Handwritten on Your Skin

by RoseFyre

Summary

Haymitch Abernathy lost his soulmate. Effie Trinket didn't have one. Somehow they came together anyway.

Notes

Written as a gift to all the people who got spoiled for Mockingjay Part 2 (particularly my usual co-author) so they can hopefully enjoy this little piece. Though just to warn you, it is very much movie-verse.

And this completes my Nano! Woot!

- Inspired by Candy Pink to Grey by FanficAllergy
- Inspired by write love on my skin by amusewithaview

“I see.”

Doctor Soranus Atherton tried not to tap his fingers on the table as he looked at President Snow.
He’d just finished giving a report on the healing of Haymitch Abernathy, the newest Hunger Games Victor. There had been some unexpected developments.

Unexpected developments were never welcome.

“What are your orders, sir?” he asked, holding his hands tight so he wouldn’t slip into his normal nervous habit.

President Snow folded his hands and looked at the doctor. “Get rid of it,” he said calmly.

“I don’t know if that’s possible, sir.” Doctor Atherton winced at the glare that statement got. “But we should be able to hide it,” he reassured the president.

President Snow smiled, his eyes glinting. “As long as he never sees it, I don’t care.”

Doctor Atherton nodded frantically. “Yes, sir. I’ll take care of that right away, sir.”

Effie Trinket was not quite ten years old when she felt her right shoulder burn, signaling the acquisition of a new soulmark. It was during a Very Important dinner with Headmistress Proserpina Bryant of the most prestigious secondary school in the Capitol, and they were right in the middle of dessert.

The Fiftieth Hunger Games had just ended a few hours before, leaving Haymitch Abernathy of District Twelve as the Victor. Headmistress Bryant had bet on the longshot, and she’d come out on top, so dinner was a very jovial meal. Effie’s parents were pleased even though their favored tribute, one of the girls from Four, had lost, as Effie’s admission to the school depended on the headmistress. If she was happy, Effie was much more likely to get in.

Everything had been going well, but the most unladylike gasp Effie made when she felt the mark forming caused Headmistress Bryant to frown and her parents to glare at her.

She managed to cover up her gaffe well enough, and nothing more went wrong. So at the end of the night, she was accepted into the school. Admittedly, she wouldn’t start for a whole two years,
but it was her future, and she needed to be prepared.

That night, when she went up to get ready for bed, she sent her family’s avox away. She needed privacy for this. Then she pulled her dress off and looked at her arm in the mirror.

The mark was simple, just one word scrawled on her shoulder in a blue so dark it almost looked black. *Great.*

She frowned.

She didn’t want a soulmate.

It wasn’t appropriate to have a soulmate.

No one in the Capitol had a soulmate.

Oh, some people in the districts did, but that always ended in tragedy. Why, look at Haymitch Abernathy! He’d lost the girl he’d claimed was his soulmate during the Games.

No. That wouldn’t be her.

Besides, her soulmate was almost ten years younger than her, and that was simply an eternity! She didn’t want to be tied to a baby. She’d make her own future, thank you very much.

Effie looked at her reflection, wrinkling her nose at the location of the words marring her perfect pale skin. She’d have to stop wearing sleeveless dresses until she figured out how to hide it. Perhaps makeup would do, though she’d have to be careful.

And then, once it was gone, she would forget about it.

After all, Effie Trinket didn’t have a soulmate.
After Maysilee died, after they killed his ma and his brother and his girl, Haymitch lived a solitary life.

He’d lost everyone important, so what did it matter?

Nothing was his own. He lived in a house built by the Capitol, bought and paid for by killing children for Capitol entertainment, eating food and wearing clothing provided by the Capitol.

Even his body belonged to the Capitol.

They’d remade him in their image. Turned him from a scarred district kid to a vision of Capitol perfection. All his body hair was gone. His scrapes and bruises and scars had disappeared. They’d covered over the soulmark on his neck, turning the faded gray of Maysilee’s words into just another patch of unmarred flesh. Even his stomach, where he’d held in his own intestines through a gaping wound, had been covered in shiny new skin. Everything was new. Everything was perfect.

None of it was him.

He didn’t like to look at his body too much. He kept it covered whenever he could, tried to pretend he was still that same district kid he’d been back before the Reaping.

Haymitch tried different vices until he found the one that worked. Alcohol dulled the pain. It dulled everything.

It even dulled his meeting with his new escort. He hadn’t even realized Quintina Brewington had decided to quit until she was already gone.

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Abernathy,” the young woman, who was wearing a ridiculous pink wig (he tried not to wince at the color) and incredibly tall heels, said.

He stared at her. “Great,” he said, taking a swig from his flask. He’d need liquor to deal with this one.
She crossed her arms and glared at him. “Is that all you’re going to say?” she asked, her voice shrill.

“Whaddya want, Princess? I’m here, ain’t I?”

She huffed. “You’d best do better than just be here.”

-oO-

Haymitch Abernathy was an alcoholic embarrassment and utterly impossible to work with.

For twelve years, Effie ended did everything herself, from instructing their tributes on how to behave while on the train (which was her job) to giving advice on what to do in different types of arenas (which was most certainly not).

At least she was getting attention for being able to manage the man. Maybe, in a few years, when someone finally retired, she’d be able to move districts. Go somewhere better. Somewhere where the mentors did their jobs and she could devote herself to solely being an escort.

But everything changed during the Seventy Fourth Games.

For the first time since he was sixteen years old, Effie Trinket got a glimpse of who Haymitch Abernathy could be when he put his mind to something. He was focused, determined. A man to be proud of. A mentor to admire.

And she liked it.

Once Katniss and Peeta were safely in the Capitol hospital and everyone was reassured as to their continued survival, Effie went back to her room in the District Twelve suite and removed her wig, then changed into nightclothes and climbed into bed, prepared to enjoy a relaxing evening in one of the finest rooms the Capitol offered. She could go back to her apartment, of course, but she might be needed in the morning. She wasn’t entirely certain how all of this worked. She’d never escorted a Victor before. But Katniss and Peeta were her responsibility and she would be available for whatever they needed.
About an hour later, Effie was reading her book of the moment when she heard a light knocking sound from her door. She looked up, putting the book down on the night table. It was likely one of the avoxes bringing her tea. They knew she liked it at night.

“Come in,” she called.

The door opened and Effie could see that it wasn’t an avox.

“Haymitch,” she said, grabbing for her wig and slamming it on her head. “What are you doing here?”

Haymitch shrugged. “Got kicked out of the hospital. Docs said I was hoverin’.”

“I’m sure you were.”

He came in and sat down on the dressing table stool.

“I repeat: Haymitch, what are you doing here?”

He seemed reluctant to answer, but finally he said, “Didn’t want to be alone.”

“You’ve never had a problem before.”

He stood up and turned to leave. “This was a bad idea.” His shoulders slumped.

“Wait,” Effie said, not quite able to stop herself. “Stay.”

Haymitch looked back at her. “You sure?” he asked.
She licked her lips. “Yes,” she said. “I’m sure.” She slowly, carefully, reached her hands up and pulled off her wig.

Haymitch’s lips quirked. “I like you like this. Natural.”

“I like you like this,” she replied. “Sober.”

He laughed. “I ain’t sober, just not as drunk as usual. Didn’t really want to drown my sorrows tonight.” His voice went dark. “There’ll be enough time for that later.”

Effie wasn’t certain what he meant, but she didn’t want to ask. She knew enough to know that the Capitol had its dark side, and that Victors tended to get themselves involved in it. Instead, she reached out a hand. “Come,” she said. “We don’t have to be alone, not tonight.”

He nodded and walked over.

She reached up and pulled him down into a kiss. A proper kiss.

It was much better than she’d ever expected.

oOo

“Hold them out,” Peeta said. “I want everyone to see.”

Katniss nodded, showing all of Panem the dark blue berries resting innocently in her palm.

“One,” they counted, together.

“No,” Haymitch whispered.

“Two.”
“No.”

“Three!”

“No!”

They brought the berries to their lips, tasting the poisonous juice of the nightlock fruit.

No announcement came to save them. As Haymitch watched, helpless, Katniss and Peeta collapsed to the ground.

Two cannons sounded.

They’re dead.

They’re gone.

“NO!” he shouted, sitting up, throwing the covers off.

It took him a moment to realize he wasn’t there. He wasn’t in Mentor Central, watching his tributes commit suicide. They weren’t in the arena, and they never would be again.

They were safe. Alive.

And he was in… Effie’s bed?

The night before came back to him in a rush. Not wanting to be alone. Making his way to Effie, the only other person in the District Twelve rooms.
Joining her in bed.

When he looked to his left, he spotted her face peeking out of the covers. Her eyes were closed and her breathing was peaceful, steady.

She was still asleep.

Good. He didn’t want to disturb her with his nightmares. This was a new one, but not surprising, not after everything. He had a feeling it’d repeat for months.

With one shaky hand, he smoothed down her hair, feeling the give in the soft blond curls. He was glad he got to see the real her. He had a feeling it was a privilege few were afforded.

He kissed her lightly on her forehead.

Then he curled up next to her – on top of the covers, since he was too hot after that nightmare – and went back to sleep.

\[\text{ooOo}\]

Effie waited until she was certain he’d fallen back asleep before sitting up herself, turning on a dim lamp so she could look at his face.

She’d woken up at the first whispered ‘No.’ But she knew Haymitch Abernathy well enough to realize that he wouldn’t want her pity. Pity wasn’t what she felt. But she knew he’d interpret it that way. So instead she pretended she was asleep and let him deal with his nightmare on his own. At least he seemed to get comfort from her. If she could give him that, she would.

But now he was back asleep, and this time it seemed peaceful.

She made a quick trip to the bathroom before returning to the bed.

As she climbed in, she spotted something that made her pause.
There, on his stomach, was something gold. It was close in tone to his skin, but it glinted just enough in the light that she could see it.

Were those his soulmark words?

Though that didn’t fit. Soulmarks went gray when your partner died, and Effie knew his soulmate was dead. All of Panem knew that.

She had to admit she was curious.

Leaning closer, she tried to make out the words on his stomach. They were hard to read, almost like they’d been partially erased from his skin. Effie wasn’t even aware that was possible.

*It** *ple**su**t** **e* **you, M** ****nathy.*

It looked familiar.

Very familiar.

Her eyes widened as she realized why.

It was her handwriting.

With shaking hands she brushed her hair and the remaining makeup away from her right shoulder, thankful that Haymitch hadn’t spotted it. *Great.* stared up at her. Now that she thought about it, it looked like Haymitch’s handwriting. He scrawled his words.

But her soulmate was younger than her! She hadn’t gotten the words until she was almost ten. And Haymitch Abernathy was six and a half years older than she was. He couldn’t be her soulmate!
Except.

She remembered, suddenly, exactly when she’d gotten her soulmark.

Only a few hours after the Fiftieth Hunger Games.

Where Haymitch Abernathy had almost died at the hands of the girl from One.

A few hours later, he’d have still been in the hospital. Katniss and Peeta still were and would be for some time, and neither of them was as injured as Haymitch had been.

Effie clearly remembered Caesar Flickerman exclaiming over Haymitch’s miraculous recovery during his post-Games interview and Haymitch’s response that the doctors told him he’d flatlined.

He’d died.

He’d died and he’d come back to life.

And she’d gotten a soulmark.

It fit. It fit too well.

She sat down on the bed next to him, staring down at the man.

He didn’t know.

There was no way he could, not when his soulmark was so broken.

Not when he wouldn’t have even registered the pain through the agony of almost losing his intestines. Not when he’d flatlined.
And of course she hadn’t figured it out. She’d expected her soulmate to be almost ten years younger than her, not six and a half years older. On top of that, she’d avoided thinking about it as much as possible. If she never met her soulmate, she could pretend they didn’t exist.

She couldn’t pretend anymore.

She didn’t know how or why her words were so faded on his stomach. But she knew they were there, and they were hers.

He was hers.

Effie wondered momentarily where Maysilee’s words were. She hadn’t seen them when she’d finally gotten him naked, or at least she hadn’t noticed them. Though, admittedly, the darkness of the room probably helped him there.

She looked at him, thinking. He’d rubbed his neck a lot in his Games.

She looked up at his neck and there, in a spot that would be covered by a collared shirt, she saw dark gray words that were as disjointed as hers on his stomach. *We***v* lo*g** wh*t* o**f

Effie turned off the lamp and lay down next to her soulmate.

She knew him well enough, after twelve years of working together. He wouldn’t want to worry about her. And he definitely wouldn’t want anyone else to know.

Neither did she. Soulmates could be used against you. The Capitol had already used his first soulmate against him. She didn’t want that to happen to either of them, not ever.

So it was better if he didn’t know, so he wouldn’t have to face that again.

Besides, there were already too many unanswered questions.
She had no idea what could make soulmarks look disjointed like that.

She had no idea it was even possible to get another soulmate after yours died.

And yet, somehow, she wasn’t surprised that Haymitch Abernathy broke all the rules.

\[ oOo \]

Haymitch wasn’t expecting to be so relieved when he saw Effie Trinket in District Thirteen.

He was.

Damn, but he was glad Plutarch had gotten her out.

“Good to see you, Princess,” he said.

She smiled at him. She looked truly absurd in that Thirteen uniform, though even here she’d managed to express her own unique style. “You too.”

They still worked well as a team, helping figure out how to show Katniss as the Mockingjay, how to work with (and around) District Thirteen. How to fight the Capitol. How to get things done.

And somehow, every night, Haymitch found himself sleeping in Effie Trinket’s bed, holding her close. The nightmares never stopped. They wouldn’t, not while Peeta was still Snow’s prisoner, not while Katniss was such a wreck. But somehow having Effie there to soothe him after one made it that much less terrible.

And he wasn’t the only one. She had her share of nightmares too, something Haymitch never would’ve expected from the pampered Capitol princess she’d been.

She’d changed.
He felt guilty, sometimes, knowing he had Effie while Katniss was missing Peeta. Even more so, after they got him back, because he wasn’t the same. He knew Effie felt it too, and they both did their best to do what they could for both of their kids.

Their kids.

Their kids!

How the hell had he managed to end up with kids with Effie Trinket of all people?

Haymitch stood in front of the small shaving mirror in the bathroom in their quarters (after a month of sleeping there every night he’d just given up and moved in with Effie), looking at himself. It had been a long time since he had; he’d avoided mirrors ever since he’d won his Games.

But now he looked his fill.

He looked a lot like what little he could remember of his father. The man had died years before his Games. Haymitch could barely remember him. But he remembered a bit of how he’d looked, and Haymitch looked pretty similar.

He also looked tired. Which wasn’t surprising, given the forced detox. But now that he was done with it, he felt better. Healthier.

Carefully, he pulled his Thirteen issued shirt down until he could see the base of his neck.

Huh.

Maysilee’s words – once candy pink, then dark gray, then removed by whatever procedure the Capitol had used – were coming back. They weren’t complete, not like they’d been when he was sixteen. But they were there.

Haymitch smiled wryly. As much as he’d loved her, they’d been kids. They’d barely known each other. And Maysilee was long dead.
She was his past. She couldn’t be his future.

But Effie… Effie could.

He pulled his shirt back into place and nodded at himself.

They had a war to win. A Mockingjay to protect. A baker to rescue.

But after it was all over?

Maybe, for once, he’d take a chance.

oOo

After it was all over, after Snow and Coin were both dead, Katniss was sent back to District Twelve.

And both of them knew Haymitch would be going with her. Effie couldn’t, not quite yet. There was too much to do in the Capitol and she was needed there.

They didn’t discuss it, but they both knew they’d be splitting up.

Haymitch and Katniss came to say their goodbyes before they actually left. Effie smiled at them and wished them well.

Then Haymitch surprised her. He kissed her once on the lips. In front of Katniss, no less. “Don’t be a stranger,” he said.

She smiled at her soulmate. “I won’t.”
She watched them walk away.

When they were done, when Panem was reformed and all of them were safe…

Then, then she would go to them.

She touched her lips.

And maybe she’d finally tell Haymitch that they were soulmates.

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