he yelled at me coming to a stop. Glaring at me, I frowned. Peeta’s hackles were raised. He never liked it when someone talked to me that way.

“Listen Gale….” I started.

“She was with me last night.” Peeta interrupted me. Gale’s head whipped around and I saw hate shine from him. Now was not a good time. Never was a good time.

Charlotte POV

I heard them coming out the house. Hell I heard them last night. Not that I was listening of course! People need to learn to close windows. They looked happy from my window and I know they would be over here shortly. I briefly wondered if her name was already imprinted on his skin? Doubt it, that would have to come with a ceremony….Hearing the knock, I waited for a minute before opening. Eager as I was, I loved to make them wait.

We talked for a minute before I invited them in for breakfast. Henry and I were about to turn in for the day but I knew from earlier our happy morning wouldn’t be happy. I smelled anger before it walked out the Everdeen house. Gale had been over at my house before the sun even started to peek over the mountains. He had demanded to know where Katniss was and I sure as shit wasn’t going to have him disrupt a mating.

But here he was again. This time Katniss was here. This time he would have his words and I know that Peeta would kick his ass and I would let him. Leaning against the doorframe, I watched as Gale starting yelling at Katniss. Peeta’s posture changed the longer he continued to yell.

I felt Henry behind me. “What’s going on?” he whispered.

“Gale’s back and he’s found Katniss. I almost need popcorn for this show.” I replied sarcastically. He sighed and kissed my neck. Keeping his hands on my waist, we watched as the argument unfolded.

“What the fuck do you mean she was with you last night?” Gale asked looking at Peeta.

“Are you slow this morning? She was at my house all night last night.”

I could see Gale’s eye widened at the implication. “Did you sleep with him Katniss?”

Her body had gone rigid. I knew she hated this kind of confrontation. Easing myself from Henry’s grasp, I went to her. Placing a hand on her shoulder, I shook my head. She didn’t have to say anything she didn’t want to admit too. But I know Katniss. She’s like my youngest daughter, Isabella. Headstrong and stubborn.

“And what if I did? What then Gale?”

He looked like she had smacked him. Not slowing his tirade, he sneered. “Remember what I told you Katniss? This will never work between you two. What’s in it for you? I still can’t believe you would do this to yourself? What did he promise you? Love, marriage, children?” he paused and sneered, "Oh wait, I remember you said you never wanted those things?” then a light popped above his head and this time I knew it was going to sink the ship, "Is he paying you?"
Gale didn’t have time to react when Peeta tackled him again. This time Henry wasn’t going to stop the fight. Not at least until Peeta’s anger was spent. Each punch of fist slapping skin echoed throughout the Village. We watched as Gale rolled Peeta over and pinned him down.

From the corner of my eye, I saw Prim watching from her window. Nodding to get her attention, she looked at me finally. “Come get Katniss, Prim. She doesn’t need to see this. Take her to her room and don’t let her out.” I whispered low enough only that Prim could hear me. Vanishing from the window she was out the door in seconds to retrieve her stricken sister. I watched as Katniss disappeared with her sister and Henry kept his eye on the boys.

Peeta was enraged. All the training he had done with Henry had finally paid off. Throwing Gale back down on the ground he came up and rested his knees on Gale’s arms. His eyes black as coal his fangs elongated, I could smell fear come off Gale in waves. I guess he just now found out. In Peeta’s moment of hesitancy, Gale used his legs and kicked him in the back. Groaning, I watched as Peeta fell over to the side and Gale took the opportunity to kick him in the stomach several times. Rolling away, Peeta grabbed Gale by the throat and held him there.

This is when Henry finally stepped in.

Taking Peeta by the arm, he whispered something to him and Peeta dropped Gale. Coughing and grabbing his throat, Gale looked a bit blueish. Backing away from the boys, Henry and I stood back. The hate that poured off them was intoxicating.

“What the fuck are you?” Gale rasped holding his throat.

“Someone you really don’t want to piss off Gale.” I heard him growl. “This is the last time I will warn you. Leave me and Katniss, especially Katniss, alone. She doesn’t need you.”

**Katniss POV**

I watched as Charlotte groaned in exasperation. Someone was coming and I’m sure it was someone that we didn’t want to come around. I turned around and saw him coming out of my mom’s house. Gale. And he was angry. I sighed and my eyes followed him as he stalked toward us. Yelling at me, I deflected all his answers until Peeta opened his mouth.

Grasping Peeta’s arm, I wished he hadn’t said anything. When Gale asked me if I was sleeping with Peeta, I almost slapped him. It was none of his business! He was yelling. Smarting off. It wasn’t looking to be a pretty event but when Peeta tackled him, I froze. I couldn’t believe this was happening again.

**Oh God, not again.**

**Not again.**

Suddenly Prim was there. Taking me by the arm and taking me back to my Mom’s house. Up the stairs we went until we made it back to my room. Scrambling to an empty corner, I started panicking. I couldn’t do this again. The last time Peeta and Gale fought, Peeta was roughed up and I couldn’t stand to see him injured because of me. Grabbing my head in my hands, I shuddered as I could hear the grunts and punches that ensued.

**Please stop.** I begged to no one.

Suddenly everything had gone quiet. The shouting and grunts had stopped. The sounds of blood
and bones breaking had ceased. Cracking one eye opened, I looked around my room. Prim was standing by the window. Watching the whole show. But it looked like she was waiting on instructions.

“Prim...what’s going on?” I whispered meekly.

“The fighting has stopped. Gale doesn’t look too good, but neither does Peeta. I’ve never seen Peeta like this. What happened?” she asked me whirling around to see me wild state.

“Gale was angry. He has some hurtful things to me and Peeta lost it. This is the second time they’ve fought.” I shuddered remembering the first time. Struggling to stand, I barely made my way to the window.

Outside, I could see Peeta standing by Henry. Gale bent over holding his neck. I could only assume that Peeta was trying to strangle him. His eyes were black as night and I could see that Henry had his hand on Peeta’s shoulder. Keeping him from attacking Gale again. I couldn’t hear what was being said but I didn’t need to know what was being said. I’m sure Peeta told him to leave us alone. Especially me.

Watching Gale leave, I looked toward Peeta and watched as he came toward my mother’s house. My heart sped up laced with desire and anxiety. Hearing his heavy footsteps coming up the stairs I went to stand by my bed. Prim came in front of me like she was going to protect me from Peeta.

The door opened slowly and there stood Peeta. He had a busted lip and I could see a bruise forming under his right eye. But other than that, he looked perfect. No one would guess he had been in a fist fight.

“Don’t come near her!” Prim seethed as he stepped closer to me. He stopped in his track and looked at her strangely.

“Prim!”

“Why not?” he asked simply. His voice deflated. I had yet to move. Even though, my eyes were trained on him, I could tell her words had affected him.

“I saw what you did to Gale. I saw what you looked like. You’re a danger to Katniss. I won’t let you take her from this house.”

“And you……” she whirled on me. “You knew about this?! You know what he’s capable of and you still go to him?”

I nodded at her. I wanted to be in his arms right now. I knew he would heal quickly but I wanted to clean his face. Take care of him. “Prim you don’t understand.”

“I don’t understand!! I’m not a child anymore Katniss. You can’t keep secrets like this from me. I could tell Mother and you would have to live here again. Permanently.”

My eyes widened. My little sister trying to threaten and blackmail me? Since I had went into the Games, she had changed. Grown up on me and I hadn’t seen it.

“Now, hold up ...” I heard Peeta start. “I would never harm Katniss. I love her Prim.”

“I don’t care! I saw what you did. You’re dangerous Peeta. What happened to that boy that would have done anything to make people smile. Give me cookies?”

“I’m still the same person. Just don’t insult or harm Katniss and we’re all happy people. You think
Gale isn’t dangerous? That he would never hurt anyone…” his voice was low and dark. He was getting angry. Stepping closer to us, I watched as she tried to defend me. Protect me. Like I had been protecting her all her life.

“Peeta...don’t.” I pleaded with him. I knew it would fall upon deaf ears.

“Don’t what? What’s he talking about Katniss?” Prim implored.

“Nothing…..” I dropped my eyes. I couldn’t hold her gaze. I didn’t want to talk about it. I wanted to be home in Peeta’s arms.

“She never told you Prim? How Gale has bruised her. Insulted her. Trying to make an unwanted moves on her?” he said scathingly.

Prim turned back to look at me again. It was true. Everything he had said about Gale. He had hurt me, confused me, angered me and downright betrayed my trust. It was amazing that I still even trusted anyone. The only people that I did trust I count on one hand. Pathetic really. I couldn’t look at her but I think she realized that Peeta wasn’t lying to her. She took a tentative step towards me, but I took a step back from her.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” she whispered.

“I don’t know...I didn't want a lot of people knowing what was going on. It’s not like he physically or sexaully harmed me.” I heard Peeta growl low. I felt wide hands come and rest on my hips. His breath tickled the sensitive skin on the back of my neck.

“She’s more safe with me than she ever will be around the likes of him.” Peeta stated a little hazy. His thoughts must be elsewhere. I sighe and looked back at Prim whose eyes had bugged out seeing Peeta’s warm hands on me.

“I...I’m gonna go.” she fumbled and bolted from the room. I sighed and leaned into Peeta’s touch. His lips gently dancing across my bare skin. Those hands, I had become to love, start massaging my hips then my lower back. I closed my eyes and let his hands work their magic on my back. I’m sure we could have stayed like this forever. Funny--how I can say that--but I eased myself from him and turned to look at him.

“You’re hurt.” I stated simply.

“It’s nothing, you know that. I’ll heal by morning.”

“You’ll be sore.”

“I already am. Katniss….” he paused rubbing my lower lip with his thumb. Instinctively, I reached out and kissed it. “I’m sorry. About earlier. I lost the control I had been holding onto since he showed up. When he...insulted you. I lost it.”

I nodded. There wasn’t anything to apologize for. “It's fine Peeta. No need to apologize.”

“See, that’s the thing. I feel like have to apologize for scaring you. I don’t know how you ended up here but I’m glad you didn’t see me like that. Henry says the anger comes from my father. The “dark side’ of the twin.” I watched as he rolled his eyes. “All males will fight to protect their female but something is different with me. He’s not sure what it is yet.”

“I don’t want you to kill for me....”

His grip tightened and he scowled. My Peeta, scowling? He must have picked it up from me. “I’ll
do whatever it takes to protect you. Is that clear? Your safety and happiness comes before mine.”

I opened my mouth to argue but I knew it was useless. He would get his way about this. No matter what I had to say about it. So, I nodded. Hoping it would placate him. When it had the desired effect, I leaned forward and kissed him lightly. That simple kiss became heated when his tongue traced my lower lip asking for permission. Eagerly accepting, a hand pressed into my lower back while the other traced the vein in my neck. We stood there wound in our own desires until we heard a slight cough. Breaking the kiss abruptly, I turned and saw my mother. Peeta, kept his back turned from us.

She didn’t have to say anything but she stepped forward and hugged me. Hugged me like it was the last time she was ever going to see me again. Hugged me like we were finally going to make up for all the things that had happened to us in the past. “I’m so sorry…” she whispered in my ear before turning and leaving me alone with Peeta.

Chapter End Notes

Eek! Charlotte finally gets a part. I try to keep some of her lingo 21st based instead of dystopian era Panem. I love her character and she only gets better.

If you want to know more about her history (And Henry's) read "Gravity". It's all Black Dagger Brotherhood style with secrets and sadness with a touch of happiness.

Let me know what you think so far! Love anything to help idea pushing.

Until next week! xoxo
Chapter Summary

It's that time of week again! A new chapter. Deeper angsty mess that it took a minute to write. This will be the beginning of a Dark Peeta moment and more secrets that should be kept buried.

Not the last time we will see Brice Mellark either. Fate is a cruel mistress for him.

As always I don't own it

Enjoy!!

(let me know what you think!)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Katniss POV

We thought things were going to get better for us. Peeta and Prim had worked out their difference and he and I were together finally. I had never been happier. Things seemed to be normal again at least until the Reaping. Then one day during the middle of warm May day things went to shit.

Peeta and I had decided to go in town that day. Apparently he needed supplies and it couldn’t wait. I Think he was finally ready to get me out the house and out of his bed for a few hours. Not that either of us were complaining. Hand in hand we chatted idly until we made it into town. Stopping at several stores, we avoided the one place we didn’t want to go. The Bakery.

I watched as he took a breath and sighed. “I don’t really want to go in here, but I’m not feeling up to making bread for dinner tonight.” he said kissing the back of my hand. I’m fairly sure if we were paying customers that we wouldn’t be denied.

Entering the shop, nostalgia melted over me. The times I would sneak to the back of the store and trade my squirrels for bread or other items. Seeing Peeta working with his family. Feeling his eyes on me as I casually talked to his uncle. When Cadon saw us, he froze. Like he was afraid of his own brother. I could see the fear laced behind his blue eyes. The ones that I knew would be passed down to all their children.

“What are you doing here?” he hissed.

“Paying customer.” Peeta deadpanned.

“Mother will flip if she sees you. I don’t know what happened and I quite frankly don't give a fuck, but she said you are not to be allowed in here. Even dad said it.” he told us quietly.

Just then, Brice came out of the back of the store. “Hey, I thought I heard…..a customer.” his light happy voice had turned cold when he saw us.
“You’re not supposed to be here. I thought we made that clear weeks ago.”

“I’m here buying. Not here to talk.”

I was finally tired of this. This argument. It could go on for years. Taking Peeta’s hand, I tugged lightly trying to get his attention. “Let’s go. I’m sure Charlotte won’t be too pissy if you don’t bring anything.”

“Charlotte? She’s here?”

“Yes…” I said slowly.

“Then I’ll swing by and drop off the food for her.”

“Whatever.” I heard him say as we walked out the door. Cadon’s crestfallen face lingered on my mind.

As we walked through town back to the Village, I could tell he was tense. He was angry for how he was being treated. How he lost his entire family because who he was and who his father was. I hated them. Even his brother’s who couldn’t come over and talk to him. Find out what really happened. Too lost in my own thoughts about today’s events, I hadn’t realized we had arrived back at Peeta’s.

Entering the house, he took the purchases from me and stormed into the kitchen. I stood there in the foyer lost for him. Angry for him. They had cut him deeply and there was no way things were going to be fixed with a simple sorry. Closing my eyes, I sighed and followed his footsteps. Opening the door into the kitchen, he was leaned over the counter, his eyes closed and his posture taut. His breathing was erratic and I could have sworn he was crying. His pain evident.

“Please…Katniss…I don’t need pity.” I heard him beg. I simply nodded and came up behind him and wrapped my arms around him. Resting my head on his back, we stood there and I let him have his moment. This time instead of anger it was tears. Today had shown him he could never have a place with his family again.

“I’m so sorry baby…” I mumbled into his back. This only made him cry harder. Minutes pass and it seemed like he was finally calming down. I know he never wanted me to see him upset like this. He turned around, his eyes red rimmed and I my heart went out to him. Holding him close, my fingers tangling in his hair, my soothing words in his ear.

“I’m sorry Katniss.” he voice broke.

“It’s not your fault Peeta. None of this is your fault. I swear it.” I reassured him. He only nodded at me. Kissing his mouth lightly, it helped him to get lost in the moment. The clocked chimed in the living room letting us know that we needed to get a move on and go to Charlotte’s for dinner. She had offered to cook and we couldn’t say no to her.

“We need to get going….”

“I know, but let’s just stay like this for a few minutes. Please?” I’m glad I had said yes to him or we would have missed the shocker that was going to change the game.

Charlotte POV
There was a knock on my door. I knew it wasn’t Peeta and Katniss nor Haymitch. None of the knocked anymore. It was my only rule. Well except you had to eat my food. Furrowing my brow, I knew Henry was still down for another half an hour. At least I Think he was still sleeping. After I fed off him he would sleep nearly eight hours straight. Setting my towel down I checked the pot roast again. It was coming along nicely. One of Henry’s few favorites of mine.

Stopping at the front door, I hesitated because it was scent I hadn’t smelled in almost fifteen years. OK, well that was a lie because the closest thing to that smell was Peeta. And he hadn’t been here in a few days. Whipping the door open, there stood Brice. My mouth started to drop open and I quickly regain my composure. *Always be the perfect hostess.* My mother’s words shouted at me.

“Brice! What brings you here?”

“Dropping off fresh bread for your dinner tonight. May I come in?” He explained. Stepping aside the twisting in my gut was telling me something bad was about to happened. God, I wish I would learn to listen to it.

“Yes, sure. Please come in.” I said watching him walkin to my living room. I know he had never been inside one of these houses. The plain evidence that Peeta lived alone was proof.

“Where should I put this?” he asked holding the bag.

“In the kitchen. Let me show you.” I said as nicely as I could. The twisting become more and more evident. Entering the kitchen the wafting aroma of my meal making my mouth water. I watched as he sat the bag down and begin emptying the contents. Two loaves of bread and dinner rolls and a bottle of wine? I raised an eyebrow. I wonder how on Earth had he acquired a bottle of this?

I didn’t say anything. It would be rude of me to do so. Another one of my mother's’ stupid rules. He must have noticed me watching him handle the wine and his looked at me sheepishly.

“I, uh, figured we could drink to old times.”

“That sounds great. I'll grab a couple of glasses.” Henry wouldn't be too excited to know that Brice was here. The feud was old as Peeta. It was actually over Peeta. He handed it to me and I popped the cork. Pouring him a glass, he sipped it slowly as did I. It was fruity but nothing I couldn’t handle.

Then something in his eyes changed. Like he wasn’t her for a polite conversation about the past and how we all had been doing since the last time I had been to District 12. He looked at me shifty. His eyes averted mine but I knew something was up.

“So I guess you’re wondering the real reason why I’m here since you haven’t been able to tap into my brain.”

*Yes, I was wondering.*


*God, now what?*

“What about him?”

“Why on Earth did you come back here and screw things up? We had a good thing going. He had no idea who he was. Jana and I had come to accept this along time ago and then he’s sporting fangs.”
“We didn’t come back to play puppet master. Henry and I have a bigger reasons for being here than this. This was just a stepping stone for us. He had been found, Brice. What was you going to do when he went through his transition? Walk him through it?”

He looked at me like I had set him on fire.

_Oh shit…_

Brice’s temper was legendary. Everyone thought Dagger was the fiery one. He was, but he was vicious. Deadly. Brice was just as bad but his temper got the best of him. Even his jealously.

“If I had too! You know we never wanted him. Jana and I. Dagger forced this on us.”

“Oh, really now? Forced you to do this?”

“Yes!”

“You could have sent him back home with Dagger and when he vanished someone could have taken care of him.” I seethed.

“Like who? You?” he sneered.

“I come from a good family. Peeta would have been my _whard_. Since Dagger and I were siblings….”

“ON PAPER!” he screamed.

“I loved Dagger like a brother!” I sighed and stopped myself. Yelling would get me nowhere. “Peeta would have come to me. Like he should have, but noooooooo you had to keep him here away from his fucking birthright!”

“That birthright of his….is that all you care about?”

“No. But it’s there and he needed to know what he was. He starts his training soon.” I watched as he drained his glass and knocked another one back. Another problem of his. He loved his drink.

“Train him to be a vicious warrior?” he sneered. “He won’t need much training. We all know how Dagger was the the one destined to be the warrior in the family and now he’s gone.”

It was a blow to my heart. That Dagger was gone. And how callous his own twin seemed to be. Sliding my hand behind my back, I felt the smooth handle of my dagger and knew I at least could defend myself if he got too much. His absurd laughter startled me out my my defense mode. Eyeing him carefully, I dropped my hand from behind my back.

“You want to know how he died?!” he cackled.

“He’s not dead….”

“Yes he is! It’s what we’ve all been told. It’s what you told Peeta, wasn’t it? Your first lie to him?”

“Dagger isn’t dead. He came home from seeing Peeta when he was three and came down with a sickness that none of us had a clue to fix. Not even our best healers. We put him in a cryo-stasis until we could figure it out.”

He stopped abruptly. But the look in his eyes let me know that he knew something. Something
about Dagger that I could hardly fathom what had happened.

“What did you tell him?”

“We told him that Dagger vanished. I couldn’t tell him his Father was in cryo-stasis.”

But then his laughing continued. A sickening laugh like a man who had been delusional too long and now he’s found out that his real world is imaginary. Like his life. Like his soul.

“He ingested moonflower. It grows around here, you know? After we had found out what he had done to Jana we decided that he needed to disappear. Oh no, we couldn’t kill him. Just wanted him out of the way…."

I couldn’t breathe. I saw red and before I could reach out for him. To hurt him, maim him destroy him something grabbed a hold of me and held me fast.

“NO! NO! LET ME GO!!” I thrashed around. Fighting my guard. Tears streaming down my face, it blurred my already hazy vision. I fought, my fangs protruding from my mouth, I’m sure I looked wild. I wanted his blood all over the house. All while I danced in his entrails. Dagger was my family. He wasn’t blood but he was my family and I loved him. It had killed me when he came home and no one could cure him. The plant was foreign to New Britain. No one had heard of it in centuries.

I continued to fight until I became weary. Collapsing on the floor, I sobbed. “Why would you do that? Why would you take away my family?”

I didn’t hear him reply. I didn’t want to hear his pathetic excuse.

“Oh dearest Virgin...not Dagger….” I cried into the floor. I knew the flower he spoke of. It was poison. He had been poisoned and for all my knowledge I hadn’t a clue how to bring him back. And in his cryo-stasis he would have to stay under we figured out how to rid his body of the poison.

Peeta POV

After I had calmed down, I excused myself to clean up. As I stepped into my downstairs bathroom. I caught a glimpse of myself. Is this what I’ve been reduced too. A serious crying mess of a man? I never cried. I screamed, I threw things; I’ve been known to punch walls and doors, but crying? It was never my thing. Until today. Until I realized that I would never have the family I wished I could have had with them. They saw me as an outcast. A monster. I was nothing like them except that we looked similar.

And even then I’m sure they hated that about me. Everyone that knew my father said I looked a lot like him. Just when I was angry. Henry had said if I let my hair grow out, I would look more like him, but I don’t think I would ever see a change unless I went through my transition. Even then, I was skeptical.

Scrubbing my face with a hand towel, I sighed into it. I wanted to scream into it, but I had Katniss to keep in mind. I didn’t want to scare her and she had seen enough of my dark side that I sometimes wished she would run away from me. I was a monster. I could tell she knew there was something different about me. It was like that sunny disposition that I usually carried was gone. It was gone the night Henry told me of my true parentage. It was gone the night I first tasted her blood.
Henry had told me that life wasn't going to be easy for me anymore. I was always going to have to fight who I was. I was going to have to fight the craving that linger on my tongue. On my soul. Gripping the vanity, I couldn’t even look at myself. I think that I hated my father. Hated that he was a vampire. Hate that I had to be caught into this. I was the son he wanted and the child my mother never wished to have. I know she hated me that she and my uncle would never try for another child because of me.

Gripping the door, I knew I had to get out here. I hated the self doubt that lingered in my mind. It would come in waves especially after a bad day. And I considered today a bad for me. Stepping into my hallway, the colors splashed like a mural before me. When was the last time I had painted anything? Normally it was the one thing that helped me through my nightmares but since Katniss and I had mated, the nightmares seemed less and less.

Maybe I should see that as a good thing?

I could hear her waiting on me. Her light foot walking around our kitchen. I knew she was impatient as ever but for me she would wait for all of eternity. Like I would do for her. If ever need the time too.

When I entered my kitchen, she turned and smiled at me. Her smile lighting the dark twisted ways of my soul.

“Are you ready to go?”

She nodded coming to embrace me, “Yea, I’m actually hungry.”

I smirked nuzzling her neck. Inhaling her delicious scent always made me gasp. “I’m sure you are. You haven’t left my bed in what….three or four days?”

She pulled away from me laughing. “I clearly remember you being there too. Most time it was you pinning me down while you ravished my body.”

“I never heard you complain.”

“No, I didn’t, but now you must feed me.”

“Then let’s go back upstairs and I’ll really feed you…” I said low in her ear. I felt her shiver and I knew I almost had her.

“Feed me food and then you can feed me how you want.” she persuaded me.

“Deal.”

Taking her hand in mine, I led her out the door and hand in hand we walked toward Henry and Charlotte’s place. Before we opened the door, I instantly knew something was wrong. Haymitch was standing there in the living room and he looked like he had seen better days. My heart plummeted into my stomach and he gave me a look like I shouldn’t be here.

“You don’t want to be here kid.”

“What’s going on?”

“Are you deaf tonight?! I said you don’t want to be here.”

Letting go of Katniss’s hand, I pushed past him and walked my way to the kitchen. I could hear the voices before I made it to the door way.
“Train him to be a vicious warrior?” he sneered. “He won’t need much training. We all know how Dagger was the the one destined to be the warrior in the family and now he’s gone.”

What the Hell? Why was my uncle still here?

“You want to know how he died!” he cackled.

“He’s not dead....”

“Yes he is! It’s what we’ve all been told. It’s what you told Peeta, wasn’t it? Your first lie to him?”

“Dagger isn’t dead. He came home from seeing Peeta when he was three and came down with a sickness that none of us had a clue to fix. Not even our best healers. We put him in a cryo-stasis until we could figure it out.”

I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. Henry had told me that my father had vanished. Now I’m hearing that he came down with some sort of illness. What was going on? Who was telling me the truth. I forced myself to stay in my spot. I had to hear more of this. I had a right to know who was lying to me and who was telling me the truth. The laughter that followed was chilling. It was sickening. My uncle had lost his mind.

“He ingested moonflower. It grows around here, you know? After we had found out what he had done to Jana we decided that he needed to disappear. Oh no, we couldn’t kill him. Just wanted him out of the way....”

My blood began to boil and my vision became hazy. I barely registered Charlotte screaming. I barely registered someone holding me back from killing my uncle. How fucking dare he?! That was my father! That was his brother! I struggled to breathe. I had been lied too and now I’ve found out what really happened to my father. Why I was left here to be raised by my uncle and his wife. He had been poisoned.

I heard footsteps. I could smell his fear from the kitchen and now the pungent smell wafted around my body like a warning. Like a trigger. Coming to my feet, I hadn’t realized I was on my knees. My uncle came into my viewing. His face had seemed to age ten years. That confrontation was all he needed to know that he was ruined. How could he have kept that secret for so long and now tell anyone?

Especially me?

My fist clenched and I felt hands on my arms. A gruff but clear voice in my ear screaming at me. “Peeta! Don’t touch him.”

“Let me go. I want him dead....”

“No, you will not kill him Peeta. He’s not worth it.”

I looked at my uncle. Hate pouring off me in waves that it was making me sick. The thought that I could produce so much hatred made my stomach roll and my head hurt. Breathing through my nose, I saw red growing in the peripheral of my vision.

“Get out of my fucking sight now!” I roared. His fear clouding the room I almost forgot who he was. Here he was: an immortal who was terrified of his own nephew. My eyes followed him as I watched him run from the house. The door slamming loudly letting everyone know he was gone.
I wasn’t safe. I had to get out before I hurt something or somebody. My breathing was heavy and I closed my eyes. The hands that had a hold of me stilled and loosened.

“Let me out of here.”

“You’re not going anywhere boy. Do you hear me?”

“Haymitch I can’t be here.”

“Let him go downstairs….He knows where to go.” I heard Henry say sadly.

Hands let me go and I walked away. I could smell the sadness pouring off Katniss and I longed to hold her and make her feel better but I knew in my state I couldn’t do anything but hurt her. I felt her hand brush my arm and I recoiled. I didn’t need to know where to go but my feet led me down the hall to the basement.

When my feet touched concrete I went to the room that I had visited frequent in my despair. In my anger. Closing the door, the lights shut off instantly and I collapsed. The demons danced in my head as I roared for the life I had been denied all these years. The Father I had lost because of jealously.

Chapter End Notes

The flower (Datura/Moonflower) that Dagger ingested is real. It's grown around the Southeast US and I think parts up North. For info:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datura

Read the "Effects of Ingestion" It's pretty wicked stuff and dangerous for humans to consume.
Even the Deepest Secrets Cut PT 2

Chapter Summary

AH!! It's that time of week! For all those that have been reading we're slowly getting to the Quarter Quell. It seems like it's taking forever, eh? I warned that it's a super slow build. I have just now gotten Day 1 of the training done for prep of the Quell. And Haymitch finally gets his own POV! I was super stoked to write him. I hope I did him justice.

As always...I don't own this

Enjoy!!

Haymitch POV

Today was going to be a bad day. I could just tell. Call it my “intuition “ but something was off. When the kid and the girl had left the house earlier in the day, I didn’t think of it. I didn’t think of it when they came back home less than an hour later. I could tell something was wrong with the boy but the girl had stayed by his side and never faltered.

She had never challenged him. Never ran from him, even when he had been at his worst. When he had found out about who he was I almost laughed. This changed everything that we had ever known about the boy. About Dagger. Fuck I wish he was still here.

He, like the other two bloodsuckers, saw through my bullshit. Even when the kid was a toddler. I think from then on out I was responsible for keeping an eye on him. Lettin’ them know when he was close to changing. That all changed when they showed up. I knew why they were here but I wasn’t ready for this. I had watch the kid grow up and saw that he looked just like his Father. It was uncanny.

I was a mentor. A Victor and a drunk. I wasn’t ready for the bullshit that was about to go down. Too much sobriety and too many nightmares that I would have to deal with once long buried secrets came out in the open.

*Long buried secrets my ass.*

When the clocked chimed six or was it seven? I struggled to get up from the couch. In my drunken stupor, I forgot about the bottles surrounding the couch. Tripping, I landed flat on my face. “Well, geeze drunk ass….nice to meet you again” my floor said to me.

Gripping the table I hoisted myself up and struggled to walk through the bottle forest. Damn...how long have I been on this drinking binge? Shaking my head, I smell like vomit and more liquor. Not that impression that I wanted to give off when I went to dinner tonight. For some damn reason that woman made me want to try and at least smell better.

I hated her for it.

Stumbling upstairs to my bathroom, I managed to get in the shower without killing myself. A small victory if I say so myself. Cleaning myself seemed be more of a challenged but somehow I
managed. Getting out, I realized I smelled marginally better. Well at least it’s an improvement.

Finding clean clothes was another challenge. Jesus. You don’t know how bad off you really are until you try to clean yourself drunk.

Yet, I managed to dress myself. I’m full of fucking surprises tonight. I almost want to pat myself on the back. Instead, I took another swig of white liquor and marched my way down the stairs. At least now I was partially sober. Exiting my house, I almost forgot my shoes. Rushing back to the house when my feet hit cold stone, I cursed loudly and threw them on.

Well my manners would have Effie in a tizzy right now. Oddly enough I almost miss her. I cringed when I realized what I missed about her. How she kept me grounded when all I wanted to do was let the liquor take me away. Now that was a woman who wanted me to better for her. Damn women. Only the girl couldn’t care less how I acted and by God that was fine with me.

When I got the their house. I stopped. Something told me that was the epitome of my bad night. And now I wish I had drank the whole damn bottle. Opening the door, I heard the voices. I heard Charlotte’s and someone else. It wasn’t her mate nor Peeta, but I heard a name.

Brice.

Holy fucking hell! What did I just walk into? I cringed, but my feet stayed still. I wanted to listen but I wanted to flee back into the safe compounds of my own house and my liquor. I hadn’t been standing there long when they boy and girl showed up.

“You don’t want to be here kid.” I told him with warning.

“What’s going on?”

“Are you deaf tonight?! I said you don’t want to be here.” Damn it! Can’t the kid get a fucking clue. When he pushed past me I looked at Katniss and sighed. Might was well get this over with now.

The words.....the truth that flew out of Brice’s mouth stunned me. Dagger wasn’t dead. He had been poisoned. Everything that they knew was falling apart. I wished had been paying better attention to Peeta because he had gone quiet. I was smart enough to grab him and hold him down when Charlotte started screaming. I have never seen him this pissed off. I didn’t know how to handle him. This was Henry’s territory. Not mine. I was a drunk mentor not a vicious bloodsucker.

When I felt him calm down, I started to loosen my hold on him. I felt for the kid. I actually felt bad for him. I felt bad for the girl and I didn’t know if this affected her. She didn’t come to my rescue when he lost his mind.

“Let me out of here.”

“You’re not going anywhere boy. Do you hear me?” I told him with certainty. I was sure if I let him go he would kill Brice.

“Haymitch I can’t be here.” I heard him say. I heard the heartbreak in his voice. I heard the defeat. Yet it was laced with unprecedented anger. One that I didn’t know the boy possessed.

“Let him go downstairs….He knows where to go.” I heard Henry say sadly. Snapping my head to him, I barely nodded and let him go. I didn’t know where the kid was going to go but I knew he needed a lot of alone time. I watched as he recoiled from Katniss. Her heart seemed to shatter but she held up well.
I didn’t want to be apart of this. This wasn't my life. But these kids were. I had saved them from dying and I owed them. They started to bring me back to life that night they were crowned victors. I had done something right for once.

Before I walked out, I could hear the scream that would haunt me for nights and days to come.

Katniss POV

I watched him leave. I watched as he recoiled from my touch. All I wanted to do was make sure he was OK. Of course he’s not OK. After what he had just heard. What he had just learned about his Father. Things that I’m sure would never surface except when there was alcohol involved. Loosens the tongue...or so has Haymitch said. I stood rooted to the floor of Charlotte’s living room and cringed when the door closed. Like it was closing on our lives.

Moments that seemed like years flew by before I heard the screams. Raw, hoarse, filled with pain and dread. Filled with regret. I knew he felt betrayed. It sent horrible shivers down my spine and I wished I had the nerve to run far away from this. At least Haymitch was brave enough to run. His eyes downcast as he walked past me.

Somehow I had figure out how to walk. My feet creeping slowly toward the kitchen. I could smell dinner burning and knew if the oven wasn’t turned off there would be a fire in the house. All of us trapped in the blazing inferno. Pushing the door open the aroma of herbs and spices assaulted my sense that were disguised by the sobs that wrecked the kitchen.

Her sobs.

Her heart clenched in my chest as I saw her. Her hair was wild and disheveled. Her body looked frail underneath all the grief that consumed her. I tried to make myself quiet and not disturb her but Henry saw me and closed his own eyes. The grief etched in his own face that was parallel to his mate’s. Holding her close, her sobs were those of a wailing woman who had lost a child. Lost someone she truly loved.

I had heard what was said but I didn’t understand. I wasn’t even sure if the flower Brice had said was real or not. My knowledge of the forest and the plants was vast, but even I, didn’t know about it. Taking the food out of the oven, I realized it had been spared. Setting it on the marble countertop, I took a seat in the barstool. I didn’t say anything and kept my eyes to countertops design. I remember when Charlotte and Henry had returned home after the Victory Tour, she had redone the entire kitchen.

After what seemed like an eternity, the crying had ceased. When she stood up, I saw something different in her eyes. Determination and sorrow. Sobs were replaced by anger. In that moment, I think I was actually terrified of her. Her mouth was pinched in anger and I could tell she was about to blow her lid. Turning away from me, she like Peeta, was afraid of scaring me too much. I wasn’t a vampire like they were but they were insistent that I would be terrified of them.

“That stupid sonofabitch....” she growled into the cooking pot. Henry came to stand behind her. His hands on her hips and I longed for Peeta’s touch. Further away from the doorway that led to the basement, the less I could hear his screams.

“Charlotte....”

“No! You didn’t see how happy he was telling me this. You didn’t see the look in his eyes. The pleasure he got.” her voice steally but grief-ladened.
Henry didn’t say anything. But the pain etched into his face was evident that he could feel her own pain. Gripping the counter in a fashion that I’ve seen Peeta do, he breathed heavily.

“I know you’re hurting but please stop channeling,” he pleaded with her.

“I can’t help it! You know that. It’s been such a long time since I’ve lost control,” she snapped.

“I know, but dearest Virgin…..” he took a shuddering breath. “We’ll figure this out, I promise.”

I watched them like it was book that was unfolding before me. One of those rare moments that I would get caught up in the story and forget the characters aren’t real. My fingers tapping on the countertop, keeping me sane for the moment. Keeping me from opening my mouth and asking what I really wanted to know.

What does this mean?

“That stupid bitch…” she stopped her rant when she remembered I was in the room. ”Did Peeta hear?”

I nodded somberly. “I don’t know how much he heard but it was enough to set him off….”

“He’s downstairs in the room.” Henry cut me off.

“Fucking Hell….” she muttered to no one. “He’s going to be pissed at us.”

“I don’t think it’s really you two he’s pissed at. I think it’s more at Brice. That was his father he was talking about wasn’t it?” I asked foot in mouth disease prominent.

“It was. Information that we had no clue about. We were in the dark about the “how and why’s” of Dagger sickness. We told him that Dagger had disappeared but he’s been in cryo this whole time.”

“If we figured out how to save him, we would bring him back in a heartbeat. I swear it Katniss! Dagger was...is...like a brother to me.” Her face fell at the mention of his name.

“Will his anger always be like this?” I asked curiosity flooding me

“His father was a lot worse. Anything could set him off, but Peeta has a way about him. A ‘gentler nature’ if you will. Only certain things set him off. I’ve noticed this about him. And what I’ve learned it’s small list of things. You being the first on the list.” Henry added offhandedly.

I was shocked, wasn’t I? I knew I had a place in Peeta’s heart but being on his list seemed….I don’t know. Words can’t describe it. We sat there in silence with the exception of Charlotte grumbling every so often.

When the door was pushed opened, I jumped. There stood Peeta. His eyes red rimmed, his posture stiff and his hands were bleeding. Jumping from my seat, I rushed toward him and pulled him to me. His arms instantly wrapping themselves around me. I felt fresh tears stain my shirt. I held him. There wasn’t anything I could but hold him. After he had calmed down, he looked Charlotte for an explanation.

Peeta POV

The screams didn’t stop. After the first one the next came. Longer and louder. I could see them
The screams didn't stop. After the first one the next came. Longer and louder. I could see them dancing in my head. The demons laughing their way into oblivion while I lost more of my sanity. The nightmare on constant loop. It was like I was seeing the poisoning happening. I could see my Father’s eyes become listless. Telling me I had failed him. I couldn’t have. I was only three.

Each scream echoed the small room. I fought to stop them. The anger was coming to me. It started rolling slowly down my spine like molasses. I could feel my heart speed up and my vision tunneled even in the dark. I was furious. I had my life stripped from me, I had been lied to, betrayed, manipulated….the list was far too long to remember. Struggling to come to my feet, I stared in the darkness. I wanted something to punch, but I wasn’t hell bent on destroying a house that wasn’t mine. The last time I destroyed a house, it had been my kitchen. Only a few weeks ago.

Control. I had to learn to control myself. It was the hardest thing I think I was ever going to do in my life. Henry said my Father had uncontrollable rage. I sank to my knees and before I could revert into myself, I punched the floor. Searing pain flooded my brain. It felt good.

Too good.

I began to pummel the hard concrete floor. Each time my fist came in contact with the hard floor, broken shards of concrete hit me in the face. Flew around me. Lodging in the soft walls around me. Hoping that I didn’t break a full hole into it. It didn’t take long before I ran out of steam.

Gasping for air, I felt better. This wasn’t control. It was rage. I had let myself go and not contain it. I think Henry would be disappointed in me. I crawled toward the door, my energy spent and pushed it open. The light flooding the small room and when my eyes landed on the broken concrete, I winced. Yea, he would be pissed at me. Closing my eyes at the brightness, I sat there for a few minutes trying to collect myself before I went back upstairs. Did I want to go back upstairs? Not really, but I had no choice. I wish I could hide away in this hole forever. Getting to my feet was no easy task and when I finally did, I cried out as pain radiated from my hands. I had nearly destroyed my own hands to make myself feel better. Slowly, I climbed my way up the stairs. It seemed like it was going to take forever but I made it. Grasping the door, I knew that Brice was gone. Haymitch was too.

Pushing the door to the kitchen open, I watched as Katniss jumped from her seat and plowed into me. Her love and concern for me started my tears again. I sobbed quietly into her shoulder. Breathing in her scent. Feeling her love for me radiate from her soul. When I had calmed down, I looked at Charlotte who looked almost as bad as I did.

“Would someone mind telling me what the fuck I just heard?” my voice was flat and uncaring. Nothing like the man that I used to know.

I watched as Henry gave Charlotte a pointed look. It was her story to tell. She squirmed a little, pain evident on her face. She didn’t want to relive the incident.

“First of all, mind telling me why Brice came by my house with food?”

“There was an incident at the bakery. We went in to purchase and was practically thrown out. He offered to bring the food when he heard it was coming to you.”

“Uh huh…” Seriously that woman had an impressive vocabulary and this is all she could come up with?

“Let’s sit down and talk about this.” she said trying to diffuse the situation.
“I’m fine where I stand.” my voice gruff and strained. I’m surprised I could even talk after all the screaming.

“There’s a lot that we haven’t told you Peeta. Some of it we’re not supposed to tell you. It’s not our place... “ she held up a hand when I started to protest. “I’m serious Peeta. The proper people will tell you in due time. Right now they want you to focus on your imminent transition.”

“Like who is supposed to be telling me?” I asked curious.

“Fraid we can’t say. You’re not ready. As for what happened earlier...I can now shed some light. First of all we didn’t want to lie to you. Getting told of your heritage was enough to digest. It’s a big pill to swallow. Second, the information we had was incomplete. Now that we know what happened to your Father we can try and reverse it.”

“So everything you told me about my Father was true except how he ‘disappeared?’”

“Yes. Brice obviously has his reason for doing this. All he said that he was doing it to get Dagger out of the way.”

I hung my head in defeat. This isn’t what was supposed to happen. “Will you be able to reverse the side effects?” My voice sounded small, even to me.

“If the right drug is there...then yea, but Peeta, I warn you. He’s been in cryo for fifteen years. His body is emaciated and shrunk. It will take months, if not years, for him to regain what he used to have. We don’t even know what the poison has done to his brain yet.”

There. She said it. The hard truth. A part of me wished she would have sugar coated but the truth was easier to digest. Even if he was cured, there would a chance I could never know my Father; who he really was before this all happened.

I looked down at Katniss mournfully. Her eyes glistened with tears and I sighed and pulled her close to me. Lost in her eyes, I didn’t know that Charlotte had gotten busy in the kitchen and produced a cup of tea of the both of us.

“You need to drink this. It will help your throat.” I nodded and took it gratefully.

“For what it’s worth Charlotte, I’m sorry.” she nodded sadly. Her hands fidgety and expression small.

“Did you hear the whole conversation?”

Swallowing my tea, it burned going down my throat, I shook my head at her. “No, I didn’t. I did hear something about being “on paper’.”

“Dagger and I are adopted siblings. He took me in after my parents disowned me. I’m not sure why he did, I was of age and past my transition.”

“He did it because he cared about you enough to help keep you safe.” Henry said coming up behind her. Winding his arms around her waist, he hugged her tightly.

“Peeta, you have quite a big family waiting to meet you. Aunts, uncles, cousins...” He said looking at me. Like he was finally happy to tell me this.

I was stunned. I had family that could have taken me away from this life even before it had begun. Something inside me broke hearing this. Silently tears cascaded down my face. I had somewhere I could belong.
“I want to leave the District now…”

“Until we’ve completed our mission, we can’t go home yet. And a select few will be coming home with us finally. Some that haven’t seen home in nearly a decade.”

The surprises that you hear about people.

Katniss POV

I stood there stunned. The information was overwhelming. Peeta was standing beside me stoic and uncaring. He only showed the barest of emotion when Charlotte was explaining herself. Part of me was wondering who the man was that was standing beside with his arm wrapped securely around my waist and the rest mourned for the man I love.

“So what does this mean?” I asked finding my voice finally.

“It means I talk to my Uncle and let him know we just found out. He’ll talk to my Aunt, who’s a doctor, and see what they can find out. It will take more than just them two. Is there anyway we can get a sample of the flower?”

“I’m not sure. I don’t even know if it grows around here…I’ve never seen it.” I confessed.

She nodded at me. Her face crestfallen. Then her nose perked up, “I smell blood.”

We all looked around the room and my gaze settled on Peeta’s hands. “Peeta! Your hands!” I exclaimed loudly. Startling even myself.

“Yea, the floor took a beating too…”

“There’s not a hole in my floor, is it?” Henry’s voice was agitated.

Peeta had the graces to look ashamed. “I think I left most of it intact. There are slabs though.”

He sighed closing his eyes before opening them again. “Peeta, we’ve had this talk. I’m not mad about the floor, I understand why you did it, but you will need to learn control.” Henry admonished.

“I tried and failed. There was too much momentum for me to try and control myself.” I heard him confess. This was something new to me. He had never said anything about his lack of control.

“These need to be bandaged. You should be fine in a day or two.” Charlotte said sharply coming back with supplies. Taking a seat, I watched as she cleaned and bandaged his hands. My appetite was gone and all I wanted to do was climb in bed and sleep for days.

“I hate to do this but I’m tired and I want to sleep.” Taking Peeta by the hand, I was careful not to squeeze, “Are you ready?”

“Yea, I suppose so.” he shot Henry and Char an apologetic look before we headed out. Locked away in each other’s arms we made it back to the house. Neither of us said anything about what happened tonight. Crawling into bed, he pulled me close and held me tightly before sleep overcame us.
The nightmares, that seemed to be forgotten, came back that night.
Counting down the Days…

Chapter Summary

Sorry sorry! Please don't throw stones at me!

Now that's said...I got bad news: I am so close to finishing "Gravity" that WTWC will NOT be updated until I do. I've been tired and busy that I'm stumped on how to write the Quell/Arena. I don't want to do full Canon either....I'm sorry for that, but good news that this chapter---while short--is a bit of a filler and those who are paying attention will notice something that won't be mentioned until waayyy later.

Note: this will not be a part 1 & 2.. I didn't realize this until last night while reviewing it. My bad!

As always, I don't own it.

Enjoy!!!

Counting down the Days…..

We didn’t speak of the night of the announcement or the night he found about his Father. Though, it was killing me to ask him. I know that he was going to do and it was the exact same thing I was going to do. We were going to try and save each other. There was nothing else to do. We haven’t even made love since that night either. The night I became his unofficial mate.

I couldn’t hunt. I never wanted to see Gale again. Prim stayed clear of the subject again but I know that she talked to his brother, Rory about it. There was a huge fight at the Hawthorne house when Gale showed up bruised and battered. He had denied and lied about how he had gotten the bruises. When Prim showed up and Rory found out, she said she wished she had never told Rory.

Laying around at Peeta’s, while he worked was killing me. I had nothing to do and it had been days since Peeta threw Gale out of my life. Well, Gale threw himself out of my life when he acted like an asshole to me. Charlotte had coaxed me out the house and tried to find me something to do. After the announcement, she, mother, Peeta, Henry and Haymitch devised a plan to help all of us prepare for the Games. Haymitch and Peeta had argued about which of them was going back in. Peeta had ended the argument saying he would volunteer if he had too.

Nothing worked in my favor. So I buried myself in a book when I heard someone knocking on the door. Setting my book down I crossed into the foyer and opened it. Standing there with tears running down her face was Prim. Pulling her inside, she wrapped her arms around herself before speaking.

“I told Rory about what happened. Between you and Gale. The fights. All of it. I had just finished telling him when Gale showed up. Rory let him speak before calling him out. Yelling at him. Oh my God Katniss. I've never seen Rory so angry. I didn’t know how to handle it so I ran. I ran and I could hear them still yelling in the house. Did I do the right thing?”

I sighed and shook my head at her. “Did it feel like it was wrong?”
She shook her head at me. Unsure of herself. This was the first time she had been unsure of herself. I was the one who second guessed and doubted myself. When I saw Rory next, he was sporting a black eye. I cringed knowing that his older brother had hit him in anger. Because of me. When I tried to apologize to him, he waved it off and told me he should be the one apologizing to me.

So each morning Charlotte and Henry would help me, Peeta, and Haymitch get into shape. We weren’t supposed to do this but as Charlotte said ‘Snow could fuck himself’. My mother changed our diets so we could all gain weight. It was especially important for me to gain the weight and try to become as skilled as I possibly could. I was the only girl between us three. But Charlotte, true to her word, worked me the hardest.

I couldn’t complain but I felt it. I felt in my bones every night I came home. I would flop on the couch and lay there. Peeta, who was ever the patient one, took care of me and gently reminded me that I had to do this. There were nights that I was too tired to do anything but let him hold me while we slept. I had officially moved out of my old house into Peeta’s. He never complained to me, which I was grateful for but he told me one night that Henry had put him through the same Hell that Charlotte was putting me through.

“You never seemed tired.”

‘I hid it very well. There were mornings I was too tired to even get out of bed to work. But I knew I had too. I remember him telling me that I wanted this. It was part of my training even before my transition started taking place.’

I knew from what Charlotte had told me he was still quite a ways away from a full transition. He still needed to drink blood several times a week but physically he was getting stronger. Sharper, more precise. I think he’ll be stealthier than me one day….and he’s louder than I am. The thought saddened and gave me happiness. He had always wanted to go hunting with me and now that he’s getting quieter, he could go.

After all the years of abuse, Haymitch’s body seems the least accepting of the new regimen. He’s strong, but even a short run will tire him out. And for a man who has slept with a knife for years, he can’t even throw one. His hands shake too much. I know it seemed like Henry was agitated with him, but once he learned about Haymitch’s past, he seemed to ease off. But he’s the same when it comes to archery or even hand to hand combat. Which he is better at but it’s still a slow go for him. Even with my mother’s bribing and Henry’s insistence, he’s slowed down on the drinking until after training is done for the day. The morning he showed up hungover and still drunk was legendary. I don’t think I’ve laughed so hard in my life.

We had been in our new regimen for several weeks when I finally broke down. I hadn’t had Peeta’s touch in ages and it was starting to show when he wasn’t around. I was irritated easily and snapped at everyone who tried talking to me. Plus the fact that I was going back into the Arena was enough to set me off.

I couldn’t hunt to ease my aggravation and I know it was starting to wear on Char. When she dragged me to her house late one afternoon after hearing me bitch, I was wary of what she was going to do to me. I had seen her dance, but I wasn’t nearly as graceful. Down the stairs, into the basement, that Peeta trained with Henry, she led to a room with machines. In one corner hung a bag from the ceiling. She had explained to me it was a punching bag, so Charlotte ordered that any time I felt the need to punch something take it out on the bag and not everyone else.

I immediately felt guilty about putting everyone through Hell while I warred with my sexual frustration. I didn’t dare touch myself for I knew I would be caught doing it. Peeta, didn’t seem to be as frustrated as me, but then again, he could hide things better than I ever could.
Since he had been banned from the bakery, he had ample time to learn new recipes. Char and he were starting to become better companions. She would teach him everything she knew about culinary arts—which according to Peeta—was a lot. She told me it was centuries of experience and fuck up’s that led her to be the cook she was. They even offered to let me sit in and learn as well, but I didn’t have the passion they carried.

Each time I came home, the house smelled different. He would try something and make me taste it before he would consider making a full meal for us. I didn’t mind because most of the things he made me try were sweets. Sweets were a rare commodity for someone like me who grew up in the Seam.

Peeta seemed to notice my lack of interest for anything, but he didn’t say anything. He was like that. Commanding when he needed to be, but then the gentle side of him would show. The one I was used to. There were still times I wasn’t used to him being a vampire. Until he would take me in his arms, and feed off me.

After a grueling afternoon with Charlotte, I came home in a bad mood. Cursing her several times, she made my life Hell. I don’t know where they knew the exercises but I wish I hadn’t signed up. Slamming the door, I could hear him in the kitchen. Wandering myself away from temptation I headed upstairs to the bath. I would worry about calming down after my bath. What I didn’t know was the Peeta wasn’t in the mood for cooking that day.

Peeta POV

I heard her coming in cursing Charlotte and I had to stifle a laugh. I had been the same way when Henry had upped my training. It was true that I was tired but the nights he worked me I hurt enough that I could have killed him. He pushed me harder every night and I vaguely wondered why I was getting such treatment. All he would ever tell me was it was part of who I was going to become.

Strange, don’t you think?

Even Haymitch, who I was surprised the most about, seemed to try and get along with our trainers. He didn’t like the fact that he had to stay sober until after the training was over but considered his options when Charlotte had shattered all his alcohol. Thrown out what she could and made him drink the rest. I have never seen Haymitch so damn drunk in all my days I had known him. Then, to make it worthwhile, she made him run two miles. We found him passed out about five hundred yards away.

Charlotte laughed and left him there. No one would bother him and he wouldn’t freeze to death. When he woke the next day, the mother of all hangovers, he mustered up an apology and decided then, to try and make this work.

Soon enough, Katniss started to get agitated about everything. We still had our regular feedings but the intimacy was lost between us. Most nights she would be too tired to do anything but sleep but lately her mood had turned sour. It might have something to do with the upcoming Reaping or our lack of sexual interaction. True that Henry said that males could go a while before we were starved for it, but it was only during times of extreme stress. And I counted this as extreme stress.

I hated not being able to do anything but hold her. My arousal for her was never ending. Most times than naught, it was me alone in my shower taking care of myself. My thoughts always on
her. Only during the times when I fed on her, was the closest I could be intimate with her….even though, each time I wanted to be inside her. But Charlotte had found ways to ease my own agitation. She came over and started teaching me her ways of culinary arts. It kept my mind off my lack of sexual exploration with Katniss. Off the upcoming Reaping. Off my own exercise regimen that had seemed become more challenging.

I once asked Henry where he had learned all this. He made an offhand comment about SEALS I wasn’t sure what it meant, but I was for certain it had nothing to do with animals. When I mentioned my theory on it, he managed a polite laugh and told me that the SEALS were the principal special operations force for the US Navy before the Dark Days. He and a few others had trained for over two years before they completed the rigorous training. Charlotte had been excluded, since women, he said weren’t allowed to become SEALS when he trained. The only thing, he said, he couldn’t teach me was the underwater segment.

I was holed up in the kitchen only hours after my own training was over when Katniss came home. I could tell she was angry and tired and cursing? I stifled my chuckled and kept quiet while she stomped up the stairs. Minutes later, I heard water running. Creeping quietly, I entered the room and heard her still fussing about today. Good, she wouldn’t hear me. Peeling my clothes off, I was instantly aroused by the sound of her voice. She had started singing. Closing my eyes, I swayed a little. I needed to be with her. In that damned shower.

Entering my shower, I pulled back the curtain and stepped in. My arousal growing stronger the closer I was to her. Placing my hands on her hips, she shrieked and whirled around on me.

“Are you trying to give me a heart attack?” she asked indignantly but with love laced in her voice.

“You were singing and I didn’t want to interrupt you.” I said with caution.

“Oh….well…” she fumbled as I gave into my temptation and took her lips. Her gasp was my reward. Pushing her against the cold wall, I placed her hands above her head and continued to kiss and nip at her lips. Traveling down her neck, I felt her move her neck to the side, giving me complete access. I growled in satisfaction but didn’t bite her. Her hips danced under mine and I took a free hand and steadied her.

Lowering my mouth to her breasts, I took care to tease her relentlessly. Pulling and sucking on them, her back arched into me. Pushing her delectable breasts further into my willing mouth. Satisfied I had tortured them long enough, my eyes rolled in the back of my head when I smelled her arousal. It permeated the room and swirled around me. Wrapping me in a cloud of her desire. “Fuck Katniss…” I growled nearly coming undone from the sounds she was making. I could feel her smile, but didn’t care to see her smirk before I claimed her lips again. Loosening my grip on her, I picked her up and she instantly wrapped her legs around me. My erection pressing into her core making me lightheaded. It had been too long since we had come to this.

The steam from the shower clouded the room and it was hot. The heat between us consumed us that I didn’t know it would be contained. Pushing into her, I let out a strangle cry at her tightness. Obscenities flew out her mouth as I chuckled darkly into her neck. This is how I wanted her. How I liked her to be when she’s being claimed by me. It wasn’t enough when I fed on her. Never enough. It was like nothing was ever enough when it came to her.

“You’re so tight….so wet for me, aren’t you?” When she didn’t answer me, I nipped her neck.

“Aren’t you?” I repeated swirling my tongue over her earlobe. I hadn’t fully entered into her and I know it was driving her insane with want. She kept pushing herself down on me, but I held back until I heard her answer.
“Ye...Yes....” I heard her fumble. “Please Peeta....”

“Please what Katniss?” I was beginning to love making her tell me what she wanted. Desire etched it's way through my skin, her nails clawing down my back. I threw my head back when her lips attacked my neck. Nipping and sucking the skin. I wanted to be in her so bad but I resisted still. I had wanted this for ages and I think that’s why Henry let me off the hook today. He could have made me walk through fire and I’d still be here trying to fuck her.

“I want you inside me. I want to feel you....” she finally said as she released my neck. It was all the encouragement I needed. Fully sheathed inside her, my knees buckled from underneath me. The only thing holding me up was sheer determination. Slow, ever so slow, I thrust into her. My hands coming to cup her ass. She squirmed above me, trying to make me go faster. Kissing her mouth, our tongues danced slowly. Synchronizing the thrust of my tongue in her mouth like my cock in her core. I could feel her hands tracing my back, my shoulders my arms. When she snuck a hand down between us, I snatched it away from her.

“No you don’t.....” I told her but increased the tempo of my thrusts. My cock hitting every sweet spot inside her was almost enough to undo me. Soon enough, she was riding my cock in hoping to make her orgasm. My thrusts became more erratic as I was coming closer to my own undoing. I wanted it to last longer and I’m surprised I had lasted this long.

I wanted her to come before me so I picked up my pace and fucked her harder. From her moans she didn’t seem to mind, but before I knew it she was spiraling before me, “Oh....fuck Peeta!” I heard her cry as she orgasmed. Seconds later, I followed her, a roar deep inside me, as I sank my fangs in her neck. Her blood gushed in my mouth as I drank, letting her ride out her orgasm. When I was satisfied, I released her and set her down on her feet. She smiled hazily up at me, and realized the water had cooled off. Squealing she hurried her shower and I watched as my own seed slid down her legs. I wanted to take her again. The small shower filled with not only the scent of our lovemaking but a much darker scent.

When we climbed out, I kissed her gently and headed back downstairs to make us dinner. A smile upon my face while I worked. I couldn’t get the shower out of my mind. I know things are sweeter when you have to wait for them, but it shouldn’t be like this. We sat in silence eating dinner. The sexual tension between us had been released and Katniss seemed to be her old happy self.

As the night wore on, she went to sleep and I holed myself up in my studio. My fantasies, my nightmares coming to life on canvas. I don’t know how long I was there but when I heard the door open, it was a disheveled Katniss. Beautiful in the dim glow of the room, she gave me a pointed look that told me I better get to bed. Nodding, she stood by while I cleaned up. Tomorrow was going to be another hellish day.

Katniss POV

Days turned into weeks and as the weeks went by the closer we came to Reaping Day. You know, after all this time, I was scared of out my mind but I was coming to realize that I was making peace that I could die. Part of me was thankful for everything that Charlotte and Henry had done, but I knew I was doomed. After the afternoon shower, sex became a regular thing for us. Thankfully Charlotte had given me birth control. She didn’t tell me where she procured it and I never asked. Things like that were hard to come by and I was eternally grateful for it.

There’s no telling how many time Haymitch had given us sour looks the next morning while
Charlotte tried suppressing a smile. Most times a laugh. I sincerely think she was happy for us.

Gale never showed his face around the Village again, but sometimes when I wasn’t prepared for it, I would see him around town. And every time that longing pulled at me. I didn’t love him, I never would. But I missed that companionship that we used to have. That we had before the Games. Before I realized I was in love with Peeta and it was always going to be him. He was my dandelion. My life and soul. And now that we would be together until he died.

Rory still talked to me but word from Prim told me that he refused to talk to Gale anymore. After he had found out what an asshole he had become. Rory’s words, not Prim’s as she explained it to me. I think he was waiting on his eighteenth birthday and he was moving away from Gale. I wouldn’t be surprised to see Gale married off soon.

Soon, too soon, the Reaping Day was upon us and as I got dressed for it, my mind wandered to last night. Last night Peeta had been gentle. Making love to me like it was the last time he would ever touch my skin again. Like the last time he would ever kiss me. I wish now we had decided to have a toasting. A real toasting. We weren’t even fully mated yet.

Effie had arrived far earlier than she did last year and I heard a knock the front door as I was reaching the bottom step. Looking at Peeta, who came out of the kitchen, his face questioning me I shrugged. Walking through the foyer, I opened the door and collided with gold hair and a squeal. Effie. When she pulled back, I could tell she had been crying.

“Effie, what are you doing here?” I asked pulling her into the house. I saw as she looked around for a second, eyeing Peeta, before turning back to me.

“Oh dears, I came to see you. I just can’t seem to wrap my mind around that I might lose you both.” she blubbered and threw herself at me. Wincing, I turned to Peeta for help. Hiding the smirk, he came to my rescue and Effie threw herself at Peeta. Now it was my turn to hide a smile. He let her cry in his arms for a few minutes before she pulled away. I had the graces to hand her a tissue.

Smiling at me through tears, she cleaned herself up. Her eyes saddened at the thought of losing us. Ever the one with graceful words, Peeta invited her to tea and some breakfast that she happily accepted. As we sat down to the last breakfast in our District, Effie chatted happily like a bird and kept me and Peeta from being too depressed. Her enthusiasm was infectious and soon Peeta’s dark mood had seemed to lift. I know it was only temporary. If Haymitch’s name was pulled from the bowl, Peeta would instantly step in and volunteer. There wasn’t a damn thing anyone could do about it. His reasoning was that Haymitch was better at mentoring us and taking care of us than he would ever be.

I couldn’t argue with it. And neither could Haymitch. Though he tried. Oh, how he tried.

We were standing outside after another grueling training session and all I wanted was to go inside, have a hot soak and make love to Peeta. The birth control I was on was working wonders and so far no baby scare. I didn’t want a baby anyway. Even if Peeta and I lived for eternity. Laying down on the hot grass, the heat from the summer sun making me miserable. I closed my eyes and tried to relax but I heard shouting. Angry shouting. And one of the voices belonged to Peeta.

Groaning, I got up and limped my way to the argument. Leaning against the side of the house, I eavesdropped. Peering over the side of the house, it was a heated one. Both men were face to face.
“You’re not listening to me…”

“Yea, I am. And your reasoning is stupid. I thought you were the smart one.” Haymitch sneered. I could tell he was itching for a drink.

“No you’re not. If you would stop arguing with me. If your name is pulled from the bowl, I’m volunteering.”

“The Hell you ain’t!”

“Yes I am. I have no fucking clue how to mentor and try to save lives. You do.” Peeta pointed out.

“The fuck I do. Haven’t you been paying attention to the last 24 years? Every kid had DIED. You and Katniss are the exception. I sold your story.”

“And that’s why you are the one to keep Katniss alive. Not me.”

“And you really fucking think she’ll live without you?!” Haymitch all but shouted. I hadn’t asked him to save Peeta but we had come to an unspoken agreement that when the time came it would be him and not me.

“She might…..”

“No she won’t. She’ll crawl into a hole and that will be last we hear of her.” Haymitch said sadly. I heard Peeta sigh. His frustration evident in his voice.

“Oh, but I will do what it takes to protect and save her.”

“Like all of us have been trying to do.”

I realized this was the end of the conversation and I snuck away before I could be discovered. I never said anything to Peeta about what I heard. I loved him too much to tell him I wasn’t coming home with him.

We had an hour before we were to be escorted to the Justice Building and Effie left us saying she had to do a few things before the Reaping began. Her tearful eyes let us know that we were doomed. That nothing was ever going to be in our favor.

Turning back to Peeta, I collapsed in his arms and tried not to cry. I just wanted to hold him and have him hold me. He trembled and I could tell he was fighting his own tears. Dragging us to the bedroom, we laid there in each other’s arm stealing and giving comfort. Sex was the last thing on my mind, I was too terrified.

A knock on the door pulled us away from each other. They were here. The silence and tension thick between us. It was like we were walking to our death’s. The reaper on the other side of the door. Sweat broke out on my palms and as he opened the door, two Peacekeepers were there. They didn’t say anything but we knew to follow.

As we walked toward our death, I wish I had dressed lighter. The old clothes I had thrown on were drenching me. Peeta wasn’t any better. I could hear the shoelaces of his worn boots tap with every step he took. We weren’t allowed to pack anything and bring. The Capitol would be sponsoring our attire. Taking his hand, I squeezed it and felt him squeeze back. Letting each other know that we loved.

In the center of town, we kept our eyes on the podium. Effie and Haymitch already there. I
wondered when they escorted him. Letting Peeta’s hand go, I felt myself cry on the inside. Walking up the steps, I stood before the bowl that held only one female name. Mine. I couldn’t look over at the other bowl. The crowd before us loomed and stared. Their faces impassive. Most seem happy that they would be skipping the Reaping this year. The rest seem angry that we would have to face the Arena again. The star crossed lovers doomed to a life of sadness.

Effie took her place by the microphone and without her usual gusto and enthusiasm, she reached in and spoke my name. My heart squeezed in my chest. When she reached over to pull the male name, I could hear a sigh of relief when she said Haymitch’s name.

“I volunteer!” Peeta cried stepping past Haymitch who tried fighting him. Oh, God. He had been serious. He was going back in with me. Effie nodded sadly. And before I knew it I was being dragged away. Crying out that I was supposed to get to say goodbye to the ones I loved.

“Change of plans.” I heard as I was shoved down the halls of the Justice Building to the podium to the train. The train that would take me back to the Capitol and back to the idea of losing Peeta forever. Pushing me onto the train, Charlotte and Henry sat there like they were waiting on us.
The Train Ride to Hell Pt 1

Chapter Summary

In honor of FINALLY FINALLY finishing "Gravity" (minus the Epilogue) I am posting a new chapter! For everyone that has been reading this I sincerely thank you for your patience. It's been a journey on "Gravity" and I am happy to say it's done for good.

As always: I don't own it!

Enjoy!!

They already knew. This angered me. They were were were going back in longe before the announcement. Neither had seemed surprised when Snow had made the announcement.

We stared at them while Effie and Haymitch boarded the train. He, escaping to find alcohol; while she disappeared to talk to someone.

“Did you know?!” I rounded on Henry. Peeta grabbed me by the waist. “Did you know that we would be going back?”

“We did. Long before. How else would Snow be able to punish you? He could have done it a different way. Like he did with…….. Finnick.”

When he said the name, I saw pain cross his face. Charlotte stiffened and looked ather hands. Like she didn’t want to hear it anymore. Like she could bury it and never find it again.

My mind swirled, making me dizzy. What has this to do with Finnick? Then I remembered. The whispers of forced prostitution. That he was always being sold off to the highest bidder. Men, women…it didn’t matter to Snow. All the blood drained from my face and I felt myself sway from lack of oxygen.

“Oh...God…” I moaned and felt two strong arms hold me up before carrying me to the sofa. Resting my head on my legs, I tried to steady my breathing. A hand rubbed my back and I tried forcing every sound out of my mind. I could vaguely hear Peeta yelling at Henry.

“The ‘star-crossed lovers’ angle was what kept you two from being sold. You really have Haymitch and Effie to thank for that. If it wasn’t for them both of you would be far worse off than you are now. And you think getting married to one another was the worst thing that could happen.” Henry continued to lecture. “No, I’ve seen worse in my days and I’ll tell you the truth, both of you got off pretty fucking easy. So don’t come attacking me because you’re pissed off. You think the forced prostitution would be the worst thing for your ‘government’ to do to you?” He shook his head scowling at us both. Like we were petulant whining children. “You never want to truly know what the ‘government’ is really capable of. We do.” he said waving his hand back and forth to him and Char.

He stalked off. Leaving me and Peeta flabbergasted. Charlotte didn’t seem much more impressed.
with us either. “Sometimes I forget that you’re teenagers and not adults who can fully understand the Hell that you could be facing. Please try to remember this when you go back into the Arena. The other Victors are adults and they will expect you to act like one.” She left us without another words and I sat there looking at Peeta. I felt sheepish. She was right. We were acting like children. Spoiled children because we were Victors and had won. He didn’t look too much better. His face was beet red and I could see the shame in his eyes.

“You know they’re right.”

“I know but I didn’t expect a lecture. I feel like I’ve disappointed them. Like everything we’ve been through since the end of the Victory Tour was all for nothing.”

“I feel the same way. With everything I’ve been through and what we’ve faced since….They’ve put up with more our shit than I expected them too. Especially during all the training. I know it wasn’t easy for you or me but we could have cut them a little bit of slack. They didn’t have to help us.” Peeta said looking forlorn. “And now we’re going back into the Arena and we’re acting like children.”

“So what do we do now?” I asked him with uncertainty.

“We apologize and do better. Henry is right. Snow could have done much worse to us.” I started to protest, but he held my gaze. “Yes, I realize we are going back in the Arena against our will but so are many other Victors. Ones that never thought they would have to see this again. We’re fresh off the train whereas they aren’t. We actually have an advantage over them.”

All I could do was nod at him. He was right in some sort of way. Standing up, I took his hand and led us to my quarters. Pushing the button on the wall, the door slid open. There my quarters looked the same as they did months ago. Though this time there weren’t any personal effects. I hadn’t even got to say goodbye to Prim or Mother. My face fell and tears began to fall.

“Hey...it’s OK.” I heard Peeta whisper. “We’re gonna be fine.”

“I didn’t get to say goodbye…” I knew he didn’t either. Like he would want to say goodbye to those people but he did love his brothers.

“We’ll write letters.” he said with an empty promise. He knew I would never write those letters. What could I say? That I’m sorry I’m going back and I’m sorry if I die you’ll have to move back to the Seam and begin the starving process all over again. I shook my head at him. I wasn’t going to put them through that.

Looking at my inviting bed, I started to peel out of my clothes. Peeta let out a strangled sound when he saw me take my shirt off. He continued to watch me until I was fully naked. Struggling to get out of his clothes, I almost chuckled when he nearly tripped on his pants. His eyes were dark and full of lust and hunger. I kissed him gently and took his hand.

“Will you stay with me?” I asked softly pulling us onto the bed. His lips captured mine again before he responded.

“Always.”

I don’t remember much after that except I was safe and loved.

I must have fallen asleep because a pounding on the door woke me up. Groaning, I opened my eyes and realized it was dark outside. How long have I been asleep?

“Someone better be dying…..” I heard Peeta grumble and the bed shifted as he got up. I watched
as he slid his pants back on. I chewed on my lip as I fingered my hair. Trying to make it seem reasonable. Plus I was trying to hide the bite mark where Peeta had fed from. My fingers brushed it and I smiled remembering feeling his fangs sink into my neck as he brought me to my third orgasm.

Pushing the button, the door flew open and Effie stood there. Her face aghast. Like she hadn’t caught us in my bed before. But unlike last time, I wasn’t dressed. I tried to hid the blush that crept on my face.

“You two! Such indiscretion! What is the meaning of this?” she proclaimed. We were saved from explaining when Haymitch showed up.

“Dinner’s ready. I suggest you two get dressed and come eat. I’m sure you’re both hungry.” he waggled his eyebrows and laughed. Looking at a fuming Effie, he sighed. She was still huffing and you could almost see smoke coming from her ears. “Oh would you lighten up! They’ve been at this for weeks now…”

Oh dear God…..we must have left the windows open.

I could have buried myself in the sand for all I ever cared and stay there. No blush crept on Peeta’s face. He had become so accustomed to us being caught. Of course, he was much more comfortable with himself than I was. And was mated, unofficially, to him. Effie huffed again and shot Haymitch a legendary death glare. I chuckled when she whipped her head around and stared at me. I froze like a deer.

“Well, regardless if they’ve ‘been at it for weeks’.” she imitated Haymitch. “It’s still not proper. I hope you two are using protection.” she glared at Peeta. Like it was all on him to keep up with this. Sighing, I nodded at her.

“Yes, Effie...we’re being careful.”

“Oh for fuck’s sake...they’re going back in the Arena….what’s good at yelling at them?” Haymitch exclaimed finally sounding exasperated at her.

She fidgeted for a minute and stomped off. We could hear her fussing all the way to the dining car. I had to suppress a chuckle that threatened to escape. Haymitch was right. We could very well die in this new Arena...the thought choked me as I closed my eyes.

“So, yea. Both of you get a move on. Dinner is waiting…” he said before he left us.

Peeta turned around and looked at me. His hungry gaze making me feel more exposed than I already was. Sauntering his way to me, he crawled back in bed instead of getting dressed. He was always the more compliant one. I was the stubborn one. I figured he would be the one to listen to Haymitch. When he rose to his knees, his fingers came into my hair lifting my head to look at him.

“I want to be inside you again and for every day after this.” he whispered before lightly kissing me. Heat pooled between my already damp legs. “I don’t care what they say. I don’t care if it’s improper. Hearing you say my name as I give you ultimate pleasure is enough to make me insane.”

He pressed his lips more firmly to mine. Like he was sealing a deal...making a promise to me. A promise I knew he couldn’t possibly keep. We both could die in that Arena...how on Earth could we live without one another? He was my rock. My reasoning for living...besides Prim. We could have stayed there kissing until the end of time, but our stomachs growled.

We both sighed and parted. I instantly felt lost. Watching him slid his shirt on, he grinned at me.
“I’m going to shower and change...I’ll see you at the table.” I nodded mutely. I didn’t want him to leave me, but if we showered we’d never make it to dinner. He didn’t even slip his shoes on but before he left my room, he turned to me. “I love you Katniss...”

“I love you too...” I mumbled biting on my thumb. When he disappeared from my sight, I flopped back down on the bed and sighed. I could smell us in the sheets and couldn’t care less what the staff would think. Or my prep team for that matter. My stomach growled again and I finally pushed myself to get up. Trodding to the shower room, I quickly showered. I didn’t care for the fancy showers or anything like Peeta did. Sadly, he liked this luxury but said he couldn’t do it every day. It was like a small treat to him. Pulling the first thing out of my drawer, I threw it on before braiding my hair. I sighed and took it down. He always liked it when it was down. The soft dark green tunic was a cinch tight in the bust, but the leggings were comfortable. Cinna must have remembered that I liked these.

Exiting the room and not smelling like our lovemaking, I ran into Peeta who was must have been waiting on me to eat. His smile lit up the hallway, his eyes raking over me. I could almost feel the love pouring out of him. Pressing me gently to him, he kissed me lightly. Tugging on my lower lip ever so slightly. Enough to make me crave him again.

“You look beautiful...” he mummered against my lips before his lips ghosted over my throat. I felt myself arch into him. Already inviting him. My body so accustom to his every want and desire. It thrilled me and scared me. We broke apart hearing a delicate “ahem.” Turning our heads, it was Henry and Char. Neither one of them seemed embarrassed to find us like this. Their stoic expressions meant they were still angry at the both of us.

“You’re in my way of food...” Char complained.

“We need to talk to you both.” Peeta said putting some distance between us. “I will speak for the both of us. Since I am better with words.” I managed to poke my tongue out. “We’re sorry for how we reacted when we got on the train. For the immaturity that we displayed over the whole Reaping and how we put you two through Hell during training. You are right. There are worse things out there than this. I just hope we can get out it and live our lives...”

Henry nodded. Like he was expecting an apology. This must be something between Henry and Peeta that I had no clue about. “If you let us by...we can call it square. It’s no big deal. Everyone occasionally needs to be reminded where we stand in times like this.” Henry said. His booming voice no louder than a whisper but the sound resonated throughout the corridor.

Both of nodded and stepped aside. Letting them past, I felt Char’s hand on my shoulder before it disappeared. Looking back into Peeta’s eyes, he sighed like he dodged a sword to the head. He rested his hands on my hips again and brought us close together.

“Stick that tongue out at me again and see what happens.” he voice low and husky. His eyes darkened and I saw his fangs lengthen. It sent shivers down my spine and I almost did it. Of course everyone was watching us through the window. Like we were on show for them. We were so absorbed in one another that we jumped when something clanged against the glass. Growling, he pulled back from me.

“OK! We get it. Time to eat!” he shouted through the glass. Everyone laughed but Effie. She was still pissed at us. I’m guessing it was time for some groveling. It always seemed to help in the past. We entered the dining car and sat down beside each other. Henry and Char gave us knowing looks while Haymitch burped and continued to eat. It still amazed me how he ate without throwing everything up. Effie eyed us evily but smiled through it. Never let a bad situation prevent her from good manners. As I took a sip of my drink, Peeta was the one that decided to grovel.
“Effie, we are quite sorry for the indiscretion earlier. We know that we are supposed to maintain a proper image for the sake of us being Victor’s but I can say as well as everyone here…” he looked at me and gave me that smile. The one that made me wet instantly. “I love her and I want to be able to spend all the time I can with her before we enter into the Arena.”

My eyes widened at his words. I mean, don’t get me wrong, they were completely sincere but I swear that man could sweet talk the pants off a virgin. I scoff, what can I say…he did the same to me. Except that I was in love with him. I watched the play between them and as he kept talking, Effie kept melting. I had to stop myself from rolling my eyes at her.

“Oh Peeta! Of course you want to spend all the precious time you have left with her. I can understand that but to find you in Katniss’s compartment half undress is improper! I know two are engaged and in love but please for now on, stay clothed!” she exclaimed accepting his apology.

I stared at her opened mouthed. She actually believed that. Charlotte kicked me under the table reminding me that I was in this too but Peeta had performed brilliantly. I didn’t need to add on to it and fuck it up even more. Closing my mouth, I remained quiet throughout the rest of dinner while everyone made pleasant small talk. I hated small talk. Occasionally Peeta’s hand would disappear under the table and caress the insides of my thighs. I would clench down and feel his hand tremble from desire.

As soon as dinner was done and settled, Effie left us to ‘get her beauty sleep’ as she called it. I rolled my eyes but said goodnight to her anyway. Henry disappeared and came back with a box. I raised my eyebrow quizzically.

“These are old tapes of the Games. Of your competitors. Haymitch will even agree that everyone, including him, have known each other for years. They have more of the advantage than you two. Fresh from the 74th and without friends or allies.”

“I hate to tell you but this will be a lot different that what you experienced last year. Those were kids; these are not.” Charlotte told us taking a seat with a glass of wine. “Quite frankly, since Henry and I aren’t from this country I’m kind of curious how these things play out…”

“Curious?! Peeta stared at her. “It’s twenty four kids sent to a death camp to kill each other….How much more do you need to know?!” He all but shouted at her. I watched her impassive face and realized he had made a mistake.

“Listen here kid, I know this shit is bad but don’t go fuckin’ yelling at my mate. She is right. This is something completely foreign to us. We might have lived for centuries but we have never seen something like this. So fuckin’ lay off, ya get me?” Henry seethed glaring at Peeta. Thankfully, Haymitch had the good graces to keep his mouth shut.

The tension in the room was palpable. Peeta had stepped over a line and yelled at Charlotte.

**Peeta POV**

When Henry had brought the tapes in for us to watch, I was curious to see how the other Victors managed to win. How they could stand to kill one another. It would be a good idea to learn how each of the worked. Maybe would help Katniss and I survive. But when Charlotte said she was curious how these Games played out, I lost it. I hadn’t realized I was standing up yelling at her until I saw the death glare Henry was giving me.

*Oh fuck…..*
She was curious how kids were sent to kill each other for sport. It was simple as basic math. Gripping the sides of the chair I was sitting in, I held back my anger as Henry lashed out. They didn’t understand and how could they? Unless they were thrown into it themselves. So I sat there in silence. Silence was my friend right now. He gave me another glare but popped a tape in. It was the 62nd Games.

We sat there and watched in utter fascination and disgust. Katniss had supplied us with pen and paper to take notes. I couldn’t imagine how hard this was for Haymitch. All his friends going to die because of us. I’m sure he hated us desperately. When the dark skinned Enobaria showed up on screen, we knew from looking at the list that she won. How, we weren’t sure….

But as the Games worn on, it became apparent how she did win. From her incredible strength and skill. She became the remaining two tributes left. When she was on top of the last tribute, I nearly gagged when she tore his throat out with her teeth. I looked over at Katniss and she seemed a little pale to me too.

“Now that’s how you kill someone….” I heard Henry whisper to Charlotte. I could almost hear the awe and appreciation in his voice.

“Pshh...I’m too damn tidy to do that to someone. Blood gets everywhere.” she protested.

“Seriously? You two...really?” I asked looking at them.

“What? It’s an interesting way of killing someone. Messy, but efficient. Make sure you don’t get a date with her.”

“Yea...duly noted.” I said sourly. I wanted this to be over, but we had been training like Careers for this and we needed to keep up the “Career” appearance for a little bit longer.

“So what’s next?” Charlotte asked as Henry replaced the tape.

“It’s the 45th Games….Jesus how many of these damn things ya’ll have?”

“Seventy five...as of now.” Katniss said.

“It’s Chaff’s Games….” Haymitch said quietly. She and I knew Chaff from all the years watching them pass a bottle around on television. Neither of us said a word throughout the Games. I think Katniss and I were starting to get a clear picture of what we were to expect.

We were most likely going to die……

After watching two more, I had to get out of the room. I was tired of watching the Games. To me, it was all the same. Different Arena, different kids, but essentially the results were the same. Twenty three dead...one victor.

“I’m going to bed. I’ll see everyone in the morning.” I finally said at the end of the 51st games. I could feel Katniss’s eyes on me as I left without saying another word. Before I closed the door to my compartment, she was there. Holding me as I trembled from the thought of our impending death. Well, my impending death. She was going to come home. Whether she liked it or not.

She had family who needed her. Cared about her. With Gale out of the picture she could find someone to love. Someone who give her the things she wanted.

“Shh...it’s OK Peeta. It will be OK. We’ll be fine.” I could hear her words in my ear but they refused to register. I was falling apart again. Mentally kicking myself, I couldn’t do this to her. I
couldn’t lose it like I did the last time. Neither one of would come out alive.

“I know, but I can’t stand how they can sit there and watch it over and over. It’s all the same to us.”

“Yes, to us. But not to them. Like they said, this is a foreign concept to them. That’s the reason why they’re fascinated.” My huntress with her rare words of wisdom. I nodded again at her and sighed heavily. I wanted her in my bed tonight. If sex happened, it happened, but I’m sure one of us would wake up with nightmares. It had been quite a while since I’ve had one and I’m sure I was due for one.

“Would you stay with me tonight?” I ask her quietly. She nodded and gave me a light kiss. “I’ll take the bathroom first while you go and grab some nightclothes.” She nodded again and disappeared from my sight. I turned and grabbed some clothes from the dresser. Making my way to the bathroom, I got undressed and cleaned up. Opening the door, there she stood. Waiting for me. Like the goddess she was.

“Come to bed Peeta.” I heard her whisper. Nodding, I didn’t hesitate and crawled in bed with her. Pulling her close to me, I inhaled her earthy scent and soon I fell asleep.

A knock on the door woke me. Just a knock. It had to be Henry because anyone else would have opened the door on us and made histrionics. Like Effie. Or Haymitch. It was annoying enough they were on the train with us but to have to listen to them bitch was almost too much. Looking down at a sleeping Katniss my heart swelled for her.

I didn’t want to wake her but I knew that one knock was all I was going to get before someone else tried waking us up. And then the show would start. Placing light kisses on her neck, I felt myself become more aroused and let my hands wander over her body. When she arched her back into me, I knew she was awake. “If you’re going start teasing me, then you need to finish.” I heard her mumble.

I was only too happy to comply.

Rolling her over, I attacked her neck in slow kisses. My fangs instantly lengthening. I wasn’t hungry. Not yet anyway. My cock brushed her core and a moan escaped her urging me on. Her hands sliding down my back, reaching into my hair while I tugged at her nightgown. I didn’t care if she had morning breath or not, I needed to taste those lips that haunted me. Tugging on her lower lip, my tongue dipped in her mouth like my paintbrushes would do to the paints. Gentle, teasing; yet utterly arousing.

Her light moans drove me insane, but I knew we had to stop. Pick up later when we were finally settled in our rooms in the Training Center. Pulling back from her, I sat up and faced away from her. I fought my marking urges. Closing my eyes, her hands slid down my bare back. Tingles and shivers wreaking havoc on my spine.

“Katniss…” I groaned. My body and mind battling away. My head tipped as I felt a featherlight kiss on the side of my neck. Sometimes I wish she had fangs. My cock jump like it was agreeing with me. I know I could never turn her. She had to be born this way. “We need to go to breakfast. Before anyone else knocks on that damned door.”

Sighing unhappily, she slipped around me and found her way onto my lap. Nuzzling my mouth into her neck, I realize this was our normal feeding way, my fangs scratching her delicate skin. I could smell the blood. I wasn’t a full vampire yet, that would come soon enough. Henry had explained what I would start to feel beforehand, but with Katniss so close to me, I couldn't fucking remember. Hell, I couldn’t remember my own fucking name at this point.
Just then there were two raps against my door. We jumped and I expected someone to come barging in. When no one did, I let out a breath I didn’t know I had been holding. It was Henry again. That was our second warning. Looking at her, her silver eyes boring into mine.

“What was that?” she whispered.

“Our second warning. It means we better get a move on before Effie or Haymitch wake up and knock. No offense but I rather them, especially Haymitch, not see you like this.” Scowling, she nodded and stood up.

“I guess I’ll see you in the dining car…” I grabbed her and kissed her. Her eyes darkened and glazed over and I knew I had seconds before she would try and jump me.

“Go female. I’ll see you at breakfast…” she raised a quizzical eyebrow at me, but left.

Looking down at my cock, I sighed. A cold shower was in order. Fixing the temperature in the shower, I shaved quickly and stepped in. Hissing at the cold water, I instantly regretted having to do this. Showering as fast as I could stand the cold, I turned the heat on. Sighing happily, I stood there and closed my eyes. My mind started to wander to Katniss in her own shower. Was she pleasuring herself? Was she thinking of me when she did it?

My hand instantly grabbed my already stiffening cock and began to stroke. Behind my eyes, I see Katniss laying on her bed, her hair sprawled out around her. Her fingers between her legs as she works herself into an orgasm. I watched as her hips rolled back and forth like she was aching for a cock. When she brought herself to orgasm, I see the pure bliss on her face. Grunting, my orgasm struck me like a damn train. My strokes continued until I was wore out. I smirked, feeling empty, it had been awhile since I’ve jerked off.

Toweling off, I went back into my room for the last time. Searching for clothes to wear wasn’t a problem when something was already laid out for me. Raising an eyebrow, disgust flooded me as I realized someone had been in here while I was showering. Had they heard me? I honestly didn’t care but what I did was no one else’s business.

Dressing quickly, I left my room and went to search of my mate. Well, my future mate….if we ever make it out of this alive. I was going to properly mate her and give her young. Whether she liked it or not. Stopping in front of the dining car, I saw her. In a light green dress that hugged every one of her curves.
The Train Ride to Hell Pt 2

Chapter Summary

So I'm full of fun fun updates these past 2 days! Here's chapter 21. "Gravity" will be finished updating soon enough and I'm almost, but not quite yet, to the beginning of the Quarter Quell. I'm slow, what can I say?

Note: This is the chapter where the Black Dagger Brotherhood members are mentioned and start to become active members.

As always: I don't own it!

Enjoy!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Taking a seat beside her, I inhale her lovely scent. Her laughter was music to my ears as Charlotte told a story about one of their kids trying to build a fort. Piling food on my plate, I noticed that Effie was rather excited about something. She and I try to make occasional attempts at conversation but I was coming at a loss. So I chose flattery.

"I love your new hair Effie.” I said taking sip of my hot chocolate.

“Thank you. I had it especially done to match Katniss’s pin. I was thinking we might get you a gold ankle band and maybe find Haymitch a gold bracelet. We’re a team.” I heard Charlotte snort as Katniss looked at us peculiarly.

Effie glared at Charlotte. “We are a team. Even you and Henry with your flashy weapons and skills.”

“We’re honored to be part of this team.” Henry said formally and kicked Charlotte under the table. I'm not sure what her deal was today but she needed to lay off.

“I think it’s a great idea. What do you think Haymitch?”

“Yeah, whatever.” Haymitch grumbled. He’s not drinking and you can tell he wants too. Effie had them take away her wine last night when she saw he was making an effort, but you can tell he’s fucking miserable.

The talk is light after that. Katniss attempts to tease Haymitch and the look he gives her is pure evil. She took the hint and laid off him for the moment. Soon enough, she would try again. After the food had been cleared away except for snacks and drinks.

“Shall we watch the recap of the reapings?” says Effie dabbing her mouth with a white napkin. Her obvious statement clear to us that she didn’t hear the argument from last night. Everyone looked at each other. The tension was skin tight in the compartment, but Katniss nodded.

“Yea, let’s watch. See who else got roped in this…” she said with a tinge of sarcasm.
I left the compartment to retrieve a notebook containing a list of the remaining victors and the notes from last night. We weren’t sure who was reaped but to know all was good idea. Settling on the couch, Katniss curled into me and rested her head on my shoulder. Effie started the program and we settled in.

Before the programs could start, Henry and Charlotte left the room and disappeared to the back part of the train. Katniss and I looked at each other searching for an explanation but we couldn’t find one. Eiffe huffed about rude manners and settled in after Haymitch gave her a cold glare. Something was going on.

Sitting there I idly doodled while the anthem played but was surprised to see that I recognized many of the faces. Either tributes, victors or both. The list isn’t long, but I can tell Katniss is trying to memorize the faces as well as the names. Putting a star by the names of the list of victors, it helped narrow down the list of potential killers.

There’s Johanna from 7, a woman who appears to be about thirty, named Cecelia, has to detach herself from three kids. Chaff, from 11 is called in. Then there’s our district. I watch as Katniss is called. Then Haymitch then I volunteer. The announcers, to my astonishment, gets teary eyed and states that the odds will never be in the favor of the star crossed lovers, but manage to pull herself together and declares “this will be the best Games ever!”

Haymitch leaves the compartment without another word, Effie following him. Leaving us with Henry and Charlotte—who had returned mere seconds after the recapping. I rip out a few pages of the victors that weren’t picked and Katniss begins to pick at her nails. A nervous habit of hers.

“Are ya’ll going to sit around and watch a few more of the Games?” Charlotte asked.

“I guess we can. It’s not like we have anything else to do until we have to stop for a refuel.” I said with reluctance. Truthfully, I didn’t but I figured it would help pass the time until we could escape to our rooms or eat.

Henry nodded and put another tape in. This time it was from the 11th Hunger Games that featured the elderly lady from District 4. The only other volunteer for these Games. We watched as the 16 year old version of herself won by being able to keep herself alive by making hooks out of anything and being able to know what edibles to eat.

Hers wasn’t as gruesome as the later Games became to be. This was still early on after the Dark Days that participants were picked and Games were done over quickly. Not in the lavish sense they are now. Which now it’s become more and more ridiculous since the last Quarter Quell.

When we finished the 11th Games, Henry grabbed another one. When the screen flashed it showed the woman from District 8. The one that had the kids. Cecelia, if I remember her name correctly. Nothing strikes odd in these Games. They’re all becoming one big blur to me. She wins because she’s handy with a sword. Who knows if she carries the same vicious ways now or not. Motherhood could certainly change that.

Finally, the clock chimes for lunch. If I had to watch another one, I was going to leave the compartment. Whether Katniss followed me or not. At first, I was gungho about training and learning everything I needed to know to try and survive this thing, but as the weeks wore on, the pressure of imminent death that laid upon my doorstep discouraged me from caring. Katniss was coming home. Not me.

The door slid open letting Effie and. Haymitch on her tail. They looked a little...disheveled? Taking a breath, I noticed an odd mix of their scents. Like they had.....my eyes widened and my mouth hung open. The only sounds I heard was Charlotte laughing. Katniss looked innocent
enough, so she didn’t understand what I was just now learning.

“You might want to close your mouth Peeta.” she whispered giggling.

“Are they?” I asked closing my mouth but still flabbergasted.

“Yea. Didn’t expect that did ya? Who would have though these two had a thing for each other?”

“Not me that’s for certain.”

“No one suspects them so don’t say anything.”

I nodded my head at her. My affirmation of keeping their secret. If they were sleeping together that was their business. It just blew my mind that the same two people who ‘hated’ each other would be in love. Then again, it might not be love. It could be just the circumstance of how our lives played out. Comfort. ...I knew it all to well with Katniss. Sometimes sex was all the comfort that I could get.

Digging into my food, I absently let my hand wander Katniss’s thigh. Her subtle change of breath is all I need to confirm that she has indeed noticed me. Up until the Victory Tour, I had a hard time getting her to notice me. She changed all that with one kiss in her room on a dark night after a nightmare.

In between sips of wine and bites of food, Effie tells us that we’ll be arriving in the Capitol tomorrow morning and it will be a big big big day for all of us. I silently groaned in my drink and looked at Katniss who looked less than pleased.

“Well…” Henry said wiping his mouth with a napkin. “Char and I have few things that need attending before we arrive tomorrow.” she looked at him confused. “The tech V sent us?”

“OH! Yea…I almost forgot.” she rolled her eyes.

“Who’s V?”

“My uncle. It’s short for his real name.”

“Short for what?” Man, I was nosy tonight.

“He sent that stuff to you already?” Haymitch interrupted. Henry nodded at him giving Haymitch a look.

Charlotte turned her attention back to us. “Vishous is his full name.”

I nodded at her and watched as they left the compartment. Haymitch let out a healthy burp and followed them. I don’t know what they were on about but I think they all knew that something was going to happen. And it was going to end with a bang. Excusing myself from the table, I took Katniss's's hand and we left the compartment as well.

Taking her back to her room, we lounged around just absorbing each other. We laid there alternating between kissing and holding each other. The train ride was boring enough as it was. Dinner arrived too soon for us and we all sat down once again. Henry and Charlotte were in deep discussion with Haymitch over some kind of tech gadget that they were going do something with around the Capitol. I didn’t ask because I knew I wouldn’t get any answers from them. Whatever it was, it seemed important. Once our plates were empty and our bellies full, Henry and Charlotte asked if we want to sit and watch recap of old Games.
Neither Katniss and I were in the mood to watch them. When we shook our heads no, they nodded and let us be. Which for them was normal but Effie reminded us that we needed to stay ahead of the game if we were going to try and win it again. I don’t think she realized that it was going to be just one victor this time, not two.

Retreating to our room, I pulled Katniss close to me and kissed her slowly. This was going to be our last night on the train and the countdown to the last days of our lives started now because starting tomorrow they were going to be solely focused on trying to learn how to kill every Victor that had been reaped.

Her breath hitched as she felt my fangs lengthen. Our tongues clashed for dominance and love. My hands slowly slid up and down her back. I wanted her to feel my love tonight. I wanted her to carry my young. Growling, as her fingers tangled in my curls that were slowly growing out for her. Pushing her back toward the bed, I lowered her down on it while never breaking our kiss. Her soft supple body underneath me, made me delirious.

Leaving her mouth, my mouth traveled down the column of her neck. Placing open wet kisses, I nibbled on her collarbone. I needed her tonight. I wanted to love her. Her hands searching my body trying to undress me; leaving scorch marks in her wake. My whole existence was to please her in every way I possibly could.

Pulling away from her heat, I reached behind me and pulled my shirt off. My eyes never leaving hers. They were dark, like mine and I shuddered when she licked her lips slowly. Her eyes traveling over the counters of my broad chest. Pulling me back to her, she kissed me hotly on the mouth. Her actions better than her words, I snaked my hands up the sides of her shirt and pulled it off. Leaving her in her bra, which didn’t last long in my presence. Unhooking it, I pulled it off with my teeth. My fangs scratching her ever so gently. Blood pooled onto her skin from the marks and I languidly licked them up.

I needed to be inside her. Jerking her pants down, I licked and nipped every inch of her skin. There, she laid before me in her panties, and with two sharp flick, I ripped them off her. I could smell her arousal. It penetrated the room making me dizzy with want. Flicking my tongue over her slit, her hips bucked before me. Her moans wild in my ears. I knew she wanted me to stay down there when her fingers roughly grabbed my hair. I didn’t want foreplay. I just wanted in her. Shucking my own pants, I came back to kiss her gently on the mouth. My tongue demanding entrance. My cock pressing into her core. The heat an inferno to my already aching cock. Inch by inch, I slid slowly inside her until I was fully sheathed.

Our moans echoed off the walls around us. I knew that we were being loud, but neither of us cared. It was our last night before the grueling training began and I wouldn’t be able to have much of her. A sweat began to break out over my body as I strained to keep myself from coming to soon. Her body rolled with mine in a sea of waves that were never ending. Oh my God… My mind screamed at me when her walls clenched around me. My fangs protruding from my gums demanding entrance into her vein.

“Peeta…” I heard her cry into my shoulder, “I can’t hold on any longer…” Her moans were cut off by my demanding kiss.

“Let go Katniss…” I whispered into her ear. My tongue glazed over her soft spot under her ear and when her walls contracted around me, her orgasm blindsided her. Her moans echoed throughout the small compartment. Sinking my fangs in her neck, I came only seconds after her. Taking my fill of her, I released her and dropped my head in the crook of her neck. Our uneven breathing began to wane after a few minutes.

Lifting my head, I placed a gentle kiss on her lips before rolling off her. Pulling her body close to
mine, I held her tightly. “I love you forever my love…” I whispered in her ear. Her breathing indicated that she had fallen asleep on me. Kissing her shoulder, I got up from the bed in search of Henry. I would need his counsel tonight.

Throwing my clothes back on, I left the compartment. Left the warm bed that held my mate in it. I wished to crawl myself back in the bed with her, but I needed something more. Coming to his door, I didn’t have to knock when it opened. Haymitch stood blocking me in.

“Do you need something?” he asked clearly sober.

I was a head taller than him, but I could see Henry and Charlotte looking at a blue screen. In the corner there was someone talking. A man I’ve never seen but the tattoos on his face was intimidating.

“I’m sending you the maps that we have modified. Tor there are three buildings that we’ve been asked to place the bombs.”

“I know V, but seriously, she’s asking for a lot. How are we supposed to get into the mansion? According to your maps, it doesn’t seem like there’s an entrance.”

“Ari, listen to me. There’s always way in. We all can dematerialized, can’t we?”

“Yea, but….”

“No buts. I’m working on new tech that will make us invisible. Since we aren’t genetically programmed to do that.”

“Very nice…” the voice that sounded like Henry said.

“What’s going on?” I asked startling myself.

They whipped their heads around and guilt showed on their faces. Who were these people that claimed they were our friends….our mentors? The looked each other. All of them including Haymitch.

“I asked, what’s going on?”

“Is that him? Dagger’s son?” the voice asked.

Charlotte nodded at him. The male’s eyes widened at the confirmation.

“Hot damn…he looks like him.”

“I know he does. He’s got the temper too.” Henry said giving a small smile. He and Char looked at each other and nodded at Haymitch. When he stepped aside, I walked in. Unsure of what I was going to learn about this. Of course, knowing these people, I wouldn’t learn anything of use.

Stepping up to Henry, I looked at the blue screen. It was some sort of projector and I could see maps and coordinates. I didn’t understand any of it.

“Peeta...this is Vishous, my uncle.”

“Jesus Christ….Has he been through his transition?”

“Not yet. I haven’t.” I told the male.

“He’s tried forcing it though.” Henry added.
“What the fuck do you mean “forcing it??” he shouted through the screen making us wince.

“He has his fangs and the bloodlust.

“Motherfucker...does Wrath know?”

“None except this room....”

“.....and Katniss.” I finished adding her in the mix as well. Probably not my best idea at the time, but I couldn’t leave her out of it.

“Who’s that?”

“My chosen mate....”

“Seriously? How the fuck is he able to do that? None of us could do that as a pre-trans.”

“I don’t know but he has. All we’ve been able to do is keep an eye on them. Trying to advise them as much as possible.” Henry and Charlotte said.

“Bullshit. I’m sure there’s more bad news that I don’t want to hear. You know I’m the one that has to tell Wrath, not either of you. Fuckers.”

“Vishous....” Char eyed him evilly. “I don’t want to be the bearer of bad news either. But fuck, this isn’t something we can control....”

“Like Hell you can’t. Now the both you will tell me what happened?”

“Almost two centuries old and he’s still tryin’ to boss me around...” I heard Charlotte mutter.

“I fucking heard that...”

“I meant you too!” she snarled at him.

Before a fight could escalate between the two, I stepped in and tried to play peacemaker. Giving Henry a look, he pulled Charlotte to him. Her eyes accusatory and hateful. I’m guessing this was a long standing argument between the two.

“A male friend of Katniss’s tried to sexually assault her and I lost my fucking mind. The only thing I remember is exploding pain and the urge to mark her as mine. Henry had said it wasn’t possible but it happened....”

He swore and nodded for me to continue. “Ever since then I’ve been trying to learn what I can. I swear you can’t blame these two. This was all my doing.”

“How are you feeding?”

“Katniss...mainly.” He raised an eyebrow first at me, then at Henry and Charlotte...

“She’s human, isn’t she?”

“She is....”

“Did you let her feed off you? It would be the only way for her to be able to sustain you....”

“The first night I bedded her, I did. She asked me to do it..”
“You both know that you have to have Wrath’s or the Scribe Virgin’s permission for that. Especially, the Scribe’s permission.” he eyed Charlotte dangerously. “Ari, you of all people should know that...Jesus Christ...leave you two in a foreign land and things go to fucking shit.”

“All I did was tell him about it...I didn’t expect him to do it!” Henry exclaimed.

“Then you could have volunteered. You and Payne could have come...She’s the only one with fighting experience.” Charlotte interrupted the incoming argument.

“I couldn’t spend that much time with my sister. It’s bad enough seeing her depressed like the way she is. You both know how Manny’s death destroyed her.”

I watched them nod solemnly. There was so much about these people that I had no idea of. No clue who they were or what their lives were like. I felt like I was on the outside of the sweet shop looking and not knowing anything. Seeing a life that people had built up but I wasn’t a part of it.

“Listen Peeta, we still have a few things to talk to V about.” Charlotte said.

“No, let him stay...”

“It’s not the wisest idea V.” Henry warned.

“Why the fuck not Tor?”

“Because of what will happen after the clock strikes 12.” V nodded at him and sighed.

“Fine...fine.. It’s nice to meet you Peeta.”

“Nice meeting you too. I guess I’m going to get going. Katniss is waiting for me in bed.” I said waving everyone goodnight.

When I left the room, I couldn’t sleep. My mind was restless from all the information that I had been exposed too. Even though it didn’t seem like it was a lot, it was enough for me to worry about Katniss and our future around these people. More importantly, why was Vishous calling them different names?

I knew I should have asked more questions or listen to them slip up every time they thought I wasn’t listening in. This was one of those moments that I wished I could have a drink. Though I wasn’t legally able to do so and I’m sure someone would snitch on me if I snuck a bottle and hid away for a while.

But, it wasn’t like I was going to live much longer. I had just a little over a month left before my fate was sealed. Channeling my bravery, I snuck past the dining car and into the bar car. Looking around, I didn’t see anyone. So I carefully walked toward the bar and grabbed the first thing I could reach. My paranoia on high as I snuck back out and down the corridors to the back of the train. When I found the spot, the same I had been hiding in the night that Katniss had her nightmare on the Victory Tour, I twisted the bottle cap an off and took a swig. Grimacing as the liquid burned down my throat, I briefly wondered why Haymitch would drink this stuff.

I know this wasn’t the same thing he drank but it tasted nasty. Maybe I wasn’t meant for drinking. Taking another swig, I began to feel the swimming feeling that only came with drinking alcoholic beverages. Even at the Victory party held in the Capitol we weren’t allowed to drink. Chuckling, I could see Effie’s disapproval as well as everyone else around me. I know Haymitch didn’t want neither of us reduced to what he had become but here lately he had been making an effort to stay sober. I wondered if that was his benefit or ours.
After tonight, I had a feeling it was a bit of both. The conversation I had with Vishous sealed the
deal that I had other family out there. Family I could have lived comfortably with. Trained with.
Setting the bottle down, I looked at my hands. I didn’t know what they were supposed to be use
for. All my life it had been baking but with all the training I had been receiving from Henry or
should I say Tor, it seemed like they were meant for battle.

I wasn’t sure if I was comfortable with that. Like it matter. I’m sure there was something mapped
out for me that I couldn't get out of. Grabbing the lonely bottle, I took another drink from it. Even
from earlier, my paranoia was on high alert and I’m glad I was able to tune into my surroundings.
I was getting better than Katniss because when the doorknob turned, it opened slowly and I could
see her from the side angle.

“Peeta? Are you in here?”

Should I answer her? Let her know my hiding spot. Hide my alcohol? I wasn’t doing bad but it
felt wrong to mislead her. Sighing, I set the bottle down and decide to do the right thing by her
tonight. Not that our lovemaking was wrong, it wasn’t fair to her to hide my paranoia and fears.

“I’m right here Katniss.”

Her head whipped around and she saw me. Sitting alone the dark with only the barest trace of the
moonlight shining through the closed window. There’s nothing I wouldn’t do to make her feel my
love for her. I would do anything for her.

“What are you doing here?” she asked coming to sit in front of me.

“Hiding, if you must know.”

“What for?” her eyes zeroed in on my bottle and she raised an eyebrow at me.

“Just needed a quiet spot to process.”

“And the alcohol is helping?”

“Not really, but it does give me a fuzzy feeling.” I said giving her a half hearted smile.

“Katniss do you think we really know the people closest to us?”

“What do you mean?”

“Charlotte and Henry….Like what are they here for?”

“To help you through your transition….train you to be like them?”

“Yea, I thought the same thing too but tonight I stumbled onto a secret meeting. You know that
“Uncle” of Charlotte’s?” she nodded at me. “I met him tonight. He’s got wicked tattooing on his
face and he’s got a “don’t fuck with me” attitude. He even kept calling them different names.” I
hung my head between my legs and sighed. Reaching for the bottle, I snuck a drink in.

She eyed me again but didn’t say anything. I knew she wouldn’t. This was helping me process
what I had experience tonight. maybe make sense of everything. I doubted it.

“What was he calling them?” she asked gently pulling the bottle from my hands. I knew I had had
enough to make me swimmy.
“Tor and Ari. I’m sure they’re short for something but he didn’t go in further. He found about me...what I’ve been going through lately and I swear I had to stop an argument that was escalating between Charlotte and Vishous. Hot heads, I tell you.” I sighed and looked at her. Pulling her into my lap, her body jostled against mine.

“Mmm...you smell incredible.” I mused my lips a breath from hers.

“What do I smell like?” she asked teasingly.

“Like a faint dark spicy scent.” she raised an eyebrow at me. “It’s faint, but it’s the bonding scent Henry told me about.”

“We need to go to bed Peeta...We’ll be in the Capitol tomorrow morning and you don’t need a hangover. They’ll know you snuck alcohol out of the bar car. They can’t blame Haymitch, he’s trying to stay sober.”

Taking my hand, she led me back to her room. My unsteady feet following my mate, I prided myself on on falling on my ass. We had left the bottle in my hiding spot and I knew I wouldn’t need it anymore. Stepping into the room, I held on to her desperately while she turned us around and slowly undressed me. Her lips kissing every inch of my body. My cock jumped in attention to her and she languidly licked it slowly.

On her knees, before me, she was goddess. My cock in her mouth as she slowly sucked me. My head threw back, glancing at the ceiling we never paid attention too, a growl escaped me. This was her way of telling me that I could find comfort with her instead of hiding away with a bottle. My breathing was ragged and I reached down to tangle my rough fingers in her soft hair. Her hands cupping my balls, squeezing them gently as she continued to suck me.

“Oh...fuck me.” I gasped feeling her teeth graze my cock. Her eyes were dark and I could see myself reflected in them. My fangs were long and I broke out into a sweat trying to hold off. My hair damping on my forehead. When her small delicate hand wrapped around the base, I choked as she squeezed. I was close. So fucking close. The love that shone from her eyes made my heart ache.

“Let go Peeta…” she echoed my words from earlier. Like a lightening bolt, I came hard enough to see stars. Her hands still working my cock as I kept coming. When she had milked me dry, I sagged against her as she stood before me again. Kissing her, I led her to the bed where her moans echoed mine. It was far the best sleep we’ve had in awhile.

Chapter End Notes

Oh! Can anyone guess what movie this line comes from: (minus the curse word)

“I fucking heard that…”

“I meant you too!” she snarled at him.

If you can guess, I'll throw at kudos/comment and love at the next chapter or anything of your choosing.
Chapter Summary

Yay another chapter for those of you that are following, reading, and/or kudos this story. This one we'll have "teenage-like" Peeta. It's always fun writing him when he's pissed off.

Smut, fighting, and a shorter chapter. Next chapter will have more information about Henry/Char characters. If you want to know more about how they hooked up, please read "Gravity"

As always: I don't own it

Enjoy!

Katniss POV

I awoke the next morning snuggled close to Peeta. His warmth radiating off him making me toasty. Not that I minded. Today was our last day on the train and tomorrow we would be underneath the Training Center to train for the Games. Rolling to the side, I groaned feeling my arm had fallen asleep sometime in the night. I realized that I had slept all night without a nightmare.

With Peeta’s revelations from last night, I laid there and thought about them. Who were these people, including Haymitch? What did they want with us or better yet what were they going to do to us? Don’t get me wrong, I cared about these people, but now I was a little wary of what their intentions were. I had been so lost in thought that I didn’t realize Peeta had woken up and was watching me.

A caress of his hand wasn’t enough of a warning. But when his lips ghosted over my throat, a purr escaped my mouth. My body had a will of it’s own. Pushing back into him, I felt a soft scratching and my body always so responsive to him arched for his demand. His tongue flicked over my pulse point and I rolled toward him. Finding his mouth we kissed slowly, deeply, full of love. I didn’t want to leave the bed. His knee parted my legs and I felt his hardness pressing in the apex of my thighs and the burning hunger was back. Rubbing my body against his he let out a low hiss. “If you keep that up, I will take you.” he squeezed my breast rubbing the nipple with his thumb.

“...Don’t care…” I gasped underneath him. I think he took my words seriously because seconds later he was fully sheathed inside me. Closing my eyes, I threw my head back. Trapping my hands above my head, he began to move inside me. Our bodies hot and aching, I captured his lips again feeling his fangs peek from his gums.

“Open your eyes Katniss.” he demanded and I forced my eyes opened and looked into his. The dark pools penetrated into mine and I forced to keep them open as he picked up the pace. Our bodies slapping against one another. The erotic sound bringing me closer to my orgasm. The heat coiled in my stomach and soon it spread throughout my body. When I couldn’t hold it any longer,
it snapped and I exploded.

“Oh, fuck Peeta….Peeta!” I cried out as softly as I could manage. His smirked against my pulse sent shivers down my spine and I felt his body contract and his orgasm followed mine. We laid there in each other’s arms, exhaustion setting in but I forced my eyes to stay open. I wanted to stay awake as long as I could. Our time clock was nearing an end and I wanted to spend every moment I could with him.

“Mmm…good morning to you too.” he nummered rolling off me. Propping himself on one arm, he looked down at me.

“You didn’t feed.”

“I don’t need to every morning. I’m able to go a day or two before I need to feed again.” I nodded at him. “You like it don’t you. The way fangs feel in your vein as my mouth massages your skin.”

I blushed at his words. He always had a way with words. Just as the words left his lips, I felt a surge of wetness between my legs again, which was fine because his cock had grown again.

“It seems like you like it too.”

“Oh, I do. I love way you sound when I feed off you.” his tongue flicked over my lips. Permission to enter my mouth and I greedily let him in. The kiss was slow, erotic and I grabbed his head and pulled him closer to me. He was about to slip inside me again when there was knock on the door.

“Fuck…there’s the warning.” he grumbled pulling back from me. We had learned yesterday to not ignore the warning knock. Effie would stomp her way in a few moments later if we don’t. “Can’t a male get laid around here?” he asked sitting up in bed. He looked down at me and smiled. “I’m afraid we need to get up Katniss.”

We both sighed and climbed out of bed. “Do you want to shower with me and make it quick?” I asked him. His eyes darkened as he nodded at me. Naked and cold, I hurried to the shower with Peeta on my heels. With the hot water spraying around us, I didn’t remember anything else when he slipped inside me once again.

After the shower, he left to get dressed in his own compartment. Leaving me to my thoughts again. Alone in our own thoughts were dangerous. Like what happened to Peeta last night. I wouldn’t have pegged him for a drinker, but it seemed like it was helping him. He didn’t seem hungover this morning, which I think, he was grateful for. Finding simple clothes, I knew they would be discarded when we arrived to the Remake Center. So, what did it matter if I dressed fancily.

Leaving the room, I wandered down the corridor, my thoughts elsewhere and I didn’t realize I had entered the dining car and sat down until Effie bid me good morning. Looking at her, I feigned a happy smile, which she took as a good sign.

Plating food, I picked around it until Peeta arrived and took a seat beside me. Looking at him, he smiled at me and kissed me. Publically. It was simple, chaste, but underneath I felt a stirring in that kiss. Henry and Charlotte arrived moments later and took a seat beside Effie. Haymitch was still a no show but I hoped he didn’t decide to go back on his word and start drinking again.

When he did finally show up, I could tell that Haymitch was still sober. Peeta tried to keep conversation with Effie, like he did most mornings, but what caught my attention was Henry and Char. They were sitting close and speaking in a language that I had no clue existed. Reaching to grab another roll, I caught the wiff of a dark spicy scent coming from Char. The same one that
Peeta told me that he smelled off me last night.

Setting my plate aside once I was finished, Henry and Char looked at us. “You two ready?”

“Not really,” I said sipping my hot chocolate.

“Yea, whatever…” Peeta mumbled. I looked at him sharply. I didn’t realize he was still angry at them, but I suppose he was.

“You mind killing the attitude today son?” Henry commanded.

“What attitude?”

“The one you’re sporting. Listen, I know you’re mad about last night…”

“Mad?” he said coming to his feet. “Mad doesn’t describe it. You mind telling me what I’m not suppose to know? You let Vishous interrogate me and then kick me out like I’m small child that can’t sit in on adult conversations.”

*This was going to get nasty if I don’t calm him down.*

But I didn’t get the chance too, because Peeta wasn’t going to let this go.

“Like we’ve told you before, there are things we aren’t at liberty to tell you. We’re just the hired guns here. No position of authority.” Henry said heatedly. Peeta’s eyes looked toward Haymitch.

“And don’t even think about asking Haymitch. He’s not the authority figure you need to be talking too. We’re trying to protect you…”

Peeta’s hand came down on the table making the silverware clatter. “I don’t need fucking protection! I need answers! Now.”

A growl escaped Henry and it shocked me as well as Effie who was a poor bystander. I had been here before with Peeta’s new flaring temper. She hadn’t. She let out a small squeak in her coffee and her eyes were a touch too wild and scared.

Haymitch leaned over to her, “Effie, baby, you might want to leave….” I heard him whisper. She nodded and bolted from the room. The word ‘baby’ was lost on my train of thought when Henry spoke up again. This time he wasn’t trying to hide his anger.

“And what are you going to do with those answers? Huh? We know what’s going to happen and we’re trying to make sure if something bad happens then you don’t suffer for it.”

Haymitch took the time to whistle a four note tune and I heard a slight clicking and a power down sound. Peeta stood there glaring at his mentor. The anger radiating off him was palpable. “I want to know.”

Charlotte had been unusually quiet this whole time and I remembered she said when it came to ‘male business’ she stayed out of it. Which is why she was glaring at me. I was ready to jump and pull Peeta from the room, but I knew better to anger my own mentor.

“No.” Peeta begin to protest, but Henry gave him a death glare. “And that’s final. You will learn when we are allowed to tell you.”

“At least tell me why Vishous kept calling you different name. You owe me at least that.”

Henry, finally to his feet, materialized in front of Peeta, which startled me more. I’ve seen
Charlotte run at incredible speeds but I have never seen this. Whipping my head to Haymitch he seemed unaffected by what happened. “I. owe. you. nothing.” he seethed his fangs long and his demeanor dangerous. His eyes narrowed even further till they were almost slits. The air around us started to chill and I shivered a little. “You listen here, I outrank you and I always will. I don’t owe you any explanations. Now if your attitude was your usual, I might tell you why, but if you keep this up, I’m not.”

“But…”

“You know what? Fuck it. I’m not breathing a word.” Henry walked off and left the dining car. I looked at Charlotte but she didn’t say anything but got up and followed her mate.

It was me, Peeta and Haymitch. It would always be us, wouldn’t it? Looking at Peeta, I was afraid to talk to him. I didn’t know if he was calmed down or not. I watched as Peeta’s eyes zoomed in on Haymitch.

“Don’t look to me to tell you anything. You’ve pissed him off royally. But he is telling you the truth. He’s not allowed to tell you anything until he gets the go-ahead.” Haymitch heaved a great sigh.

“I’m sorry..”

“It’s not me who you need to be apologizing too. I’ve been around your kind for a long time and you males are alway hotheaded. When you get pissed you don’t think, I get that. But you have to remember when it’s their business, specifically the Brotherhood business, you are not allowed to know anything unless you’re one of them.” Haymitch paused like he said too much.

What the fuck is the Brotherhood?

“How do you know so much Haymitch?” I asked carefully.

“I told you, I’ve been around their kind for a long time. I’ve known those two for over fifteen years and I knew Dagger.” Peeta looked him sharply his eyes narrowing. “Yea, I knew him. Fine male and yes you look just like him it’s uncanny; even with that temper you seem to share. But even he knew better than to cross Henry. You might not know it, but if you think your father was dangerous, then you have no clue how vicious Henry can be when he’s pissed off.”

Then he got up and left us. Left to mull over the morning’s’ events. I stood up and inched closer to Peeta. He instantly wrapped his arms around me. We held each other for the longest time. Underneath the Captiol smell was Peeta’s own natural smell and it soothed me.

“Did I scare you?”

“No, you didn’t. You were just angry. I know you’re still mad but Peeta, you have to apologize.”

“I know I do, but I can’t control my temper.”

“I didn’t know you were still upset from last night.”

“I didn’t either until I saw them this morning. The memories from last night came rushing back and I remembered how I felt. It bubbled in me until it spilled over.”

I nodded at him, but tugging on his hand I dragged him to Henry and Char’s quarters. I knew he was dreading apologizing but he would feel better when he did. The anger wasn’t Peeta. The gentle happy optimist was. And I knew he hated how the urges reacted in him. Coming to the door, I knocked gently and the door opened.
Charlotte stood before us, her eyes narrowed at Peeta. “What do you want?”

“Who is it?” the voice called from the other side of the room.

“Peeta and Katniss…”

“What does he want?” he asked as the voice became clearer. Still angry but clearer.

“Don’t know, I’m about to ask.” she turned her attention back to us. “What do you want Peeta?”

“I want to apologize.”

“Well he’s in there. It’s not me you have to apologize too.” she waved her hand giving us entrance into their quarters. We stepped in and I knew that Henry was still angry but I needed him to listen to Peeta.

The thudding became louder as Henry came from the bathroom. Cleaning his hands with a towel, his eyes narrowed at our presence.

“What do you want now?” he asked tossing the towel to the side.

“I want to apologize to you. For stepping out of line. It’s not my place to tell you what to do.” Peeta apologized with actual sincerity.

“Apology accepted. I don’t mean to be a hard ass to you but sometimes you need to know where you stand. Especially you. You’re a pre-trans. There’s a lot you will not be told because of it. I don’t care who you know or who your father is. You’re not fully transitioned, and you’re not a Brother. So you’re not going to be included. I know you think different but trust me on this, you’re not ready.”

“When will I be ready?”

“You’ll know when you are.” Henry said. “Now to tell you one thing that we can tell you…” He looked at Charlotte and she nodded. We heard the same four tune whistle come from her lips and everything seemed to shut down around us.

“We can tell you our real names. That much we have given the go-ahead.”

We waited for a split second.

“I go by Torhture and she..” he nodded his head toward Charlotte. “goes by Arianna.”

Another breath escaped us.

“Then why change your names?” Peeta asked startling my thoughts.

“For the sake of the mission. And no, I’m telling you what it is.”

“Do...do I have name like yours?”

“You do,” Torhture nodded. “But I’m not at liberty to tell you what it is. Only your Father can. There’s power in our names.” he looked at his watched and sighed, “But you two need to get ready. We’re coming into train station as we speak. We’ll talk later when it’s safe.”

I snort at the thought. Nothing in the Capitol is safe. Taking Peeta’s hand, I pulled him away from the room. He followed me to the dining car and sure enough Henry...I mean Torhture was right.
The train station loomed ahead of us and I took a seat.

A sickening feel clawed its way through my body. Surrounded by the large lake and mountains, it stood there like a beacon of hope. But for those who had been ensnared in its clutches we only saw death and fear.

Slowly the train slowed to a stop. Coming to my feet, I hadn’t realized I was trembling until Peeta took hold of me and held me close to him. I didn’t want to go back. I didn’t want to face everything again. The horror was still fresh in my mind. I couldn’t escape the nightmares that would occasionally plague me.

I know they haunted Peeta too. Even through his unfailing good optimism I knew he was affected. I think it was even more so worse after we had slept together the night of the announcement. I shrugged it off because the train gradually stopped and the crowds that faced us was enormous. It seemed that half of the Capitol people had turned out just to see us. The thought alone was nauseating.

Effie and Haymitch showed up as soon as the door opens. I knew that Tortture and Arianna would behind them. Pretending to be bodyguards for us when in fact they were the complete opposite. It seemed that Peeta and I had an entourage of people who were mentoring us. One to keep us alive through the games and the other two to prepare us for a new life. I stole a glance at Peeta and his eyes were thinking the same thing as mine. Putting on brave smile, I took a huge breath and waved to our adoring ‘fans’.
Chapter Summary

Where we're Parading like Birds Pt 2

Sorry for the delay. I've been lazy daydreaming and procrastinating to get more written. Thankfully for me, I have over 75% of the story written and I try to keep it a minimal of a 30,000 word distance between the chapter I post and the one I'm writing on. Here in this chappie, Finnick makes his lovely debut.

Haymitch and Ari have POVs this chapter

As always: I don't own it!

Enjoy!!

Effie and Haymitch showed up as soon as the door opens. I knew that Torhture and Arianna would behind them. Pretending to be bodyguards for us when in fact they were the complete opposite. It seemed that Peeta and I had an entourage of people who were mentoring us. One to keep us alive through the games and the other two to prepare us for a new life. I stole a glance at Peeta and his eyes were thinking the same thing as mine. Putting on brave smile, I took a huge breath and waved to our adoring ‘fans’.

He took my hands and warmth spread through my bones and we walked slowly. Peacekeepers in front of us kept the crowds from harassing us. Kept the order in the train station. Once free and clear of the train station we were escorted to the Remake Center. Effie, Haymitch left with Torhture and Arianna--who looked at us with mixed sympathy and pity as well as a healthy dose of amusement. Part me was glad she wasn’t going to be in the Remake Center because I couldn’t handle her ridicule and amusement.

We reached the doors that would split us up. Kissing me softly on the mouth his eyes told me that he would see me soon. Ushering me into the room, I was sure that being with my prep team so many times it would be a breeze, but what I wasn’t expecting was all the tears. Every single one of them had become so attached to me that he wouldn’t bear that I was going back in the Arena again.

That would make the four of us.

Each time something was said, one of them would burst into tears. Flavius finally had to tell Venia to leave if she couldn’t hold it together. When she left, I was left with two simpering prep team.

“Cinna told us to take you back to Beauty Base Zero and leave your makeup and hair alone.” Flavius sniffled into his sixth tissue.

So I laid there and took the pain. The waxing, the cutting, the trimming. The foul smelling cream that smeared all over my body that would effectively remove all the hair from me and leave my skin baby soft. After an extensive rub down with lotion that makes my skin breath a sigh of relief, I was allowed to leave them. To make things worse, I turned and gave each of them a hug. Which sent them into further histrionics.

Entering the room that Cinna would meet me, I sat on the red couch that was there last year. I
didn’t have time to get comfortable when he should up. His face gave away nothing. Nothing that I could tell that he wasn't happy about this.

“So how are you?” he asked indifferently.

“You could wring me out.” I joked. “You’re not going to cry all over me either, are you?”

“No. I channel my emotions into my work so I don’t hurt anyone but myself.” he said softly.
“Now this year we’re going to do something similar like we did last year.”

“So you’re going to set us on fire again.”

He nodded and produced my outfit and clicked a device. The lights swarmed around it. The fire seemed to be so real until I touched it and it was cool. unlike real fire; which burned.

“It so lifelike.” I mumbled amazed.

“Portia and I spent a lot of time studying fire,” he told me as helped me suit up. The black outfit was similar to last years but with the some difference. This year I was showing my shoulders and I had a train. Taking a better look at it, I realized it was a dress.

“This is a dress. You don't think I'm going to trip over myself.” I asked.

“You’ve done well with dresses so far, haven’t you?”

“I guess….”

“Don’t worry. Peeta will be able to take care of you if you fall down.” he joked.

Fixing my hair in an elaborate updo, the rest it hung in curls down my back. With a dash of makeup that make my face look smokey, I was terrifying. I looked like something that had crawled out of the mines. I was as dark as coal.

Letting me go once he was finished, I moseyed down to the area where the parade would start. All the tributes were milling around. Most staying by their chariot; others were talking in groups. I felt awkward as I was the new kid of the block and I didn't have the lifetime of friends like these people did. I hoped to find someone but I find that I’m alone.

So the safest place I could be would be at our chariot. Finding the District 12 chariot I walked my way over. Keeping my head down and to myself I made it over there without much attention, The horse whinnied seeing me like it remembered me from last year. Rubbing my hand over its snout, I sighed and looked into its eyes. Hoping to distract myself from being around all these people with Peeta and Haymitch around.

I heard the crunching coming from behind me and I turned around to see who it was. Finnick Odair’s sea green eyes are penetrating mine. He’s eating little cubes of sugar which are meant for the horses.

“Hello Katniss.” he says as if we’ve known each other for years instead of just now meeting.

“Hello Finnick.” I say before turning back to the horse. It wasn’t in me to be shy because of his state or should I saw lack of dress. I’ve seen Peeta naked numerous times so I’m sure I can handle Finnick being half way there.

“Want a sugar cube?” he offered me. “I know they’re for the horses and they can live and eat the cubes until they die, but you and I, well…” he chuckles darkly. “aren’t quite as lucky are we?”
“No, thank you.” I politely turn him down. I’m sure Effie would be ecstatic at my manners.

He and I stood there for a minute longer when he spoke up, “What happened to your pretty little-girl dresses?”

“I outgrew them.”

“I can see that you have…” his eyes darkened a little but he kept his distance from me.

He sighs dramatically, “It’s too bad about this Quell thing. You could have made out like a bandit. Anything you wanted.”

“Well sorry to burst your bubble, but I have everything I need right now.” I lashed out. “What do you spend all yours on, anyway?”

“Oh I haven’t dealt in anything common as money for years.”

“Then how do people pay for the pleasure of your company.” I asked intrigued.

“With secrets.” he says softly. Somehow I believe him. Why wouldn't anyone want to tell him anything. It would be easy for these insipid Capitol people to tell him what he wanted to hear as long as he whispered the right words to them.

“Ah, here come lover boy and Haymitch. I must be off….and Katniss may the odds be ever in your favor.” he mimicked.

He walked off tipping his head at Haymitch before disappearing to his own chariot. I could tell something was up when Haymitch returned the nod. It was a sign that they were more than just old friends. Like they were co-conspirators. My thoughts were interrupted when Peeta’s hands slid around my waist, pulling me close to him.

“Was that Finnick Odair?” Peeta asked before kissing me on the mouth. His own eyes had darkened like Finnick’s but I knew this was because another male was talking to me.

“Yea, it was. Trust me, he didn’t make a move on me.”

He looked shocked. “How do you know what I was thinking?”

“It’s easy. It’s a subtle gesture with your body.” I said shrugging my shoulders and diving in for another kiss from him.

A soft ‘ahem’ behind us reminded us to keep the public displays under wraps for a moment. Most of the tributes here didn’t believe the hype that we were in love. I’m sure Peeta would give them a run around about how much he really loved me.

Moments later Effie and our prep teams showed up. Fixing the powerpack on our suits, Cinna turned to look at us. “This year, instead of waving, I want both of you to look ahead. As if the crowd is beneath you.”

Be unforgiving. Embrace the dark side. Let them know that you are mad at them for this.

“Finally something I am good at.” I sarcastically bit out. They all nodded and disappeared from our sight. Helping me into the chariot, Peeta stopped and looked around and winced. I knew he could hear the crowds from where we were..

“You OK?”
“Yea, it’s going to be loud out there.”

“I got you.” I promised and squeezed his hand.

His smile didn’t reach his eyes and I knew he was dreading this. Squinting, I think he was praying for an overcast, but nothing is ever in our favor and it was sunny outside. The horses jerked forward and we begin our procession. The music is beginning and I see the wide doors opening for the first chariot, hear the roar of the crowds. Following District 11, we had a long ways to go before we reached the City Circle.

Finally it was our turn, flipping the packs on, I ached to hold him close to me, but I remembered Cinna’s words. Unforgiving. Easily enough. The mounting screams and cheers from the Capitol people were deafening and I snuck a glance at Peeta. He seemed to be holding up well despite everything. The roar of music danced around us as we kept traveling toward the end.

I fixed my stare on a point in the distance, I kept my eyes away from the crowds that always seemed to love us and yet hate us at the same time. I couldn’t care less. Sneaking a glance to Peeta, he seems to easily slip in his role. There’s a lot of things that he can call unforgivable. Is this what is getting him through this?

Passing by the intense stare that President Snow was giving us, I dared not look at him for I knew I would falter and he would know. It would make the Games worse on us if he could find a weakness. When our chariot came to a stop I finally had a chance to get a good look the rest of the tributes. Some had even tried to copy Cinna’s idea of fire and I saw several with lights and poor illuminated fake flames. Whereas ours looked real. I ignored the speech given by Snow. I ignored the crowds even more.

Finally we were on our way back to the Training Center. Relief washed over me even though I tried to hide it. I hated this type of public displays like this. It was grotesque and completely wrong. Our group was waiting on us as our chariot came to a halting stop. It jerked so hard that I nearly fell over the side of the chariot. Peeta deftly grabbed me and held me close to him. His body flushed against mine, I had to bite my lip in anticipation.

“Are you OK?” his whispered softly in my ear. The hint of seduction colliding with concern.

“I am now…” I replied giving him a small smile. The one that I would reserve for him. He must have caught on because he returned the same smile.

Hopping down, he held his hand out to me. I grasped it tightly and I stepped down. That simple gesture sent everyone gushing about how much of a gentleman Peeta was. I hesitated to roll my eyes at them, but Effie was strict on her schedule.

“Follow me you two. I have to tell you they have outdone it this year. Everything is brand new. Even our quarters have been redecorated.” she gushed. Honestly I could care less what it looked like. Stepping into the elevator, another being entirely in green slipped in with us.

Tossing her head dress to the side, she grumbled and began to cursing her idiot of a stylist out. “Isn’t my costume awful. I wished I had gotten Cinna. You two are so lucky.” she said before turning around and and stripping herself out of her costume. With nothing but her green heels she hasn’t a stitch of clothing on. Both Haymitch and Peeta eyed her appreciatively, but his hand squeeze mine.

They talk about his paintings and how much fun we’re all going to have while were here. When the elevator stops at level seven, she walks out and I can see Haymitch’s face. Apparently he enjoyed her company completely. I didn’t dare look at Peeta.
“Johanna Mason. District 7.” Haymitch said softly. Peeta and I nodded and soon we were to our floor. Stepping out, I had an insatiable urge to wash up. Without saying another word, left Peeta and Haymitch in the living area and found my room. Closing my door, I didn’t think to lock it when it opened suddenly and Peeta was standing there. He seemed quite upset.

*Good, let him.*

“What was that?”

“What ever do you mean?” I asked sarcastically.

“Storming off like that.” Was it because of Johanna?” he sighed realizing why I was angry. “Katniss, I only have eyes for you…”

“....which, in the elevator, were all over Johanna.”

“...Because you refused to look me in the eye!” he all but shouted at me. Great we were arguing about my insecurities. I should know better but I wasn’t thinking rationally.

“You don’t think I want you….like that. Parading around for me?” he pushed me roughly into the nearby wall. My sharp cry was cut off as his hands lifted me to him. Wrapping my legs around his waist, I held on for dear life. Running his tongue slowly over the soft skin of my neck, I felt the sharp pinch of fangs nick me. Heat pooled between my legs instantly.

“You don’t think I want you in nothing but heels...thrusting deep inside you?” he growled and dropped me to my feet. Coming to tear at his costume, he tore it off within a matter of seconds. Spinning me around, he unzipped my dress. Letting it pool in the floor around me. Leaving me only in my bra and panties….and heels. I was vulnerable to him and I liked it. When his hands spun me back around, the touch was a tad more gentle. Picking me back up, he pushed my ‘panties’ to the side and thrust quickly inside me.

I saw stars as he began his rough thrusts. Coming to cup the back of my head he pulled me down for a kiss that would sear into my brain for lifetimes to come. With just a few thrusts, he had me already building an orgasm. His free hand came to roughly squeeze my breast through my ‘barely there’ bra. He was wild. ...and angry. He was making a point to me. One that I was clearly getting.

When his fangs sank into my neck, I cried out. My own orgasm rolling over me like a tidal wave. Gripping his hair roughly, I tugged and felt his body jerked and a growl escaped him. His own orgasm beating at him as he released inside me. Releasing me, we stood there panting.

“Now...do you understand there is only one female for me.” I nodded meekly and kissed him slowly.

“I love you…” I mumbled against his lips.

“I love you too.” he said letting me go. With my feet touching the ground again, I instantly felt his absence. As crass as it was, I felt his seed slid down between my legs. Shaking my hips, I squealed as he chased me to the bathroom where we proceeded to shower.

**Haymitch POV**

Watching from behind a closed door, Effie by my side, I watched the entire pathetic showing off of tributes. It was Snow’s way of keeping control in a time that it was slipping from his bony
hands. They did well...too well in my taste. The whole unforgiving thing was fantastic. The crowd ate it up. Which is what we needed from them. The rest of the tributes, my friends, weren’t affected. None of them cared about this. No one wanted to be here. We all thought this was ridiculous.

After the bullshit earlier this morning on the train, I stayed clear of those two. I can understand that they’re young and have no clue what’s been on plan for them but Jesus, pissing off Torhture like that wasn’t funny. I’ve seen him at a pretty nasty point and even I, who’ve seen shit because of the Games, had a few nightmares after that.

It’s why when the train stopped, I took Effie, who was still trembling from the argument and took her back to her place. Once inside inside the car, she tried her best to keep it together. But when she threw herself at me as soon as the door closed at her place. I held her as her body went through the shakes.

This woman...somehow she had snuck up on me. In my drunken wasteland she showed up and started cleaning it up until there wasn’t anything left. When I could finally see again, I hated it. But when I kissed her at my house weeks after the Victory Tour, this vicious cycle that we didn’t want to start, started. I laugh remembering that night. She slapped me, I laughed, then she kissed me.

I thought we were being discreet. But that damn boy picked up what we were doing on the train and I have to say I’m impressed he didn’t say anything to me about it. The girl never paid attention to the subtle hints around her and that’s why it made it so easy for us to keeping planning and doing what we needed to do around her. Peeta, on the other hand, wasn’t so naive. He was very much aware that we--Tor, Ari and I--were up to something.

I knew it was a bad idea when Vishous asked to see him. I knew it would escalate to something more later on. And, un-fucking-fortunately I was right. And rumor has it that a bottle of liquor was stolen from the bar car. When I was asked, I denied it.

After the parade, Johanna decided to show her ass to us. Literally if I might add. Don’t get me wrong, I was into too deep with Effie, but I’m not dead. Yea, I eyed her appreciatively. But that’s all. When we stepped out of the elevator at our floor, I had to contain my laughter when Katniss stormed off. When the door slammed I lost it and fell to the floor. Both Tor and Ari were already waiting on us. They had left after the train had stopped to start posting spyflys--a new tech gadget to be able to let us see inside the building without getting caught. No sound, but sometimes you didn’t need it--around the Training Center and around the city.

I didn’t dare tell them family was here. I didn’t want to spoil anything for anyone. Leave it to me to be nice for once in my fucking life. Effie must be rubbing off on me. I hated her for it.

**Arianna POV**

Finally, we were here. The Capitol. The last place we had seen it was on the Victory Tour with Peeta and Katniss. I hated it then, and I hate it now. The gleaming white city with its fortress of mountains and lakes was a good idea for defense but not for people like us. We can get into anything anywhere. It’s a secret that even Snow had no clue of. Bidding the kids goodbye for their long process of being plucked at--which I held no sympathy for--Tor and I left to ‘roam’ around the city.

The people here were insanely dressed. It reminded me of watching some kid cartoon that used to play on the television decades before their Dark Days. Tor and I were happy where we were living in New Britain with the rest of the Brotherhood, their *shellans* and their young. We had our
kids and a house. Then we got the call. A distress call from another continent. The same one that almost all of us had lived on at some point or another.

Wrath didn’t want to take it. He didn’t want to further risk separating all of us. But it needed to be done. He had offered the job to Vishous and Payne—my aunt and uncle, but Payne had just recently lost her mate and was in no condition to handle this job. She, myself and Xhex were the only females that could handle an operation like this. But JM was a mute which made he and Xhex disqualified.

That left me and Tor.

We weren’t the oldest or the most experienced— me being almost 160 and Tor almost 240 years old—but we did have decades of espionage under our belts and since we had escaped our hostage of government experiments, our natural born gifts had been enhanced. It made us a livewire and easy to place in undercover work. So, we said yes. But the deal was that we would come home immediately after this was all said and done.

When we arrived, it was a dump—mind you I’ve worked in some shitty places in my day— but this place was like a third world country. The only upside was the running water and electricity. We took residence in the nicest neighborhood. Which was a damn surprise when we figured out that Haymitch was there. Hadn’t seen the drunk in fifteen years.

Then we found Peeta. He was alive after all these years. I had expected to be visiting his gravesite but he was alive and well. Looking like the fucking spit image of Dagger. If Wrath found out he had been in their “Hunger Games” and barely survived, he was going to be pissed. So we did everything we could to help him. Help him and the girl he was in love with. All the while learning about the Districts. Learning what happened to this country we used to love. The more we learned, the more we came to dislike the idea of it. I had half a mind to abort the mission, but Tor was determined to at least get Peeta home where he belonged. As well as Katniss and Janja, Flynn….

So here we were...in the Captiol again. This time we were setting up the spyflys that V had sent with us. They were tiny bugs that flew around and attached themselves wherever we needed them to be. We snuck over to the Training Center—a large skyscraper that would house all the tributes as well as a training center for the Games. A few run ins with Peacekeepers, a few swipes of wiped memories. I had floors 1-6 and Tor took floors 7-12. Once we were done, we headed around the rest of the city.

Getting as close as we could without tripping off that we were spying on Snow’s mansion, we mapped out the perimeter. This was where the bombs would start. We marked everywhere we thought a bomb should be placed. If you take down the leader the pack will scatter or surrender. It was basic. Easy enough. Or so we hoped. I knew the kids would be busy for several hours before the parade. I wasn’t in the mood to watch it. It seemed grotesque enough this was their way of life. Snow’s way of control.

Once we returned, we had only minutes to pack away the evidence and keep the kids from knowing what was going on. You always have to have a contingency plan no matter how well you think your Plan A is going to work.

Easing out of my work clothes, I tossed them in the suitcase and headed to the shower. Tor had stayed behind to check to make sure all our spyflys were working. I never heard him come in, but it was evident when he pushed me against the wall and slipped his cock in me. It had been days since the last time I had been with him and I missed him. And I was hungry. It coiled around my body like a vice and each thrust increased my oncoming orgasm. When I finally let go, I sank my hungry fangs in his neck and fed deeply. His cry for me was cut short when he bit me as well.
We barely had time to get dressed and meet everyone in the living area. When they arrived, Katniss, angry, stormed to her room with just confused Peeta following her wake. Haymitch, on the other hand, was fucking hysterical. We watched his body slide down the wall laughing like there was no tomorrow.

We heard the shouts then the rips of fabric and I’m sure Peeta was letting Katniss know a few things. Well shit wasn’t boring with those two around.
Family Makes the Circle Complete Pt 1

Chapter Summary

Don’t hate! I took a rather small hiatus on the writing of this story, but I’m back in action. Sort of. Here’s a new chapter for everyone that has waited. Multiple POVs in this chapter.

As always: I don’t own it!

Enjoy!!

Torhurtal POV

Haymitch sat there and laughed until he couldn’t breathe. Effie had followed a few minutes later along with Cinna, Portia. When they looked at us, I gave them a look.

“Don’t know. He’s been like this since Peeta and Katniss got off the elevator.” They all nodded at me and walked off. I could hear Effie scolding Haymitch for ruining his suit. I don’t know he handled that female. I’m glad mine wasn’t like that. She would prefer me with no clothes on anyway. She had disappeared to our quarters to finish freshening up while I kept the fort from becoming a disaster area. Especially with Peeta’s temper lately. I swear to fucking God, he was just like Dagger. I was always wary of him. In the end, his extremes produced a child and ripped a family in two.

I could smell her when she walked back in. Looking less frazzled than she did earlier. Turning to look at her I could still see the amusement in her eyes. The light that danced in them made my heart warm. It had been over a century and I wouldn’t have any other shellan. She had given me five young and one adopted son. I think she was ready for another young, and she told me this would be her last one.

As Peeta and Katniss walked back into the room, fresh from their shower, I kissed each side of Ari’s neck then her mouth. We were a bit safer here in this room that had been debugged hours ago. I could finally be affectionate to her. Taking a seat on the lounges, she crawled into my lap and sat there contently like she had been doing it since we met. I think Peeta and Katniss were watching us with confused expressions.

“What?”

“We’re not used to seeing you two being so affectionate with each other.” Katniss said taking a seat as well. Coming up behind her, Peeta laid his hands on her shoulders. A stance that he had seen me do with Ari.

“We’re not being watched so much here.” I told them evasively. Peeta raised his eyebrow at me but after this morning’s argument, he had learned quickly not to push me further.

“Anyone ready to watch the recap of the Tribute Parade?” Effie asked coming in the room looking a bit frazzled herself. Haymitch was behind her and I could tell he wasn’t done with his spill from earlier but it had been contained. He had quit most of his drinking but it helped that he could act drunk if he needed too. Keep up appearances he said.
“Why not?” Ari said not looking at her. “We didn’t get to see everyone dress up.”

“That’s right...where were you two?” Effie asked.

“Out and about Effie. Things that needed to be done...were done.” I said looking at Haymitch. The slight nod of his head meant he had understood what we had gotten done. Imagine that, vampire can get more done than humans can.

She bristled at the vague answer but flipped on the projector. Maneuvering around in my lap, Ari brushed my cock with her ass. Biting my back a groan her impish smile indicated she did it on purpose.

Pulling her close to me, I whispered “Do it again and see what happens to you.” Her pinkish blush that spread over her face let me know she was incredibly tempted but under the circumstances; she refrained.

“Don’t let us stop you from going back to the room…” Haymitch shot at us. His own eyes teasing the fuck outta us.

My reply was cut off when Ari jumped off my lap and skidded to a stop in front of the projection. Her shierk repeated throughout my mind. My puzzled eyes were concentrated on her until I looked up. There he was. Flynn. Then the next few were followed behind him. When she cried out next, I saw her. Janja. What the fuck were they doing back here? The deal was one time in and learn how to make this rebellion happen.

“Oh, dearest Virgin...not again.” she moaned collapsing in my arms. “I can’t do it again.” her tears came and I held her close. My eyes trained on the screen in front of me. I heard a soft cough from the other side of the room and Haymitch looked guilty.

I hate guilty assholes.

“You could have fucking told me they were Reaped! What the fuck is this Haymitch?!” I roared.

“Hold up! I wasn’t going to tell you yet.”

“That’s my son and my niece!” I interrupted him. I was dangerously close to snapping someone’s neck. Jesus Christ when Rhage found out….. but Haymitch, I gotta give him credit. He didn’t back down.

Katniss POV

The air in the room seemed to disappear when Tor started yelling at Haymitch. I had no idea what was going on. Who was he talking about? There were twenty two other people up there and none of them look like Tor and Ari. Peeta and I looked at each other in confusion. Turning my head back, Torhture was still holding a crying Arianna.

“You promised Haymitch! You fucking promised this was a one time deal. That they wouldn’t have to do this again!” Torhture shouted. You could feel the anger roll off him. It hit us like waves.

“Listen here, none of us had a fucking clue what was on that damn slip of paper. This was purely coincidental. Got it?! Don’t yell at me for something I can’t control.” Haymitch shouted back
clearly getting angrier by the second. Effie came to him trying to placate him, but it was to no avail.

“You don’t think he knows, do you?” fear was laced in his voice.

“No, he doesn’t. He hasn’t got a clue who they are. We’ve made sure of that.”

Torhture nodded finding relief in that statement. Arianna’s tears had seemed to stop but I couldn’t miss the hateful glare coming off her. I had seen her pissed off. I had heard her screams for blood and this wasn’t the time nor the place to fly off the handle.

“Can anyone tell us what’s going on?” I implored.

The adults in the room looked at each other and a silent conversation began. None of them seemed to thrilled that we were in the room. What was we supposed to be doing? Having sex? Geez, what they must think of us. Leaning back into the couch, I felt Peeta’s hands squeeze my shoulders. Trying to find some kind of comfort from him. It wasn’t working. I was too tense. He must have felt it because he came around and pulled me close to him.

Leaning into him, I noticed the room was too quiet. The absence of Avox’s was evident that no one had anything to drink or to eat.

“Bring them to us Haymitch….,” Arianna said, her voice cold as ice, before disappearing into the sleeping quarters. He nodded and left the room instantly. She returned a few minutes later with a see through tablet. Pressing a few buttons on it, we all waited. I had no clue what it was, but Peeta’s expression told me that he had seen it before. Projection it to the wall that we would sit and watch announcements, a blue screen showed. A ringing noise continued for at least three minutes when a face appeared. He had dark hair and tattoos on his face.

He took in her tear streak face and concern instantly flooding his face. “What’s wrong Ari?”

“V...get Rhage and Mary....” he nodded and disappeared from the screen.

**Finnick/Flynn POV**

I can’t believe I’m here again. This time it’s not for manipulation of these Capitol idiots. This time it’s because I’ve been Reaped again. I had to believe this was all staged. That I had done something to be captured under Snow’s radar. It’s not like I haven’t done my job since I was “sixteen”. Damn, part of me wishes I was still ‘sixteen’. Life was so much easier. I had arrived here almost a decade ago and I was ready to go home. It was part of the deal I made. That when District 13 won their rebellion, I would go home. I just didn’t know that it was going to take this long. I didn’t know what horrors I would have to put myself through. Though, I’m thankful that it’s not my body but my mind that is truly fucked.

Mom and Dad both didn’t want me to go. Didn’t want me to volunteer for this. But I did and now I regret it. When I had volunteered, Wrath looked at me skeptically but I assured him I could do it. I learned enough espionage from my parents and my gift of glamour would hide my real features. I hadn’t seen myself in so long I’m sure I wouldn’t recognize myself. The blonde hair and dark bronzed skin was starting to get old.

When my real parents had died when I was ten, I was adopted by Torhture and Arianna.

*That was over a hundred years ago.*
These two were my parents for all intent purposes and I remembered how mahmen cried for days. The real Finnick Odair was released and I took his place. Thankfully our names were similar. I convinced myself I wasn’t going to do anything but my job and I did it. I did it very well. Then I met Annie. Annie, the mad girl with horrors in her mind that only someone like mahmen could help. Needless to say, I fell in love with her.

I hadn’t seen anyone except Janja in almost ten years. She was my cousin and we took care of each other. Hearing a knock at my door, I pulled myself from Annie, I flicked my tongue over the bite marks. Opening it up a minute later, it was Haymitch.

“Follow me. You’re needed in 12.”

**Johanna POV**

Can you believe it? I’m here. Again. I could kill Snow for this fuck up. I had proven myself long ago that I was a Victor. Never to be bothered again. Until that fucking announcement. I remember screaming. I remember calling Flynn. I don’t remember what was said, but I holed myself in a closet for three days until the other Mentor showed up and made me come out.

There were days that I wished I hadn’t taken this mission. That I should have told Wrath to kiss my ass. But I didn’t. I wanted to prove myself. I wanted to be like my Aunts. I wanted to be a female warrior. This mission would put me on the roster to learn what I needed. When I arrived in District seven to take the real Johanna Mason, Flynn was there. With his gift of glamour he turned me into her. I hadn’t seen myself in so long. So long, my ass. I had been here for three years now unlike Flynn who had been here a decade. I admired that.

My father, was proud of me. Mahmen cried and made me swear on the Virgin that I wouldn’t do anything stupid...like die. Unlike Flynn, at least one of my parents were alive. Rhage, my father was a Brother….like Flynn’s adopted father. I never knew my mother.

I remember getting the profile for Johanna Mason. A girl from District 7, Lumber. Great.. a hillbilly. The most interesting piece of information was that she could swing an axe like a motherfucker. At least she had a weapon. This helped me prepare for her. And trust me, when I say I got good, I mean badass.

It took me forever to get used to the name Johanna. But eventually after hearing it so much after the 71st Hunger Games, it stuck. I still wake up with nightmares from the Games. It had been three years ago and I could still hear the screams. I don’t know how Aunt Ari, Payne, and Xhex did it, but here I was...again. A knock on the door interrupted my meal. There were a sprinkling of vampires in the Capitol and I was in the middle of a feeding. Watching him vanish, I went to open the door and stood Haymitch. Behind him was Flynn.

“Follow us. You’re needed in 12.”

**Arianna POV**

I watched Haymitch leave. The sense of betrayal ran deep. We had all been promised the same thing. That our family wouldn’t have to face this hell again. We had been lied too. Putting our family at risk so these people could start all over. Ridiculous. I’m glad Tor took care of yelling at Haymitch because if I had if it wasn’t going to be pretty. If Katniss and Peeta thought I was out of control when I learned about Dagger, then they haven’t seen me when it comes to my children.
Heading to our quarters, I flipped through the suitcase that held our equipment. Finding the tablet that held a secure untraceable connection, I brought it back to the living area. Feeling Tor’s hand on my hips, he watched me set the connection and dial in for V. Katniss gave off the confused vibe while Peeta knew what this was.

After an agonizing five minutes, it connected. V’s face showed on the other side. He must have seen the look on my face. Concern flooding him.

“V….get Rhage and Mary.” I said softly. He nodded and took off like a bat out of Hell. I don’t know how long he was gone for but the door opened within a few minutes after Haymitch left. Turning around, I saw them walk out of the elevator.

Flynn and Janja didn’t look the same. Different, but I could tell in their eyes it was them. Happiness, like warmth seeped through my bones and I knew we had to get all these kids away from here.

Finnick/Flynn POV

I followed him and Janja to the elevator. What was in 12 besides the two Victors? Was Haymitch going against his words and letting them in on the plan. I surely hope not. They were too fresh for this. Neither of them had experience what Janja and I had. Riding in the elevator, Haymitch was tight lipped. I could tell he was a mix of dread and relief, but somewhere lied anger. Janja wasn’t talking too much either. I guess she didn’t want to be around them either. I’m sure both of us have had interacted with the 12 Victors.

The elevator opened and I could hear talking. I could hear voices. Voices I thought I’d never hear again. Pushing past Haymitch I booked it in the room “Mom!” I cried running into her open arms. She was crying and holding me tighter than she ever had. I heard Janja gasp behind me. “Uncle Tor!” Her sobs, like mahmen’s, echoed in the room. Breaking away from her, my dad grabbed me and held me tight.

Dearest Virgin what a reunion.

Dropping my glamour, it felt nice to be myself again. “What...what are you doing here?” I managed to say when Dad let me go.

“Helping. We’re here to finish this mess and go home. All of us.” He said looking at all the Victors in the room.

Turning to look at the 12 Victors, I gasped realizing where I had seen Peeta’s face. Before I could say anything about it, I heard a male voice.

“Ari, I got them..”

“Dearest Virgin, Uncle V….” his face moved and was replaced by Rhage and Mary.

“MOM! DAD!” Janja screamed loud enough to break glass.

Johanna/Janja POV

When I heard Flynn cry out ‘Mom’ my knees buckled. His mahmen was here. That mean Uncle Tor was here too. Stepping tentatively into the room, my resolve broke when I saw my uncle.
Rushing to him, he held me tightly for a moment before taking hold of his son. We swapped and I embraced my aunt. Our tears mixed with happiness was electrifying.

I heard the voice of V and when I looked to see him, his face had disappeared and was replaced by my parents.

“MOM! DAD!” I screamed rushing to the screen.

“Janja! You don’t look like yourself” my mother gushed. Tears falling from her face.

“Damn! Flynn drop my glamour please?” He nodded and waved his hand, the cold calculating demeanor of Johanna Mason disappeared. My normal dark hair melted into strawberry blonde. Red from my birth mother and blonde from my father. My electric blue eyes were all from my father. I could see him staring at me as I transformed.

I didn’t miss the gasps the surrounded the room. My skin had a slight tint of tan to it but underneath it was a creamy pearl skin.

“Janja….” my father choked.

“Daddy…” I cried. Tears running down my face. “Where are you?”

“We’re still at the compound.”

“I want to go home!”

“I know you do honey.” my mother said. “It won’t be long now.”

I whirled around to look at my Aunt Ari. “Can’t you bring them over here. Through the Sanctuary?”

I watched her pause and look at my Uncle. “I don’t know….

“If she can I wanna come too!” we heard Vishous shout. Light laughter floated through the room.

“Please Aunt Ari. I want to see my parents.” I begged her. I knew she would cave when she said yes.

“They can’t stay long. We don’t need to raise suspicion.” She warned me gently.

I watched her disappear to her room and come back dressed for prayers. Looking at Rhage and Mary, they nodded and disappeared from the screen.

“I better not get in trouble for this…” she grumbled before collapsing to her knees and within several minutes, she was granted access and vanished. Now all I had to do was wait.
Chapter Summary

Skip it if you want. It's just an info-merical.

A Guide to the Black Dagger Brotherhood:

(I realize I should have done this sooner, but it didn’t cross my mind until today when I posted “Family Makes the Circle Complete”. Many of you know that Peeta is a half-vampire and Tor, Vishous, Ari are full blood vampire. There are A LOT of differences in this series (BDB) than there are in regular vampire novels. I did, however; make up a few things to help with Peeta’s character)

All info is pulled from: blackdagger.wikia.com/wiki/Category:Vampire

Physical Characteristics

In the BDB universe, vampires are an extant genera of hominid, like Homo Sapiens. As such, they have almost all the same characteristics as human beings: they are mammalian, walk on two legs, have a higher functioning brain and the ability for speech, etc. However, they would be considered the more superior species in terms of physical characteristics. Their hearts, for example, have six chambers (as Doc Jane discovered in Lover Unbound), their immune systems are invulnerable to the common illnesses and diseases that plague human beings (as Wrath explained to Beth in Dark Lover and Vishous pointed out in Lover Unbound), their sexual response to a lover or to a female in her breeding time is more passionate than a dozen normal human sex sessions combined (they are easily stimulated and multi-orgasmic), and their internal organ function is far superior to that of human beings. They also have a vastly expanded longevity (~1,000 years—more than ten times that of humans).

Their weaknesses, however, allow the species to be kept in check, per the pact The Scribe Virgin made with The Creator: sunlight is deadly to vampires (so no daylight movement), they cannot subsist for long without blood from one of their own species (the opposite gender to themselves), and their reproduction rate is very slow (once every ten years or thereabouts) and extremely dangerous to females (long gestation periods combined with bad odds for conceiving and carrying to term, and a high mortality rate for birthing females and stillbirths).

Vampire bodies are, on average, considered tall. Most males stand at or around six feet, and most females are close to that six foot mark as well. As a result of breeding powerful characteristics over the generations, the warrior classes of vampires all tend to be giants, even among the race (Wrath tops off at 6'9", Butch and John Matthew at 6'8", Xcor at 6'6", etc.), and they are all thickly muscled. However this is not in such freakish proportions that they appear alien.

Vampires in the BDB series, as is expected of the genre, have fangs. They are retractable to an extent, appearing as oversized insicors when fully contracted, at full extention they prevent the mouth being fully closed. They use their fangs to scare off others (flashing them and hissing), to puncture through another person's skin to get to the nutritious blood underneath, sometimes to fight with (biting and tearing their enemies up with their fangs), and also sometimes as a
convenient way to get clothing out of the way (many of the males like to bite through bra straps to get to what is underneath as fast as possible, for instance).

Vampires are stronger and faster than the other species mentioned in the BDB universe (humans, sympaths, lessers, and shadows being the other four; only their cousins, the shadows, come close to matching them when it comes to physical strength and fitness). Members of the Black Dagger Brotherhood have been known to be able to bench 500 lbs. when lifting weights and to run five-minute miles on the treadmill without breaking a sweat. Even the non-warrior class and the females of the species seem capable of benching an average human’s weight with ease, as evidenced by Marissa’s show of strength when handling Butch in *Lover Revealed*.

**Life Stages**

Vampires have three stages of life: pre-transition (from birth until they undergo their adult transition around their young-to-mid twenties), breeding adult (from the age of their adult transition until approximately 700 years old), menopause and old age (when they are no longer able to breed until death).

**Eating habits**

Vampires, while the do require blood, must also eat on a regular basis much the same as humans. Vampires do not tend to call meals ‘breakfast’, ‘lunch’ and ‘dinner’, but rather (more literally) ‘First Meal’ and ‘Last Meal’. It is unclear as to what they call their version of lunch, as it is rarely mentioned in the series.

Male vampires are always fertile. They can occasionally impregnate human females (as in the case of Elizabeth Randall, who is Darius’ daughter, and in the cases of both Brian “Butch” O’Neal and Manuel Manello, whose father was a vampire, but whose mothers were both human).

*In the case for Peeta, he is a half vampire who hasn't hit his transition yet. Which means he's still partly human whereas everyone else isn't. The characteristics for a pre-trans are weak, scrawny, have no sexual drive, can't handle normal foods, lack of erection as well. Transition is normally around age of 25. As you can tell, I've changed that for Peeta since he is already buff from working in the bakery. He won't be able to do the things that the rest can do. Not yet, anyway (that's for part 2 of this story...if I ever finish this one!) I had to make him a special case because his character has a strong bloodline. Making him able to do what normal pre-trans wouldn't be able to do.*

I sincerely hope this clarifies a few things for everyone. I know not everyone here has read this series since we’re all obsessed with THG.

Lovebeauty01
OMG...I know, right. I finally updated. I had completely forgotten about K&P! I still don't have it complete, a rabid Harry Potter plot bunny took over my summer and I had to write it instead. If you would like to read it, it's on my profile. Here's part 2 of "Family..." As always: I don't own it! Enjoy!

Peeta POV

Katniss and I sat back and watched the reunion take place. I had no idea who Tor and Ari were talking about until Haymitch left the room to get whomever. Tor started pacing the room while Ari set up the tablet communications that would let her talk to to Vishous. The minutes seemed to drag on until it connected and he appeared a minute later. She told him to get Rhage and Mary...whoever they were.

I had a feeling I was going to find out. Was this part of the family that I didn't know about. That wanted me to come home. Twisting my fingers in Katniss's braid, she leaned close to me and her eyes told a story. That she was just as confused as I was. From hearing about the vague trip around the city that Tor and Ari had done to their confirmation that something had went on to Haymitch, I thought it best to keep my nose out of it until I was told….if I was told.

My stomach growled and I knew it was getting close to dinnertime. If they darkening sky outside wasn't an indication. Snow had all the rooms bugged, how were they able to do this without being caught.

"Because we have a way to debug and jam the audio." Torhture said looking at me.

"Like you did on the train? That four note whistle?" he nodded at me and it confirmed my suspicions. Whatever was going on was big enough that we had to hide our conversations from prying eyes and ears.

Soon the doors opened and Haymitch walked in followed by Finnick Odair and Johanna Mason. Katniss and I looked at each other confused, but when we heard Finnick scream "Mom’ and threw himself in Ari's arms, I had an idea who Torhture had been talking about earlier. Each of the Victors hugged Torhture and Arianna but when I looked at Finnick again, he had changed. It wasn't the same man. The bronze blonde look was replaced by dark hair and green eyes. Stubble lined his face and he seemed taller.

Just then we heard Johanna scream for her parents, the ones that had came up on the screen. This must be Rhage and Mary. I didn't see a resemblance until Johana transformed too. Completely the opposite of what we knew her as. Haymitch didn't look surprised, but we sure as shit were. More secrets that we were just now learning.

When Janja-as everyone was calling her-begged Arianna to bring her parents over, I was infuriated. So she could send me and Katniss back to their home in a matter of minutes! Katniss must have noticed my anger because she placed her hand on my arm and kissed me lightly. It was enough to calm me but I would need answers. Fast.

We watched in fascination as Arianna came back from her room dressed in pure white. What the hell is she doing? I thought to myself, but kept my eyes locked on her. After a few minutes of waiting around, she vanished from our sight. My eyes widened as saucers as I looked around the room.
"So anyone mind telling me and Katniss what the fuck is going on?"

"See, it's like this Peeta. The two here-" Torhture pointed to Finnick and Johanna- "are family. Flynn is my son and Janja is my niece. They were sent…"

"Volunteered…” Flynn interjected.

"Right…volunteered to come over here and be our spies. They won their Games and got into good with the Captiol and have been gathering information for us."

"Why them?"

"Why not?" Flynn asked. "Janja and I are still quite young enough to blend in with this society that it wouldn't look suspicious."

"What happened to the real Finnick and Johanna?" I asked hoping the answer wasn't death.

"Don't know. That's out of our hands." Flynn said flippantly.

"They're not dead, are they?"

"Nope! I talked to my counterpart a few weeks ago. When "my" name was recalled for this. I know Johanna is still alive. She's still eternally grateful that I took her place."

"So is this your natural look?" Katniss asked looking at them.

"Yea…"

"Then how can you look so different."

I saw Flynn grin. "I'm the Loki of the group. It's one of my gifts. Glamour. Janja wears an anklet that is designed to keep her glamour going until she takes it off. But it's been a long time since I've been able to show my real self. Only Annie and Janja know."

I was afraid to ask if the 'forced prostitution' was real. If glamour was his thing, then couldn't he make it to avoid such things from happening. Of course it was none of my business….

"May I ask one more question?" Torhture nodded. "How long has this been going on?"

"Years, decades…” Haymitch said startling everyone. We had almost forgotten he was there. His silence in watching us and listening made him a mute. A light flashed and Ari was standing there with four other beings.

I knew Torhture was tall, but Vishous and Rhage towered over him by a few inches. There were two females present. I though only Mary was coming. The other female had blonde cropped hair and looked stern compared to her mate. Rhage and Vishous arrived looking for a fight but seeing their family they seemed to relax.

Katniss POV

Before I knew it I had nodded off only to be woken up by Peeta nudging me. A flash of light signalled that Arianna had left. We had heard so much from Flynn and Janja that my head was spinning. Seriously this couldn't get any weirder. I had met both of them and privately met Flynn but he never said anything to me, but the when his eyes darkened, I should have known then. That he wasn't human.
Everyone was waiting around for Arianna to return with our guests. Was this the way we were going home? Peeta seemed disturbed the whole time. He was getting angry and hungry. I could feel it. Kissing him on the mouth, it seemed to relax him, but it was only momentarily. I wasn't sure if I wanted to leave my my mother and sister alone in District 12 without me. It wouldn't feel right. The talk was light yet intense and I had to keep with everyone to make sure I was learning this the correct way.

Suddenly, she was back and there were four others with her. Two tall and imposing males that seemed ready for a fight and two dainty looking females. One blonde and one brunette. The opposites of their mates. We heard Janja squeal and launch herself into the couple that we had seen on the screen.

The tearful reunion was enough to make tears roll down my face. I had never seen any family love each other as much as they did. Even my love for Prim couldn't be matched and I thought that was eternal. I watched in fascination about these people. The same people who were related to Peeta. It was like we were watching something that we weren't privy to. When everyone had broken up, we all scooted around to make room.

"So where are we?" Mary asked.

"In the Training Center…." I said softly.

"Ah, make warriors out of you?" Rhage asked. I looked at the other Victors and winced. "It's not what it's for?" he asked confused looking at us.

"Ah, well….." Janja started.

"Janja….." Rhage started eyeing her carefully.

"It's because we're back in the Capitol." I could tell she was hoping he was smart enough to figure it out.

"Why do I have to spill my guts?!" she whined.

"Because my parents know what's going on." Flynn told her.

"What the fuck is going on?" Rhage asked again.

"Fine! I'm going back to the Games. Ok, I said it." she shouted taking a seat. The air around us cooled and I huddled close to Peeta. He was on alert and could sense that something was going to happen. His arm wrapped around me and held me tightly. I think to shield me from this. I had seen his anger but what came out of Rhage made him look tiny in comparison.

"She's what?" he hissed looking at Torhture.

"And so is Flynn, Peeta, and Katniss." Arianna finished.

"Why?" both Mary and the blonde woman choked out.

"None of have a say over this and before you go beastly on me Rhage, I didn't know until the announcement." Haymitch said defending himself.

"This moves the plan much faster. I don't want any of my family in this." Vishous said looking around the room.

"Yea, who died and made you leader." Rhage spat.
"No-fucking-body. Chill Hollywood...Tor, Ari and I got this." He turned to look at them. "Have the spyfflys been set up."

"Did them this morning. Training Center has them on each floor and we strategically placed them around the City." Torhture said.

"Good. Now we can move onto the next phase..." he trailed off when we all heard a knock.

"Everyone hide but Katniss and Peeta!" Ari hissed. Those that could vanished and the girls jogged to a room.

The door opened and two Peacekeepers stepped through the door. Neither of them looking around to the splendor of the room. I froze. My heart stopped and I felt my blood run cold. What were they doing here?

"Is Henry and Charlotte Huxley present?"

"We are. What business do you have?" Torhture asked.

"You are to report to President Snow's mansion immediately." The female Peacekeeper said formally. I looked at them panicked and swallowed my fear. What was going to be done to them?

"Well, lead the way." Torhture said indifferently.

"Do we need to change clothes? I'm only in lounge clothes." Arianna asked.

"He would prefer you to be dressed formally...." the female Peacekeeper said slowly.

"We'll be right back." she took Torhture's hand and they disappeared to their room. I'm sure they were telling the rest of the family what was going on. When they returned several minutes later, Ari was dressed in a black and white block irregular dress. I only know this because Cinna whispered it to me. He seemed to be in awe of her choice of clothing. Torhture was in black slack and a black dress shirt.

Their faces showed nothing that would make them panic. Which was good because I was doing enough panicking for the both of them. When they disappeared, I prayed they would come back to us.

**Arianna POV**

I was not expecting to be called to the Presidential mansion, but here we are. Long before Tor and I came over here we came up with a cover story that would help us blend in and in case we were ever interrogated, we would be safe. Following the Peacekeepers down the hall as we reached the first floor, people were staring at us. Clutching Tor's hand, I held it tightly. The last time I was around a President, I was experimented on and lost five years of my life. I was determined to not repeat the process.

Instructing us to get in the black car ahead of us, we stepped in and took a seat. I looked at my mate and in a language they wouldn't be able to detect, the Old Language, we spoke quietly. I expressed my utter fear, but he was sure nothing would happen to us. I wasn't so sure. I wish I had my mate's utmost confidence.

The driver didn't speak and kept his eyes on the road. I'm sure we could have walked but it seemed more formal to force us to ride in a car. I envy and reveled in this luxury. It had been so long since I had been in a car. District 12 was poor enough that people walked instead of drove. I make myself sound spoiled.
When the car stopped in for a white nearly three story house. It was splendid. Built in a time before the Dark Days. It had terraced gardens and a fountain cascading down the hillside. A recurring motif is sculpted and painted swans throughout the house and grounds. Which seemed appropriate for the man who lived there.

A Capitol attendant escorted us to the library where we were to awaitn on the President. Tea would be served shortly. Looking around the extraordinary amount of literature and exquisite traditional furnishings, it made me long for home. Taking a seat on the red couch, I saw there was a small table where we could take this "tea." I could tell Tor was wishing he would have brought a few spyflys and let them loose inside the mansion.

We were only waiting for a few minutes when the door opened again. It was a Capitol attendant. A different one. "Please follow me to the dining room." she said. Standing up, we followed her down the hall and toward the kitchens. Pushing a set of double doors open, we stepped into the dining room. It was a formal dining room. Like the one we used at the compound for First and Last Meal. A chandelier hung above us as we stood there.

Old memories came flooding to ones you wished to forget. Oh fuck, not now... I closed my eyes and fought my own curse. The memories of standing and waiting in the dining room waiting on my parents for ages to sit and eat. Etiquette lessons and days where I was forced to attend and observe while everyone ate and I was denied food..

Please go away...Please go away.....

I gripped the back of the chair so tightly that I"m surprised I didn't snap the chair in two. Tor must have noticed my agony because he nudged me.

"Are you….." then he realized what was happening. "Oh fuck...Ari."

"It's fine...I'll be OK." I squeezed my eyes tighter. The memories still flooding my brain like a fuckin' spot light. This was a mistake. This was a bad idea. It soon became harder to breath but I had to fight it and fall apart later when I was alone.

Suddenly the door opened and President Snow walked through. Whipping my head up, I focused on the mission ahead of me. The look Tor gave me sent a few chills in the room. I was going to be useless tonight.

"Please, be seated." Snow said pleasantly. I almost gagged from the overpowering smell of rotting blood and tissue.

As we took a seat, another attendant brought a tea tray. We all sat in silence as it is poured and served to us. I was determined to keep my hands from shaking. I had a century of practice to keep me stable. Stirring my tea, I slipped a neutralizer in the amber liquid. I saw him do the same. It would help me and Tor from going into shock of whatever poison he might have put in it. Pouring milk and sugar in my tea, I sipped it slowly. It had been ages since I've had good tea.

"So what brings you two to the Captiol of Panem?" I raised my eyebrow questioningly. "Yes,I know you're not from Panem."

"We're historians. Teachers, if you will. We came over here to study and learn about your country. Maybe, with your permission to take it back and copy into our history books so that the children of our country would know what else is out there after the Dark Days. We have such little information that Panem is just a few paragraphs." Tor said smoothly. We had practiced this for days before getting it right.
"What would you like to know about this country? I know you were on the Victory tour this year, don't think I didn't see you."

"Anything that you're history books are willing to let us have. People are curious about Panem." I said efficiently taking a sip of the tea. Both men followed my lead. Bravo me!

"Did you learn anything on the Tour?"

"We did but anything you can tell us wouldn't do it justice. The landscapes are beautiful. The Capitol is extraordinary, but it's not really the landscapes, it's about the country as a whole." Tor replied.

This seemed to please Snow. He was a closet diva that wanted everyone in the world to know how he ran such a tight ship over a country. A totalitarian dictatorship, if you ask me. We came from a monarchy. Both human and vampire.

"Then before you leave, I will send a few copies of books for you to look over so you can write about Panem and all its glory." he said giving us a snakish smile. "I hate to be rude, but there are things this President needs to take care of. One of the attendees will see you out."

I stood up and flicked my fingers freezing Snow in his place while Tor moved his hand over Snow's face and his eyes went glassy for a second. He would never know that we were here. I knew he couldn't do everyone but we left quickly before Snow unfroze and disappeared from his sight.

Getting back into the car, I could almost sigh in relief but my hands started trembling. I looked at Tor and tears threatened to escape from my eyes. Pulling me close to him I fought until I knew we were back at the Training Center.

The ride seemed longer going back that coming but we finally arrived there and Tor rushed me to the elevator and I could hear him praying for the elevator to hurry. Finally a ding indicated that we had reached our destination.

"Go to our room. Sit in the closet if you need too." he whispered and Jane came rushing to me. Helping me to the room that had been assigned to us. Crawling in the closet, she closed the door and my shields crashed and the memories came flooding back.

Katniss POV

Since Tor and Ari left almost two hours ago, everyone had made idle chat. The atmosphere was quiet and undisturbed as an abandoned pond. Peeta was engaged in conversation with Vishous and, who I learned later on, Jane, about New Britain and things about his Father. Rhage and Mary were still visiting with Janja. Flynn sitting with Vishous and Jane, who I also learned, was his Aunt and Uncle.

Or something like that. They said they were related by blood but they shared a blood bond with their King. Which made them Brothers.

Cinna, Portia, Effie and Haymitch had left us sometime ago and it felt like the room wasn't so damn small. I couldn't breath with so many people in the room. I casually sat on Peeta's lap and toyed with his hair while we all talked.

The elevator opened and Tor and Ari came back in. Something wasn't right with Ari and Jane rushed to help her. Ari was ashy and I could see from my seat that she was trembling. She covered
her face with her hand like she was hiding tears. Jane was a healer so maybe she could help her. The look on everyone else's faces said something different.

"It happened again, didn't it?" Vishous asked once Jane and Ari were out of the room.

"Yea. It did. Right before Snow came into the room." Tor replied wearily.

"Fuckin' hell. You'd think the curse be lifted by now."

"Mine isn't." Rhage volunteered.

"Yours is different. You didn't volunteer for it." Mary said softly looking at her mate.

"You know what triggered it?"

"The dining room. Remember how she freaked out the first night she ate dinner at the compound?" Everyone but Peeta and I nodded. "She once told me that she can't handle traditional dining rooms. It brings back too many painful memories."

"What memories?" Peeta asked innocently. Everyone in the room looked at each other then looked at Tor. I almost snapped. Why can't these people tell us anything?

Tor opened his mouth several times, but Flynn beat him to it. "From when mahmen was physically abused by her parents for almost two decades." he explained softly not meeting us in the eye.

"She made a deal with the Scribe Virgin, my mother, to erase Mayrah's, her sister, memories and Ari would be forced to remember. Each time she sees something that reminds her of that time, it triggers an emotional-fear, if you will- episode that can take hours; sometimes days, to overcome." Vishous finished explaining.

"I thought Mayrah was your daughter?" I asked carefully.

"She is firstly my niece, but Ari convinced us to adopt her and since then she believes that we are her birth parents."

"Does this happen often?"

No. Just on rare circumstances when she's forced. Like today. I knew something was going to set her off." Tor said tiredly.

"Is there anything that can be done about it?"

"Nope. Not until The Scribe Virgin lifts the curse. She's a crafty one. Mine was originally 200 years but it's been changed till my death. Long story...don't wanna get into it." Rhage rolled his eyes.

Peeta and I were silent. Though it makes sense. The entire house at the Victor's Village looked nothing like ours. We were for the traditional and theirs were more of a Capitol modern. I hated it but now I realized why she did it. I wanted to ask more questions, but the air had changed. I don't know what crossing through Ari's mind, but I felt incredibly sorry for her. Clutching Peeta's hand, he squeezed back.

"We need to get going..." Vishous said.

"I thought you couldn't leave without Ari?"
"I think my mother will let us pass through…" he said. Looking at Tor, "Did everything go OK with the visit?"

"Yea, nosy asshole. Just wanted to know why were were here. We gave him the cover story then wiped his memories." Tor said evasively.

A feral smiled cross V's face but it disappeared as Jane came back in the room. The love and adoration that bloomed on his face was nearly identical to Tor and Peeta when they looked us females.

"How is she?"

"How long did she fight it?"

"Almost an hour."

V whistled, but Jane continued. "Then it will a moment."

Tor, Vishous and Flynn audibly sighed and shrugged. "Thanks Doc…"

"Alright you three…let's bounce." V said. Rhage and Mary gave Janja another hug and they disappeared.
Feels like Deja Vu Pt 1

As always: I don't own it! Enjoy!

Feels like deja vu

Katniss POV

Ari didn't show up for dinner. The subdued atmosphere was agonizing. No one spoke and everyone, including our Avox's, knew something was amiss. Torhture looked like he was a nightmare loop. He picked at his food and barely looked at any of us. I didn't understand what was going on. I know Ari was holed up in her memories, but it shouldn't affect Torhture like this, should it?

Even if she and Effie didn't get along, Effie seemed saddened that Ari was struck by 'sickness' as Torhture told her. When she offered 'expert' medical services Haymitch laid into her.

"Oh please, let the girl alone. Go find something to do Effie." he had told he which ruffled her feathers but I think she forgave him because we heard them fighting in his room after that callous comment. The silence explained that they must have forgiven each other because they both seemed relaxed when they came back. Which told me that they were sleeping together. Peeta confirmed it with a tiny nod of his head.

Picking at my own food, I could feel my eyes droop. I had been tired lately. Sleeping more. Peeta noticed and nudge me gently. I gave him a tired smile and rested my head on his shoulder. "You need to eat love…." he whispered as he kissed the top of my head.

"I am….slowly." he chuckled and continued with his own food like nothing was wrong. Effie was even quiet tonight. Haymitch was informed about Ari and his demeanor changed. Tonight he was drinking, which wasn't a good sign for him. How much was he affected by this indicated how much he drank.

"You want some Tor?" he asked holding the wine bottle toward him.

"It won't help."

"How do you…"

"Because I've tried it. I've tried everything to numb her. Nothing works Haymitch." he spoke softly.

"What's wrong?" Peeta asked setting his fork down. He and I had been wrapped up in each other that we barely paid attention to what they were talking about.

"Nothing son. I promise. She'll be fine in a matter of hours."

Just then the tablet made a noise and the Torhture stood up so fast that he knocked the chair over. Which startled us and gave Effie the chance to reprimand him on his manners. From what I could tell Torhture and Ari had the best table manners.

Leaving us to wondering what he was doing, he grabbed the tablet and hurried from the room. Excusing myself from the table, Peeta grabbed my arm, "Don't bother him…"

"I'm not. I'm going to check on Ari and lay down. I'm tired Peeta.” I explained myself. He nodded
giving me a kiss before turning back to his food.

Wandering down the hallway, I crept slowly toward the room that assigned to Torhture and Ari. Pushing the door opened, the lights were off and the air was cool. Tiptoeing to the closet, where I'm sure she was, I opened it and she crouched down in the fetal position and I could hear her breathing quietly. She was in the same dress from earlier, but her heels were off and her hair was a mess. Like she had been pulling at it for sometime now. In her vulnerable state, I knew what she must be feeling. Even in the darkness, you could see the fear shake through her.

Leaving as quietly as I could, I didn't see how Torhture knew she would be OK. Moseying back to my room, I passed by a door that was ajar. I could hear words being spoken and I knew Torhture was in there.

"How's she doing?"

"Still the same. I can feel her tonight. Even more so."

"She didn't block you?"

"No, I think sometimes she can't control it. She's always able to control the channeling but tonight, her shields must have crashed."

"Take a run. Do you want me to come over and keep an eye on her?"

He sighed heavily. Like a weight had been lifted off him. "Yes. If you can. Running will numb me down."

"I'll tell Wrath where I'm going. He might just tell me to stay."

"If that's the case, you need to pack up and when the Games start we'll send you to the Safe Zone."

"Will do my Brother...see you soon."

I scampered to our room and undressed. Wrapping myself in my robe, I sat down on the bed and dreaded tomorrow. Tomorrow started the training for the Games. Haymitch had told us that we needed to make allies if we could. We needed to work together and learn what we could. I was against it, but Peeta seemed more optimistic about it. I was good with it being him and myself like it was last year, but they both had a point. These people had already killed to win. They had years over us.

I had agreed, to an extent. We would pick our allies. I wouldn't be responsible for them if they died. I wouldn't become their friend just to watch them die. Like I did with Rue. The door opened and Peeta stuck his head in.

"Tor wants you in the dining room." I nodded and stood up. I knew what this was about. Taking a seat at my spot, I rested my elbows on the table and looked him expectantly.

"Vishous is coming back. Like myself, he can keep an eye on things."

"Where will you be going?" Peeta asked.

"Away for a few hours. I need to get out of the Capitol."

"Is this because of Ari?"
"Yea. She and I are connected. She's a strong woman, don't let this make you think she's weak, but her shields crashed and she's channeling hard. It's a...gift if you will. I accepted it a long time ago and I love her regardless, but I need to be of sound mind right now and I can't handle her pain." he said vaguely.

"I've heard you say something like that before...channeling."

He nodded at me. "It's a blood connection. Whatever happens to her, I feel and vice versa. It's supposed to keep her from finding a mate and having an emotional connection. Her mother cursed her long before her transition."

We both nodded at him. Haymitch seems unaffected by it. It made me wonder how much he actually knew. Effie didn't say anything but I'm sure she would badger Haymitch later. Unfortunately I can see it between the sheets and not sitting around with us.

"If Flynn or Janja show up, tell them I'll be back before daybreak." he told us before leaving the room.

A flash of light startled us from our silence and Vishous stood in the living room. He held several bags with him. I'm sure it was things he wouldn't let us go near let alone know what they were.

"He gone?"

"Yea, think so."

"How is she?"

"Not good. I checked on her, but she's alive." the words left my lips and Peeta glared at me. I shrugged my shoulders at him unaffected.

"She should be. It's not physical, it's mental." he informed us. He checked his watch. "Where am I to crash?"

"I'll show you...It's a spare room. You can set up your toys there." Haymitch said getting up and letting V follow him.

The room was silent once again. Effie, Peeta and I stared at each other. The urge to sleep came over me again. "I'm going to bed."

"I'm coming with you." Peeta said. He followed me as I headed to our room. I was already ready for bed, so I watched Peeta get ready for bed. The developing corded muscle that wrapped around his arms enticed me. He had filled out during our training sessions. Gone was the boy that cried when we were first reaped. What replaced him was a male that was incredibly strong and worthy.

"You enjoying the show Katniss." he said catching me eyeing him. Well, more like drooling over him.

"I am."

"Are you now?" his voice was low and he came at me until he was in front of me. Leaning down, his lips barely brushed mine as I backed down on the bed. Crawling over me, his lips found mine before finding my neckline. His erection pressing into my thigh, his desire for me already showing. Capturing his mouth with mine he opened my robe and shucked his own pants. As he slipped inside me, his fangs found my vein. And I let everything go.

We awoke the next morning with no nightmares. Well at least none that I could remember.
Turning over to my side, Peeta laid on his back, an arm thrown to the side and he looked peaceful. Younger. Like our lives weren't going to end soon. What a way to be able to sleep like that.

Crawling out of bed, I saw my uniform laying over a chair and I knew it was almost time. Entering the bathroom, I took care of business and brushed my teeth. re-braiding my hair, my eyes caught a glimpse of the newest bite mark. He didn't seal it. Which was going to be a problem. I could always re-braid it to that side, but it still would show.

Opening the door, he was still asleep. Chuckling, I shook my head at him. Crawling on the bed, I straddled his lap. Kissing gently on his neck, he moaned and his eyes fluttered. Grinding into his lap, his eyes flew open. I could see his fangs peeking from his upper lip and his eyes darkened.

Rolling his hips into mine, I closed my eyes and moaned. His cock brushing my sensitive spot. "Mmm...good morning." he whispered leaning up to kiss my mouth.

"Let me inside you." he demanded softly. I nodded and he lifted my hips and sheathed himself inside me again. I sighed happily as he began to thrust inside me slowly. Kissing my mouth, my neck, my shoulder, he left no place untouched. Soon, I was building to my orgasm.

"I'm close Katniss..." he groaned his hands squeezing my ass.

"Me...too..." I gasped when his bite replaced his tongue. That tiny ministration sent me over the edge and when he drank from me my walls tightened around him and I felt him shudder as he released in me.

Pulling back from me, he languidly sealed each of the bite marks. They would heal soon and no one would know any better. Sliding off his lap, I moseyed my way to my training clothes. They looked similar from last year. I could feel his eyes on me.

"You look different..."

"Do I?"

"Yea, you do. I mean, it's a good different." he quickly recovered. Getting up, he walked over to me, sliding his hands around my waist and pulled me close to him. "Yea, you feel different."

"Hmmm...I'll take that as a compliment." I said turning to kiss him, It would have kept going but I broke the kiss. "We have to get dressed Peeta."

"I know." he kissed me once again and threw his pants back on. "Do you think Ari will be at breakfast?"

"I hope so."

"I'll see you at breakfast."

I nodded and dressed quickly. Looking in the mirror before me, I looked myself over. He was right, I have changed. Maybe it was all the food I had been eating since I won the Hunger Games. Maybe, just maybe, I had finally put on weight. I wasn't as bony as I used to be. I took that as a good thing.

Taking a seat on my bed, I rolled over and laid on my stomach. Just to rest my head on the pillows. Maybe snooze a bit but I winced when my breasts hit the mattress. My breasts were sore. Maybe my bra was too tight. I had been feeling a little out of sorts. Shrugging it off, I left the room and entered the dining room where everyone was waiting on me.
"Morning." I said taking a seat. A chorus of greetings followed me as I took a seat. Looking around the table an assortment of food was piled around me. Wrinkling my nose, I avoided whatever smelled bad. Fruit, eggs, and toast seems to be harmless enough. Halfway through my breakfast a door opened and slammed loudly. Everyone turned their heads to see Torhture, & Vishous coming out and wrapped around Torhture was Ari.

She didn't look well, but she looked better than she did last night. Tor helped her into a seat, kissing her gently on the forehead. Giving us a pained smile, she took a glass of OJ and sipped it slowly.

"Er...morning all." she said unsteadily.

"Morning Ari." I smiled at her encouragingly.

"So, what's for today?" Vishous asked taking a seat beside Peeta.

"Peeta and I will be at training at 10." I looked at the clock, it was after 9am. I noticed the same ring that Tor and Ari wore was on V's left hand.

"Remember what I told you two about making allies." Haymitch spoke up as we turned our heads to him.

"I still don't want any."

"Don't care. Not your call sweetheart." he retort. I rolled my eyes at him.

"You two better get a move on before you're late." Haymitch said tapping at his own watch.

Effie rose to stand up, "And no Effie, you will not escort them. They need to do this by themselves." giving him a glare, she huffed when he didn't budge. Light laughter danced around the room. Standing up myself, I grasp my chair as a wave of dizzy came over me.

"Woah…." I mumbled and squeezed my eyes.

"You OK?" Peeta asked coming to my aid.

"Yea, dizzy. Must have stood up too fast." I said looking at him. Everyone not human turned to look at me. Ari's penetrating gaze left me wondering what she was thinking. She was sizing me up. Like she was trying to read my body. Each of the males looked at me as well. I felt like I was a body on the chopping block.

"I'm fine…." I said before grabbing Peeta's hand and leading him off our floor.

When we reached the training room, it seemed that we weren't the last ones to arrive unlike last year. This year, however; it seems that no one cared to even show. None of them care to even train because most of them know they're going to die anyway. The thought alone sounds morbid. Pushing the door open, I surveyed the room. Effie had been right. The entire training floor had been redecorated. New equipment everywhere; including stations that weren't there previously.

"Shall we split up or stick together?" Peeta asked me. He, like me, surveyed the room and those that stopped to look at us, noticed him first. He had gained much more muscle mass than me. He was nowhere near the height and mass that Torhture and Vishous were but he was still quite big.

Brutus and Enobaria, the tributes from District 2, were the only two to arrive on time from what I can tell. With her gold teeth sharpened to take out someone's throat, she was fearsome. Brutus was muscular and look even more mean tempered than he appeared to be. Whereas Peeta had strength
over him, I'm sure that the brutality would be won by Brutus.

As the hour wore on, more and more Victors showed up to the training of them would rather be elsewhere it seemed. Only few like Flynn, Janja, myself and Peeta did see half way interested. Half were moseying around and a few were brutally tacking on the stations. Giving me a quick kiss, Peeta and I split up, but I could feel his eyes on me the whole time I was walking away.

I wandered from station to station. Stopping every so often to listen or participate. Finding the knot-tying station, I spent quite some time there. Fumbling through the intricate designs on how to make knots into something more tangible.

"You're doing it wrong…"

I dropped the rope startled and whipped my head around. It was Flynn. After seeing his true design, seeing him as Finnick Odiar threw me off. Where Finnick gave me the saucy 'come-hither' look, I could see Flynn in his eyes.

"Fly...Finnick. I would think you would know how to do this…"

"Oh, I do. I'm very capable to tying knots all day." Taking the rope from me, I watched fascinated as he tied a knot that looked like the number 8. Then another that he called a slip knot. We stood there while I tried to replicate the knots he had shown me.

"How's mahmen?" he whispered when no one was looking.

"Better. She came down for breakfast this morning. V….is here" I whispered back and watched his eyes light up.

"Da...Tor told us where he was going last night."

"Yea, running he said. I didn't hear him come back to our rooms last night."

"You wouldn't." he paused and looked around. "Peeta's looking this way.."

I turned my head my eyes finding him as well. "He knows nothing is going on."

"Doesn't matter. I'm the same around Annie..." then he smiled and Flynn disappeared replaced by Finnick. His hands subconsciously making a noose which he tried to hang himself with for amusement. I rolled my eyes and he wandered away from me.

Leaving the station, I grew bored. Very bored. So I moved to the fire-building station where I met Beetee and Wiress. They were struggling to make a fire. When I joined them, I told Beetee he had to move his hands faster to make a fire with a stick. I grabbed a flint and worked my way to making my own fire. It took me nearly thirty minutes but when I achieved a fire, I was actually proud of myself. Beetee, Wiress, and I make small talk about the Games and the fire making but when Beetee and I reference trouble in our respective districts as signified by "backup production" which meant that District 3 was in just as bad of shape.

What grabbed my attention was when Beetee's eyes found the area where the new Gamemaker was standing along with several other people. "Do you see it?"

"See what?" I asked looking in the same direction but not seeing what he was.

"That patch by the table. The one closest to us. It's vibrating." I had to look hard but finally after a minute I saw it.
"What is it?"

"A force field. Amazing...." he said taking off his glasses. Cleaning them, he replaced them a second later. "Why would they do that?"

"Maybe because of last year, I shot an arrow at them." I replied flippantly.

Beetee didn't say anything, but then a buzzer rang for lunch. Meeting back up with Peeta I was greeted with soft kiss. His eyes darkened from keeping his eyes on me most of the morning. Following everyone to the cafeteria, we grabbed food and sat down. Sitting across from me, we ignored the looks of everyone around us.

"I saw you talking to Fly...Finnick earlier."

"He was asking about Ari." Peeta nodded but didn't say anything else. We sat and ate lunch. OK, well, Peeta ate and I picked at my food again. The nausea was back. The one I experienced this morning. Grimacing, I forced myself to eat the food. Peeta must have noticed my discomfort because he eyed me.

"Are you OK?"

"Yea. Just don't feel well today. Must be nerves." I said lamely.

He didn't press me further, but I can tell he wanted to ask more questions. Digging into his own food, he set his fork down a minute later. "So who did you find that you liked?"

"Beetee and Wiress from District 3." he looked at me surprised but nodded.

"I've heard others call them "Nuts & Volts". he told me. "I favor teaming up with Chaff and Seeder from District 11." I looked at him sharply, "Not because of Rue...."

I wasn't so sure about Chaff, even though I'm sure Haymitch trusted him. We sat in silence for a few minutes. I could feel eyes on us. We were the wild card this year. The new kids. Unpredictable. The other victors thought they knew us, but they had no clue. They didn't know about the training that was turning Peeta into a solider. Or the way I can throw a dagger with deadly accuracy.

Lunch ended too soon for us and we moseyed back into the training rooms. I was tired of going from station to station so I found the archery section. The trainer from last year remembered me and let me through.

Entering the room, I stood up on the platform and waited. I didn't have to wait long before the simulation began. It was flying birds and as quickly as they appeared I shot them down. It seemed a little silly at first because it was so easy, but the longer I was in there the harder it got.

Thwack
Reload
Thwack
Reload

In that moment, it was just me. Me and my bow. No vampires, no Snow, no fear of rebellion. Nothing that clouded my mind and kept me worrying every day. It was like being in my woods. Where all I could think about was my next target. When the simulation ended, I stood my ground
breathing heavily.

Once I caught my breath, I turned around to leave only to see the all the Victors watching me. I couldn't find the graces to blush but Peeta’s extreme pride kept me from doing it. The doors slid open and everyone parted as I handed the bow and arrow back to the trainer who was in just as much awe as everyone else.

I kept my head down for the last hour of training. I had made a spectacle of myself and I wasn't sure if was a good thing or a bad thing. Tor and Ari would be proud of me, but I wasn't. My skills have increased. My attention to detail was sharper. The fluidity of my aim was smoother. Was it Peeta's blood in me that centered me? It certainly wasn't my unrelenting practicing. Ari had me practice every other day but her main focus wasn't the bow. It was daggers. She was an excellent throw and wand me to learn.

I didn't argue with her.

Training ended an hour later and I was all too eager to get out. Being the first one out, I had to stand aside and feel the glares aimed at me. When Peeta finally emerged, he pulled me down the hall and into a lone corridor.

"You were amazing today."

"I was playing around."

"It didn't look it….""Is it because of your…." I hesitated trying to find the right words. So I rubbed my teeth with my tongue. He closed his eyes and groaned but nodded.

"I think so. It must have enhanced your senses."

"That's cheating Peeta." I teased.

"Only if you get caught." he replied. "We gotta go… I need a shower." giving me a quick kiss, he looked down at me. "And you're coming with me…"

Taking my hand we scurried to the elevators and I knew he wished to actually kiss me but eyes were everywhere. They heard everything. It didn't matter how innocuous the conversation was they would find something ath would be held against you.
Feels like Deja Vu Part 2

Another chapter for you. As always: I don't own it! Enjoy!

Reaching out floor, we escaped to my room. We had forgone Peeta's room when we arrived the other day. Vishous was staying there and I know that he had it permanently debugged. No one needed to know that he was here. What he was actually doing here I don't know and I didn't ask. Closing the door behind us, Peeta grabbed and pulled me close to him and kissed me.

A hand wove around my neck, while the other snaked it ways around my waist. Holding me close, like I was going wiggle from him. His mouth slanted against mine and his tongue asked for permission to enter, when I let him in, he groaned and pulled me even closer. Our bodies flushed and all that was missing was skin to skin contact.

Tugging at my uniform, he pulled the shirt off and I took the opportunity to take his off. My mouth leaving trail kisses down his shoulder my hands skimming his now bare chest. I can't remember how we got the bathroom or how he removed my pants and shoes. My naked body pressed against the wall my eyes trained on him as he slid his hands up my legs to part them. I could see his fangs peeking from his mouth, his eyes dark as coal as he threw a leg over his shoulder.

Flicking his tongue over my slit, my knees buckled and I was thankfully that was holding me up. I was primed for him. I was ready for him. And I wanted him inside me. I didn't want his fingers nor his tongue.

"No….No…." I whispered. He stopped his ministrations and looked at me confused. "I want you inside me now. I don't want foreplay." I struggled to form this easy sentence.

His grin grew feral as he nodded at me. Reaching for him, I helped his stand up and remove his pants. As he was stepping out of them, I grabbed his cock and slid my hand slowly up and down it. Enticing him. I felt it grow in my hand and I wanted him now. His low hiss turned into a growl but instead of thrusting inside me, he pushed us into the shower and started it. The heat of the water swarmed around us. His slow methodical stalk was like a predator to a prey.

Pushing me against the wall, I don't remember anything but the pleasure he was going to give me. I only remember crying out his name like it was a mantra to me. My walls gripping his cock as he tried desperately to not come inside of me.

"Fuck…..Katniss" he growled against my neck. I could feel his fangs scratching the skin. "I want to come inside you so bad."

"Then do it…"

"It's not safe. Someone will be able to tell…." Like who? My prep team? They did take me back to Beauty Base Zero and the evidence would be there.

"Then…..fuck…" I moaned as he hit a tender spot inside me. "Come on me right now." I muttered in his ear. It was all his body needed and he roughly pulled himself from me and I felt the hot sticky evidence against my hip. A roar muttered from his lips before he sank his fangs in my neck. My neck rolled to the side and I tangled my fingers in his hair. Holding him on. Holding him close to me.

When he pulled away from me, I dropped my head on his shoulder and breathed heavily. His own
breaths matched mine. Absently reaching over to the facet, he fixed the temperature for the water had started to cool off. Breathing through my nose, I could smell the dark spicy scent around us. I could feel it sink into my skin. Embedding itself permanently.

"I love you…"

"I love you too." he mumbled against my lips. "I love you so much."

"Are we going to have to shower now?"

"Yea…" he rolled his eyes but reached to start cleaning up.

Once we were done, I stepped out and dried off quickly. He followed suit, kissing me on the shoulder and beat me to the bedroom. I know he would have to go back to his own room to find clothes. We were living in the same room sans the clothes. Looking at myself, I couldn't believe this was the same girl from last year.

Of course, things had changed since then. I had survived the Hunger Games. Finally admitted to myself that I was in love with Peeta. Confessed it to him. Our love making was electric. I never wanted it to end. That was the biggest change..besides getting engaged to him. Which that was something thought would never happen to me in any lifetime. But it did...and here I am.

Running a brush through my hair, I avoided the bite mark. The last time I nicked it. I about panicked because blood streamed from the spot and it left blood hungry Peeta breaking down the bathroom door to find out why I was bleeding. I smirked, of course I wouldn't mind his mouth on me again. Chewing my lip, I knew it was going to hurt but I ran the teeth over the mark and I hissed. As sure as day, I reopened it.

It didn't take long before I could hear him burst into the room. He would always be like this when I was hurt. Pushing the door open, I turned to him and his eyes zeroed on the mark. "I hit it with the brush…" I explained lamely to him.

He nodded, his eyes turning black and he reached for me. Pushing my neck gently to the side, my eyes rolled in the back of my head as his mouth found the spot. "Oh...God...Peeta." I moaned feeling his hands undo my towel. His knee pressing between my legs as a hand squeezed my breast. Rolling the nipple between his fingers. He continued to drink from me. I know it was dangerous. I knew that if he took too much I'd be out for hours.

Letting go of me, his lips lingered over the reopened bite marks. "Be careful next time."

"I'll try…" I replied softly feeling his tongue finish cleaning the blood trail that reached down between my breasts. His eyes locked on mine and I felt a shiver of desire trickle down my spine. His own desire for me evident. I knew if he kissed me I would succumb to him. Just then I heard a knock on the door.

"Damn it!" I cry. I don't think he heard it because his was still focused on me. Lifting my leg up he wrapped it around him. He already removed his clothes. My bare breasts flatten against his chest. "Peeta...that was the knock."

"I know…" he mumbled. I could feel him at my entrance. "and I don't care. I need to be inside you again." I could only nod when he slipped himself inside me once more.

Later on after had left me, I felt satisfied. Ordering fruit and cheese, I nibbled on it while I rifled through the clothes that we given to me while we were here, I slipped on a dark green tunic that was long enough to be a dress on me. Running my hand over my stomach that funny feeling came back. Like there was something different about me.
Looking at myself again, like I did this morning, I realized there was something different about me. I just couldn't pin it. Shrugging, I slipped on flat shoes, I left my room and followed my nose to the dining room. The savoury smells that wafted through the penthouse gave me mixed feelings. I was ravenous from today but I was bulldozed by nausea. Again? I thought. It must be nerves. It's not like I hadn't been here before. This, like all the other Victors, was their second Hunger Games. What a reprieve for those in the Districts.

Laughter rang through the dining room as I came closer. There seemed to be more voices. Entering I saw Flynn, Janja and a redhead woman sitting by Flynn. Quirking an eyebrow I took a seat beside Peeta. Everyone had already filled their plates and I looked down at mine and saw a sprinftime green brothy soup before me. Good, something that wasn't too overpowering. The more I sat here before it the more I crinkled my nose. Ari must have been watching me, because she decided then to voice her opinion.

"Katniss you feeling alright?"

I looked at her sharply. Everyone in the room had ceased to talk. Intent on hearing this. "I'm fine. Just a little off today. Must be nerves."

She looked at me like she didn't believe me. Even the males in the room sans Peeta and Haymitch looked at me as well. If they knew something; I know nothing was going to be said. "All right, but if you feel worse, let me know."

"I will." I told her honestly. Turning to my soup, I didn't miss the look the rest of the vampires in the room gave each other. It took all my effort not to huff at them and demand to tell me what they know. Suddenly, I had the urge to pee. Didn't I just go? Excusing myself, I headed to the bathroom and relieved myself. When I got back, my soup had changed to my creamy orange chicken and rice. Normally I loved this dish. Not as much as lamb stew with plums, but it was a close second.

I had to be careful to keep my facial expression to myself. Ari had already started poking her nose around and I knew I would be dragged to a Capitol doctor if I wasn't careful. The chicken smelled funny but I didn't dare ask.

"So how was training to day?" Vishous interrupted my train of thoughts.

"Everyone saw Katniss shoot. I mean really shoot."

"You're that good?" he asked me.

"I'm all right." Janja scoffed and rolled her eyes.

"Speaking of which, besides these two here, I've had request from other Mentors that they want to be allied with you." Haymitch interrupted. This time, I rolled my eyes.

"I still don't want any…" I turned to Janja and Flynn. "No offense you two. You two are probably the only exception."

"Well, gee thanks Katniss...Not that I told my mentor anything about teaming up." Janja shot back.

"Janja!" Ari admonished while V and Tor laughed.

"Be nice or I'll hide your axes when we go in." Flynn teasingly threatened.
"You wouldn't dare!" she narrowed her eyes. I could see the tips of her fangs peaking out.

"Yea, I would. What of it?" he challenged.

"I'll take every trident I find and break them."

"No you won't. I'm too fast for you." he smirked taking a sip of his drink.

"Oh puh-leaze!" she rolled her eyes. "Which of us ran fastest mile during training?"

"Fuck if I remember, but I'm sure it was me." he said.

"V!" Janja looked toward her Uncle...."You remember, don't ya?"

"Jesus Christ....." he said between laughs, "I missed you two." he mimicked Flynn and took a sip of his drink. "Guys that was over a decade ago...I don't fuckin' remember."

"It was me. V's just being nice and not telling you the truth..." Flynn teased her. I could tell her temper must come from Rhage 'cause she stood up with a knife ready.

"Listen here...." she started before Tor jumped up and removed the knife from her grasp.

"No knifing each other... Seriously don't you remember what happened last time you teased Janja?" he asked glaring at Flynn.

"Come on dad..." he started.

"Don't want to hear it. I still hear it from Wrath occasionally." he said with finality. Flynn huffed and glared at Janja. Her steely gaze would melt iron.

"Fuck it. Pax?" he offered.

"Yea.. pax."

"Now if you two are done bickering like old ladies can we get back to dinner?" Tor asked sitting down beside Ari.

"Are….they always like that?" I asked.

"Worse if they're around each other more. Fight like siblings." Vishous replied rolling his eyes. He shook his head and muttered "here we go.....'"

"She can't help that she loves me." Flynn said as he ducked a flying knife at his direction.

"DAMNIT! I fuckin' said stop!" Tor roared smacking the table with his hand. Making the dishes and glasses rattle around us. I looked at Peeta and shrugged. He pulled me close to him.

Janja sat back down and both of them had the graces to look ashamed. The look on her face told me that they took it too far. Vishous and Haymith he seemed unaffected by it, but Effie squeaked and left the table. She had been uncharacteristically quiet the whole time. I don't think she's ready for knife throwing at the table. It wouldn't be beneath her to admonish them for manners.

"Now look at what you did....You scared Effie from the table." he joked lightly before turning serious. "I hope you two learn to control yourselves. Shit is going down and I need you two to be on your guard. Not bickering at each other. I know it's been ages since we've been able to be ourselves but for fucks sake keep it under wraps!"
"Sorry dad…"

"Sorry Uncle Tor…"

At least Peeta and I weren't the only ones that he talked to like this. There was no question that Tor was the leader of this mission of theirs. Once things were settled again, Haymitch stood up and left. When he returned he had a half skittish Effie with him.

"I know you two apologized to Tor, but for fuck's sake, you need to apologize to Effie. too. She ain't used to this." Haymitch snapped.

"Sorry Effie…” they said simultaneously.

"It's all right. But please remember your table manners. None of you are wild barbarians!” she admonished taking back her seat.

The rest of dinner was quite uneventful after that. I kept my food down but had to excuse myself twice more to use the bathroom. Ari's eagle eye was still on me, but she didn't say anything. The banter around the table was light. When dinner was over and we were sitting around talking when Flynn introduced the red haired girl as Annie Cresta. When he said she was his chosen mate, Ari about burst into tears.

"Mahmen," he got up, taking Annie with him, walked over to her dropping to one knee Bowing his head, he place his hand over hers. What surprised me was that Annie mimicked him. " I want your blessing for this."

Ari was trying very hard not to cry but nodded her head at them. In a language no one but Vishous, Tor, Flynn, and Janja understood, Ari whispered "To unto this blessing be true, I see it as whole and may your lives be full of love and happiness."

I would later on ask her what she said.

Flynn raised his head and beamed at Ari. Turning to Annie, he kissed her wholly on the mouth and I knew from that day on there would be no other love in Flynn's life. When they rose up they headed back to their seat. Flynn whispered what Ari had said in Annie's ear and she smiled happily.

Just then the tablet beeped. This was new. Vishous rushed to pull the screen up. When it connected, Jane faced us.

"Jane!" he asked panic laced his voice. "Is everything OK?"

She looked around the room and saw Peeta. We watched as she chose her words carefully, "He's awake….."

"Oh dearest Virgin…” Ari choked tears falling down her face. She stood up quickly and rushed from the room.

"Are you sure?” V asked.

"Yes. He looks like Tohrment did after he came back when Wellise died."

"Oh holy fuck…"

"I know. I'll keep you post. I love you."
"I love you too leelan."

What's going on?" Peeta asked. "I know it has something to do with me because Jane looked at me."

"Nothing." Vishous said.

"What…?"

"Obstinate, isn't he?" V asked Tor. "I said nothing. And that's final."

"NO!" Peeta argued coming to his feet.

"Peeta…." I rationalized coming to my feet as well.

"Listen here boy… I don't give a fuck who you think you are tonight but Imma give you the same run around Tor did but with less words. Butt-the-fuck-out. If we want you to know we'll fuckin' tell you." V snarled his eyes become diamond hard. Which I mean literally like his eyes were diamonds.

"V…." Tor started. When he didn't answer. "V...let it be."

"Fine." he snarled. Turning away from us, they begin talking low. I sighed and the aches from today's training started to take it's toll.

"Peeta, I'm going to bed." I pulled him to me kissing his mouth gently. Hoping this would keep him from losing his cool with V and Tor.

"Already?"

"I"m tired. I've been tired." he nodded at me and I left him alone with the other two.

Peeta POV

When Katniss left the room, I turned to them. I didn't appreciate that Vishous had chewed my ass out but they knew something. I didn't care about their mission but I had seen the way that every male was looking at Katniss. It was eating me alive. They didn't think I wasn't paying attention them but I was. I was coming to learn my surroundings as well as the people that inhabited them.

"You two know what's wrong with Katniss." they paused their conversation, like they remembered I was there, and looked at me sharply. "I'm not stupid, I've seen everyone watch her today."

"You two know what's wrong with Katniss." they paused their conversation, like they remembered I was there, and looked at me sharply. "I'm not stupid, I've seen everyone watch her today."

"We do but it's not our place to tell you. She probably doesn't even know herself." Tor said breaking the silence.

Another excuse. I was really starting to get tired of them. Every time I asked a question, it was dodged by an excuse. Rarely would I receive an answer from them. I was more likely to get an answer from Haymitch than I was these people. In the beginning , I trusted these people with my life, but the more that happened to me or others the less of an answer I got. My trust in them was starting to waver and I wasn't sure how much longer I could hold out.

"You know…the longer you evade my questions, the less I'm trusting you." I said before I walked out of the room.

Entering our room, I looked at a sleeping Katniss. She was tired lately and it had showed. Her
eyes always seemed to be closing when I looked at her. She had chalked it up to nerves. That included her odd bouts of nausea. And I believed her. I always would. Leaning against the door, I felt claustrophobic. My hands, my body itched to do something besides being idle. Blame Tor and his excessive training.

Sneaking back out of the room, I went back to my room. Pushing the door open, I averted my eyes to the blue screens that illuminated the room. This wasn't a first for me to see them and I had no interest in looking. Changing from my everyday clothes, I stood there naked in my room. Rifling through the drawers, I finally found my workout shorts and a worn white shirt. My sneakers were placed in my closet. *Seems Tor remembered to bring something useful.*

Throwing them on, I crept out of my room again. I didn't dare want to disturb Haymitch and Effie either. Tor and V were still in the sitting room when I walked in. They stopped talking again and looked at me.

"It's not safe for you to leave."

"Like I give a fuck." I drawled before stepping in the elevator.

Reaching the bottom floor, I didn't care if someone said something to me. I was a fucking Victor, turned tribute again, and I needed out of here. I wanted as far away from these people as I could possible stand. I would be back in time to catch some sleep before tomorrow's training. Exiting the Training Center, I breathed in the air around me. The city would never be dark but illuminated so much that it looked like daylight hours to me.

Looking around the city, I knew I could take a left and run around the block. Nothing wouldn't become of it. It was shorter or I could take a right and it would lead me to a pathway that I was for certain I might not return. Taking it safe because I knew eyes were on me and I wasn't about to get caught by Peacekeepers trying to escape the city. Who knows what the repercussions would be.

I started slow but soon my feet picked up the pace. They pounded against the pavement and I lost myself in my run. I would say this was probably one of the few things that Tor had pushed me in that I could enjoy.

If something could help me forget everything that I have learned, I wouldn't be in this mess. I knew so much but yet so little. My brain was wired tonight as I kept running. I had made around the block three times before I saw Tor standing outside like he was waiting on me. I ignored him and ran past him. I didn't want to hear him talk. Sweat soaked and breathing heavily, I stopped and the Capitolites stopped and stared at me. Like they have never seen anyone run like this. Most didn't believe in keeping fit. I did. This wasn't training; this was letting off steam.

Wiping my face with my shirt that was wet, I took off again. My pace matched evenly with my breaths. When I reached the Training Center again; Vishous was standing out there with Tor.

"You need to come in."

"I'm OK out here."

"It's not that. You got a hella' stride kid." V said.

"Thanks but I'm not in the mood for talking."

"Well get in the mood." he snapped.

I resisted the urge to argue back. Not here. Out here wasn't a good place. Too many eyes. "Fine. But make it quick, I've got training tomorrow."
"Go!" V snarled. "Before I break both your legs for being a smart ass."

I could tell he and I were going to get along famously. So I followed them inside the fleeting freedom of being locked inside was gone. I was going back to prison in chains. No one spoke as we rode the elevator back up. The Peacekeepers that patrolled the Training Center didn't say anything about two large males escorting one disgruntled tribute.

Once inside the Penthouse, I flopped on the couch disregarded my careful manners. Picking at a loose thread, I looked at them expectantly. "What do you want to know?" V asked lighting, what he called a 'hand roll' and flicked his eyes toward Tor.

"Don't care…." I replied flippantly. Whatever they wanted to tell me, I had no interest in knowing now.

"You might be Dagger's son but at least he had more respect for others. Yea, he was a foul mouth, pissed off sonofabitch, but he knew when to keep his fuckin' mouth shut." V snarled pointing a finger at me. "You might want to take in consideration of what we're trying to do."

"Really now?" I shot back sarcastically coming to my feet. "And what the fuck have you been doing? All I get is excuses from any of you." The disdain evident in my voice. My eyes going black as anger rushed through my limbs. Pacing the room, my body wasn't in the mood to rest, "No! If you wanted to tell me things, you should have. I'm not some fuckin' child anymore. I'm back here in this hellhole and my only fuckin' concern is keeping Katniss safe and going home when it's over." Crossing my arms over my chest, my anger only building toward him. I was mere seconds from exploding.

The growl that came from V didn't escape me. Right now I didn't care about pissing him off. Where I had wanted answers a long time ago I didn't see the need to.

"Listen here fucker...You might be able to throw that shit around Tor, but you won't with me. I can give you something but not with that piss poor attitude." he looked at Tor who was uncharacteristically quiet. "Jesus, you weren't wrong about him."

"I told you. He's only just starting. He's not as sadistic as Dagger but he can take and give a hit." Tor said running a hand through his hair. The same frustrated tactic I still used.

"The only thing I care about knowing right now is if we're going to come out of this alive?"

"Yea, we're gonna fuckin' try." I opened my mouth to ask, "But I can't tell ya. We gotta take all the precautions that we can. You two are a hot commodity in this country and whatever you say or do is going to affect everyone." he warned me. I knew he wasn't joking. I should take this warning seriously.

"What do you expect us to do?" I asked cautiously.

"Do what you've been doing." he said.

"Like you haven't been told a thing," Tor supplemented. "The importance of this information is critical to yours and Katniss's survival."

"Unlike the rest of the Victors here, you and Katniss have done something memorable. You've taken this 'star-crossed lover' story and it's becoming real. No one is happy that you and her are going back in the Arena. Quite frankly, no one is happy that any of you are going back in." Vishous explained. At my shocked expression, he nodded. "I've been briefed thoroughly about you and Katniss."
"And trying to make Snow cancel the Games is a no-go. We all know he won't do it." Tor added, "But that doesn't mean we can't try and cripple him. Make his Panem breakable."

I was beginning to form an idea in my head and I wasn't sure if it was going to work but what they said made perfect sense. I had been blind from what the Capitol was doing to its people but my lovely Katniss had her ears closer to the ground. Through her disdain and lack of compassion people were willing to tell her anything she needed to know.

"Yea… your female is a smart one. She's known something for ages now, but she put the pieces together. Just like you're doin' right now. Keep in mind, we will keep you in the dark, but we won't stop you from learning on your own." V said finishing the conversation.

I realized this was all they were going to give me. This tiny bit of information that seemed to have no value to it carried the weight of the entire country. Their silence was thick in the room and I realize I was dismissed. Leaving them in the room alone, I stood alone in my shower a few minutes later. The hot water cascading over my body seeping into the drain below me. Reaching for the soap, I began washing myself. Balancing with one good foot, the bar of soap trailed down my body while the water chased the bubbles down the drain.

The steam from the hot water surrounded me like a thick blanket, the heat overwhelming to my senses, but the hotter it was the better I felt. My natural body temperature as constantly warm from all those years of working beside an oven. Putting the soap away, I reached for the shampoo. Gripping my tangled locks, I massaged the substance in my hair, my back arching into the water spray coating my body and keeping me warm.

Finally done, the sweat from tonight's run washed away, I stepped from the shower and embraced the cool air that whooshed in from the bedroom. The love of my life was asleep, wrapped in our bed waiting on me to return to her. Throwing shorts on, I climbed in and felt her scoot her body into mine. My arm coming to hold her close. Kissing the back of her head, I succumbed to sleep.
There are Days we can Breathe Pt1

Chapter Summary

Yea, meant to update in September. Kind of forgot when I've been working on a Twilight story. It's taking quite a bit of time and research while I'm writing the first half of it, but it should be worth it. It's mostly in Carlisle's POV.

Katniss POV

Rolling over in bed, the sunlight streaming through the window that looked into our room, I gasped seeing Peeta beside me. When had he come in? I must have been so tired that I didn't remember. Laying there close to him, I didn't want to move from my spot until the painful twinge in my bladder reminded me that I needed to pee. Sighing, I climbed out of bed and briskly walked to the bathroom where I relieved myself and fixed my braid. Rushing back to the bed, I climbed back in an cozied up to a warm Peeta.

Inhaling him, I smelled the essential aroma of him. Rosemary, dill and vanilla. Underneath all that was the embodiment of male. The smell was intoxicating to my new acute sense of smell. Straddling his lap, I kissed his neck-much like I did yesterday morning-and waited for him to wake up.

Opening a sleepy eye, I nearly laughed. My strong Peeta looked so child-like in his sleepy state. Rolling his hips against mine, I moaned feeling his morning arousal for me. "Good morning love." he whispered coming to pull me close to him. Resting my forehead on his chest, I could feel his steady heartbeat.

"Morning to you too. When did you come in?"

"Late. I had to get out of the Training Center last night."

"Where did you go?"

"Running. It helped clear my mind. Too much going on…" he chuckled softly. Pressing his warm hand on my lower back, he involuntarily pushed me into his chest. Wincing from the sharp pain from my breasts, I leaned up and a frown crossed his face.

"I will ask you again Katniss...is everything OK?"

"I think so. Could be that it's almost that time of month for me." my lips pursed and I scowled at the thought. What a way to enter the Arena?

He looked at me skeptically but nodded anyway. Like he knew anymore about the female body than I did. I could asked Ari but her eagle eyes from yesterday still haunted me. She knew something was going on with my body but refused to tell me. We sat there and stared and each other for a minute before I had the urge to pee again.

"I swear all I'm doing here lately is peeing." I grumbled loudly from the bathroom.

"I haven't seen it."
"You're not quite paying attention to that part of my daily activities."

"I pay enough attention..." he exclaimed clamoring off the bed. He sighed as he checked the clock on the night-table. "We better get dressed. It's almost time to go."

"Really? And no one woke us?" My shock was evident in my voice.

"I know but we still have time to grab a bit of breakfast before we go."

At the thought of food, my stomach rolled and I clamped my hand over my mouth. Peeta stood and rushed to my aid. Before I could wave him away, his warm hands clamped on my hips and held me I tried desperately not to throw up.

After a few minutes of gagging, I splashed water over my face and sighed. Opening my eyes a second later Peeta was staring at me with mixed confusion.

"Please don't ask me if I'm alright?" I quickly said before he could utter the words.

"You need to talk to Ari." he said quietly

"No. I'm not talking to anyone. I'm not going to some Captiol doctor and have them broadcast this all over Panem." I continued to stare at his reflection.

His posture stiffened and his jaw had gone rigid. Spinning me around he forced me to look at him. His eyes dark against my silver ones. The frown that lined his mouth was unlike him. "You. will. talk. to. someone. And that's final Katniss."

I glared at him. What in the fuck does he think he's doing? Ordering me around like small child. I'm not some incompetent person who can't handle a little nausea. "I'm not talking to someone and that's final Peeta. It's these fucking Games. It's everything that's been going on. Like you said earlier...too much going on." I threw his words back at him.

"It has to be more than this." he growled low.

Squeezing my eyes closed, I didn't want to argue and we were three seconds away from a blowout. "Listen, if I don't feel good in a day or two, I will talk to someone. I've been out of sorts since we were Reaped."

His face softened at my words. Concern flooding his entire body. "Why haven't you said anything?" his fingers caressing my cheek.

"I didn't think it is a big deal. Like I've told everyone, I've chalked it to nerves. Stress. etc etc." He nodded at me but didn't say anything. "We've got only a few more days left before we go back and I don't want to spend it fighting."

"OK." he whispered tucking his face into the crook of my neck. His arms encircled my waist while mine wrapped around his neck. "I'm just scared something is wrong with you..."

I didn't want to admit it to him, but I was afraid too.

Releasing me a few minutes later, he kissed my mouth gently before leaving the room. Gathering my clothes, I slipped them on and met him outside my room. Taking my hand, we didn't say anything even we stopped and grabbed some toast to nibble on. I thought going to training was useless but I knew it would take my-our- minds off the argument this morning.

No one said anything when we stepped into the elevator like it was the last time we would be able
to do it. This was our last day of training. Last year we had almost two weeks and this year they
seemed to want this over with so they cut it back to two days of training, the special training
session, the interviews, then one full day of rest before the Games began. Reaching the bottom
floor that lead the training area, I almost turned to beg Peeta to let us skip it.

I knew he would tell me no. Staying in physical shape was ingrained in him that he couldn't afford
to miss one day. Of course what we had been trained as wasn't going to help us here. About the
most that was-we couldn't show off to anyone here. Even during the private sessions with the
Gamemakers, I wasn't sure what I was going to do. I had shown them all last year with my bow,
but this year? I hadn't a clue. Even Peeta, who was always thinking further ahead than me, didn't
have a clue. Pushing the door open, I realized that we, along with a few others, were the only ones
in here.

No one wanted to be part of day two of training. Haymitch still pressed us about allies, but like I
told him last night; I wasn't interested except Janja and Flynn. Maybe Beetee and Wiress, but that
was all. Would it be enough?

Kissing me once more, we split up like we did yesterday. Rotating around the training room, I was
growing restless so I stopped again at the Edible plants station and reviewed myself which I think
I did fairly well on. Like a lot of things here, it was review. Must be a perk winning last years
Games. I knew that Peeta wanted me to come home without him. He was preparing himself to die
for me again and I wasn't going to let him. I didn't know if I could survive without him. Just the
thought of not having him here sent me into a small panic attack.

"You all right?" I heard a female voice speak up.

Looking at my invader, it was Janja. "Yea, I think so."

"You didn't look like you were doing too hot over here." she said cautiously.

"Well I'm fine now Thank you for your concern." I bit back. Her eyes narrowed in flints and I
mentally cursed myself. Stupid Katniss...she's a vampire for frick's sake!

"You know I'm just trying to be nice to you. The Johanna I put up front would be a hell of a lot
bitcher to you. You know after all, we're family."

"I know, I'm sorry. It's been a long morning already and look at that...it's not even lunch yet."

"So more bad shit will follow you." she returned the banter, then her face grew serious, "Listen I
know that the rest of my family know something is up with you and quite frankly I'm not sure....I
don't ask and I don't tell. So this funny act that's going on with you...I won't tell anyone I saw you
panicking and running the bathroom three times in the past hour we've been here."

I nodded grateful that my secret can be kept my one other person. "Thanks Jan-Johanna."

"But I will tell you this...they will be keeping an eye on you. At least Aunt Ari will. Uncle Tor
and V have enough on their plates with Peeta last night and everything else."

_How I wish I could know what the 'everything else' was..._.

"She's got a sharp eye and if you've landed on her radar, she's going to be hawking you till you
tell her what's wrong. Trust me, I know this." She chewed her lip swinging her ax that I had now
noticed she a was holding onto...."So for your sake you might want to talk to her."

"Thanks Jo. I've already promised Peeta I'll talk to her if I don't feel well by tomorrow. It has to be
nerves."
"Don't sweat it. Just don't try and kill me off when we go in. Dad will lose his shit." We chuckle lightly and she disappears. Well that cleared thirty minutes of my time. Roaming around, I ran into the elderly lady that was playing around with fish hooks. Intrigued by her delicate hands and designs, I motioned for her to help me.

I offered to teach her how to use a bow, but she shook her head at me. It wasn't something she needed to know, she mumbled in a garble voice that let me know she must have had a stroke not too long ago. It was hard to understand her but the longer stood there working on the fish hooks the easier it became to understand her.

We stood there for almost an hour-I had found her name was Mags-I had finally given up trying and instead watched her work on hook after hook. Neither of us realized that people were filing out of the room to the cafeteria for lunch until strong hands grasped my waist. Startled, I turned around to see a smiling Peeta. Brushing a loose bit of hair away from his face, his eyes lit up.

'It's time to eat ladies…" She and I nodded and he offered an arm to both of us. I smiled thinking it a bit silly but maybe it was more for Mags benefit than my own. Walking into the cafeteria we were bombed by Flynn.

"Peeta! You're stealing my thunder at being the ladies man! You comin' in here with two lovely ladies is leaving me inept at doing my job." he teased.

"If it makes you feel better, I'm sure Mags would be thrilled to be escorted by you." Peeta joked back as Mags took Flynn's arm.

"Now we we both got a girl. Although, I'm not sure which is lovelier." I rolled my eyes at his teasing dramatics.

"We can call it a draw if you like. Fighting over females can be messy."

"Sounds like a deal Mr. Mellark."

"A deal it is Mr. Odair." Peeta nodded and escorted me to the lunch line. Placing his hands on my hips, it was like he was warning off all males from talking to me.

Taking our lunch we sat down across from one another but soon our privacy was interrupted by the howling laughter of everyone around us. Even Janja and Flynn had elected to sit with us. Mags, taking a careful seat beside Flynn sighed happily as she finally sat down. I couldn't have agreed more with her.

We decided that small talk was better than dealing with no talk or heavy talk. Any of sort heavy talk would have to be done in our Penthouse because it was least likely to be watched. I'm sure they would like to see Vishous before he left. The announcement was coming soon, I'm sure there was no way he would be able to stay with us the entire time we were in the Games. I'm not even sure that he would even watch the Games.

When we were done, I ached to skip the last three hours of training and sleep. I could sneak out but I would have to deal with a disgruntled Peeta. Breaking away from our group, I excused myself to go to the bathroom again. It was strange. My fluid intake hadn't increased but I needed to pee more.

Arriving, Peeta had taken to hand-to-hand combat and he was easily winning against the Victor from District 2. Flynn and Janja were playing around with their respective weapons and it made me wonder why they would choose to do this. If they actually liked the weapons of the people they replaced. To leave their families like they did to pursue a life of being a spy for another
country. Was it worth it? The time away from everything that they knew and thrust into a world that they had no clue about living in.

I couldn't imagine what that would be like. I shuddered at the thought. Wandering from station to station, I half assed paid attention to what the instructors were talking about. It wasn't like any of this was new to me, but for some of us it was new or a refresher course. A refresh course about how to kill people. I snorted softly to myself.

"What's so funny?" I heard a voice ask from behind me. I didn't know I had been followed.

"Nothing. I was just thinking." I said turning around to see Peeta.

"You must have been thinking hard to not hear me." he teased.

"I know. I'm distracted, I'm tired, I need to hit the bathroom again." I felt like complaining. I never complained to anyone like this.

He raised an eyebrow at me. A smirk forming on his face. "Well lucky for us, training is over."

"Is it really?" I looked around to see the crowd of tributes filter out of the room.

"Yes, so we can take care of a few things. Like you can take your bathroom break and I'll give you a massage to help you sleep."

"I don't think I can lay on my stomach….." I pulled him close to me like we were going to kiss. "My breast are still tender."

"I wasn't talking about a back massage….." he whispered back. I could almost see the smirk in his eyes. My eyes clouded with desire and I pulled back to see that his had begun to bleed black.

"I'll...I'll….be right back." I stuttered rushing to the bathroom. When I returned, we hurried from the training room. Know that it was the last time we would ever see it again. Taking the elevator, I had a weird sense of deja vu. Like we had done this yesterday. But we were so close to our deaths that I didn't care anymore. Pulling Peeta close to me, we back into the side of the elevator wall.

"Woah Katniss….." he sputtered before my lips claimed his. Wrapping my arms around his neck, he deepened the kiss and finished closing the distance between us. We kissed like it was our last. Like we were starved for water. For food. For air. For love. Tasting his mouth in mine, I let out a soft whimper. It wasn't much to me but it fueled him. His hands caressing the exposed skin around my hips as I tangled my fingers in his hair. I didn't want to let him go. Cupping the side of my neck, he broke the kiss and trailed slow kisses down the column of my throat, before he could bite down, the elevator came to a stop.

"Looks like training was fairly dull if you're having this much fun." we heard a voice.

"Fuck ... sorry guys..." this time a male voice spoke up.

Growling, Peeta didn't try to hide his anger. "You fucking mind?" reaching for the button to close the doors again, a strong hand stopped them from closing.

"You don't wanna do that in there. You know they're watching you." Tor said coming up behind a very amused Ari and V kept his eyes averted.

"Right now, I don't care." his mouth went back to caress the skin on my neck.

"You will if Snow finds out....."
Placing a hand on his chest, I placed the other on his cheek and forced him to look at me. "He's right Peeta. You know he is."

"Fuck..." he breathed softly. Taking my hand, he pulled me out of the elevator. "You three going somewhere?"

"Yea... scoping the city some more." V said with finality. Peeta nodded slowly catching his words. Now Peeta was in on whatever was going on?

"It's not like that Katniss." Peeta said as if he read my mind.

"Not really it's not. He has an idea, like you, but neither of you know the details." Ari equipped.

"I'm sure. I'm going to nap before dinner if you four don't mind."

"Please, by all means, get you some beauty sleep." Ari rolled her eyes playfully.

Squeezing Peeta's hand, I left them all standing there around the elevator. I was tired so I skipped a shower that I probably needed. Climbing into bed, I told myself I'd only sleep for an hour. But when I woke, it was dark outside. Sitting up in bed abruptly, dizziness swept over me. Clutching the pillow, I closed my eyes and prayed for it to stop.

When it did, I got up and eased out of my uniform. It saddened and elevated me to think that I wouldn't have to wear it ever again after tomorrow. I wouldn't be able to do a lot of things ever again but it wasn't like tht matter anymore. I was determined to get Peeta out of the Arena. No matter what cost.

Winding my way down the hallway I heard people talking in the sitting room. Poking my head around, everyone was sitting around talking. Entering the room, the noise level dropped and everyone wield around to look at me.

"Hey...." I muttered lamely.

Peeta stood up and rushed to me. Nuzzling his face in my neck, I sighed happily. "Are you feeling better?"

"Yea, but I'm still tired. Napping isn't always refreshing."

He nodded and led me to the couch where everyone had picked up their talking. I didn't listen to anyone but rested my head on Peeta's shoulder. I assume they were telling Vishous about the Games because he kept asking questions.

"So the location of the Arena is always in a new place?"

"Yea, it's always has a different landscape as well. No one know what they'll be faced with until the get there. It can be any environment with any temperature." Peeta explained. "We got lucky last year because it looked like home. It was an advantage to us.....especially Katniss."

"What do they do with the old Arena's?"

Haymitch scoffed and sipped from his never-ending flask, "Use the as landmarks for the Capitol people to visit. That way they'll get a taste of it the Games but never having to be in it."

"Sounds like your President has some control issues...."

"Like you would know V.."
"Fuck you Tor."

"Jesus, not again." Ari rolled her eyes. Both males turned to look at her. "What? This how your arguments start. Remember how the first one came about after I was rescued?"

"How did it happened?" I spoke softly.

"Ah! She speaks to us." Ari teased lightly. "Vishous had just found how demented my father actually was…"

"Ari, he used to beat you." Vishous interrupted.

"Anyway…” she shot V a glare, "I found these two face to face about ready to punch fists when I gave V a sound lashing."

"And then she pulled a dagger on him." Tor spoke up.

"Wasn't my best idea that the time, but I was thoroughly pissed off at V." Ari shrugged her shoulders at the two males and sighed. "After that we were tight like shoelaces."

"It did get some getting used to having her around. That was the moment I realized that Ari had my Father's temper."

"Is that how you two are related?" I asked.

"Yea, we didn't tell you that she's my half niece through her Father? He and I share the same dad." V explained with a questioningly look.

"He did...remember Katniss?" Peeta nudged me gently.

"Yea, sorry. It's been a lot going on." I mumbled. Taking a sip of my drink, I finally decided it was time to eat. Peeta's eyes never left my plate, but he began to eat as well. The rest of the crowd took this as a good sign and began eating too.

We sat in silence, the only sounds that were heard were the exchanging of dishes and refills of glasses. I poked around my food, eating only enough to abate my hunger but not enough to make me sick. Whatever was wrong, I hoped was temporary. I couldn't go into the Arena like this. Sighing, I sat my fork down and yawned again. Excusing myself, I left table and searched for my bathroom. When I was there, I looked at my reflection. There was something not right. How on Earth can I be sick and no one else?

Was this a side effect of drinking from Peeta? Or did I need more of his blood to keep me from getting sick. I wasn't sure but I had a feeling that was it. I was sick because I needed more of his blood.
I know what you're thinking! "Finally! She has updated!"

But no...it's an Author Note...sorry ya'll.

For all my lovely readers for W2WC, I WILL be back! I know it's been a few months since my last update and I am truly sorry for this. I tried my hand at a Twilight story and now that its finished, I can return to HG world. HOWEVER, there is a problem, when I was writing it, I was totally in depth with my characters and my prose. (I noticed this when I re-read the last 60 pages) I want to find that again so I am going to be re-reading some HG FF for a while. I don't have much left except the interview and the Arena. Once done with W2WC, I will probably write something else, but I am not sure.

If you want, I will take all suggestions for something new. I can update W2WC because I still have over 60 pages until I would be completely caught up and then you would have to wait for ages before a new chapter is written. Each chapter is about 20-25 pages and 7,000-10,000 words a chapter. Which is quite a bit when I only have 2-3hrs a day to write (once my kids are asleep).

Please be super patient with me. I love Katniss and Peeta and plan on writing more since this world seems to be my niche.

Love you all

lovebeauty011 (the writer known as Chelsea)
Chapter Summary

(Here is the long awaited next chapter of W2WC. I want to thank EVERYONE for waiting on me to get around to uploading the part 2 of this chapter. I know it's been 2 months, but everyone has been super duper patient with me and I decided to upload as a present to you, my readers. Now that the holidays are ALMOST over, I am going to start back on finishing this. I'm not sure if I'll ever get around to doing a sequel but I will do a very long Epilogue for them. Which could take some time to wrap things up. I have another idea for a new story for K/P but it will have to wait. I have two more stories after this in queue, but I'll try to write drabbles and ficlets for you in between all that writing. As I finish a chapter, I will upload a new one for you. As always: I don't own this! Enjoy!)

Katniss POV

When I got back to the table, everyone had finished their dinner. Had I been gone that long? Maybe so, but I sat down anyway. Looking down at my plate, it was the same springtime green broth I had last night.

"I figured since you didn't feel well, I had them make this again for you. It seems easy on the stomach." Peeta said caressing my cheek.

"You've been nauseous?" Ari asked abruptly.

"Ya…." I said slowly knowing that Janja was right. Once you were on Ari's radar there wasn't much she missed.

"OK...you follow me now!"

"Ari…." Tor began.

"No, she needs to come with me." "Now is not the time."

"We can make the time Tor."

"Talk later. We've got things to discuss." he said. The look he gave her silenced her for the moment. I was safe until it was time for her to snoop on me again.

"Fine!" she growled at him. He arched an eyebrow at her, but said nothing.

I had kept quiet with their arguing and began to sip my soup. It was good-like always-but it fell into my stomach like lead. It was not a good feeling to have. Whatever Ari wanted to talk to me about upped my nerves even more. I wanted to leave the table and crawl back into bed but I forced myself to finish the broth before excusing myself.

In my room, I sat down on the soft blanket and stared at the wall across from me. Warm hands
placed on my thighs broke me of my thoughts. Looking down at the body that accompanied the hands, it was Peeta's sparkling blue eyes that held my gaze. They were laced with worry for me. I could tell and I felt guilty for making him worry about me.

"I'm sorry…"
"For what?"
"Making you worry about me."
"Katniss, I love you. I will always worry about you. As I'm sure you worry about me?" he assured me. I gave the tiniest nod of my head at him.

"I think I know what's wrong with me…." I blurted out.

His interest piqued he didn't move from his spot between my legs. "Do you?"
"Yea, but it's only in theory." I replied with caution. What if I was wrong?
"Let me hear it."
"I think I need more of your blood…."

He raised an eyebrow skeptically at me. I knew this wasn't going to go well. Nothing is ever in my favor. At least it hadn't been since my dad died years ago. He sighed closing his eyes briefly before looking at me. Confusing what I needed and what I wanted distracted me.

"Are you sure?" he asked slowly.

"Like I said...in theory. What else could it be Peeta? I'm nauseous half the time, I'm sleeping constantly and I have to always pee. ….I'm clearly sick with something that I don't have a clue about."

He nodded in defeat. Even he didn't have a clue. Caressing my cheek, I leaned into his touch. Grateful for this moment. He opened his mouth like he was going to talk but closed it. He was quiet for a moment, like he was trying to formulate a way to phrase his next words. "Ok, I'll feed you tonight. After everyone has went to sleep. We don't need Ari to ask questions."

I nodded eagerly. This had to be the reason why I felt poorly. Now the waiting would be driving me insane. "Good thing all we have to do tomorrow is our private session with the Gamemakers."

"You know what you're going to do?"
"Not a clue."
"Me neither." he said but perked for a moment, "I told Haymitch that you wanted the tributes from District 3 and Mags from District 4. ….besides Janja and Flynn."

"Oh? How'd that go?"

"He said he would tell them you're still thinking." his smile didn't reach his eyes this time and I wondered if that was my doing. The whole blood issue?

"Of course he did." I rolled my eyes, but returned Peeta's smile.

"I think we should shower and get ready for bed. Then I'll see if everyone has left or crashed out for the night. I'm not worried about Haymitch or Effie," he told me.
I agreed and took his hand and led him to the bathroom. Disrobing, we didn't speak. I could barely look at him. He wasn't comfortable with the idea, but he wasn't going to deny me anything. If he believed that I believed it was the reason, he didn't argue with me. The shower was quiet and uneventful. You would think after all this time, he would be ready to jump at the instance to do something like this. I hadn't drank from him since we first mated.

But he was quiet...and hesitant. So unlike him. Deep in his own mind, I could never understand what was being said in there. I know he carried his own demons about his own existence, but this should be worry free for him. So why was he hesitant?

Climbing out of the shower a while later, I stood before the mirror again and looked at myself. Coming up behind me, his eyes dark and lowered; he kissed my shoulder and left me in there. I heard the door close a minute later and knew it would be a minute before he would return. Running a brush through my hair, I stepped out of the bathroom and threw on a nightgown. It was unlike me to dress in something like this, but tonight I needed the sensual touch of something other than Peeta's hands on me.

Taking a seat on the bed, I waited patiently. I could see myself in my mind. In a maze where I kept making the wrong moves. Where the answer would be in the end if I could ever find my way out. Braiding and inbraiding my hair for the like the umpteenth time, I finally became discouraged and pulled myself off the bed. I squashed the urge to pee again even though my bladder was knocking furiously at me. Begging me to relive myself. I stubbornly refused. I wanted to be in the room when Peeta returned. If he returned to me.

Would he crack and tell Vishous? I know they didn't quite get along but I'm sure Peeta could tell him anything without it being told to Tor and Ari. I wasn't sure how to trust him. I wasn't even sure how to trust myself at this point. The Games were days away and I had nothing to look forward too except my own death. Regardless of what Peeta wanted or not.

He was coming home and that's final.

Pacing the room, I thought over what Haymitch had said about having allies. I though about the interview that would be forced upon us. The private session with the Gamemakers tomorrow. I hadn't a clue what I was going to do much less how to keep Peeta alive. I thought about all the secrets that surrounded our lives. How each of them affected us.

My thoughts flew to my sister. How I missed her sunny and cheerful disposition. Her light in the stormy clouds of my own disposition. If hadn't volunteered for her; she wouldn't be here. I would be mourning the sister I loved my whole life. My little duck who quacked and cared too much for animals. I knew that I would never see her again and it saddened me. It didn't depress me but saddened me.

The sun had set hours ago and I wished for Peeta's return. He, alone, could keep me sane in a world of madness. Maybe he told everyone I was asleep or maybe he was talking to his family. It seemed weird to call them his family when I had known forever who they were. Or who they pretended to be. What struck me odd was how he reacted to them. He wanted to be apart of their lives but they continued to push him out claiming he wasn't ready for they needed to tell him.

_When is anyone ready?_

I heard his footsteps before his could grasp the doorknob. I heard the turning of the handle and the breeze that swept into the room before I saw him. His essence floated through the room swirling around me. Giving me comfort and safety. Turning my head, he stood there wearily unlike earlier when he looked full of life. Closing the door, he strode toward me and pulled me to him.
Maybe it was a ruse for the rest of them. His came to rest on my hips bringing me roughly to him. My body pressed against his and I ignored the ache in my breasts. I wanted him to touch them, caresses them; but his mouth and hands seemed to have a different plan.

"Sit on the bed." He mummered his mouth ghosting over my shoulder. My nightgown bunched around my hips already. His voice, the one that always soaked my panties, was in my ear. Crawling it's way down my spine and back up my brain making life seem fuzzy.

Letting me go, I stumbled toward the bed. My body already buzzing for a release. A release I knew only he could give me. Sitting down on the bed, like he instructed. His eyes were black against my stormy grey eyes. My clit throbbed in anticipation. Falling between my opened and inviting legs, I don't know where he procured the small knife, but it was there gleaming in the dim glow of the room.

He laid it down beside my thigh and ran his hands up and down my legs. A rush of goosebumps released onto my skin and I ached for his hands to slide between my legs. At the thought my legs opened on their own volition. Inviting him to learn its secrets. He must have noticed the invitation when I finally felt fingers slowly trace the sensitive skin. Trembling, my heart sped up and I bit down hard on my lower lip. Tasting blood for the first time. My hunter's eyes trained on him and his nose twitched smelling the succulent aroma of my blood.

"Katniss…" he breathed agonizingly. The temptation was becoming too much for him. "Please don't test me right now."

"W-why not?" I asked knowing the answer.

"If I don't stop, we'll never get around to doing this. I'll have to take you." The pleasureable aching pain between my legs had been a dull throb turned inferno. He leaned down and slowly began kissing softly on my exposed thighs. I sighed in contentment and he barely flinched but kept his slow ministrations. By the time he had pushed my nightgown up to my belly button, I felt a pool of wetness under my ass.

Inhaling my scent, he growled low in his throat. I could feel it against my bare thighs. The vibrations humming their way all over me. "Blo…blood tasted better when you're aroused." He murmured his nose brushing my sex. My breath hitched and I faintly nodded. Twisting my fingers in his curly locks, I ached to push him all the way into me and taste me. A flick of his tongue against me and I felt him pull away from me sharply.

He was breathing heavily. His body taut like my bowstring. Flushed and sweating, I leaned forward to run my hands down his chest to grip the shirt. At that moment, I didn't care about blood. I wanted his body on top of mine. Ripping it off his body, he didn't fight me. In fact, he helped push my nightgown off me. Pulling me from my sitting position, we swapped spots. He sat down and roughly pulled me toward him.

I never saw the small knife in his hand or when he nicked the side of his neck. I did watch a small stream of blood trailed quickly down his skin. The bright red contrasting against the lightly tanned skin. "Drink now!" He exclaimed and I didn't hesitate. Leaning forward, I captured his skin in my mouth and felt blood pour into my own. Our moans were in unison. Plastering my hand on the other side of his throat, his hips bucked into mine. Rubbing my already sensitive area with his cock, I grind my hips into his hoping for a release. Which I knew I wasn't going to find unless he was inside me.

Tugging gently on me, he pulled me away from his neck and I hungrily wanted more. Before I could reach for him again, he had rolled us over and pinned me underneath him. I could feel his blood course through my body and If I had thought about being on fire before this was entirely
new to me.

My eyes closed involuntarily, my mouth parting as my breathing became erratic. I couldn't help the moan that escaped my mouth. It wasn't like this the first time I tasted his blood. What was different now? My mind screamed as I laid there thrashing gently underneath Peeta. In that short moment, everything I had been put through over the past few days with the changes of my body, disappeared. I was just here. Nothing more, nothing less.

Finally the rush seemed to slow down. Like a train finally coming to a stop at the station. Hissing and braking ever so slowly. My body felt hot as if was in fever. Which I knew I wasn't. Opening my eyes, I could see the worry and confusion plastered all over Peeta's face.

"Ar-are you OK?" He whispered.

"Yea, I think I am. What happened?"

"You got this wild look in your eyes when I pulled you away from me. You thrashed around and it looked like you were in pain but you weren't. It didn't last long, but you were starting to worry me."

"It felt like my veins were on fire." I explained. "It wasn't like this the first time."

"What do you mean?" He asked releasing my hands. I wished he hadn't I was starting to like it.

"There wasn't an aftershock like this time."

He thought for a moment. Lost in his own mind. I hesitantly waited on him. My worry growing with each passing second. "Maybe my blood is getting stronger. I am getting closer to my transition." He finally said.

"Are you OK?" I ask watching him pull himself from me.

"Yea. I'm tired Katniss."

I burst into tears. "I'm....sorry Peeta" I buried my head in my hands. OK, this is new. I never cry about anything. At least nothing as insignificant as this. This must have thrown him because it took a minute for him to react.

"Hey...hey...what's with the tears? There's nothing to be sorry over."

I gulped and tried to wipe the tears off my face, but he pulled me close to him crushing me. I didn't even care that my breasts were hurting. Just to have him close to me was enough to keep me sobbing in his bare shoulder. When I finally let up, I stood there in this warmth and I realized I wanted nothing more than for him to hold me while we slept. I didn't care if we had sex tonight. I didn't care about the blood issue or the impending Games.

"Can we sleep?" I asked softly. Never answering his question about my crying. I would need time analyze it myself. He nodded and stripped the rest of his clothes off. When we climbed in bed, he pulled me in tightly to his body. Snug as we fit together like puzzle pieces; we soon fell asleep.

The next morning when we awoke, it was earlier than normal. Which was saying something about us. I was normally an earlier riser because if hunting and Peeta's naturally early up before myself to bake. This morning it wasn't any different. The sky hadn't turned orange yet. Still the inky blackness that would eventually give way to a purple hue until the shun showed its head to us. Encasing us in its warmth. Bringing the world back to life.
Rolling over I saw that Peeta had finally rolled away from me sometime during the night. When he was in my bed, the nightmares stayed away. But on those rare occasions when he wasn't there; nightmares would plague me until I managed to escape them.

No nightmares tonight, but this one left me feeling all sorts of emotions. Happiness, sadness, longing. I could see us sitting in a garden. It was dark out but the lights around us illuminated the entire area. There was Peeta crouched down with a young boy, maybe 10 or so, with blonde hair and grey eyes. In my arms, a infant. Female with the clearest blue eyes I've ever seen with the exception of one person. Was this the happiness that I wanted?

Running my hand up and down his broad chest, I watched as my hand moved up and down to the rhythm of his breathing. I didn't want to wake him up, but we would have to get ready soon enough. Today was our private session with the Gamemakers and the results would be broadcasted later. Truthfully, I hadn't a clue what I was going to do.

So, I laid there hoping I would fall back asleep. When sleep didn't arrive thirty minutes later, the beating my bladder was getting sent me rushing the bathroom. Relieving myself, I almost sighed in happiness. My rush to the bathroom must have woken Peeta up, because he was leaned against the doorway, naked, and amusement danced across his face.

"Never knew peeing makes you happy…” he teased.

"When you have to go like I do recently, it does." Normally I would feel self-conscious about Peeta watching me do something like this but we have seen so much of each other, that it didn't bother me as much as I thought it would. After taking care of myself, I shook my head at him. Reaching to brush my teeth, he stopped and wrapped his arms around. In his arms, I felt him breathe into me. He was at least a few inches taller than me right now. Rumor has it that he would grow exponentially when his transition happened.

Nibbling along the flesh of my shoulder, his hands splayed over my stomach. Hugging the skin close to him as he could. "You still seem different to me.” He whispered, "but I like it. It's your body but its wonderful as well."

I wanted to blush down to my roots, but his intense gaze kept me from doing it. "I don't care what happens in the next few days, I want you to know I love you."

"I love you too.” I whispered trying to keep my emotions in check.

Crawling back into bed, we laid there unable to sleep. His fingers caressing my hair normally would have lulled me to sleep but this morning was different. Sighing into his chest, I sat up abruptly. Running my hands through my hair, I quickly braided it while he stared at me in confusion.

"What's wrong?"

"Can't sleep. Normally I'm so tired that all I want to do is sleep. Can we go somewhere?” I asked.

"Yea. The roof, if you want?"

That sounded like the best idea in the world at the moment. We could sit up there and escape for a little while. Throwing a pair of sleep pants and a tank, I sat down and watched as Peeta dressed. Even though, I was tired, I still could appreciate his body. I didn't notice when he was done until he grabbed me and pulled me to my feet. Taking me from the room, we tiptoed quietly up the stairs and he pushed the door open to the roof. There was a perk to being assigned the top floor.

I was lost in my own thoughts that I must not have seen him grab a blanket. Sitting down, he
pulled me gently in his lap and wrapped the both of us. Even in the middle of summer, it was
warm but on the roof there was a breeze that could chill you to the bone if you weren't dressed for
it.

Closing my eyes, I rested my head against him. I don't know how long we sat there but soon
enough the sun started to peek over the white buildings that surrounded us. Streaks of orange and
gold smeared against the white buildings. You could see the hazy dusty looking particles that
floated around making the world seem like we were in a painting. One by one the lights started to
go off. Darkening the streets for a brief moment before the sun illuminated the dark roads. The
world started to wake up and for us it was another day closer to the Arena. Where I could very
well lose Peeta. I shuddered if I ever saw his broken body lying amongst the wildlife that would
surround him before the hovercraft would take him away from me. Would I even get to say
goodbye?

Or worse, would he get to say goodbye if he found my body? How would he react? He promised
me that I would be coming home. I didn't...no I couldn't believe him. That he would give up his
own life to save mine. A debt I would never be able to pay back. Not in a million lifetimes.

"Beautiful, isn't it?" He asked barely breaking the silence.

"Yea." I supplied shortly.

"I was talking about you.." He tilted my head to look at him. His sapphire blue eyes intensely
gazed at me and I was entrapped. Like in one of Gale's snares and I didn't want to be freed.
Lowering his head down to mine, our noses brushed intimately before his lips found mine. I
gasped at the tenderness behind it. It was a feeling that we had yet to share.

Every time we were intimate it was hot, passionate, sometimes it was dark and dangerous, but
never tender. Never soft. It was how his body wanted mine. To mark me. To claim me as his own
forever. Those nights between the sheets, blood roaring in my ears as he took me over and over,
sweat pouring off us his body atop of mine filling me taking his blood fill of me were nights I was
going to miss.

"I love you Katniss." He whispered breaking the kiss.

"I love you too." I said my heart really feeling it after all these months. I've loved him this whole
time but something about the right moment that you truly fall in love with someone. That one
moment that you know can last lifetimes was this one moment. Framing it, I put it away in the box
of memories that I would cherish forever.

Curling into him, I wrapped the blanket tighter around me. I could hear the steady beat of his heart
through his skin and I wondered how many more days I would be privileged to hear it. I could
hear him sigh in contentment; his arms tightening around me. I didn't want him to let go.

Ever.

But I knew we would. Hearing footsteps a minute later, I felt him shuffle his body around to look
at our intruder. He ignored whoever it was and turned back to me. Giving me a small smile, I felt
his fingers weave into my hair.

"It's time to go Katniss..." I heard him sigh.

"I don't want too." I protested.

"I know. Neither do I, but it's time."
Pulling back from him, I searched his eyes. Hoping he would tell me different. When he didn't I could feel the tears start to prickle around my eyes again. Cupping the side of my face, he pulled me back to him. Holding me as I felt tears fall. He held me as I cried. This perfect moment of what could be our last sunrise.

Kissing my forehead, he pulled away from me. Coming to his feet, he held his hand out me. Looking at his stretched hand I didn't want to take it. Taking it meant that we had to leave our sanctuary. I felt my mind weigh in the options for a mere second before I took his hand in mine. The warmth spreading to my bones. Gooseflesh spread over my skin, but I squeezed his hand tightly in mine and let him lead me down to our room.

Entering the room, I hesitated to undress. But I knew I had too. This wasn't the option of wanting too but having too. Kissing the back of my hand, he began to strip down. At least they had the brains to bring his uniform in this room. I didn't want him far from me. Undressing as well, I slipped on the uniform. It stretched against my elusive changing body. It didn't worry me now that I had tasted Peeta's blood last night.

As we walked through the penthouse, I could smell breakfast looming in front of us. Blanching at the smells, I turned and rushed back toward the bathroom. Retching, I held the toilet hoping that it would end soon. Thankfully for me, there wasn't anything in my stomach or it could have been worse. Flushing a minute later, I looked at my image in the mirror. I was pale and tired. Dark smudges were prominent under my eyes.

Turning the tap on, I cleaned my face and washed my mouth out. The taste of vomit lingering even after I brushed my teeth. Brushing again, I could barely taste the aftertaste. A knock on the door interrupted my thoughts. Opening it, stood a worried Peeta. The crease in his forehead indicating that his worry for me was increasing.

Collapsing into his always open arms, he held me again. We both know the truth. The blood didn't work. There was still something wrong with me. Something we couldn't describe but I know once we left the room, Ari would be on my ass. I didn't want to deal with her. Not today. Not when I felt particularly vulnerable. I felt his strong hands smooth over my back in a sweet gesture to calm me.

"Are you alright?" His voice low to my ear.

"No, but there's nothing I can do." I sighed heavily and looked up at him. My head barely brushed his chin. He nodded and pulled me back to the dining room where I'm assuming no one saw me rush to the bathroom.

Taking a seat, the chatter was quieter this morning. It had become quieter every day since we arrived. No one seemed to be in good spirits; including Effie. Which was a shocker to both Peeta and I. Normally she was inclined to talk everyone to death. Every so often, I watch as Haymitch would grab her free hand and squeeze it affectionately.

I guess after 15 years of working together you form some sort of affection for a person no matter how decrepit they actually can be. They reminded me of two sides of a coin. One polished and shiny. The other dull and lifeless. Effie maintained her orangey hue today but it seemed softer. Like Peeta's sunset. And not as garish. Maybe Haymitch was having an effect on her. Even he, had stopped drinking, to make sure Peeta was to come home.

Around me, plates of fruit, pancakes, eggs and a variety of breakfast meats greeted me. The only thing that seemed appetizing was the fruit and eggs. I knew I had to keep up pretenses in case I was interrogated about my eating habits. Normally I could eat anyone under the table. With my love of food….OK, well, Peeta's cheese buns; no one stood a chance.
Picking at my food, I sipped at the hot chocolate and grasped Peeta's free hand with my own. I could eat one-handed. I just needed to keep in my mind that he was still with me. Always. We were due to leave in the next half hour and I hoped that the time would drag. Ari eyed me for a minute trying to gauge me.

Like I was ready to tell her anything.

Of course, I knew she would get it out of me. What I didn't know was that it was going to be at the last minute before I would be sent up the tube to the Arena. And it would rock my already crippling world apart.

"You two need to get going." Ari mentioned turning back to Peeta and I.

"We know...."

"Procrastinating will not make this go any faster. Do you two know what you're going to do?" Tor asked.

"No." we replied in unison.

"Do what?" V implored finally realizing that people were talking.

"For our private session with the Gamemakers." I grumbled scooting my eggs to the side of the plate.

"And I'm assuming that you've done shown them what you're good at?" He said.

We nodded at him. Perplexed at what he was heading at, we waited patiently for guidance. In this place, it was the only way you were going to survive. With the exception of Haymitch's silver parachutes.

"Do something you've learned since you've been here. Be it big or small. I'm sure they really don't care what you can do, do they?"

"Not really. Since everyone here are previous Victors; it's all for show. The Gamemakers know who's vicious enough in the Arena and who will be on the list to be killed first." Haymitch spoke up as he wiped his mouth.

It was all the advice we were going to get. I thought to myself. What had we learned since we got here? Nothing really except for the knot-tying station. Or maybe Peeta could throw a few knives. I physically shrugged my shoulders at them.

"Like it matters anyway...." I grumbled. My mood was indeed sour this morning. First, not being able to sleep, then being pulled away from our private moment. Lastly, my impromptu run to the bathroom. Yea, my morning was swell.

"OK, we need to get going." Peeta finally said taking my hand. Pulling me to my feet, like he's been doing all morning, we barely waved goodbye as he led us to the elevator. Stepping inside, anxiety grew in my stomach as the doors closed on us.

Peeta must have known because he pulled me in for a long slow kiss. One of those soul searching kisses that left me wanting for more. Couldn't he have done this afterward? His large hands settled on my waist and he backed us against the wall. His body pressed firmly against the side of the elevator while my own my free to move around instead of being pinned under his possession.

Palming my hands around his neck, I could feel his heartbeat thrum under my fingers. Our lips
and tongues danced the ancient mating ritual that ensnared us in its intricate design. In that moment, we forgot about the Games, our friends and family, and found each other. He deepened the kiss, our bodies pressed firmly into each others.

"I'm going to need you tonight…" the words rolled off his tongue like honey and I could feel my body responding immediately to his command. I could only nod my head words escaping me, like always. Before I could lean in for another kiss. The elevator dinged and the doors slid open. It was time.
It feels like Minutes, Not Hours Pt 1

Chapter Summary

Simple:

DO. NOT. KILL. ME.

YES! I have finally updated. I know it's been four months since my last and I am truly sorry. Real life took over and I was stuck there instead of fantasy land where it's much nicer. Part 1 and 2 of this segment have been finished and its the last chapters I can post until everyone has to wait for a new chapter. I hadn't planned on this to happen, but it did. But I am currently working on the next chapter that will cover the interview. I'm not sure if it's all going to be Peeta or Katniss's POV for it. But it's here and it's been edited. As always: I don't own this! Enjoy!

It feels like minutes, Not hours….

Peeta POV

I didn't want to pull away from her. The heat from her body warmed me to the core. After last night feeding I was feeling particularly tired. It didn't help that we have been up since the crack of dawn. Holding her in my arms earlier was the happiest and most serene I have felt since we returned from the Victory Tour months ago.

Had it been that long?

Everything in my body screamed to take her but I focused my mind to just hold her. She needed it as much as I did. When V interrupted us, I could have decapitated him. But I knew it was time to go. The tears came unexpectedly. I wasn't use to them and it worried me that she was so easily prone to crying. Holding her, I let her cry herself out. Taking her downstairs, she promptly ignored me. A coping mechanism that Tor had described to me long time ago.

When she sprinted back to the bathroom, I looked to see if anyone had seen her. She was wary of anyone finding out how bad she was. My worry for her had exponentially grown over the past few days and today was the epitome of my worry. I realized, as she did, that the blood didn’t work. She was still sick and was going into the Arena like this unless something happened. When her mouth found the opened skin last night, the feel of her drinking from me roared a new beast inside my head.

Even now I can't describe the emotions that rolled over me like a tidal wave. Hunger and lust were at the forefront but underneath it was a mountain of love and trust that I thought I would never find in this lifetime. Even if Katniss never accepted me after the Games.

Breakfast was subdue. Even Effie was quiet this morning. Every day we crept closer to the Arena day; everyone's moods were off. I'm supposing hers as well. It was the first time she had ever had victors. I never assumed that she would grow attached to us. What would happen to her and Haymitch if Katniss and I died in the Arena? Move on to another pair of tributes next year?
I didn't miss the affectionate hand squeeze that Haymitch bestowed on Effie. I knew they were sleeping together, but to be affectionate like they were a couple, wasn't something I was ready to admit. I don't think they were ready either. Squeezing Katniss's hand under the table, I was pulled out of my thoughts hearing everyone finally speak.

"You two need to get going." Ari mentioned turning back to Katniss and I.

"We know…" 

"Procrastinating will not make this go by any faster. Do you two know what you're going to do?" Tor asked.

"No." we replied in unison.

"Do what?" V implored finally realizing that people were talking.

"For our private session with the Gamemakers." Katniss grumbled scooting her eggs to the side of the plate. I don't think she realized I was watching her, but I was. She should eat more than she was because who knows if there was accessible food in the Arena.

"And I'm assuming that you've done shown them what you're good at?" He said.

We nodded at him. Perplexed at what he was heading at, we waited patiently for guidance. In this place, it was the only way you were going to survive. With the exception of Haymitch's silver parachutes.

"Do something you've learned since you've been here. Be it big or small. I'm sure they really don't care what you can do, do they?" My "uncle" said.

By blood relation, he wasn't my Uncle, but since my Father and Ari were adopted siblings; it was only right to call him Uncle. From what I've been told privately, there were at least seven cousins that were desperate to see me. They knew about me, but I didn't know them. If I lived long enough to move to New Britain and see them, I don't know how well I would take to them. My own family disowned me. Even my brothers didn't speak to me. Not even in the days leading up to the Reaping.

Haymitch decided it was time to interrupt and put his two cents in. He was right though, we were all Victors so it didn't matter whether we did something spectacular or not. All of us were going to our death. It's not like we seriously needed the sponsors this time. People were angry that their favorites were going back into the Arena anyway. I know that Flynn and Janja were favorites as well as Cashmere and Gloss. Whether we wanted to admit it or not, Katniss and I were favorites too.

"We need to go." I said grabbing Katniss by the hand and dragging her to her feet. She was far beyond reluctant to do anything today. It was going to be our private session. It's not like it was time for the interviews. That torture was reserved for tomorrow night. Giving everyone a light wave goodbye we entered the elevator.

Pulling my mate into a low slow kiss. I searched the inside of her delicate mouth. Learning every curve, every crevice until I was sure it was seared into my brain. Stepping back against the wall, we stood there kissing. Our hands keeping in 'safe areas' because we knew Snow would be watching us. I didn't need him staring at her while I took her like an animal. Claiming her as my own. In that moment, I forgot about everything I had been through since Ari and Tor came into our lives and screwing things up. Yes, I had been happy beforehand but I was ignorant of what I could become.
"I'm going to need you tonight…" the words rolled off my tongue like honey and I could feel her body responding immediately to my command. The scent of juniper wafted in the elevator and my cock responded immediately. I know she felt my cock against her. Before I could spin us around and lift her body around mine, the elevator dinged and the doors opened.

Entering the room, everyone was sitting around talking. A hush fell over the room as we stepped in and took a seat. Flynn, Mags, and Janja rose from their spot and joined us. Even Chaff joined us. We were a strange lot to look at. There's a lot of kidding about what we're going to do. It seem that no one know what they're planning. Most are so out of touch about a special skill. Sing, strip—which Janja said she would do—tell jokes. Mags said she would just take a nap.

I know it was ridiculous for Katniss to chose her as an ally but I can see why. There's a bond forming between the two females and had Mags been decades younger; she and Katniss would have been friends.

Flynn was the only one who wasn't talking. I guess he was still concerned about the things that were happening since we've arrived. He would give us a pained smile like he was interested but his head wasn't there.

As the tributes from District 12, we were scheduled to go last. I would go before Katniss. I wracked my brain to do something. Anything that would 'prove' I was competent enough for this. As the hours rolled on, people went in and didn't come back. Sent back to their rooms to await the results that would be televised later tonight.

Finally we are left alone. The silence in the room deafening when it was once filled with voices. "You have any idea what you're going to do?" She asked.

"Not a clue. I've been thinking all morning and I've come up with nothing. You?"

"Me neither. Maybe some fish hooks. I'm going off what V said." She whispered the last part. It was true, he wasn't supposed to be here.

"Do some camouflage." She suggested.

"If the morphlings have left me anything." I say wryly. "They've been attached to that station since we've arrived."

We sat in silence a little while longer. How long have we been alone? The time frame is fifteen minutes. Surely it's been longer.

"How are we going to kill these people, Peeta?" Her voice breaks the silence around us.

"I don't know." I say leaning my head down to rest on our entwined hands. Kissing her knuckles gently I closed my eyes and sighed.

"I never wanted them as allies." She complained. "I don't know why Haymitch wanted us to get to know them. That makes it all the harder to kill them." I sympathized with her. I didn't understand it either except strength in numbers. Maybe he thought us knowing them would solidify a real alliance, but what happens when we're having to face off with that same alliance that we had so painstakingly built?

Soon enough, I'm called. Kissing her gently—not that I cared anymore if anyone was watching us—I left the room. Following the Capitol attendant, I was led to the same room as I was last year.

The Gamemakers were sitting behind the force field that Katniss explained that was set up in case a tribute decided to do what she did last year. I was still proud of her for that. I stood there and
waited for my time to start.

"Peeta Mellark, you may begin." The head Gamemaker said.

Quickly, I decided to do the camouflage that Katniss had suggested but when I reached the table where there would normally be ample amounts of paints; there were none. But there were plenty of dyes.

Gathering several different colors, I put them on a rolling cart and pushed it toward the center of the room where I knew they would be watching me. Dropping to my knees, I thought about the one thing that the Games had done last year. The most despicable thing. Killing Rue. An alliance, that without her help, Katniss would have never found the courage to end the food supply and help us win the Games.

Working quickly in their eyes, I actually took my time to get this right. I remember how Katniss described Rue and how she arranged the flowers around her body. Starting with the image of Rue, I worked quickly, closing her eyes for effect. Around me, I used the dyes and painted a massive wreath of flowers that circled her entire top half of her body.

Add a little color here and a little more detail there, I finally leaned back from the painting and looked it over in satisfaction. Stealing a glance at the Gamemakers, it had the effect I was looking for. A few sharp cries from the females and some of the males. The head Gamemaker smiled down at me and nodded his head like he was approving of my "talent". No one spoke when I rose to my feet to be dismissed. A few of the Capitol attendants scurried over and started cleaning my mess.

What a waste of they were going to destroy it. Like they did her life. Branding the image in my brain, I would never forget her. Being dismissed a minute later, I left the room alone. Katniss would surely follow soon after. I hoped. Following the pathway that led to the elevators, I didn't have anything else to do but head back to the penthouse and wait on Katniss.

I didn't have to wait forever because about an hour after I returned to our penthouse, I could smell her coming off the elevator. The faint scent of cleaners still infused into her skin and her clothes. At least this was over with. It took nearly half the day, but it was over with. I wasn't kidding earlier when I said I needed her.

I did.

And I still do.

I was hiding in what used to be my room. I had showered and was in the process of trying to scrub off the dye from my hands. I hadn't wanted to use them but it was all the morphlings had left me. Dyes were a pain in the ass to scrub off the skin.

Taking a seat on the bed, you'd never tell that someone lived in there. Unless you see the bags and computers around the room. I knew this room had been debugged. It was the safest room in the entire penthouse beside Ari and Tor's room. I didn't see them when I returned but they were elusive since the night I had been dragged back into the Training Tower.

Sighing, I got up again and rummaged through the massive closet that held more clothes in it than I knew what to do with. Slipping on slacks and a black button up, I left the room just in time to smell food. My stomach growled sharply but then I saw her coming out of the room. Dressed better than me, I knew it had to come from Cinna. The dark grey of the dress brought out her eyes and I instantly felt myself hardening. My hands itched to get under that dress.
"You look amazing." I said coming to push her gently against the wall. Kissing under her jaw, her neck arched for me. I was hungry and she knew it. I didn't get to taste her from last night's activities and now I wished I had. The hunger rolled up the base of my spine circling each vertebrae. Clenching and squeezing the breath of out me until all I could see were stars.

Gripping her hips, I forcefully pulled her too me then pinned her against the wall. She didn't fight me when I got like this. There wasn't a use in it. I would win and she knew it. My fangs lengthened and all I could smell was blood. I never realized that her feeding off me would leave me a little wild. Unhinged. Her moans in my ear entranced, yet fueled the pounding in my head. Jerking her even closer to me, my hand caressed the side of her silky thigh, the fingertips tracing goosebumps along her muscles.

Opening my mouth a little wider, my tongue mischievously snaked out and tasted her skin. She tasted heavenly. Like a bunch of wildflowers. The ones that only bloom in the Springtime. A low growl escaped me when she fisted her fingers in my blonde locks messing it up further.

I could hear her heartbeating frantically in her chest as her free hand snaked its way down my chest and begin to unbutton the top buttons. Things were getting hot fast and I needed to get her out of this damned hallway and into our bed. Leaving her neck alone, I captured her mouth with mine. The kiss fueled by our desires for each other left whimpers from her.

"I-fuck- I need you right now." I groaned as she slipped the last button from its home. My bare chest exposed to the cool breeze of the hallway, I hissed and felt her hands slip over my shoulders and scratch my upper back. Her hands disappeared from by skin and wiggled behind her to grab the door handle of our room. Reaching down, I left a trail of small kisses across the bare skin of her chest and picked her up. Her legs wrapping around my waist, my cock pressing further into her. Rubbing slowly into the juncture of her thighs; it instantly stopped her movements of breaking back into our room.

"Peeta….please for fuck's sake, don't stop." She groaned and I too happily complied.

"Open that door right now." I demanded in her ear sucking on the lobe. My hands gliding under the dress coming to cup her ass squeezing and kneading. Leaning in for an open mouthed kiss, our tongue sliding against one another, we both moaned loudly. There wasn't a soul in the entire Penthouse so I didn't care how loud we were.

Or at least I thought there wasn't anyone in the Penthouse.

I hadn't notice any heartbeats or sounds; my main focus was in my arms waiting on me to take her. My mind screamed in lust. My body roared in hunger and I spun us around my back pressing against the door. Propping my good foot against the wood panel, I reared back to kick it open.

"You know that's what rooms are for." A male voice drawled.

She froze in my arms like a caught deer. I stopped as well. We knew that voice. Anger coursed through my veins at this horrendous interruption. It wasn't like it was the first time we had been caught fooling around, but her bare ass was showing and my shirt was open. She yelped in pain at my roughness. I was squeezing her hips too tightly trying to control myself.

Turning to look at the intruder, Haymitch was leaning against the wall looking at us with amusement. He looked sober enough from a distance but I could smell the alcohol pouring off him in waves. It was enough to make anyone contact drunk.

"Do you fuckin' mind Haymitch?" My voice growled glaring at him. Removing my hands from her ass, she dropped gracefully to the floor. Burying her head in my shoulder, I protectively
wrapped my arms around her waist.

"Not at all. It provides enough entertainment." He replied. "Dinner is ready if you two are hungry."

"Why bother telling us if there's food?"

"If you're going to play you need energy, don't ya?" The smirk returning to his face as he turned and stumbled down the hall.

I shook my head in anger and disgust. I know we messed things up by fooling around in the hallway, but I could have sworn there wasn't anyone in the Penthouse earlier. When he disappeared around the corner, I wrapped my hands around her neck to look at me. Forcing her to look in my inky black eyes. Underneath them, they were still the cerulean blue that she loved. In seconds, they bled back to blue. I was learning quickly how to calm myself down.

"I'm so embarrassed." She mumbled.

"You know I'm not." She shook her head giving me a pained smile.

"You're incorrigible."

"I didn't lie when I said I needed you... I still do."

"Yea, but that moment has been snatched away because of Haymitch."

"Not for long. We have to eat, then watch the results, but I'm taking you right back here and we're going to finish what we started." I mumbled nipping her neck gently. "I'm hungry for you." Her breath hitched again and I knew we needed to get to dinner. Did I want to go? Not really. But if we didn't get a move on, someone else would come looking for us.

Sighing, I dropped my hands to rebutton my shirt. Eyeing her the whole time, she chewed her lip like she was fighting to eat or take me to our room. I know her better than she thought I did and I knew that food, in the end, would always win. It never bothered me but I knew her history with food and that unspoken vow that she would never again go hungry.

Once finished, I took her hand and led her to the dining room where everyone was already seated. Everyone, including, Cinna and Portia are there to watch the results. Once the soup is served, Haymitch cuts to the point. Not even bothering to taste the food first or wait until we're all done.

"All right, so how did your private sessions go?"

Katniss and I exchange a look. I have no clue what she did. We never got around to it with our hallway tryst-which I was ready to get back too- but I'm sure it was just as fantastic, yet dangerous as mine was. She looked at me perplexed like she didn't want to talk about hers. So I opted to go first.

"Well, I did the camouflage thing, like you suggested." I paused and looked down at my hands. "I used the dyes instead."

Ari shot me a wary look. "To do what?"

"I, uh...." I paused when Katniss cut me off.

"You painted a picture, didn't you?
"Did you see it?" I asked amazed at her guess.

"No, they made a show of cleaning it." She confirmed.

"Well that would be standard." Effie spoke up unconcerned. "What did you paint, Peeta?"

The question of the day. I opened my mouth to say it. Put on your big man pants Mellark. "I painted a picture of Rue. How she looked after Katniss had covered her with flowers."

The whole table is silent. Cinna closes his eyes while Portia doesn't look my way. The only consolation is the the rest of my "family" seemed amused. However, Haymitch and Effie do not. My comment instantly sobered him and the hard lines around his face came into view. He was angry while she was astounded.

"And what exactly were you trying to accomplish?" Haymitch asks me in a very calm and measured tone.

"Not sure but I wanted them to be accountable for Rue's death. Even for a minute." I said shrugging my shoulders.

"Peeta! You shouldn't have done that. You don't know what they could do to you and Katniss." Effie shrieks.

"I'm really gonna have to agree with Effie, here." Haymitch agreed.

"You're not serious?" Tor asked shocked. "What more can they do to them?"

"Make them first priority targets when they go in. Maybe do something to their families!" Haymitch retorted back coming to his feet.

That shut Tor up. Which might have been a first. Suddenly, I didn't feel like my session was so grand after all. Leaping before I thought. So unlike me. More like Katniss. I felt ill now. But then, I looked around the people at the table and realized that I didn't care about my own family in District 12. The ones at the table were all that mattered to me.

"I guess it's a bad time to mentioned that I hung a dummy and painted Seneca Crane's name on it." Katniss said quietly. The repercussions of what I did impacted on her. And what she did.

"You...hung...Seneca….Crane?" Says Cinna.

"Yea, well I wasn't aiming for that. He just somehow ended up on the bottom of my noose." She explained. I looked around and saw admiration coming from Ari.

"How did you know that?" Effie asks with a whisper. Her hand clutching Haymitch's like her life depended on it.

"President Snow pretty much told me. Didn't lie to me about it." Effie gasps and leaves the table. You could tell she was trying to hide her tears. "Now I've upset Effie. Maybe I should learn to lie."

"You would have thought we planned it." I said giving her a grin.

"Didn't you?" V asked.

"No." we said in unison. "Neither of us knew what we were going to do beforehand." I say.

"And Haymitch?" Says Katniss. "We've decided that we don't want allies."
"Good. Then I won't be responsible for you killing off any of my friends with your stupidity." He says.

We all sit in silence for the rest of the meal. No one but the vampires in the room have an appetite. I do, but it's not food I want. It's the beauty sitting beside me. I managed to take down a plate or two while she picks at her food again. I know she's not feeling well, but I really wish she would eat.

They talk quietly amongst themselves. We come to find out that V is leaving tomorrow. No use for him to stay around for the interviews. Once that's over, then the next day is the Games. Damn and I was just finally getting used to him. He didn't say where he was going and I didn't ask. I think Katniss did, but the look I gave her refrained her from asking.

We rise and head to the sitting room once we were officially done with lunch. Effie had yet to return to us but showed back up just as we were sitting down. Haymitch stood to greet her and take her by the hand like a small child and they sat down as well.

The tribute's faces come up, and their scores show up underneath their names. Predictably high scores for Cashmere, Gloss, Brutus, Enobaria and Flynn. Low to medium for everyone else. I'm really surprised that Janja didn't score well. She was quite handy with her axes during training.

Finally its us after Chaff has his turn. "Have they ever given a zero?" Katniss asks with a touch of panic.

"No, but there's a first time for everything." Cinna answers.

And it turns out he's right. Both Katniss and I score a solid 12. We sit there stoic and no one feels like celebrating. Even V, who isn't use to this, looks a bit wary.

"Why did they do that?" Katniss asks.

"So that the others have no choice but to target you." Says Haymitch flatly. "Go to your rooms or whatever you do. I can't stand to look at either of you."

He stalks off leaving us alone. Cinna and Portia leave soon after Haymitch leaves bidding us goodnight. Tomorrow is the interviews so I'm sure they'll be busy. This leaves me and Katniss with Ari, Tor, and V. They all look at each other and promptly ignore us. They talked in low voices and kept to themselves. Looking at Katniss who had a smile on her face, she gently took my hand and led me out of the room.

*Where was we going?*

I was intrigued. My eyes following every curve of her luscious body and I followed her quiet footsteps while mine thundering along behind her. Reaching the top of the stairs, she had led me to roof. Her smile never left her face and she pushed through the door and we were blasted with a sticky humid air that sucked the air out of our lungs.

"Damn, it's hot out." I muttered but didn't get a chance to wipe the sweat that formed on my brow when she pulled me into a long kiss. It wasn't often when Katniss took control and made me follow her. The kiss started out slow turned passionate as I wrapped my hands around her neck and pulled her close and steadied her frenzied movements. I wanted to take her slowly. Make her feel everything before I tasted her.

My body roared in appreciation when she started tugging at her dress. Trying to take it off her. Slipping my hands under the skirt, I inched them up her silky thighs. It didn't take us long to pull it
off her. Clad only in her bra and panties, I growled and lowered us to the ground where there seemed to be blankets and pillows strewn all around. In the few times we had been up here, I had never noticed anything but Katniss. It was hot. Too hot for my clothes and when her hands found the first button of my shirt, I eagerly helped her undo them and throw my shirt aside. I didn't care if it sailed over the Training Center and landed on the sidewalk below.

Instead of that slow love making I wanted to give her, when her hands palmed my engorged cock, we flew into a tempestuous whirlwind of discarding clothes and touching. When I entered her minutes later, her tightness wrapped around me like a vice and I had to catch my breath. In all the months we had been sleeping together, she wasn't this tight.

"Jesus, Katniss…" my voice groaned. "...you're too tight for me."

Incomprehensible sounds came out of her mouth. It seemed to agree. Oh, she was primed for me; no doubt about that, but her walls tightened hard around my cock. A few quick thrusts and her walls relaxed around me and I sighed in relief. When I'm inside her I hardly remember the mechanics just only by her sounds and how she felt underneath me. How her noises fueled the animal inside me to dominate her.

The hunger from earlier coiled around my body squeezing me as hard as her walls did my cock I could feel it. Taste in the air and I hurried quickly to make her orgasm so I could drink from her. Enveloping her mouth in a long slow kiss, I needed her to come. "Come for me Katniss." My voice dripping with lust. Her body obeyed and I felt her walls fluttered around my cock and squeezed me. I didn't want anyone to hear her so I silenced her incredible moans with my mouth. Bucking once, twice, my orgasm denoted like a bomb inside me and I roughly sank my fangs in her neck. Drinking her in. Tasting every droplet that landed on my tongue. I was fevered for her. Pinning her bucking hips into mine, I pulled heavy mouthfuls from the bite mark. When full, I reluctantly let go of her and buried my head in the crook of her neck and breathed her in.

We laid there. Her body cradling mine as we forced ourselves to steady our breathing. Lifting my head, I looked down at my mate. Her silver eyes boring into mine. I could see the love pouring out of them. Wincing when I saw the bite marks I had left, I knew that no amount of makeup could fix it right now. I would have to carefully seal the wounds if they were going to heal.

Lowering my head to her shoulder, I snaked my tongue out and carefully cleaned the bite marks. Normally I wouldn't have an issue with everyone seeing them. Everyone know that she was mine, but tomorrow was the interviews and we weren't safe in the Capitol. I wasn't safe in the Capitol. I wasn't safe anywhere except wherever Tor and Ari were from.

Her body shuddered under mine. The slow assault on her neck making her arousal spike again. I could almost taste it on my tongue and a quiet moan escaped me. Never in a million years did I think I would be here. Not the Games; that was predetermined, but lying here in the dying sunlight with Katniss in my arms drinking from her.

"I've torn your neck pretty good, Katniss." I say looking back into her eyes. Instantly she reaches up to touch them and winces in pain. "I'm sorry. You fed off me last night and I was hungry. Hungrier than I normally am."

"It's OK." I looked at her skeptically my thoughts waning. "I'm fine Peeta." she exclaimed giving me a small smile. I knew she was lying to me. I had torn into her neck in my hunger and she was trying placate me.

Rising from her, I slipped out her and sat up. The sun scorching against my skin, I squinted against the harsh sunlight. Sitting up as well, she grabbed a blanket and covered herself. As we sat
there, I could tell she was thinking about her neck. I couldn't even pull myself to look over at her. The bite mark was enough to make me feel ashamed.

Yes, ashamed.

I said it. It had been a long time since I've lost control of myself. Not even when I was being trained on self-control did I ever slip like this. I learned there were times that it would be difficult to control myself but I had always been careful. Until now. I knew last night was a bad idea.

"I'm fine Peeta. I swear it. You sealed the marks and they'll be healed before morning. No worries." she assured me.

"I should have been in better control." I replied pathetically.

"It happens, Peeta."

I scowled at her. Why couldn't she understand my plight? As Peeta Mellark, the human, I never lost control. I was always even tempered. Likable. Peeta Mellark, the half vampire, I was uncontrollable, angry, lustful. I wasn't sure which one I preferred. Right now, I was leaning toward the person I used to be.

I didn't want to argue with her. We would be soon in the Arena and I wanted to spend every moment I could with her. Regardless of what we did. Even if we laid in bed all day or on the roof gorging ourselves with food. I would be with her.

She rested her head on my shoulder and I sighed wrapping my arm tightly around her. Pulling her close to me, I could hear her heartbeat beating gently. Steady. Unlike my own, which pounded my ears like a thundering drum.

The sun had finally set and I felt my body sigh in relief. Sunlight didn't bother me as much as it would Vishous, Ari or Tor, but the piercing heat blazed my already sensitive skin. I wasn't sure how long we sat there until Katniss's stomach growled. Betraying her. We both laughed and I leaned over to kiss the side of her head, but she turned at the last second and I caught her lips.

The kiss was slow but the fire that usually consumed us banked under the imminent stress of tomorrow. Sighing, I broke the kiss earning a look from Katniss. Shaking my head at her, she understood that I didn't want to talk about it but when I was ready She would be there for me. It was interesting how our lives flip flopped over the past year. Usually she was the one that didn't want to talk to anyone about her feelings. Things changed when I found out who I was.

"We need to get going before your stomach eats itself." I commented as her stomach growled again. Chuckling again, she nodded and stood up. Her bare body before me. Fuller and softer. More womanly than it used to be. Leaning forward, I kissed her stomach gently never knowing that my child was growing in there.

Throwing my clothes back on, I waited while she dressed. Leaning over the balcony, I looked down at the world below me and shook my head. The sunset spectacular here but nothing like it was at home. A good run would help sort me out before I crashed for bed tonight. Of course, that is, if I was let out. I would fight and cajole my way out, if I had too.

A small hand caressing my back pulled me from my thoughts. Turning around, I gazed into the eyes that captured me and held me prisoner. Taking her hands in mine, I kissed the palms before encasing them in my large ones. Taking her downstairs, we didn't have to talk. Both of us have enough on our minds to have incessant chatter.

Reaching the bottom stair, we could hear the talking coming from the dining room. V's boisterous
laughter rang through the air while a more delicate female one joined him. It wasn't Ari, nor Janja that was in there. Looking at Katniss, she shrugged her shoulders in response. I nodded and pulled her a little tighter to me.

Entering the dining room, everyone was seated and waiting on us to arrive. All eyes turned to stare at us briefly but turned back to their food. I was still on guard until I noticed that Jane was with us tonight. I honestly liked her. She was a stern like minded individual. Looking around, I saw that the whole family was there tonight. Including Janja, Flynn and Annie. I hadn't the chance to talk to Annie, but I knew she was a Mentor this year while her mate was going back into the Arena.
It Feels Like Minutes, Not Hours Pt2

Chapter Summary

See the super long AN!

To all my faithful readers..I have not forgotten about you. I PROMISE! I have a seriously good excuse for not writing, nor posting. In June of this year, I found out I was pregnant with baby #2! I was already 6 months along when we found out. The early part of my pregnancy I had a lot of health related problems. Part baby and part my own illnesses. Which kept me from having the energy to write at all. I think I managed 6 pages before I couldn't do it anymore. On August 13, (the day AFTER my own birthday) I gave birth to my daughter. I am now 8 weeks in and have finally gotten time to sit down and type this. She, along with her two other siblings, have had me hopping since August. This is the last chapter that is fully written. I have started on Chapter 34-which has the Interviews and a bit more. Then there will be the Arena and I should be done. I'm not sure if I will ever have time to write my version of Mockingjay. Maybe when my toddler heads to Pre-K? Or when the baby grows a little more. I still have 2 more stories (HP and Twilight) to work on too.

So here is Chapter 33. I don't own this...As always Enjoy!

Entering the dining room, everyone was seated and waiting on us to arrive. All eyes turned to stare at us briefly but turned back to their food. I was still on guard until I noticed that Jane was with us tonight. I honestly liked her. She was a stern like minded individual. Looking around, I saw that the whole family was there tonight. Including Janja, Flynn and Annie. I hadn't the chance to talk to Annie, but I knew she was a Mentor this year while her mate was going back into the Arena.

Taking a seat beside Katniss, the table promptly ignored us until food was set in front of us. I looked suspiciously at Katniss for her reaction but if it bothered her, she didn't show it. She was becoming good at hiding her emotions. At least in front of everyone.

"Well, now that the sessions are over. All we have left is the interviews." Janja said sourly. Clearly, she wasn't happy about them.

"I know. Seems like time has already flown by so quickly." Flynn mused giving Janja his classic smirk but I could tell he squeezed Annie's hand under the table.

"So, these interviews….What are they for?" Jane asked.

"One last hoorah to talk about ourselves before we leap to our deaths." Flynn muttered. Beside me, Effie gasped and I saw Katniss pale at his words. It wasn't funny. The two males going in had mates who they loved. Rolling my eyes, I promptly kept my mouth shut knowing if I opened it, I would start something. I had to take V's advice to heart and learn manners.

Jane scrunched her nose at his answer but didn't voice her opinion. "Are-are-ya'll nervous?"

"About tomorrow?" I inquired. "Or about the Arena?"
"I think both."

There were a chorus of "Yes" and "No's" that filtered the air. I wasn't nervous. More like scared to fucking death. But at least I had a purpose. Stealing a glance at Katniss, I watched as she ate her food. Eating more tonight that she had in two days. Maybe something agreed with her stomach tonight. Of all nights.

I looked at Janja and Flynn. Neither of them looked particularly happy to go back in as well. Maybe there was something we could do that would prevent us from going back in? It would take a monster of a lie to pull it off and I was good with words and with the Capitol people to know how to pull heartstrings. I could come up with something, surely.

While the tributes ate in silence, the rest of my family laughed and talked like they hadn't seen each other in years instead of days. Jane filled them in the coming and goings of the "compound" as she referred it. Tor and Ari got updates on their kids as well as their son who was expecting his first young.

I watched Katniss carefully all through dinner. It was becoming a habit of mine. Watching her. But when Jane mentioned a young, Katniss's face glowed. This woman who had always told me, told Gale; that she didn't want children glowed at the thought of one.

*That's a good enough of a lie....*

Tor and Ari seemed ecstatic when Jane gave the update. It was going to be a male. Another male to carry on Tor's family lineage. V clapped him on the back and even Haymitch and Effie gave their congratulations. I merely smiled and nodded my head at him. Katniss, oddly enough, enthusiastically gave her congratulations. I noticed she was trying to hard but I think she was covering for something. The tight squeeze of her hand was an indication to me that she was covering. The food was quickly replaced with another dish that smelled divine and I grabbed another roll looking at it before biting into it. It's not what I'm used too-a stab of pain hits me-but I try to ignore it.

A while later, once dinner is done, everyone gathered around the living area and continue with their talking. Not feeling it anymore, I excuse myself from their company and embark to my room. Finding what I'm looking for, I slip on the running clothes that seem to be cleaned double knot my laces.

Exiting my room, I don't steal a glance at anyone; even Katniss. I know she would have questions but I needed another night to run off this negativity. Sweat it out and exhaust myself. No one stops me from getting on the elevator but I can tell that V starts to say something but is cut off by Tor who just shakes his head. The ride down is quiet for me and I wish now I had brought music. Maybe it would help me clear my mind and ignore everyone.

Stepping out of the Training Center a few minutes later, after being asked by a Peacekeeper where I was headed too. He was quite nosy for a Peacekeeper, but I suspect he needed to know in case I was really trying to runaway. Which I wasn't. I wish I could but I couldn't leave Katniss behind.

My feet pounded the pavement with such force I was sure I was going to break it. My head held high as I counted my breaths. I know it would take several laps before I would start to feel the effects. Yes, I was in that good of shape. I ignored the Capitol people who would stare at me as I passed them. Many of them tried stopping to to talk to me. Peeta Mellark, the Star-Crossed Lover. I wasn't interested in in any of them.

*Stomp*
Breathe

Stomp

Breathe.

Turn corner

Over and over this was my routine. I don't know how long I ran but when I finally stopped, the streets were empty of any souls. When I had arrived, it was teeming with life and now it was devoid of all breath. Shaking my head resulted in more sweat pouring into my eyes. The salt stung, but not nearly as bad as when I saw the savaged bite marks on Katniss's neck. How could I be so careless? She had told me she was fine and I believed her but I still hated myself. I promised to never hurt her. To protect her always.

Standing alone on the sidewalk, I didn't hear the footsteps that crept up behind me. I was too lost in my own thoughts and self hatred. A breeze swept by me and I sighed as the air cooled my heated body down.

"You know it's not safe for you to be out here like this?" the voice reminded me.

"And like I said the other night, I don't care. What are they going to do to me? Kill me?" I retort turning around to face Tor. His eyes were hooded, but were cautious.

"No, but it's still not safe for you. Peeta, I know there are a hundred and one things I need to tell you but I can tell you that it's still not safe for you. It wasn't safe for you in District 12 and it's certainly not safe for you in the Capitol when everyone is watching you."

I opened my mouth to argue at him. How was it, that I, a citizen of Panem, not safe? I was born here. I took my vocation to be a baker here. I was a decent person who never got into any sort of trouble. I even maintained decent grades. But the look in his eyes told me different. It told me that he was right.

It wasn't safe because I was a vampire.

I wasn't safe.

Safe? Was there such a thing? A pipe dream that small children feel when they're tucked in their beds at night. With their parents down the hall. Safe wrapped in their parents arms. So what did that mean for me? Where would I be safe? Would I ever be?

"You OK, there Peeta?" Tor asked looking at me with concern.

My mouth opened like a fish again. "I-I- yea." I choked. He didn't looked convinced.

He didn't press me. I had thought he would say something to me. I should have know that people like V and Tor weren't the ones to pry into someone's life unless they needed too. Sighing, I dropped my head and ran my fingers through my sweat soaked locks.

"We need to get in. You have your interview tomorrow. Then, I'm ordering you to hit the sack early. You'll need your rest."

I only nodded. Words stuck in my throat. Unlike last time, I didn't fight him as I followed him back into the Training Center where Katniss was surely waiting on me. I kept my head down as I followed him back to the elevator. It was like this every time I was sucked back into this building. I was trapped. I wasn't free. I was the Capitol's prisoner. The elevator dinged and I followed him
into the Penthouse. There wasn't a sound anywhere but I could hear the faint heartbeats of everyone that occupied the Penthouse. I didn't look at anyone but passed them on the way to the room I shared with Katniss. Opening the door, she was perched on our bed. Waiting for me.

Her eyes followed me as I walked past her as well. I don't think she realized I wasn't mad at her, but she didn't say anything. Closing the door to the bathroom, I leaned against the door and glanced at myself. I had changed but stayed the same. No one could tell unless they really knew me. Knew my features well enough.

Stripping down to nothing, I twist the handle to turn on the hot water. I wasn't interested in smelling like roses or any other scent. I just wanted clean hot water for once. Stepping in, I hissed at the stinging pain on my skin as the hot water hit it. The droplets bounced off my skin and rained down in the swirling vortex.

Resting my head and hands on the cool shower wall, I let the water pour down my head. Down my back. I tried my best to ignore the pain, but I relented after a while and inched the facet toward cooler temperatures. My skin sighed in relief. I stood there for a while. Inching the facet over toward heat when it started to cool off.

Finally, after what seemed like an hour, I grabbed the shampoo bottle and squeezed a healthy amount into my palm. Gingerly washing my hair, I concentrated on what I was doing rather than balancing on my good foot. I had become accustom to it and found that it was like breathing to balance now. The door to the bathroom never opened, not even when I soaped up, nor when I rinsed off.

Stepping out of the shower, I took a seat on the toilet and began drying myself off. I kept my thoughts to myself and tried to scare them off lest the show themselves while I was around Katniss.

Katniss

She was patient with me. Keeping me from going insane from the labyrinth that was my mind. From hating myself and doubting myself. I don't know what I would do without her. Yawning, I rubbed my hands over my face and sighed. Attaching the prosthetic, I stood up, a towel wrapped low around my waist and exited the bathroom. The cool rush of air wrapped around me giving me goosebumps.

She looked up at me from her reclined spot on the bed. Her eyebrow quirked in question but I knew she wouldn't push me either. Opening her arms to me, I crawled onto the bed and into her embrace. Resting my head on her chest, I could hear the thump of her heart. It soothed me. Her deft fingers curled into my hair soothing and caressing the scalp. I breathed as evenly as I could. My body and mind warred. Each side battling and trying to win. I wanted her underneath me, yet I wanted comfort and silence. Giving up the battle, I laid there in defeat. There would be no sex tonight. I wasn't in the real mood for it.

"We need to sleep, Peeta." she whispered in the dimmed room. I barely nodded my head. I was nearly asleep myself. Groaning, I lifted myself off her and rolled to the side taking her with me. Her head resting on my chest, I entwined our fingers together. With a few more even breathes, I succumbed to a deep slumber.

Katniss POV

I stirred in my sleep. My mind foggy. My body stiff from sleeping in the same position all night. Laid upon Peeta's chest, I can't remember how long it took me before sleep overcame me. It had taken hours and even when I did fall asleep, it wasn't restful. The twinge of my bladder began
beating at me. Reminding me that I needed to relieve myself or I would pee all in the bed. How mortifying that would be?

Easing myself from his strong grip, I didn't glance at him while I rush to the bathroom. Every step I took ensured I would feel better. When I reached my destination, I sighed in relief when I empty my bladder. Taking a look in the mirror, I re-braided my hair and opened the door. Peeta was still in the bed, snoring lightly.

Leaning against the doorframe, I looked him over. When he came in last night, I was wary of his mood. He was as difficult as I was. Moody even. I didn't mind it. Those moments only came out when he had pushed himself too hard or when he was aghast about what he had done to me. The biting yesterday hurt. I won't lie to you. It did hurt but I didn't care about the pain. I was so used to him biting me that I dismissed it. Only to remember the pain when he said something.

Yea, I winced. It did hurt. Which sent him spiraling into shame and anger. I tried my best to reassure him that everything would be OK, but the love of my life wasn't listening to me. So, he left. Went running. I didn't say anything. If it helped him, who was I to bitch? I retreated to my room, unable to be around Ari and her hawk like stare. She knew something was going on with me but she had yet to find the time to bug me about it.

I wasn't ready to be cornered. All I knew was that last night he needed me. And not in a dominant sexual sense. I was smart enough to be able to read his moods. He wasn't looking for that. Of course if I had initiated it, he wouldn't have been able to tell me no. He would keep his fangs at a distance from my vein no matter how much I would beg him. He would have to feed before we went into the Arena anyway. Who was he going to find? A surge of jealousy swept through me. I didn't want another female offering her vein to him. He was mine and mine alone.

Sighing, I tried to keep the thoughts of tonight's endeavour out of my mind. Tonight was the interviews and I wasn't ready for them. It just meant one more day closer to the Arena. One more day closer to losing my life. Peeta would survive. I just didn't know how. I wasn't afraid of death. I was just afraid of what my death would mean to those around me. Those I left behind. Peeta, mother, Prim, Gale. Yes, even Gale. Though I hadn't thought of him in weeks, I know he would mourn me. Even hate Peeta for letting me die.

Looking at the clock, I realized it was almost time for breakfast. Walking timidly over to him, I crawled onto the bed and rested my hand on his warm chest. I could feel every contour of the muscles underneath his skin. Looking at him, he seemed at peace. For once in his life. The life that had been thrust upon us since the Dark Days. No one in our District slept well with such ease.

I didn't have long to contemplate our lives anymore because he cracked an eye open. The deep sky blue eyes were groggy but clear enough that he knew I was there. A slow smile spread across his face. I returned it. Every time he looked at me, I felt like I could breathe again. I was in love with him. No matter what life was going to throw at us.

"Morning…" he rasped.

"Morning to you." I replied. The smile still on my lips. My eyes were on his. Focus. Leaning forward, I captured his lips with mine. The kiss that was to start out as slow picked up quickly. Before I knew it, he had rolled us over and I was under him. His favorite position. Before things could get serious my stomach betrayed me by growling.

I chuckled lightly against his supple lips and I could tell he was just as amused. "Only my stomach would throw a temper tantrum." I groaned.

"Yea, but it's still cute. Like letting you know who's boss." he teased pushing a stray hair behind
my ear. I rolled my eyes and shook my head at his silliness. "But in all seriousness, we need to feed you."

Getting up from the bed, he looked back at me after he put his prosthetic on. The clicking sound still disturbed me even though I should be used to it by now. Guess I wasn't. Looking at him through tired eyes, I wondered why we haven't heard the knock? It was way past time for everyone to be up and moving about for the day.

Peeta must have noticed the time too because he gave me a look and walked over the door. Poking his head out, he turned back to me. "It's silent in the penthouse." he said. "I'm going to check it out."

He left me sitting on the bed wondering what had happened to everyone. Were they taken in the night while we were sleeping? No, I would have heard them. I was awake till past 2am. Something else must be going on. The panic that had started before he walked out the door only amplified the longer he was gone.

Before I knew it, there was a small stinging pain in my thumb. Looking down, I had chewed the nail practically off the bed. Great. Now, I'll have to hear it later today when Venia is doing my nails. I sighed and dropped my hands in my lap. It was a bad habit to break and I, for one, wasn't not ready to break it. Hey, it could be worse, I could drink myself into oblivion like Haymitch.

The minutes ticked by as I waited with baited breath. I nearly jumped out of my skin when the door burst open. Crouching into defense, my hunter's instincts on high alert, my eyes widened and I visible relaxed seeing Peeta standing in the doorway. He was quiet, yet undisturbed.

"What's going on?" I demanded.

"There was a note." he said closing the door. In his hand was a wadded sheet of paper. I raised an eyebrow waiting on him to explain. "It says that we're free for the day. That since we've done this before, we, apparently, don't need their help."

I stared at him wide eyed. We were free for the whole day. No Effie or Haymitch? Better yet, no Ari or Tor. "That was, uh, generous of them."

He smiled wolfishly at me and I felt my body react to him. "So what do you want to do?" I asked.

Crawling toward me, my eyes locked on him, he pushed me back down on the bed. His eyes already darkening. Nuzzling the crook of my neck, I inhaled deeply. "Oh, I can think of a few things, but really I just want to spend every waking moment we have left together...." Encasing me in his warmth, I sighed as his hands began to remap my body. As if he didn't know it already.

"That is, if you'll allow it?" I peeked a glance at him. There wasn't anything I could deny him. I was irrevocably in love with him. The usual self confidence that exuded from him was clouded by worry. What was he worrying about?

My face softened as I realized that he was still affected by who he was now. "Of course I'll allow it." A smile spread across his face lighting the entire room and warming my soul. The last thing I remember is how wonderful his lips felt.

I awoke later to an empty bed. Alarmed, I sat up quickly and forced myself to wake fully and take in my surroundings. I was naked, for sure and Peeta was nowhere in sight. Running my fingers through my hair, I forced myself to calm down. There wasn't anyone in the Penthouse. He should be around here somewhere. I listened but didn't hear him the bathroom. As soon as I thought it, I rushed to it.
My bladder was on the verge of rebelling and I barely made it. As I went to clean up, I noticed something different. Now, I'm the type of girl that hardly notices anything. They tell me I'm oblivious to everything around me, but when it comes to my body; I'm slightly more self-aware. I couldn't tell if there was more of me or him but one quick sniff and I realize that it was indeed him. Bile rose in the back of my throat. Now I wished I hadn't done it because before I could blink I was hovering over the same toilet vomiting. Thankfully, it didn't last long but it was enough that when I got done I felt better.

The nausea that I had been experiencing had fallen been too much for my body, I guess. Strange odors and food, occasionally, turned my stomach. Wiping my mouth with a towel, I flushed and proceeded to brush my teeth vigorously. Once I was done, I looked at myself. I was too pale. Peeta would know something was wrong as soon as he saw me.

Pinching my cheeks, I forced some color back to my face. It worked briefly. As observant as he is, I'm hoping he is ignorant. Opening the door, I smelled the food before I saw him. Clapping my hand around mouth, I turned quickly and vomited in the same toilet I had just done a few minutes ago.

I felt my hair being pulled back from my face. A gentle shushing sound in the background. When I was done, it was only seconds but it felt like it had lasted for hours, I leaned back and gratefully accepted a wet washcloth. Cleaning up, I proceeded to brush my teeth again. Avoiding the question that lingered in Peeta's eyes. Finishing a moment later, I turned to breeze past him and he let me, just briefly.

Coming back into the room, I felt a gentle tug on my arm and he whirled me around to look at him. Concern, not anger, was in his eyes. He was worried for me. We both know that something was wrong with me. Neither of us could place it.

"Are you OK?" he asked softly.

"I am now." Funny. If I was really sick, I would still feel like shit. Which I don't.

"What was that Katniss?"

"What was what?" I asked feigning ignorance.

"You know what I mean! The happy dance with the toilet." he looked at me carefully. "This wasn't the first time, was it?"

No, it wasn't. It was like the third or fourth time. I didn't tell him because I didn't want him to worry more. He would get a Capitol doctor here and a fight would ensue. The first couple of times, it wasn't a big deal. I had eaten something that didn't agree with me. Happens all the time. What I was worried about is if it was going to happen all the time.

"Katniss…" I could hear the plea in his voice.

"No, it's not. The first couple of times, I ate something that didn't agree with me." I confessed.

"And this time?"

"I don't know. It was the odors that got me." I looked at him. He was uncertain. I could tell he was ready to bolt from the room and find a doctor. He wasn't afraid of me, but for me.

"Maybe's it's a weird side effect from tasting your blood the other night." I offered as reassurance. It was weak but it was all I could muster for now. He nodded at my explanation because he had no other himself.
Cupping the side of my face to look at him, I leaned into his touch. It was on the things I loved about his hands. The way they would gently caress my skin. Kissing me softly on the mouth, I melted into his kiss. "Let's get some clothes on and sit on the roof again," he offered breaking the kiss but trailing his lips down the side of my neck.

I mustered a nod of my head barely able to talk when his lips were on my skin. Giving me one more kiss on the lips, he left the room in search of his own clothes. I sighed watching him leave, but hurried to gather my own clothes. Throwing on leggings and a tunic top that was a soft sunset orange. Peeta's favorite color. I doubt I would need shoes, so I left them sitting by the door and exited my room.

He was right. There wasn't a soul around. Even Effie and Haymitch were gone. I wondered briefly where they could be? Effie was from the Capitol so maybe she had a house here? I shuddered from the thought of Haymitch and Effie in bed. Together. Naked. The urge to hurl again surfaced but I quickly choked it down.

I crept quietly toward Peeta's room and just as I grabbed the handle, it swung open. He stood there naked. Unashamed, my eyes followed the lines of his body. As I enjoyed what was presented to me, I caught a brief smirk cross his lovely face. An intensity that flowed from his eyes telling me that he was very much enjoying me ogling him.

Jerking me into the room, he pushed the door closed with our bodies. Pressing his naked form into mine, I felt his desire already pressing into my stomach. Wetness oozed between my legs and I held my breath and counted to five before I felt fangs sink into the side of my neck.

"Mhmm...Peeta." I moaned softly. His mouth massaging into my neck. I forced myself to remember how he felt. How his hands gripped my hips roughly as he rubbed himself against me. The way his mouth felt. The soft and plump lips contrasting with the sharp deadly fangs. How his muscles coiled under his skin. A showing that his body had listened to Tor's training before the Reaping day.

Breaking away from my neck, he placed soft butterfly kisses on the new set of bite marks. Honestly, I wish he wouldn't seal them. I would wear them proudly. And he knew it but we couldn't. It wasn't safe. "I'll seal them later." his voice was husky and a shiver weaved itself down my spine. It was uncanny how he could read my mind sometimes.

"Are you getting dressed?"

"Do you want me too?"

Damn. He had me.

"Not really, but I'm sure everyone would appreciate if you did." I grumbled. "What about me? Shall I go naked?"

He growled dangerously and his eyes flashed from black to blue several times. His hands gripped my hips painfully. I let out a squeak and the grip lessened. Yanking himself away from me, he paced the room once. Twice. A third time before he stopped and looked at me. "Unless we're in my bed, shower, or our room will you ever walk around naked. Your...body is for my eyes only. No other male is to look at you like that. I would gouge their eyes out." his voice was steel laced with anguish.

I had expected something like this from Peeta, but it was the way he said it. How rigid his body was when he was looking at me. It wasn't him. The easy going Peeta would have simply laughed but said no, but the vampire Peeta darkened every word. The possessiveness laced with anger was
becoming part of him. He was waiting on me to make a decision.

"Hey….hey…" I said softly coming toward him. Placing my hands on his chest, he looked down at me. His eyes were dark and distrusting. "I didn't mean it like that. I'm all yours Peeta. You know this."

A shuddering breath escaped him. An acceptance that I was only his. Placing a gentle kiss on my forehead, he didn't say anything but went to throw on clothes. Coming back to me, his demeanor had changed back to his normal happy self. Whatever I had said clarified something for him and reassured him. Of what, I wasn't exactly sure. Ari and I didn't really talk too much about their species, the males especially. I just knew that whatever was thrown at me was normal and I had to deal with it. Learn from it.

Taking my hand, he led us up the stairs to the roof again. A faint memory of us making love yesterday crept through my mind. We had left it a mess but it was immaculate when we arrived today. Setting something down, I realized he had brought food. I smiled at his thoughtfulness. I wouldn't have remembered food. Just another reason why he was so much of a better person than I was.

Taking a seat on the pillows, I motioned for him to sit with me. Today wasn't a day to worship each other in bed, but to fulfill a moment that would last us through the Games. I needed him just as much as he needed me. Intimacy. Love. Being with one another without the pretense of the Capitol's idea of us. I felt his arms wrap around me and I sighed leaning into his strong body that would only become stronger when he completed his transition.

We sat there all day. Lost in each other's presence. We would eat a little and I dozed off and on my head in his lap. His fingers curled in my hair teasing me into sleep. I stirred later in the day and found him sketching. I didn't say anything but watched him work. It was like seeing a glimpse of the old Peeta. Reaching up, I kissed him softly on the mouth eliciting a moan from him.

"How long have I been out?"

"An hour or so. No worries." he assured me.

"So what was that earlier?"

"What was what?"

"How you reacted to me about nudity?"

He dropped his eyes and sighed. His entire posture stiffened at my words. Leaning in for a kiss, he avoided my question but the look was still in my eyes. He contemplated his words carefully. His eyes trained onto the tallest building in front of us. I don't know what it was but he was eyeing intently.

"I don't know. When you asked if you should be naked too, I lost it. There's this possessive urge in me. In all of us, especially the males, to keep their woman to themselves. Wholly. It's why every time you and I were alone and V showed up he respectfully backed away. We are possessive of our women."

I raised my eye at him. Possessive? Normally, that wasn't a good thing. "Not like that!" he assured me seeing me pull away from him slowly. "You can do what you wish but your body is mine. I don't want another male looking at you." I could feel something changing in the air as he spoke.

Was I really to belong to him and him alone?
"Tor and Ari have been together for over a century now. Just like V and Jane. Or Rhage and Mary. They've taken one mate. Never wishing to have another. Even though they could. Males can have more than one mate whereas, due to the territorial nature of males, females cannot." he explained to me. The way he said it though seemed like textbook. I'm sure he and Tor had many conversations about this.

"Oh." it was the only thing I could muster.

He nodded sighed. Looking at the sun, he squinted, then closed his eyes. "It's almost time to head downstairs and prep for the interviews tonight."

My silence spoke volumes. I'm not ready for this. Is anyone ever ready?

Standing up, I'm glad he took my hand because I was determined to sit there and wait it out. Wait until they dragged me down the stairs and threw me into the Arena. Another twinge of pain in my bladder reminded me to go back to the bathroom. Again. Maybe like the hundredth time today. I sighed and walked my way back to my room and into the bathroom I went.

Staring at the reflection in the mirror, I looked at the girl that was staring back at me. My reflection was showing someone I didn't know. Someone that was ready to die for love. Who was this girl? It seemed like yesterday that Prim's name was being called for the Reaping and I taking her place. That day my whole world changed.

Actually if you really think about it. My world changed the day Peeta tossed me that bread. The same bread that I never thanked him for. I didn't have the courage then. I do now, but it's a waste of time. He already has my body, my heart and my undying thanks. I stood there as long as I possibly could because in a matter of moments, Effie would be barging into my room and dragging me to my prep team for tonight's interviews.
It Starts and Ends at Midnight

Chapter Summary

This is the very last chapter of "When two Worlds Collide". I thank each and everyone of you that have read and/or reviewed this story. I started this out 2 years ago and I had hoped to be done with it sooner but life is crazy. I am NOT going to write the Arena chapters because it was going to stay Canon. I do not know if I will ever write the sequel so what I am going to do is write an long Epilogue that will cover MJ and what could happens...

I thank you all again for having patience and reading this story that truly meant something to me. Its a step in the direction of dedication to writing my own Original stuff. I am saddened that its over but I am happy that it is, ya know?

As always: I don't own it! Enjoy!

It Starts and Ends at Midnight...

Just as I predicted. She arrived. Except she knocked instead of barging into my room. I was still hiding in the bathroom when the door slid open and there she stood colored in her gold outfit with Ari behind her. Unlike Effie's fake "big big smile", Ari's was of entertainment. Hiding a groan, I flashed her the brightest smile I could muster. I still felt fake. Peeta had disappeared into his room seconds after I closed my own door.

How I missed him already. Unlike him, I was subjected to torture. In the rest of what life I have left, I will never understand why women took the pains to look beautiful. Following Effie and Ari, were my prep team.

They each take one look at me and burst into tears. I grimaced but averted my eyes. Their sobs were tilting on uncontrollable today. Finally, Venia takes action, "Remember what Cinna told us..." she whispered fiercely to her other companions. Octavia whimpers and turns to leave the room, leaving me with two thirds of my prep team.

Ari takes a seat on my bed, her eyes watching the scene unfold around her, but I could see the concern flooding her eyes as she watches me. Watches my prep team carefully touch my face to add cream or makeup. How neither of them actually speak to me, but talk quietly to themselves as if they raise their voices, this horror is actually real. That they are doing their last beautification on me. Eventually, Flavius can't handle the silence anymore and turns to leave the room. Out of the corner of my eye, I watch Ari's eagle eyes follow him.

Leaving me alone with Venia, the strong one in this case. Her pale skin makes her tattoos stand out like they will slither off her skin, but I've come to be accustomed to them. Her hands fly everywhere and all over the rest of my face and nails doing the work of three effortlessly. She, like Octavia and Flavius, take their job seriously.

A light knock on the door breaks the deafening silence and for once, I am grateful. It is Cinna. Unlike the others, he keeps his eyes on me and I can tell he's just as uncomfortable about this as I
am. He looks me over, adding a touch here and there, but he concludes that I am ready. Before Venia leaves, she takes my hands and finally looks in my eyes, "We would like you to know what a….privilege it's been to make you look your best." she whispers before leaving the room quickly.

I sat there in a daze. My foolish prep team actually cared about me. Their words and actions nearly break my heart and I can feel the tears start to form in the corner of my eyes. I can't cry now. Cinna would have a fit trying to fix my mess. It scares me that Venia's words tell me that they don't believe that I will be returning.

The thought shakes me to my core. I expected this, yes; but to actually have others think the same makes me stomach roll. Gripping the arms of my chair, I swallow heavily pushing the bile back down. I can't do this now. I can't let this weakness show. Closing my eyes, I take slow deep breaths trying to get myself under control.

When I finally do open my eyes, Cinna and Ari are watching me curiously. Both of them wish to speak but I can tell neither one of them will. At least not yet. Shaking my head, I look at Cinna who is holding a garment bag.

"So what am I wearing tonight?" I ask warily.

Giving me a pained smile, he clutches the zipper and begins to unzip, "President Snow put in the dress order himself." he informs me lightly. Ari's eyes light up curiously just like mine. As the dress is revealed, I realize it's the same one I wore for my photo shoot. Heavy white silk with a low neckline and tight waist. It is covered in crystals with voluminous organza and chiffon skirt. I only know this because I've heard Cinna talk fabrics countless times. Laying the dress down on the bed, I see him reach for something else.

Pulling out two metal pieces, he sets them down on the bed beside the dress. Getting up from my chair, I walk over to him and look over the dress. It is beautiful, but it's not me. It's for someone else. For another girl that would appreciate it.

"What are those for?" I ask, indicating to the metal pieces.

"Those will attach to your dress representing fire and flames." Cinna explains motioning for me to get undressed. At this, Ari excuses herself for a while. I know nudity shouldn't bother her but the manner she left meant something else.

Easing me into the dress, I watch as Cinna frowns. "What? What's wrong?" panic rising in my voice.

"Nothing." he comments. "You've just gained some weight."

Too bad, I didn't tear the dress I thought sourly.

As he attached the pieces, he wouldn't let me look in the mirror until he was truly done. Finally, after ten painstakingly minutes, he allowed me to turn around. What I saw in the mirror wasn't Katniss Everdeen from District 12. It was another girl. A girl that belonged to the world of the Capitol. I forced a smile that made me want to cry. The metal pieces that were attached did look like fire and flames. I was afraid to touch them.

How appropriate…

"You're ravishing..." he says as he makes me walk around the room to get used to the feel. It's heavier than the original one I wore to the photo shoot. "Now because this bodice is so fitted, I don't want you raising your arms above your head. At least, not until you twirl."
"Am I twirling again?" I ask, thinking of my flaming dress last year.

He nods slowly. "I'm sure Caesar will ask you. It was a hit last year. Save it for the finale."

I nod at him knowing full well that Cinna will help me out like he always does. Peeta never needs help. It's me. The hopeless one that can't figure out how to work this life without someone giving me the cues. Cinna flashes me one final smile as we hear a knock at the door. Before I could open it, the door pushes open revealing an emotional Effie.

Her eyes were bright with unshed tears, her hands clasped at her chest. Behind her, Haymitch standing there like he would rather be far away from this show. I barely caught a glimpse of Peeta behind Haymitch. He was in an elegant tuxedo with what appeared to be white gloves on his hands. His hair was smartly done and his blue eyes pierced into my grey ones. They flashed dark before returning to their natural blue.

I had the good graces to blush. I wasn't used to people staring at me. At least, I think I wasn't. Since being Reaped, everyone has had their eyes on me. I felt a nudge at my back pushing me forward. Taking a breath, I gave everyone a small smile and followed them out of the room. Time to face the music, I suppose.

I felt a strong grip in my right hand and I didn't even have to look to see who it was. His warmth spiraled up my bare arms all the way into my heart. Just his closeness was almost too much for me to breath.

I let my mind wander knowing that Peeta would never steer me wrong. Back home, if Peeta and I were to do this the right way, I would have rented a dress that hundreds of other women had worn. He would be in his best clothes. There would be a small gathering where we would do our toasting. Light our first fire. Maybe have a small dinner. Parting gifts, if anyone could afford any. We would toast our bread alone before we would consummate our marriage. It was simple. It's what I would prefer over this.

This. This whole grandeur. Putting on this elaborate dress, showing it off in front of the whole of Panem. Peeta's tuxedo. Even Haymitch's suit. I dread seeing how the wedding would have looked had we not be Reaped again. The thought nauseated me. I don't do well with crowds and people in general. There was no way I would be able to pull off a Capitol wedding. I was so lost in my thoughts, I never heard Effie and Haymitch leave us alone.

Peeta squeezed my hand tightly bringing me back to reality. When my eyes focused, I realized that everyone had already gathered offstage, talking quietly. Flynn and Janja were there standing as far away as they could from one another. Every so often she would shoot dagger eyes at him. He must have said something to anger her again. I caught Flynn's eye and nodded to him. A tight smile crossed his face and I wondered what was bothering him.

Turning back to Peeta, I watched as his eyes canvassed my body in this ridiculous dress. His eyes continued to darkened the longer he kept them on me. I felt a shiver of pleasure trickle down my spine and I knew where this was going to go if the Interviews did not start quickly. Leaning up then, I kissed him softly on the lips but pulled back when he wanted more. Sometimes, my proper Peeta couldn't give a damn where we were. The frown that crossed his face quickly morphed into something else when we heard the first of the Victors to be interviewed. Finally I thought to myself. Maybe we could hurry this up.

Following the long procession of Victors we took our seats on stage and I caught a glimpse of Caesar Flickerman, hair and face highlighted in lavender this year. He begins his opening spiel and then the tributes begin their interviews. One by one, Peeta and I sit there listening to the older tributes answer Caesar's questions. Sitting here I begin to understand the depths of their anger, but
I know they are wonderfully smart about how they play it. No one really notices it. The audience is too dazzled by the costumes to notice anything else. They cheer for their favorites and weep along with the tributes who are especially good at bringing forth their emotions—whether they be fake or real.

Each tribue plays the crowd well except for Joanna. She is brash asking if something can be done about their current situation. Demanding an explanation about why we had to go back into the Arena. Of course, no one can give her a straight answer. No one but the man who thought this monstrosity up.

By the time my name is called, the audience is a wreck. Many are weeping and crying out for the injustice of this year's Games. Some are enraged by the whole thing entirely. I had to suppress a smile. This is exactly what we wanted them to feel. It was like it was orchestrated without us all getting together. When the audience catches a glimpse of my silk bridal dress, it nearly causes an uproar. No more happy ending for me. No more wedding for them to gawk at. They can blame Snow for that.

I know I do.

Taking a seat across from Caesar, he looks worse for wear. His professionalism is hanging on by a thread but somehow he manages to recover when the roar of the crowd lulls. Flashing me his brightest smile, I take a breath knowing it was time.

"So, Katniss, obviously this is a very emotional night for everyone. Is there anything you would like to add?"

I swallowed thickly before nodding, "Only that I'm sorry that you won't get to be at my wedding, but at least everyone saw the dress."

Something in me clicked, I knew it was time. Time to twirl and show off my monstrous wedding gown. Standing to my feet, I could feel everyone's eyes on me. Lifting my head, I feel the tightness of the sleeves. Closing my eyes, I twirled my body around. When I hear the screams of the audience, I think it's because of my dress. But then, I notice something strange, I smell smoke. Fire! My heart begins to beat wildly in my chest—as if it wasn't already, I stopped to breathe.

Looking wildly around me, I glance down at my dress. The monstrous wedding dress that Snow forced me to wear. It was gone. Gone was the silks and pearls. Gone was the white headdress and the heels. I felt a hand reach out and touch my arm, steadying me. It was Caesar. His eyes were wild and questioning. Oh God, what has Cinna done?

Glancing down at my dress, I saw the white silks fall off and replacing it was a black dress underneath it. The fabric is the color of coal and tiny feathers. Lifting my arms, I realize the sleeves are wings.

Cinna has turned me into a Mockingjay.

Once the revelation has dawned upon the audience, Caesar calls for my time up and I'm ushered off the stage. Escorted back to my seat, I catch Peeta's eye. They're smoldering and I feel my knees weaken. Lucky for me, I was standing beside my seat. Collapsing into it, I took several long breaths, steadying myself. My body reacting like it did always surprised me. Watching as he takes a seat across from Caesar, the tuxedo fitting his form deliciously, I had to stop myself from getting up.

When the applause died down, Caesar turned to him and smiled brightly. I wish I could see his face and watch his reactions. Instead, I get the back of his head. They talk naturally for a span of a
few sentences before Caesar launches into his interview.

"What was it like to know about the Quell?" he asked.

"To be honest, Caesar, I was shocked. You know, one minute I was watching the dress rehearsal and the next…." Peeta trails off, sounding forlorn.

"...that you knew there would be no wedding?" Caesar finishes for him. Peeta nods sadly and the whole audience sighs with him.

He is quiet for too long. Much too long for my taste. Peeta has something planned. Something that he will do to throw the sponsors, the audience and even Snow. Waiting with baited breath, I watch as he leans toward Caesar.

"Do you think our friends can keep a secret?" he asks, his voice hushed. The tittering of laughter in the audience worries me. I mean, this is the Capitol. Who in their right mind would keep a secret here?

Caesar looks around, wide eyed and nods vigorously at Peeta. "Oh, I'm certain they can….

"You see, Katniss and I we're already married." Peeta whispers. Hiding my face in my hands, I am the picture perfect image of surprise. A loud gasp filters through the astonished audience, each of them hanging on word for word.

"You….are?" Caesar stutters for the first time in his career.

"We never made it official." Peeta explains. "We have a marriage tradition in District 12." He quickly explains the toasting to everyone.

"Was your families there?" Caesar asks.

"No, we didn't tell anyone. Not even Haymitch." Peeta confirms.

"Was this before the Quell?"

"Of course." Peeta answers. "Had this been afterwards, I'm not sure we would have went through with it." His voice colors in anger and I hope that he can hang on for a few minutes more. "I mean, no one saw this coming….especially us. We went through the Games, won, came home Victors. We were supposed to live our lives out. How could we have anticipated this?"

"You couldn't, Peeta." Caesar answers sadly. "But at least you had a few months of happiness, right?"

The whole of the audience applauds in encouragement. It's sickening really. How they can pick and choose each year who they like or dislike and this time it's us and they want to see their Victors happy. Next year, who knows how they'll feel. Lifting my head from my hands, I give a tragic smile. As if I'm thanking them for their encouragement. I'd rather barf.

"I'm not glad." Peeta states. "I wish we had waited until the whole thing was done officially."

"Surely you can't mean that!" Caesar exclaims, astonished.

"Maybe I'd think differently, Caesar, if it wasn't for the baby." Peeta says softly.

BAM!

He's done it again.
I swear I need to have a talk with him about dropping surprise bombs like this on me.

Now everything that the other tributes tried so hard for has vanished with those words. My face crumples and I let my head fall back into my hands. I could sob for days for this. I could feel the eyes of the other tributes staring at me. Then again, maybe he didn't ruin it for everyone. Maybe he lit the fuse...adding more coal to the flames. Making them higher, hotter.

The crowd roars in accusations. The voices blur into an incoherent mess of noises that I try desperately to tune out. Even the bloodthirsty, Capitol loving, Games-hungry person is screaming in injustice. They are seeing this as horrific.

I am pregnant now.

At least to the eyes of Panem.

My God, what might my family be thinking. Hearing this live. Thinking I am married and pregnant with Peeta's child. I dare not glance at Haymitch, nor Cinna. I'm sure by now Haymitch is cursing under his breath of all the ways he's going to kill us when we get back to the Penthouse. Even Effie is bound to be shocked, but knowing her, she would be thrilled at the prospects of us being married. Not so much the pregnancy though.

While it was true that I never wanted marriage or a family. Just like I told Gale all those months...nay years ago; I knew that I would want that with Peeta. Even though there was a darkness in him that could be unleashed without warning; he was the perfect man for marriage and fatherhood. How could any woman deny him that gift. Certainly not me. Not now. Not when I am so bound to him in more ways than physical.

I'm so lost in my thoughts that I don't notice when Peeta sits down beside me and takes my hand. Only when he grips it tightly do I turn to look at him. His eyes are shooting me questions that I can't answer right now. Caesar has lost his chance to reel in the crowd and the room goes dark as the lights are extinguished.

We stand hearing Peacekeepers instruct us to leave the auditorium. I'm glad Peeta has my hand or I would have fallen, or gotten lost. As we make our way out of the darkness and into the light, I am hesitant about looking at the other tributes. What their faces would show about this news. I see Flynn and Janja coming toward us and I knew they will follow us to the Penthouse.

**Peeta's POV**

I had done the unthinkable….At least in my mind it was unthinkable.

I had dropped the bomb that would ignite a fire that would surely spread throughout Panem. A harsh reminder to those that hungered for our demise that the world wasn't fair. Sitting there beside Caesar, I could feel Katniss's eyes on the back of my neck the entire time I was talking. The way she looked tonight, her indescribable beauty pulled to me like a magnet. I felt her emotions, her arousal and knew she was wanting as much as I did.

Quickly turning to look at her while Caesar tries to reel in the crowd, her eyes were watery and I couldn't decipher her emotions. They were all over the place. I felt a hand on my arm and pulling me from my seat. Growling, I was prepared to snap their arm, but held my temper in check. Letting a Peacekeeper escort me back to my seat, I sat down. As I reached for Katniss, the lights shut off. Enclosing all of us in darkness.

Hearing the shouts of the audience, we barely heard the Peacekeepers instructing us to leave the
auditorium. Holding Katniss tightly to me, I led her out of the darkness and into the light. The
tributes crowd around us, their eyes dancing between accusing us and praise. I was conflicted by
their actions.

Didn't they want Panem to fall?

Didn't they want the evil regime of Snow to be over?

Live their lives the way they want too?

I shook my head in disgust. I couldn't bear to look at them. Katniss was far away from me and in
that moment, I wish she was close to me. At least mentally. Physically, I could pick her up and
carry her back to the Penthouse with no one saying anything. Except Effie; she would have a fit. I
almost considered it.

Turning around, I saw Haymitch coming toward us. The look on his face was murderous. Behind
him trailed Flynn and Janja. I couldn't distinguish their emotions. Pulling Katniss closer to me, I
led her back to the elevators to the Penthouse. As we gathered inside, I knew I had fucked up.
This wasn't part of the plan.

The plan wasn't to put Katniss in the spotlight, but she was my mate. It burned me to protect her.
To keep her safe. Maybe, in my mind, by doing this I was protecting her. Hoping that in some
small infinitesimal way that the Capitol people would push Snow far enough that he would cancel
this year's Games.

We were still the favorites. Still new and fresh but we were favorites. I had that in our favor.

The ride to the top was quiet. Katniss had finally pulled herself back to the land of the living and
was clutching me tightly. Her body finally relaxed when she realized we were in the elevator. She
knew she could breath a little easier. Placing a small kiss in her hair, she leaned her head on my
shoulder. When we reached the top, the doors slid open and everyone filed out.

No one spoke as we gathered in the living area. Both Flynn and Janja flashed me looks of
approval before turning away. No one wanted to anger Haymitch any further. He was standing
there watching us. Watching me. Soon enough, Tor would come in, find out-if he hadn't already,
and would have my ass. Anger ticked in the back of my brain. I could feel it growing but a small
squeeze of Katniss's hand eased it temporarily.

"What in the fuck were you thinking?!!" Haymitch roared. I stood my ground but I felt Katniss
recoil. Effie's quiet shriek was the only sound in the room besides breathing. Even if we were still
doing that.

"I don't know! Protecting Katniss!" I seethed, letting go of Katniss as I threw my arms out in
emphasis. I didn't care about reeling my anger in.

"Oh, and how in the fuck do you think you managed that smart guy?" he shot back, his arms
crossed as he stared me down. I had the urge to push Katniss behind me, but I didn't.

"Maybe help fuel the flames that were already burning. Everyone else…"

"Yes everyone else! Did it ever cross your mind that we had most of this planned out? Hmm…?"
Haymitch pushed.

"Had what planned out?" I heard Katniss quietly ask.

Haymitch stared at her, but refused to say anything. No one dared to look at her. They were
hiding something from us. Something that could possibly save our lives. Haymitch's cold grey eyes inspected me like I was an experiment that maybe he should finally give up on. Calculating with the intent to kill. If I wasn't already furious, I would be terrified.

I didn't dare look back toward Katniss to gauge her reaction to him. I wasn't sure that what I would find. We had seen many sides of Haymitch, but in that moment, we were finally seeing the real Victor. The one that murdered to survive. Gazing back at him, I didn't blink for fearing that it would show weakness. My breath steady, my body taut readying itself to fight if necessary.

"A way to keep you alive, but now we don't know." his words chilled me to the bone. What had I done? I knew we were targeted but had I completely ruined our chances of surviving the Arena? I felt a trembling hand grip mine squeezing with an iron clad hold that would eventually cut off the circulation. I could feel Katniss's fear seep from her pores permeating the room. The smell of rain washing over me. Drenching me. I couldn't shake it. I wanted to turn around and enveloped her body into mine. Keeping her safe and away from what was to come.

Haymitch, finally giving up on staring me to death, stomped from the room. You could hear him muttering frantically to himself. Probably asking himself why he should keep trying to save us. Save us or let us die of my stupidity. Flinching as his door slammed down the hall, I finally released the breath I hadn't realized I was holding.

Jerking Katniss's hand, her body crashed into mine before I wrapped my arms around her trembling body and held her close to me. Both of us were still in our interview attire and neither felt like moving. Even though the wings were becoming annoying, I couldn't find the energy to move us.

Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, Katniss broke away from our embrace. Taking my hand, she silently led me back to our room. My eyes bore a hole in the back of her head but I refused to open my mouth. It had already caused enough trouble. Closing the door a minute later, I watched as she lazily undressed. First, she unhooked the wings letting them fall with a thud on the floor. Then, her nimble fingers grasped the clasp of her dress. I watched as her fingers worked the zipper slowly and before she could take her next breath, my fingers replaced hers.

Leaning my head forward, my lips grazed her shoulder. Her warm skin burning a memory on my lips. I heard her heart speed up, anticipating my next move. Hearing her dress plop softly onto the thick carpet, she was left in her lingerie. The urge to tear it off her body leaving her bare before me overcame my rational senses.

Slowly, ever so slowly, I lowered her panties down her strong legs. My mouth leaving soft kisses on her skin. Her quiet moans above me spurred my own desires for her. Coming back up, my mouth searched for hers. Kissing her deeply, I led her back to the bed before succumbing to her love for me.

Hours later, we laid in my bed. She was softly snoring beside me, but I couldn't calm my mind enough to sleep. My life played out before me. From the second I saw Katniss when we were children to the day my name was called at the Reaping. Then surviving my first Games, learning of her love for me. Then my name being called again. The agony knowing that I may lose her this time. I could feel my heart being shredded to pieces just thinking about it.

If I lost her, I wouldn't control myself. Everyone in that Arena would die by my hands before I took my own life. I would do it while the whole of Panem watched on. Would watch at my savagery as I killed every tribute. Then watch as I would shove a knife in my own heart. Watch as I would bleed and tremble from the blood loss. As my body became pale and slowly died. I would lay there in the Arena for all the world to see. To let them weep of my love for Katniss and her tragic death.
Blowing a breath into the room, I briefly closed my eyes and wished for sleep. The next morning, I would meet Portia once more. She would prepare me for the Arena. I would give her one more hug with a soft 'Good luck' from her lips. It was sad that I may never see her again.

Tomorrow, I would wake and kiss Katniss once more. I would pour my love for her into that kiss hoping vainly that my kiss would give her some sort of protection. I would eat breakfast once more with her before we would part. The only thing I wasn't looking forward too was encountering Haymitch in the morning. I knew he was pissed at me for what I had done in my Interview, but it was over now. Nothing I can change.

Around 4AM sleep finally found me, but it wasn't satisfying. I tossed and turned for the few hours I had left. Launch was at 11AM. I must have woken Katniss because when I cracked an eye open, she was gazing at me. Those silver orbs penetrating into my soul with just one look. She gave me a soft smile before snuggling her warm body into mine.

Holding her close to me, I breathed in her scent. My hands caressing her back, feeling her spine, her muscles, her skin. We could have stayed like this forever but we knew that soon Effie would be knocking at our door. Telling us it was time to rise and start our day. Our last day of freedom.

Our quiet time was interrupted when my love ripped her self from my arms and rushed toward the bathroom. I could hear her retching in the toilet and my mind was pounded by the mystery of her illness. There wasn't anything physically wrong with her sans the vomiting. Her appetite, while always hearty, was more lax these days. Like her, I chalked it up to nerves. Being ripped from Prim and myself and catapulted into another Arena had her on edge. It had everyone on edge.

Haymitch tried his best to stay sober to keep us alive. Effie, in her own naivety, cared for us in a way that seemed maternal. Even though, she rarely showed it. There was Cinna and Portia who were fond of us. Ari and Tor. The list goes on. We had so much to lose so many people who would be devastated if we were to die.

Stretching in the bed, I steeled myself for the upcoming day. I had to keep her alive. It didn't matter if I died. As long as she stayed alive and kept on living, I would find peace. Peace? I snorted. There was no peace without Katniss by my side.

The door slid open and Katniss stood before me. My huntress. Padding over to the bed, she climbed into my waiting arms, "How much longer do we have before they come knocking?"

"I don't know. All I know is that I want to spend as much time with you as possible before they do come." I replied tightening my grip on her. She nodded into my chest and we laid there in silence before the knock came. Sighing, I eased away from her. My body screaming at me to stay with her but I resisted its call. Kissing her softly on the mouth, I slid my pants back on and with one last glance at her, I stepped out of her room for the last time.

Katniss POV

I watched him walk out of my room like it was the last time. I know he hadn't slept at all. I slept only a few hours. My body and mind knowing that I was destined for the Arena today. Like the mornings before found me with my head in a toilet. I wasn't ashamed, but I was scared out of my mind. What was wrong with me?

I had told Peeta that it was nerves. It was the same lie that I had been telling myself hoping, nay, praying that it wasn't a lie. In my gut, I knew it was something more. I just didn't know. Ari kept a careful eye on me. Watching me like I was the prey and she the predator. It unnerved me every
time I was around her.

Flopping back down on the bed, I pulled the covers over my head and pretended that I wasn't here. That I was back home in my own bed with the succulent smells of breakfast cooking in my kitchen by my mother. Inhaling, I could almost smell it. Could almost taste it on my tongue. Laying there, I imagined Peeta was in bed beside me. Holding me close, our lives unburdened by reality.

"Katniss! It's time to wake up!" Effie called from the other side of my door. She had learned her lesson about walking into my room unannounced.

"Go away, Effie!" my muffled voice shouted at her. I could hear her huff in exasperation when another voice interrupted her tantrum. Ari. I groaned knowing it would be an interrogation.

The door opened and closed quickly. Her footsteps as light as mine in the forest. A second later, the blankets were violently ripped from me and I tumbled back toward reality. Sitting up, I glared at Ari who was waiting on me. I never noticed that she had a box in her hands.

"What?" I mustered as hatefully as I could. She arched an eyebrow at me, but said nothing. Seconds ticked by and I refused to tear my eyes away from her. "What?!

"I know there's something going on with you and this is the first time I have been able to get you alone. So spill…" she said never taking her eyes of me.

"Th-there's nothing going on. I don't know what you're talking about."

She knew I was lying. Her face was unchanged as she sat there watching me. "OK, fine. I don't really know what's going on other than I don't feel well these past few days."

"Uh huh...is that it?"

I nodded slowly but said nothing.

"Here." She thrust the box in my hands. "Take this in the bathroom. Read the instructions and wait. When the time is up. Let me know the results."

Casting my eyes toward the box, my curiosity overrode my senses. Glancing at Ari, "What is it?"

"Don't worry about what it is. Do as I have asked." Her voice was low as she nudged me off the bed. Taking the box, I climbed out of bed and walked toward the bathroom. Closing the door behind me, I sat the box on the counter and debated whether to open it or not. Taking a large inhale, I lifted the lid and peered inside.

It was a pregnancy kit.

She had given me a pregnancy kit. I had half a mind to throw it back in her face and tell her I wasn't pregnant. Why would she give me something like this? I wasn't pregnant. I couldn't be. Could I?

Pressing myself against the wall, I stared at the box for several minutes. Do I dare brave it and take the test? Do I keep denying myself? I was desperate to know what was wrong with me and this is her solution. My mind was trying to comprehend what she was trying to tell me.

What could it hurt? I mean if I was pregnant it would make sense. If it was negative, then it was something else. With trembling hands, I lifted the test out of the box and stared at it. How was I supposed to work it I mused to myself. Checking the box, there was a paper outlining the
instructions. Reading over them carefully, I proceeded to use the test.

It said wait three minutes for results.

Three minutes seemed to pass like molasses in winter time.

Sitting on the toilet, I watched as the lines begin to form. Holding my breath and trying to calm my racing heart, I closed my eyes and reached over grabbing the test. Taking a heavy breath, I opened my eyes and looked at the results. Re-reading the instructions again, I looked at the test. My eyes didn't seem like they were comprehending anything.

I was pregnant….

Of everything that is holy…

How was I pregnant? I was on birth control. I had been on it for ages now. Since we….I gulped loudly. No, I wasn't on it when Peeta and I first had sex. Nor was I that night on the train.

I was pregnant.

I was carrying Peeta's child.

Standing on shaky knees, I grasp the counter and looked at myself. I couldn't believe it. Fumbling my hand found the door knob. Yanking it open, Ari was still sitting on my bed.

"From your reaction, my suspicions are true."

My brain had forgotten how to speak so all I could do was nod. I heard a clatter and realized that I had dropped the test. Not picking it up, I stumbled drunkenly toward the bed and sat down heavily.

"How..?" I croaked refusing to meet her eyes.

She gave me a pointed look. "It had to have happened before you requested birth control. You are throwing up a lot aren't you?"

I nodded at her.

"Then I would guess you are around six to seven weeks along." she surmised. "I would say I was sorry but to have a young is a great thing..

"Not when you're going into a death trap!" I screeched. My voice not sounding like mine. "What do I do?"

I watched as she thought over my question. "You can either tell Peeta now or not. That's up to you. Quite frankly, I'm surprised that he hasn't figured it out."

"Does everyone else know?" I gasped, fearing trickling through my veins.

Shaking her head, I felt some sort of relief. "Not everyone. Tor and V know…" I paled at her words. "Males know a female is pregnant before we do. There's a scent about us that let's other males know that we're off limits."

Her words didn't comfort me. Taking a seat beside her, the bed dipped down with my weight. Resting my hands on my slightly swollen belly, my heart ached for our child that laid safe within my body. My thoughts were scattered. I wondered if I should tell Peeta or keep this to myself. Now that I was indeed pregnant getting myself out the Arena was imminent. I know I had pushed
Now that I was indeed pregnant getting myself out the Arena was imminent. I knew I had pushed Haymitch to save Peeta but now this? Plans had changed. I needed to get both of us out. For our baby.

Our baby. I trembled on the inside. I never wanted children. I never wanted to be married. I knew what would happen if I did. When they turned of age, they would be Reaped. I don't think my heart could handle if one of them died. But then there was Peeta. In my mind, I could see his smile. See his blue eyes. Everything about him screamed that he should be the one to have children. He would be a wonderful father. I knew it. Myself? I'd be a horrible mother, but then I would have Peeta beside me to help me through the rough times.

But we were going into the Arena in a few hours….

It terrified me to think about it. I felt something grasp my right hand and squeeze gently. Ari was still with me. I could feel her presence but I couldn't grasp reality. I couldn't understand why this had happened like it did. Was this a cruel trick by Fate? Was I destined to suffer more than I already had in my short life?

If I told Peeta, he would do everything in his power to make sure I came out alive, even if that meant he would die in the process. My heart clenched tightly at the thought. The air left my lungs and I couldn't fathom a world without Peeta in it. What in the hell was I going to do?

Whipping my head up, I looked at Ari like she had all the answers. The sorrow that flooded her dark eyes shook me. Did she not think we had a chance at surviving this? If Tor and V knew, did Haymitch know? Oh God...what if he already knew and he was trying to save us both?

"Katniss…." I could hear a voice calling me. It felt so far away. "Katniss…"

"Damn it Katniss, snap out of it!" the voice raged.

"What?!" I snapped glaring at Ari who didn't seemed amused.

"I can't tell you that everything will be fine. I can't." she shook her head. "I can tell you that we are trying to make sure that you and Peeta will be safe. That's all I can say for now. Go into the Arena. Try to keep yourselves safe and alive and let us do what we have to do."

"But what about…?" I trailed off indicating my swollen stomach.

"I don't know. You're not like me. You're human so I'm not sure how this will affect you…." she faltered frowning at her answer.

A knock on the door stopped me from asking her another question. When it opened it was Effie standing there in her gold and lilac dress waiting on us. I half expected her to hustle me out of the room and chastise me for ruining her schedule. But she said nothing. Her eyes were full of sorrow and she only nodded her head. Grasping the handle, she quietly closed the door and walked away.

Ari and I stood up and she embraced me. "You need to get going…." I sniffed, "I don't want too."

"I know you don't, but you must." she pulled away leaving her hand on my cheek. "Just to let you know I love you. It's been an honor being around you and teaching you."

I nodded, feeling tears flow down my cheeks. My throat was constricted, keeping me from saying anything. Not that I could muster the rights words in the first place. Grabbing her, I held her tightly and wished that this was all over and I was back home in District 12 sitting in my woods with Peeta by my side as we watched the sun set for another night.
Breaking our embrace, my feet shuffled toward the door. Before I walked out, I turned back and looked at her once again. "I'm not telling Peeta. I...I can't compromise everything like that. I can't have him do something stupid and dying to save me."

She nodded once and I turned away and walked down the corridor to my destiny. Or death. Stepping into the elevator, I placed my hand on my lower abdomen and sighed. Trying to muster up the courage to do this.

The Peacekeepers escorted me to the hovercraft that would take us to the Arena where we would be separated and then face one another inside the Arena. Seeing Peeta from across me, I gave him a tight smile and mouthed 'I love you.' He returned the sentiment and I closed my eyes and waited.

When we arrived, I was escorted to the launch room where Cinna would be there to help me prepare for the Arena. I said nothing but when he brushed his hand across my lower abdomen, I nearly burst into tears. I think he knew but he would never say anything. Stepping into the launch tube that would take me up. It closed and I watched as Peacekeepers came for Cinna. Beating him for what he did for me at the Interview.

My screams were futile as the launch tube activated and it took me up and away from Cinna and from the life that I wished wasn't mine. When I reached the top, I could smell the saltwater and I choked on my own despair. I was surrounded by water and I feared I would never make it out alive.

The gong chimed to zero and I jumped off my launch pad and prayed that I would survive this long enough that Peeta and I could have the future we wanted.

Let the 75th Hunger Games begin…..

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