Heart of Fire

by TheStorywriter

Summary

Before the events of the 74th Hunger Games, Katniss Everdeen gets the once in a lifetime opportunity along with one person from the ages 12-18 from each district to train with the Careers for 3 months in preparation for the next hunger games. Katniss only accepted the offer with the thought of winning her district a feast, falling in love with a career was just an added bonus.
My little sister Prim was up with me as I got ready to leave, she insisted I take an extra helping of goat cheese for myself and, for Gale. Despite spending a good five minutes arguing with her to keep the cheese for herself, I lost of course. She was my little sister after all, the only one I got, I wanted to make sure she was fed before myself, but she was the most selfless person I knew.

Our mother was still in bed asleep, the rise and fall of the blankets around her let me know she was still alive. Ever since the death of my father five years ago life has never been the same. My mother fell into a depressive comatose state. Soon after it felt as if the weight of the world itself fell on my shoulders. I was the sole provider of the family, bringing in both food and money to ensure we don't starve to death, and to make sure me and Prim would not be sent to a Community home in the district. If the district were to find out our mother doesn't have a job and is mentally unable to provide for us that was what was sure to happen, I didn't want that.

I still love my mother but at the same time I hate her for what she is doing to me and my sister. After my father's death the district gave my family money to get by with until her month of grieving was over with after that she was expected to get a job which she never did. Instead she left us all alone, of course she is still here with us, but it feels as if she is watching life pass her by like a damn movie. A movie that stars herself as the unfit mother with two starving children, only this movie is based on a true story.

The job of being the provider for my family was hard but with each passing day became easier and easier, and soon it felt like a natural thing to now. Every morning I would get up bathe and dress myself, Prim would sometimes do my hair and before I leave for another morning in the woods she would give me a treat to eat for Gale and myself. Gale, I figured he was already in the green thickness of the forest outside the seam, outside the troubles of our district and I couldn't wait to join him there.

Putting my hair in it's simple braid I was almost set to leave as I gathered my a pair of my father's work boots. It took a few years but I finally grew into them they were of simple leather but they kept my feet feeling like I was walking on the clouds themselves. I felt something watching me I turned around to see Buttercup with his yellow eyes trailing my movements around the house. He laid at my mother's feet with his busy tail flicking back and forth. I took only two steps toward him before he began to hiss venomously at me, even striking out a paw to scratch at me with.

"Buttercup that's no way to act to Katniss apologize right now!" my little sister was pointing a finger at the cat and stomping her foot to get him to behave, but he just looked at me again before hissing and turning around to ignore me. "I guess that's his way of saying sorry." I say to Prim. I just shrugged my shoulders at the cat he had every reason to hate me, after all I did on one occasion try to drown him, but that was because I didn't want an extra mouth to feed, plus he was just so ugly. But Prim the lover of all things especially animals, fell in love with the muddy brown, yellow-eyed cat with a mashed up face. One of the Buttercup's ear had been apparently bit off I assume possibly by another cat but I praise the one who did it to him.

Putting on a light coat was the last thing to do before I was to leave, I got my bag which was filled with goat cheese, courtesy of Lady, Prim's pet goat. At least Lady earned her keep here she provided us with milk and cheese, unlike Buttercup who has the privilege of just being a lazy cat.

I look around making sure there was nothing I was forgetting to do, nope nothing. I strap on my pack and leaned down to give Prim a quick kiss on her forehead good-bye. Before leaving I remind her to get mother up to take her wash off, she smiles sadly but nods her head in understanding. I watch Prim hop back in bed with my mom and Buttercup, Buttercup he doesn't
deserve to be named after a flower he's the complete opposite of that, but it's the name my sister
gave him and I learned to except it.

Before the golden hues of sunlight were to begin streaming in through the cracks of our house I
was out the door racing down the dirt road that led me outside the seam and into the forest. I
refused to look at the coal mine that rose up over a hill to my left, the place where my father
worked, the place where he was killed by an explosion. I still have nightmares of me screaming
out to for him to run, and I remembering wondering if he would ever come back to me. My father,
he was the one who taught me all about hunting and, using a bow and arrow, which are the things
I use to keep my sister and mother feed. It was those skills that helped me to stay close to my
father even after death, with every successful kill I make using the bow, with every meal my
family eats, I thank my him for teaching me how to live.

The electrocuted fence appeared before me as I ran up the grassy hill, it separated me from the
forest, I didn't hear the soft humming of electricity in it, so I climb through a big enough space fit
for my body. Soon I was running like the wind through the thick forest, I began to feel so
weightless, I could hear animals scurry out of my way as I shot like a released arrow itself through
this haven of mine. I slowed down until I came to the hollow out tree that held my bow and some
arrows. "About damn time Catnip." I hear the deep strong voice of Gale from behind me. I smile
just a little at his impatience, I knew he was waiting for me before he began to hunt himself, but
I'm sure he had snares already in place around the forest bed.

"Sorry I got off to a later start than usual." I say. He sits down on a large unearthed tree root
flexing his massive shoulders. "Early bird gets the worm you know that." Gale says. I roll my eyes
of course I know that almost as well as him. I throw Gale my pack and tell him to open it. A few
dimples appear on his face as he holds up the goat cheese. "Your sister is the best Catnip, give her
my thanks." He places his share of the cheese in the pocket of his jacket and hands me back my
pack which I strap my arrows onto and, string up the bow before throwing it over my shoulder. I
place the extra bow string into my trousers and hand one to Gale. He looks at me with a confused
expression, I snatch the bow and string from him and begin to go to work with them both. Gale is
still fairly knew with the bow, but after two years of handling it he still hasn't learned to string it,
well at least not as well as I can. "Thanks Catnip." Gale takes back his bow and starts flexing the
string trying to get the feel of it.

"You ready to go?" I ask. Gale smiles and teases my braid moving it like a wiggly worm. "I was
born ready." I slap his hand away and run down from trees with him bringing up the rear until we
come to a small grove. We communicate without even speaking, he throws a large rock into the
trees and I am ready with my bow, a flock of geese fly out from the safeness of the trees, I
managed to shoot two down before the rest flew out of sight. Gale ties the birds together and tucks
them away in the hunting pack he carried. "Not bad but lets see you do even better." says Gale. I
follow him to a few older trees off in the distance, looking up into them I make out the many nest
left over by squirrels. I was a much better shot than Gale I could always hit a squirrel whether it is
being still or scurrying around trees, right in it's eye. The eye was the best place to hit them
anywhere else on the squirrel the arrow would ruin the meat and ruined meat don't sell.

I saw a squirrel emerge from it's hiding place and I was prepared to shoot it when there was a
sudden rush of air being propelled around me. Everything was sent blowing every where and I
could feel Gale pull me under a fallen over tree to hide with him. The large hovercraft of the
Capitol's moved over us, it's large bulk blocked out what little sunlight there was this early in the
morning. When it passed over us it was safe to come out. "What was that about?" I ask Gale. He
shrugs his shoulders and continues to look towards the skies. It was an unusual sight to see a
hovercraft at this time of year, because the hunger games was many months away and that was the
only time you ever saw them. "I guess someone from the Capitol is visiting." Gales says. I wonder
who it could be until I feel the gnawing of hunger bite at my stomach. I eat the goat cheese which
helps for a time until it is no longer enough and I will be hungry once again. "Come on lets gather some vegetation and catch a few fish." says Gale. We missed out on easy food from the squirrels all thanks to the interference of the hovercraft but we still had the two large birds, plus Gale still had his snares to check up on. The baker is gonna be upset when he finds out we have no squirrels for him today, he was after all my best buyer when it comes to the squirrels I hunt.

After catching a few fish I chow down on dried meat, I spit out the hard parts that I can't chew on the ground. "Careful with those scraps Catnip wouldn't want another kitty tailing your trails." Gale says cleaning up the fish in the stream bed. He's bent over laughing I guess he was thinking back to the day when I finally lived up to my nickname of Catnip. I throw a piece of meat at him and he catches it with little ease then pops the food into his. I laugh when he tried to chew the harden bit of meat and then he quickly spit it out into the water.

We moved onwards until we came to a grassy clearing where we liked to sit and talk about almost anything on our minds. Gale would usually start off by saying how he felt about the Capitol and their unrightful hold over all us. He hopes to one day make a difference against their unjust laws, I hope one day he will get that chance. I'm the one who listens most of the time instead of being the talker. We've been friends for more than few years now brought together with a mutual understanding of hunting to provide for both our families, yet I still find it hard to fully open up to him. I'm a reserved person I keep to my family and what little friends I do have. I count Gale and Madge the girl from my school who is also the mayor's daughter as my only friends. I wonder about Madge though about whether or not she is my friend because she pities me, I don't need anyone's pity I find away to pull through the tough times on my own just fine.

"In a few months the 74th Hunger Games will begin." I say. Gale shakes his head, he like me and everyone else hates the games and all that it stands for. "In a perfect world there are no games and everyone lives together as one," says Gale. "What world is that?" I ask. "A make believe one." he says. His imagination runs as deep as the roots of an old tree, but his has passion and a fire like mines to fight for what we believe in. The day grows older it's almost noon about time to leave, but I don't want to leave again I like watching the clouds roll across the blue skies and hearing the wind call my name, if it could speak I know it would.

Gale had fallen asleep beside me and I nudge him awake letting him know the time. He yawns loudly and tells me to wait for him while he goes back into the forest to check his snares. When he returns our next stop was gonna be the Hob, a black market, the place where we trade all the supplies that we hunted and gathered to any who had the coin to buy from. The Peacekeepers were mainly our buyers, there the ones who are suppose to outlaw hunting beyond the electrocuted fence, but even they need to eat and so they flourish off what ever we manage to get from the forest. Today we didn't get much but it would be enough to put a dinner on our tables tonight.

I imagined Prim was up making herself and mother some lunch, with our mother of course just sitting in her chair and staring off into space emotionless, expressionless. Gale returns with a rabbit and a wild turkey, he holds them both up like trophies and that's what they were to us anyways.

When we arrive at the Hob I found it to be bustling with talk like never before. People were talking in large or smaller groups about something important enough for gossip. I wonder if their talk had anything to do with the hovercraft me and Gale saw earlier. I told Gale to take care of the trading and buying while I go speak with Greasy Sae.

The bony old woman stood over a black pot cooking only god knows what inside, I tried to not to inhale it's rancid fumes. Greasy Saes give me a toothless smile when she sees me approach her. "Care for some soup dear?" I quickly but nicely turn down her offer of the vile smelling food. She gives a dry cackle before she begins a rough coughing fit. "You know me well girl, it may smell
like beef but it ain't and don't nobody know that but you and I." But it didn't even smell like beef this time, mostly she would use dog meat in the soup and pass it off as chicken or beef, it didn't even smell like dog meat. I decided to stop trying to guess what it could be.

"What's going on Sae?" I ask. The old woman looks around the Hob still lively with chatter and whispers to me, "We got a visitor here in the Seam." My ears perk up at this and I know it's someone from the Capitol. I wonder why they are here and now of all times, "Someone busy body, rich fellow been walking around here slinging out fancy words at us and such." Greasy Sae says turning her wrinklely nose up in the air. "And he has the most horrid voice I ever heard of in my days, it sounds like he swallowed a squeaky mouse or something." Yeap someone from the Capitol alright, who else has those distinct voices and their fashion taste is even more enormous than their egos.

"Why is he here?" I ask. But she just shrugs her saggy shoulders saying no one knows why. From what I could gather the man walked from house to house in the Seam as if he were looking for something, or someone. I hope he hasn't been to my house. Gale comes back with a sack full of food for our dinner tonight we equally split the profits before returning to the Seam. I ask Gale if he had heard about the strange man from the Capitol. He said that if that man were to walk in on them at his house the man was going have a rude awakening. I imagined Gale charging up at the man with a fist ready, in my mind it seemed funny, but in reality Gale would only get a death sentence for the assault.

"Oh yeah the Baker was upset that we didn't have any squirrels this time." says Gale. I just shrug my shoulders it couldn't be helped, tomorrow I will catch two to make up for that one I missed today. Me and Gale walked down the dirt road that led to our houses, mine was a bit further than his but he walked with me the whole way. I looked around for the man from the Capitol but I didn't see anyone in fancy colorful clothes, nor did I hear the sound of a high-pitched voice. Did he leave already? I had hope so because his presence here in the Seam felt out of place and I was ready for things to go back to their normal District 12 selves.

Gale waved me good-bye after we arrived at my house, normally he would stay for a while but he had business to take care of like me at home. He had two little brothers and a mother to provide for on his own, just like me, well minus the brother for me but we each had about the same responsibility. I waved back to him before entering my house expecting to see Prim cleaning or playing with the animals, or my mother sitting in her chair. What I didn't expect to see was brightly colored man with sparkly silver hair smiling at me as I entered. His teeth, his smile, was huge and quite disturbing, living in the Seam all your life can make one forget what a smile like that even means anymore. But all the same his smiles seems to brighten up our dull little house, though I wonder why he is here.

I close the door quickly before anyone saw him in our house but it was too late. People from next door and across the road were trying to peer into our little windows trying to see what was going on. I shut the blinds it became darker in the one room house. Despite it being dark I could swear the Capitol man's teeth were still shining white as his eyes never left me. Prim was sitting by our mother who had curious look on her face. That look must have been the first of only a handful I have seen from her in a long while. I guess she is as curious about the man's presence as anyone else.

I drop my bow and arrow on the floor near the door then I put the food on the table when Prim gets up to help me begin supper. I go about my business as if there wasn't a strange man in our house staring at me with a smile. "He says that he wants to speak with you." says Prim. I rub her head before making my way to the man, I grabbed a knife holding it behind my thigh just in case he tried something. I didn't care about some damn death sentence not if my family's safety was threaten, and I didn't care by who.
Buttercup walked over to the man smelling him, the cat hiss from the weird scent then he took off under the bed. The man smiled even more as I approached him, he stood up with a well kept hand outstretched for me to sake. "I am very, most graciously happy to finally meet the one and only Katniss Everdeen." he says. "I am Sterling Silverbright, and I am honored to be here in your quaint little home." His smile never faltered nor did he even flinch when I refused to shake his hand. I could hear Prim giggle off in the background probably at his appearance or his voice, maybe at both but his voice felt like a butter knife cutting through butter itself. Mr. Silverbright batted his eyes at me and they almost looked like flickering stars, almost.

I finally took his offered hand moving like a robot and he smiled even more if possible, he gave my hand a warm gentle squeeze. I pulled out of him grasp fast and I was beginning to feel the irritation build up like a fire in me. "Why are you hear?" I ask him. Mr. Silverbright makes his way to the kitchen table to have seat where we could all sit around and hear him while he spoke. He motions like a host for me and my sister to have a seat near him. I noticed him giving my mother a sad look when she just sat staring off into space before getting up to lay on the bed facing opposite of us all. "Don't do that please." I say to him. He nods his head in understanding. His pity was something me and my family could continue to live without.

Prim kept staring at Mr. Silverbright as if he were a deity sent from eternal heavens themselves. Though he was strange a sight having silver hair that sparks when caught by light, his hair was longer than mine it hung all the way down past his waist and at the end or it was a pink hair bow. In fact his entire suit was a soft pinkish color, on him it looked almost natural.

"Now then I bet you both are wondering why I am here correct?" Me and Prim nod our heads together. I forgot about the knife I had in my hands and I quickly throw it on the table with a loud clatter. Mr. Silverbright had looked down at the knife shaking his head. "Oh my, oh dear I come here in peace Ms. Everdeen not to harm or to cause terror." I crossed my arms over my chest fighting the urge to pick up the knife again. "Just tell us what you want." I say. He clears his throat and pulls out a stack of papers from a jeweled white bag he had beside him. "Ms. Everdeen you have been chosen by yours truly to participate in the District Training Camp of Panem." Mr. Silverbright smiled at me thinking I must honestly know what he's talking about. "What the hell is that?" I ask. He gets up and begins to walk around the room with his hands behind his back. "This is a fairly new program we have started and each year months before a hunger game is to begin we give one lucky person from a district to participate in the District Training Camp of Panem an opportunity to train with the careers. Who knows you may get picked for the 74th Hunger Games and this training would be beneficial for at best."

I sit there trying to soak in all that he has told me and at first I want nothing to do with it because I couldn't leave to go trying with careers just because there might be a chance I get my name drawn at the reaping. Though because of the Tessera the odds of me not getting my name pick were not in my favor but I didn't care about me only protecting my little sister from the hunger games, even if it meant having my name in the bowl a thousand times I didn't care. But needed what little oil and grain we could get each month in exchange for taking the Tessera. I got our family's first Tessera after my father died and I was waiting to turn 12 so I was old enough to it. At that time my life was at it hardest my own family was starving and even though I was due to turn 12 in a few weeks I knew we didn't have that much time. It was around that time when I first truly saw Peeta Mellark not just as a baker's sun but as a savior, he gave me burnt bread after his mother caught me in their trash cans looking for food, I will never forget that day. My family managed until I was 12 for those few weeks off the bread and what else little we had.

"I can't, I can't leave my family behind to starve while I go off to some stupid boot camp." Prim turns to me quickly, "It's fine Katniss, we'll be okay Mr. Silverbright said so." I look to the man who has in only twenty minutes changed this day for me like never before. He smiles at me, "Its true while you are off away the I will make sure your family is being well taken care, they are and,
yourself sit within my well magical hands.” I couldn't help but to stare at his hands, his fingernails were the same pinkish color as his suit and each one of his fingers were lighting dipped in a shimmering silver dust. In fact as I look around the house silver dust shimmered everywhere, cleaning up the dirty dust was bad enough now we have fancy dust to clean as well.

"Where will it be held at, this camp?” I ask. "In District 2 this year, one of Panem's finest career training district of them all.” says Mr. Silverbright. District 2 the district with the more respect for the Capitol, there nothing but loyal Capitol dogs always waiting for a command, or to please their masters. I never dreamed of going there before because I never wanted to, I didn't want anything to do with the Capitol or its dogs yet in only a day that may all change.

"Your little sister here tells me how well you are with a bow, might I ask what you use that skill for my dear?” I turn to look at Prim who was blushing and trying to hide behind a stack of folded wash towels on the table. "No you may not Mr. Silverbright.” he nods his head looking down. "I'm sure for what ever reasons you have they are necessary ones at best."

I ask him further questions about the program, I will be gone for three months, training in District 2 with it's careers, and at the end of that three month long course I am to demonstrate what I have learned to the Capitol over a TV screen. I along with one person from each district will have this opportunity and who ever skills wins by the judges their district will get a week long feast of endless food and clean water. I didn't need to be asked twice before I jumped at Mr. Silverbright ready to sign the papers for me to apply myself in the program. He seemed pleasantly taken aback from my unexpected eagerness. But this seemed like an easy enough opportunity I didn't want to pass up on, because according to Mr. Silverbright for each person in a district something like this comes only once in their lifetime.

"If it were up to me I would have all the districts of Panem and all of its residents given an equal footing for the games, however our Capitol only favors the ones that bow down the furthest for them, and its no secret half if not all of the districts hate us.” says Mr. Silverbright. "I don't hate you Mr. Silverbright sir, you make me smile.” says Prim. "Oh thank you child I have been known to have that affect on people no matter where I go I just tend to make them want to smile.” Looking at Mr. Silverbright seemed to have the opposite affect of making me want to smile, but I figured I couldn't frown anymore than I was already at the moment.

When the papers were all signed I asked the most important question of all. "When do I leave?” Mr. Silverbright stood from his chair stretching like a cat. "Now, or tomorrow morning which ever suits your needs.” I quietly say tomorrow morning not expecting to leave so fast, and so soon. "Alright now that we have everything signed and, you know all the benefits of what the program holds all that is left for you to do is pack.” Mr. Silverbright gathered his things into his white jeweled bag and mentioned if I needed anything that he would be staying in the Mayor's house for the night. But I didn't need anything else from him, I just needed him to leave so I could breathe again.

I got up walking Mr. Silverbright to the door all the while trying not to slip in the trail of silver dust he left behind. I smirked a little when I saw Buttercup emerge from underneath the bed and he tried to run to Prim but ended up slipping along the way on the sparkly dust. Mr. Silverbright reached out to shake my hand good-bye I reluctantly took it again before he left. I closed and lock the door after him finally feeling relaxed and not on guard.

"Katniss do you think he will tell the mayor about mom?” asks Prim. I think about it for a minute before shaking my head no. I didn't think he would, of course he is from the Captiol so what would he know of the life we had here, I'm still fairly sure he knew what happened to children with unfit parents though. "Don't worry about it Prim he seems...okay” I rub her head softly before telling her it was time to make dinner. I guess I'll tell Gale tomorrow before I leave that he
want see me again for three months, I know he want be happy about it but he'll get over it when I
win the Skills Contest for our district with the promise of a feast as the prize.

I noticed Prim with a faraway look on her face I ask her what she is thinking of, she tells me she is
imaging how the feast would look with every kind of food imaginable. I ended losing myself with
my own thoughts of the week long endless feast. It seems more like a goal than a dream, but that's
the way I see it and that dream can't come true if I don't work hard at the training camp. I plan to
work hard though, for my family, for Gale and his family, for my district, because those were the
only things that kept my heart burning for a purpose.
Departure

This time I woke up before anyone else in the house. I spent all last night after dinner packing for the 3 month long trip to District 2. I laughed at myself I didn't even have enough supplies to a last week so, for the next 3 months I'm gonna be mixing and piecing together what little clothes I did have just to make it seem like I had enough. I knew the Careers would be judging me and every other tribute from the lesser districts with as much criticism as they could. I keep telling myself what they think doesn't matter but somewhere it does. I don't want them to think I'm too weak or too strong I want to keep them all guessing about who I really was.

I didn't go through my normal routine like I normally did when going hunting. This morning I threw on my boots and Coat, I let my hair stay freely down my back. I nibbled on a apple before grabbing my bow and arrows laying by the door. I was out the door when I heard Prim and Buttercup finally stir from their sleep, but I didn't stop to turn back around I just kept going on my way.

When I reached the electrocuted fence I could hear the soft hum of electricity flowing through it's metal wires. It was odd to find the fence on at this time of day, and I knew Gale wasn't up yet so I thought I would drop by his house instead.

I knocked on the yellow chip painted door of Gale's house. He answered the door after about five knocks, he was grumpy like usual and had chin stubs along his chin and jaw. "Katniss what are you doing here this early, we don't hunt for another two hours?" I asked him if I could come in and he step aside for me, I saw his pregnant mother and two little brothers asleep in the next room. Gale offered me a hot cup of tea which I gladly take. I sip on the hot beverage and Gale watches me with concern. "Is everything alright?" he asks. I take a deep swallow of tea before I tell him the big news.

He obviously didn't take it well like I knew he wouldn't even when I mentioned wining the feast for our district he was still upset. "Katniss you need to go to that man and tell him you decline the offer right now!" "No I want do that Gale, I can't it means too much." I had half expected him to understand where I was going with in the program, my intentions were to make sure my family was fed and hopefully along the way I will somehow win the contest for a feast. But Gale being the stubborn boy with a passion for as long as I had known him did just what I was expecting him to do, and that was by burning himself up over the Capitol. "It means too much, what you can't wait to crawl on all fours and bark when the Capitol says to?" Gale stood up pacing around the room rubbing his hand through his hair. "Its just a small program to help us train for the games if I were to be picked in the reaping at least I would have a chance."

Gale sits down beside me and takes my hand in his, he kisses my palm softly before rubbing his thumb over it. "If you leave then I want see you for 3 whole months and when you come back it the games will only be a week away, anything can happened from then until now." He was right but what choice did I have for now I will take the easy way out and go to the program. I keep reminding myself that while I'm away training my family would be getting the best meals that we haven't had in a long time and it sets me at ease.

I say my final good-bye to Gale before heading back home to get my things. Mr. Silverbright was already there waiting for me, smiling, always smiling. "You all set to go Ms. Everdeen?" I shake my head no I still haven't said my good-byes to Prim and my mother. Prim was eating some left overs from dinner for breakfast and my mom was still asleep in bed. I went over to her and sat down on the edge of the bed, whispering words in her ear. I knew she could hear me and understand what all I said to her, yet she never responded back and I'm used to that silence by
now. I finally go over to Prim and hug her till she tells me she can't breathe. I smile down at her and kiss her forehead, she smiles back and I know her smile will be the one I dearly miss. But I will be back home soon enough three months isn't very long and at the end of it all it will be worth it. I gather the only two bags I have packed and walk to the door near Mr. Silverbright. "All right Katniss we have one more stop to make before we board the hovercraft, your mayor wants to give you a public departure for your district." I freeze at the word public. "Do I have to I ask him." Mr. Silverbright who was now sporting a metallic green suit looked back at me with confused eyes, until they soften in understanding. "Oh I see your shy." Not really but I will let him think that for now. He pulls out a silver pocket watch and checks the time. "Well then I will inform your mayor, you just go on ahead and board our hovercraft." he says patting me softly on the back.

I feel eyes on me as I follow a peacekeeper that was leading me outside the district. Gale watched from the shadows and waved bye to me, I waved back before I was out of sight beyond the district's wall. A large hovercraft was waiting for me, so this will be home for the next few hours until I make it to District 2. Mr. Silverbright came walking really fast outside my district trying to hold on to his long hair, I could see the shimmer of silver dust sparkle in the sunlight. "Alright everything is all set and we are ready to go." says Mr. Silverbright. The door to the hovercraft closes and I can hear it's motor starting up, soon I began to feel weightless as it was starting to lift off up into the air. I thought I was gonna have a panic attack I have never had my feet off the ground this high before, besides climbing trees my own whole life, but I was gonna up much higher than any tree.

"Was the mayor upset I refused to do the public thing?" I ask. Mr. Silverbright tells me no and that I still had a public leaving without my knowing a camera had been following me around since I left home with him. Perfect, I was on national TV for all of the Capitol to see and I'm sure they will replay the video over later today for my district to see.

The chairs of the hovercraft was very comfortable and I was soon feeling sleepy. "You know if you fall asleep now we will be there before you even wake up." says Mr. Silverbright. I couldn't wait to fall asleep and have this trip with him go by even faster. I adjusted my seat so I could lay further back and I pulled a soft blue blanket from a compartment above me all around my body. I must admit the inside of the hovercraft was very fancy and it reeked of all things Capitol, from the bright colors of the interior to the sweet smell of exotic fragrance, to all the high technology that was set up all around me.

Mr. Silverbright tried to break the silence by turning on some music, the sounds of a birds filtered in through the speakers, it was calming to hear I have to admit. "We will be there soon enough Katniss and don't you worry about a thing I will be there with you every step of the way." he says. "Oh I see you brought your own bow and arrows." I look down at the weapons laying by my feet, I almost gave them to Gale to keep for safe keeping till I got back but I needed them with me, the bow was after all the first one my dad made for me. "I hope they will allow you to use them, but I'm pretty sure they will give you a special Capitol made bow to use in the training." "If they don't there will be problems." I say. Mr. Silverbright laughs as if what I said was a big joke, he really didn't know me at all.
Hardships that blossom into Friendships

The stars were the first thing I was met with when I opened my eyes and I immediately found myself gazing through the window beside me. I looked around and saw that I was still in the hovercraft. We should have been in District 2 by now and for some reason we've stopped. Looking outside I could tell we were outside a district because of the high security walls that towered in the distance. It was too dark to read the district emblem that was on the outside of every district gate so I decided to go out and see for myself where I was. Even Mr. Silverbright was nowhere to be seen, though I didn't panic too much on that matter.

I unstrapped myself from the chair and stretch out my muscles I could only guess I've been asleep for at least three hours. A heavy aroma filtered into my nose and looking down I saw a table covered with all sorts of food. I didn't waste anytime indulging myself with the food, it smelled good, it tasted so good. I've never had this kind of food and this much food before in my life. Of all the different assortments of food the lamb stew with dried plums was my favorite, and it was all gone before I knew it. I licked my fingertips savoring in the last remnants of the wonderful dish.

The door to the hovercraft opened and Mr. Silverbright stepped in looking flustered. "Oh my dear you are finally awake and I see you have discovered our dinner for tonight, or at least what's left of it." I felt my face grow a hot red I realized how much I ate and I hardly left any food for him. "Yeah I guess I got carried away sorry." "No need to apologize my dear there's more where that came from." Mr. Silverbright pressed a button on the wall not a second later avoxes came inside carry plates filled with hot food. Is it bad that I feel a particular hunger arise within me again when I see and smell the oncoming food?

"Oh Katniss we will have some new company joining us on our trip to District 2 they will arrive shortly." says Mr. Silverbright. I tried taking my eyes off the steaming food long enough to listen to him. "Company, who are they?" I ask. "A dear old friend of mine's and a tribute that she is escorting from District 11." says Mr. Silverbright. "Okay that's...fine" I say. Mr. Silverbright smiled and nodded his head happy with Katniss positive attitude with the news. "Alright then I'm glad to hear that the little girl from 11 could use good company while we make this journey of ours." "How old is she?" I felt myself become truly interested in this girl from District 11 that I haven't even met yet. "She just turned 12 this month and was lucky to have been chosen to participate in this program." says Mr. Silverbright. What did he mean by lucky? How was receiving training to kill or be killed in a death sentence like the hunger games. No one is lucky no matter how much training they have, even for a Career and Tribute the games are a way of enforcement to keep and remind all the district's their place beneath the Capitol's feet.

I wasn't feeling hungry anymore, I sat down on a cerulean colored couch while Mr. Silverbright ate his dinner. He ate with as much grace and mannerism as anyone from the Capitol. "Oh my this chocolate delight pudding is splendid indeed." I watched him eat the dessert like it was a treat from heaven above. "Katniss have you tried the pudding? It is to die for, so soft and creamy." Even if I wanted some there wasn't any left even for a spoonful. "Oh excuse I guess I got carried away with the pudding it's just so good though." Mr. Silverbright leaned back in chair full from all the food he consumed. I tried not to eat so much that I would get full it's not something I want to get used to. Food like this want always come in this abundance to me, but for the next three months I guess it will be.

Rapid knocking filled the silent hovercraft and Mr. Silverbright wasted no time in opening the door. I looked out the window and saw a little girl standing outside with her bag under the lamp light. A woman whom I recognized as my district's hunger games tribute escort Effie Trinket. The woman smiled and screamed happily when she was met by Mr. Silverbright at the door. The little
girl behind her covered her ears against Effie's high pitched screaming. "Come in, come in." Mr. Silverbright ushered in the Effie and the girl.

Effie seemed to have immediately made herself at home tossing her things all over the room, while the little girl sat down in a chair beside me timid and a little scared. The girl reminded me so much of Prim in size and demeanor, but the girl had dark brown skin and brown eyes but other than that she reminded me of my little sister. It's been only a couple of hours since I left home, since I saw Prim and I miss her dearly.

I scooted a little closer to the little girl and softly asked her name. "It's Rue." I could barely hear her quiet reply her voice was so small. "Hello Rue my name is Katniss, I'm from District 12." I say smiling trying to cheer her up. Rue kept her eyes fixed on the worn shoes on her feet and refused to make any further eye contact with me. I know how she must feel to be suddenly thrust with strange people, but I still couldn't understand why I was even bothering with her I hardly ever take well to meeting new people. Though this little girl right here before me seemed even more fragile than I and my father as told me to my strength didn't always have to be my owns. So I wanted to help her in anyway I can, and I wouldn't mind having at least one friend during the training program.

Mr. Silverbright and Effie sat at the glass dinner table lost in their...whatever they talk about stuff, and I still sat by the little girl thinking of something to do. I looked on the table and saw a new bowl of chocolate pudding delight. Maybe she likes sweets? I got up to fix her a bowl and when I reached the table was when Effie truly saw me for the first time. She blinked her long diamond trimmed eyebrows as if trying to clear her vision on if I was really there. "Well you must be the tribute from District 12 I have been hearing so much about from Sterling, how do you do?" I inwardly cringed at her voice while shaking a white gloved hand offered at me. I never really felt like laughing since I left home but her wig was rather comical it was even bigger than Buttercup. Her sweet perfume irritated my nose badly and I tried to get the pudding and leave. "Effie have you tried the chocolate pudding yet it is amazing my dear?" asked Mr. Silverbright. Effie held up her hand waving it in the air. "Oh once I had but it does terrible things to my digestion that I wish to not dwell on much." In my words she was saying that the chocolate pudding gave her the shits and apparently it is a horrid thing to shit even though its also a natural thing to do. Typical Capitol woman nothing more or less. "Effie that color looks so good on you." Mr. Silverbright was gushing over Effie's teal colored dress. "Thank you, thank you it was personal made through my eyes of course, the designer was young but gifted in my opinion but he did the job well enough."

I finally escaped the two Capitol fairies before I suffocated to death in their so called small talk. Rue's eyes widen as she looked at the pudding I had holding before her. "Is that for me?" "Of course it is, I hear it is really good." I smiled down at her showing her my comfort towards her. She reaches out for the white bowl and I hand her the gold spoon she gladly takes them both. "I never had chocolate before." Rue says. "I'm sure it is as good as everyone says go for it, dig in." She takes a small bite tasting it then before I know it the bowl is empty, but at least she was smiling and finally relaxing. "Rue my goodness don't eat like such a slob." Effie looked as if the girl had committed a sin, but she was just hungry.

I saw the look of guilt pass over the girl's face. "Don't listen to her just eat and try to be happy." Rue got up to place her empty bowl on the table and walked back to her chair. Effie was unaware of the affects that her words had on Rue. A woman with her head in the clouds of luxury and endless amounts of food would never understand our struggles in the districts. It was getting harder to try and contain my anger towards those kind of people. I got up and made myself a large plentiful bowl of pudding and sat down beside Effie eating the sloppiest I have ever eaten. She didn't like it her narrowed eyes could cut through the thickest glass I'm sure of that. I looked across the table at Mr. Silverbright and saw a little smile coming from the corner's of his mouth.
Me and Rue sat on the round large couch in the next room by ourselves leaving Mr. Silverbright and Effie alone in the front. The hovercraft was finally back on course to District 2, it moved smoothly through the night sky and I loved watching the stars and shifting clouds pass me by. Rue had laid down beside me the pudding gave her and me tummy aches, but that it was damn good it was worth a little tummy ache for the both of us.

I took noticed for the first time at the clothes Rue wore which was a red shirt that had many holes in it her black pants were in the same shape. I wondered if these were the only nice enough clothes she had to wear and her bag was very big. I would have offered her some of my clothes but they would be way to big on them for her. Rue caught me staring at her clothes and picked at a hole on the sleeve of her arm. "They are my sister's clothes, back home we share each others things and she let me wear this along with a few other pairs of clothing I packed." Rue told me that she knew how to mend clothes a skill taught to her by her grandmother, and so all the holes in her clothes would get fixed eventually. I asked Rue if she could fix a pair of my favorite trousers I had packed. She was happy to help and offered to do them now since her stomach was feeling a little better.

I enjoyed watching her stitch up the holes in the pants, her small fingers were very skillful with the thread and needle. It reminded me of the stitching my mom used to do on deep cuts though I could never stand the sight of blood and I always ran away out of the house to leave that kind of work to her and Prim. Back then she was a mom, back then she loved to help others in need. The irony of it was that now she couldn't even help herself. I felt the threat of tears form behind my eyes and I wiped them away before they fell. "Are you alright Katniss?" Rue looked over at me concerned. For someone her age she was too young to feel concerned with anything her life right now should be carefree and fun if it weren't for this world we lived in things could be different, better I think. "I'm fine I just...miss home is all." I didn't want to think of my mom again at least not while I was on this trip I can't afford distractions if I want to be my very best. Though thoughts of home will always be on my mind and, I imagined Prim and mom was in bed by now with Buttercup right at their feet.

Effie's high volume laughter broke through my thoughts. I really felt bad for Rue and how she got stuck with someone like Effie for the next three months. "Katniss are you scared of going to District 2?" asks Rue. I tell her no but I never have imagined ever setting foot inside another district it will take some getting use to I know. "I hear the Careers are really mean and scary and, will kill you if they don't like you." says Rue. I laughed a little at they way she described the Careers. "Who told you all that stuff?" I ask. "My big brother told me before I left, so is it true then?" Her eyes grow wide, she was really scared. It was somewhat true they are trained from young ages to how to fight, how to kill, and protect themselves, and how to use every kind of weapon made. Just from watching previous hunger games gives you a prime example of the brutality of the Careers, it makes since that they are usually the ones who win the games. Even before this training program was accepted by the Capitol, training any tribute for the hunger games used to be illegal but that didn't stop District 1, 2, and 4 from training their tributes, but those were the Districts with the strongest ties to the Capitol so they got away with it.

"They can be brutal, but it's not like we're in the games or anything this is all for training." I say. Rue still looked uneasy but she finally went back to mending my trousers. I never did ask much about the training itself. Well tomorrow we will see just what it all has to offer and I keep telling myself I'm ready to face them all. I always feel bad when I lie to others most of the time but, I'm happy I don't feel so bad when I lie to myself, but I know I'm not even close to being ready.

Before going to bed I wanted to grab a glass of water and I couldn't help myself to eavesdrop on Mr. Silverbright and Effie's conversation. "Honestly Sterling that girl is rude and mannerless in every way possible." "Come now Effie she's not so bad, I think you mistake all that negativity she has for that fire deep with inside her." says Mr. Silverbright. "Fire? What fire?" asks Effie. "She
has a good head on her shoulders and I see a passion burning in her heart, she won't be so easy doused, I can assure you of that." I was very stunned to hear my escort talk about me in that way. But why? He is getting paid to escort me, not to like me. "Hmph, I'm sure there will be a Career or two who will smother that fire of hers, she just needs respect and learn when to conceal that anger and aggression." "She seems perfectly fine to me, growing up in that district of her's I imagined that attitude is what has been keeping her and her family alive this far." says Mr. Silverbright. Effie just took a small sip of her liquor shaking her head at his words.

I guess Mr. Silverbright knows me a little. I never have been I push over I could always hold my own and that fiery attitude of mines was like a superhuman power to me that I try to use for good. So if I were to unleash it on some unsuspecting Careers it wouldn't be so bad, I mean they are the villains right?

I decided to not get that glass of water and turned to go back to join Rue in the other room. The little girl was on her way to sleep curled up under a homemade quilt, I assumed her grandmother made it for her. It was lovely though it was purple and blue adorned with mocking jays and musical notes. The Mockingjay? A symbol of the Capitol's failures, at least one of them. Picking up my pants I admire Rue's work they looked brand new. "You like the new fix up?" asks Rue. "It's amazing thanks." "Your welcome I love sewing almost as much as I like singing." she says. I wonder what kind of life she has back in her district, for her to love singing her family must be really close and happy despite the hardships. District 11 is almost as bad as my own district, but certainly not the worst.

I lay down across from Rue on the couch and stare up at the ceiling, I thought it was my eyes playing tricks on me or something but the ceiling really did change into different colors. One second it was blue than red the next, with each fading color it shimmered like water into the next one. "Katniss?" I hear Rue's soft voice call my name from underneath her quilt. "Yeah?" I ask. "Let's stick together okay?" I smile looking at the girl with her eyes closed ready to fall asleep and, I brush back her soft black curls. "Okay, from this day and until infinity we'll stick together." She whispers a thank you to me and I'm thankful as well that I have found a new friend in this unforgiving world of ours. I feel almost ready to face it all now and I couldn't wait for tomorrow to come, nor could that fire that Mr. Silverbright praised so much about it burned impatiently for the next day as much as I did.
The rocky mountain range broke through the low clouds finally exposing our destination. The black walls of District 2 loomed in the distance against a hazy morning sky. They were far more impressive than the dirty old gray walls of my own district, and a lot more intimidating. I couldn't fight the anxiety that kept me guessing what I was to expect from the other side of those walls. There were at least a dozen or more armed Peacekeepers that stood against the walls glaring at our landing hovercraft.

Rue was looking out the window beside mine breathing uneasily. "Hey relax we're alright." I say. "Why are there so many Peacekeepers out there Katniss?" District 2 is where most of the Peacekeepers are made and trained so of course there will be a lot of them here. "Alright Imagine the Peacekeepers as worker bees and District 2 as their beehive." "Yes and if they sting you, you'll die." says Effie. I watched the woman frantically gather her things from around the hovercraft ready to leave. Rue gasped at the Capitol woman's words and I tried to calm her down. What I wanted more than anything in the world was to set fire to that woman's turgid wig. "Come on Rue, let's get our stuff together."

I walked behind Rue on our way to the back when Effie grabbed hold on my wrist. Her hands were small and soft they held no traces of a hard life unsurprisingly. "You like playing the role of big sister don't you?" she asks. I yanked my wrist out of her grip. "It's flattering really but unnecessary that girl doesn't need to be babied anymore than she already is. It's about time for her to grow up."

"I hate your voice." I yell. Effie looked taken aback blinking her long newly pink eye lashes. "You what?" "I hate your voice, I hate your clothes and your damn wig, I hate everything about you, and I hate the Capitol for destroying my life and hers." I knew I was shouting by that point but I didn't care. This dolled up clown of a woman could never understand my life or Rue's.

"You should count yourself lucky girl, if I were anybody else you would be facing a public execution for speaking out against your glorious Capitol!" shouts Effie. My glorious Capitol? How ignorant could this woman get? She really can't see past all the glamour and all the illusions that the Capitol has bestowed on Panem.

"Do you want to know how many nights I've lain awake wishing for nothing but hell itself to rain down on my glorious Capitol?" I ask. I moved closer to her, but she held her ground. I was fairly taller than her but she used her high heeled shoes to counter that. "You don't scare me girl." I didn't care or want her to be frightened of me, I just wanted her to understand but I guess the makeup and years of being a Capitol zombie can't change in less than five minutes.

Five minutes was how long the argument between Effie and I lasted until Mr. Silverbright came into the room looking refreshed and smiling. "Hello ladies, good morning to you both." He sat down at the table looking between us. "Is something wrong?" "No, no everything is just...peachy." says Effie. "If you will excuse me I must continue getting ready." Patting her wig and adjusting her collar she disappeared into the bathroom.

I sat down heavily in the chair across from Mr. Silverbright at the table. I failed to notice that it was filled with food. In less than a minute I had two full plates eating like there was no tomorrow, and maybe after stepping foot into District 2 there might not be one.

I could feel Mr. Silverbright's eyes boring into me as I ate. "What?" I ask. "You know I was thinking Katniss, about how different you and Effie are. Opposites attract from what I here." he says. I took a huge swallow of eggs before answering him. "So are you saying eventually me and
her will fuck or something?" "What! No not that kind of attraction, I mean the one where overtime the negative differences you both have will turn positive. A friendship perhaps? I bet before these three months are up you and her will be the best of friends." he says. I chug down my glass of cold Apple juice. "Don't hold your breath on that Silverbright." "She's not so bad and naïve as you may think, she'll come around just give her that chance."

"Well that's a hell no to the sex part and to the friendship part. It's never gonna happen." "Effie is an attractive young woman and is quite friendly, she's a people person one would call her." says Mr. Silverbright. I look at him confused. "What were we even talking about again?" I ask. Mr. Silverbright just waves his hand dismissing our conversation and went back to eating his breakfast. At first I thought he was suggesting that if me and Effie were to hook up all the tension between us would be gone, or that a friendship between me and her could happen. I know he was right about the first part though, Effie did seem a bit tensed maybe getting laid would do her some good.

"Do you have like a crush on Effie or something?" I ask. Mr. Silverbright nearly choked on his spiced pear tart before answering me. "Good heavens no Effie, she's like a little sister to me. Besides she's not really my type per say." he says. Not his type? I didn't blame him for that really, whose types is Effie's anyways?

"Whatever I'm just ready to get off this damn hovercraft." I say. Playing with the half eaten sausage seemed more entertaining than this conversation I'm having with the man across from me. "Really you're tired of us all already and only being on here together for a day?" he asks. "Goodness I hate to imagine how you will deal with the other tribute whom you will be rooming with for the next three months."

I perked up finally giving my full attention to Mr. Silverbright. I caught he smiling at me while fanning his face with a piece of paper. "You know who your roommate is?" I ask. "That I do my dear girl." Mr. Silverbright held up the paper that I couldn't take my eyes off of.

I knocked my chair over trying to grab hold on the paper, but Mr. Silverbright held them over his head and out of my reach. I saw him smile and I turned around to see Rue sticking her head peaking around the corner of the hallway. "Come my dear there's enough breakfast for us all." Rue smiled a little and made her way to the table sitting down by me. "Where's Effie?" she asks. "She's still in the bathroom." says Mr. Silverbright. "Or maybe she was attacked by that wig of hers, I swear I saw it move on it's own." I add. Rue giggled at me before fixing her plate. "That's a big no, no, Katniss. Remember I what I said earlier." Mr. Silverbright sat there pointing his finger at me with a scolding look. Damn he makes feel like a little unpotty trained puppy, that pops me with a thick roll paper everytime I try to piss somewhere. Speaking of paper, the one that was in his hands was the one I wanted. I picked my chair back up and folded my arms across my chest waiting impatiently for the information regarding my roommate.

"Rue my dear would like to see who your roommate will be?" asks Mr. Silverbright. Rue nodded her head at the man. "But I thought me and Katniss could be roommates." "Oh no the trainers make up the schedules and the rooming between the tributes and careers. "Wait so some of us will be rooming with the careers?" I ask. "Oh yes, sorry I guess I forgot to mention that, but yes careers and tributes will be rooming together under one roof." he says. Mr. Silverbright took a heartful bite out of a cinnamon pastry before handing Rue her piece of paper.

Rue laid the paper on the table so we both could see who was going to be her roommate. All that was on the paper was a picture of the tribute, their district number, age, and their name. "Sophie Walsh?" Rue says the girl's name like she was tasting how it sounded coming out of her mouth. I looked the paper over again. Sophie Walsh a red-headed girl from District 5 who was fifth-teen years old. Looking at her face the image of a snarling fox came to mind. She really did have those
conniving and sneaky looking features of a fox.

"She looks kinda scary." says Rue. "Oh my she does look rather...tricky that one." says Mr. Silverbright turning up his nose and squinting his eyes at the photo of the red-headed girl. "Just make sure you keep all your valuables hidden and don't tell her too much about yourself." I say. Rue nods her head taking in everything I say to her. "Come now girls don't judge a book by it's cover, I'm sure this Sophie is no different from either of you." Somehow I doubt that much. I tried my hardest to not be so judgemental of people that I haven't even met yet with Effie, being the exception, but there was something about Foxface's expression that made me think that anyone could end up with a knife in their backs from a girl like this. I hate that Rue had to room with her, but as long as I'm around I want let nothing happen to her.

"Alright Katniss, now it is your turn to-" I yank the piece of paper from Mr. Silverbright's hands before he could finish.

When I finally look at the piece of paper I feel cold. "My roommate is a career!" I shout. The out of nowhere high-pitched sound of Effie Trinket's laughter filled the air around the breakfast table. I guess she thought it was funny that I'm being roomed with a career. She stepped fully out of the bathroom looking brighter and happier than before.

She made her way into the dining area and sat by a smiling Mr. Silverbright. He kissed both of her rosy cheeks in greeting. After they was done she turned to me and smirking. I could easily read what she was saying without words being spoken. You got what you deserved bitch. That's what she was saying to me with those green eyes of hers. I want let her get the last laugh though, that I can promise.

While the others was eating and talking I kept looking over my career roommate's picture. Her name was Clove, a last name wasn't listed. Strange? Clove is fifth-teen years old a year younger than me and there no surprise that she was from District 2 itself. She looked in Rue's words "Scary" even more scarier than Foxface herself. Clove looked sadistic, dangerous and powerful all in this one face frontal photo of her. Rue looked over my shoulder and down at my roommate's picture. "I think I'll keep fox girl over her any day." she says. "I would to." I say. I can hear Mr. Silverbright's voice in my head "Don't judge a book by it's cover." That didn't seem to apply to the picture of the District 2 career whom looked as if she has a dark closet full of skeletons.

"What are you thinking about Katniss," asks Mr. Silverbright. "I'm thinking how I can not judge a career by the sadistic features that covers her face." "Well...that's a good positive start at least." he says. I shrug my shoulders and ate my last bite of food before I wasn't feeling hungry anymore. Effie hummed sweetly and ate a bowl of fruit dipped lightly in a white cream topping. "Careers aren't so bad Katniss, they only do what they are trained to do which is take orders and obey them unlike some people." says Effie. "You forgot to mention how well they are trained to kill from the time they could walk." I say, stabbing a piece of bacon in half with my fork.

"Oh please that's just their natural instincts that kick in from time to time." says Effie. Yeah of course she would make up unnecessary excuses for the people that practically throw themselves at the Capitol's feet with their undying allegiance to them.

"If I saw a Career trying to kill me my natural instinct would be to turn and run for my life." says Rue. "I would too." I say. Only I couldn't ever imagine myself going down without a fight against anyone, career or not.

A loud knock came from the other side of the door. I looked out the window to see a Peacekeeper looking grimly down at me. Effie happily opened the door for him. "Are you going to be our escort inside?" she asks. "Yeah so I'm told." says the Peacekeeper. The Peacekeeper had that kind of look that wished he was anywhere but here, and Effie's ecstatic presence didn't seem to help
with his glumness either. "I know a strapping young fellow like you must have a name?" asks Effie running a pink finger nail down the Peacekeeper's white uniform. Was she really trying to flirt with him?

"What? Oh yeah my name is Richard, and please mam, refrain yourself from touching my uniform." The Peacekeeper brushed himself off like Effie's touch was dirt fill and left grim all over him. I laughed at the interaction between the two.

Effie threw her hand over her heart. "How dare you I'm not even old enough to be a mam, look at my youth appearance." The Peacekeeper in his gloomy expression looked her up and down. "Looks can be deceiving." he says. Effie turned on her heels and threw up her little nose into the air walking off away from him.

"Hi excuse me sir, I'm Mr. Silverbright are you already for us now?" "Yeah we are." says the Peacekeeper. Mr. Silverbright clapped his hands, silver dust erupted all over the floor and on Richard, the Peacekeeper's shiny shoes. "Oh my sorry about that dear boy." Mr. Silverbright turn back to us and clapped his hands again further away from Richard. "All right everyone gather your things we're are finally leaving."

The distance between the hovercraft landing site and District 2 itself wasn't very far but we had a lot of luggage mostly Effie's to carry on motor carts and ourselves as well. I rode with Mr. Silverbright in the first cart while Rue and Effie brought up the rear in the next cart. The heavy sun was beating down on us the whole ride there until we soon fell into the dark shadows made by the District's large black walls.

Richard had stopped the cart in front of the District's door and got out to talk to the other Peacekeepers guarding it. When he came back to told us everything was all set and the black doors began to slowly open for us.

"Don't worry Katniss, you'll do just fine here." says Mr. Silverbright. I felt him take my hand and normally I would yanked it back, but as of right now I'll take whatever comfort I could get. I didn't feel like being a choosey brat right now as I caught my first sight of the inside of District 2.
Beyond the walls of District 2

District 2, one of the wealthiest districts in Panem, and a place where I never would have imagined myself to ever be under any circumstance, but despite the circumstances now this place was amazing. Looking over the foreign district I first pointed out all the things that I could and compared them to my own district. Well first off it was cleaner and very spacious with small villages all through out the district, and each small village was based around a mine. District 2 was known for it's mining and stone cutting along with weapons manufacture.

Even though District 2 received preferential treatment from the Capitol, the quarry workers suffer as much as any other district, and their strong loyalty to the Capitol doesn't exclude them from the games.

With better treatment and living conditions District 2 can be seen as a paradise compared to my own and Rue's district. Though what I notice most about the district was its lack of trees and plentiful rocks and the mountains that it laid in not far off from the Capitol itself. In fact when I look to the north through the hazy fog that rests over the mountain tops I could just barely make out the large city.

I look back at Rue to see how she was taking in the strange sights, but she sat low in her chair with her eyes low playing with a loose thread on her shirt. I knew she wouldn't really care about any of this all she wants is to go back home. Effie sat beside Rue and kept nudging the little girl to look up and see all the nice colorful shops around them. I can imagined Effie's words "Look at all the wonderful things you have only ever dreamed of all around you now." Rue turned in her seat facing the opposite direction of Effie who was getting frustrated in dealing with the her. Rue looked up when she felt my eyes on her. I smile at her and she gives me a little one back before she looks down messing with her shirt's loose threading.

I felt Mr. Silverbright tap me on my shoulder he leans close to my ear so I can hear him better over the loud machines in the background. "They're taking us to the career's training hall to get settled in with the other tributes in the dorms." "Great so will I soon meet my new career roommate then?" Mr. Silverbright quirks an eyebrow at me. "Goodness girl, you really are trying to find and discover any excuse as to not room with that career aren't you? Firstly everyone here will be treated fairly no matter if you are a career or tribute or what district you come from, secondly the training hall is quite far way from the district's housing section so it would make sense for them to live on the premises to avoid living in the Seam part of my district. Once or twice now I try to imagine growing up here and what my life would be like as a career.

I quickly turn to Mr. Silverbright hitting him on the arm hard to get his attention. "Ow, my what is the matter now? That hurt some." He rubs his arm giving me a hurt puppy face look. I ignore it and ask him the question that's been reeling in the back of my head like a endless film. "If the careers live here then why are they being forced to live with me and the other tributes? I thought they were better than us?" "Goodness girl, you really are trying to find and discover any excuse as to not room with that career aren't you? Firstly everyone here will be treated fairly no matter if you are a career or tribute or what district you come from, secondly the training hall is quite far way from the district's housing section so it would make sense for them to live on the premises to avoid
"It really is hot even for this time of year hear my goodness. I hope we get to the training hall soon I could use a nice glass of lemon spritz." says Mr. Silverbright. The man picks up his long pony-tail and places it in his lap holding it like a child. "Poor Effie she looks as if she's about ready to pass out any minute now." Mr. Silverbright taps Richard the Peacekeeper who was driving our cart on the shoulder asking the man if there was somewhere we could get some water. Richard looks back at Effie then at us still supporting his gloomy look. "Nope, this is a straight ride no stops to be made and we're almost there anyway."

I stick my head out the open cart and look ahead seeing a large dark building loom in the distance, the career's training hall, the place where they make and break the children of their district into being trained hunger game killers. I try not to think of the training they may put me and Rue through I just hope it isn't the ruthless kind they use on their careers.

From what was on one of the handouts that Mr. Silverbright had the various training goes from weapons, survival tactics, hand-to-hand combat, swimming, and a endless list of supposed practice courses that were to test our abilities to the fullest. I wonder now why I really signed on to do this and even thinking of the feast I could win for my district to keep my grounded wasn't working anymore. I was about to lose my mind and jumping off the moving cart to make a break for the district walls were futile getting a bullet in the back from a Peacekeeper wasn't pleasant, but I think it would be better than the hell that awaited me up ahead.

"There it is Katniss do you see it? My I see they've added on and did some remodeling since last I've been here and they even grown trees and flowers all along the building how lovely." says Mr. Silverbright. I'm a girl who knows her trees and judging from their large sizes I assume that it has been awhile since he's been here, because those trees were at least five years old.

Richard brings the cart to a complete stop outside the tall gray gates and helps get our stuff out of the holders. "Well I guess this is finally it you're last stop. Oh I guess she couldn't hold out for another mile better get her squared away before anything else." says Richard pointing to Effie who was hanging out of the cart passed out. Mr. Silverbright ran to her side before she fell out of the cart grabbing her wig in the process that was threatening to fall off her head at any second.

I saw flashes of light come from behind me and out of nowhere cameras were thrown into my face from people asking me all sorts of questions and taking my pictures. They were swarming around Rue as well and even Mr. Silverbright who was having a hard time helping Effie. Some Peacekeepers came from behind the gates shooing away the Capitol press so that we could get inside.

"Hey 12, how does it feel to have been chosen for this once in a life time opportunity for you?" asks one of the reports. He leans his microphone into my face waiting in anticipation for my answer. I wonder if I'm on TV right now? I clear my head thinking of a good way to respond. I smile at him then at the cameras. "This once in a life time opportunity comes with a once in a life time emotion that I can even scarcely describe, but I'm happy and honored to be here." I lied. The large crowd nod their heads approving my answer. I felt Rue hide behind me not wanting the attention that I was getting from the Capitol reporters on her. I didn't know where I really found the confidence to not be camera shy I never liked having all eyes on me and I especially hated
cameras, but at least they weren't all in Rue's face I knew she wouldn't take it as well as I was. "Alright you've seen enough lets go make way." says a Peacekeeper pushing away the reporters waving his weapon in the air at them. Once the crowd was gone leaving us with at least five Peacekeepers that was helping us load our other gear onto newer carts that would finally take us down the long drive way towards the hall.

Rue and I rode together this time since we both were to be taken straight to our dorm rooms while our escorts were to be the joining the other tribute escorts somewhere else in the building.

A Peacekeeper hops into our cart starting it up ready to drive us further on. "Hey Richard, do you mind driving they lady to the medic wing the other carts are to full to carry her on?" asks the Peacekeeper. Not waiting for a answer our Peacekeeper soon was speeding down the drive way away from the others. I notice Richard roll his eyes letting out a heavy sigh before helping Mr. Silverbright lift Effie on the cart me and him rode on here.

The only comfort I found in this place was the many trees that filled the large grounds of the training hall. This seems to be the only place with trees in this whole district despite the few trees that was in a park near a ice cream parlor back in the square. The flowers lining the drive way and side walk were pretty there were even a few gardens here and there darting the landscape.

Looking up I notice a large white domed shape structure rising behind the training hall. "Whats that?" I ask the Peacekeeper. He looks to where I'm pointing and smiles. "That's the new training arena, it's suppose to be a replica of the actual arenas that the games take place in, and it can be turned into any thing the trainers here want it to be whether it be a desert, forest, or marsh for example." explained the Peacekeeper.

Rue grips my arm tightly and I place my hand on hers to give her comfort. I bet she's thinking of the same thing I am. Somewhere in the three months that we are here I know we are at least once are going to be placed in that arena, but it's just a training exercise so I'm sure nothing bad will happen this isn't the actual games. I still ask the Peacekeeper the question I want the answer to, but then I almost don't want the answer to. "Have people died in there?" He laughs at my question throwing his head back. "Have people died in there? Hell yeah they have it's usually the ones who aren't cut from the same tough stone like some of the more stronger careers though I don't know what to say for you tributes. This is the first year where this training hall has been opened to anyone but careers consider yourselves lucky none the less." he says. Some luck this is.

When we finally reach the building there are Avoxes waiting there to take our things and lead us to our rooms. The Peacekeeper waves us goodbye before speeding away somewhere behind the building.

As Rue and I step into the cool building I feel instantly overwhelmed by the grandness and size of it all. The very first room we walk inside looked as if it could hold my entire district inside and still have room for more. The many golds and reds that covered the room seemed to enhance it's magnificence even more.

There was one long counter that stood in the middle of the room and I notice other tributes appeared to be signing in there. The Avox motions for us to go there and I grab Rue's hand leading us to the counter. We stand behind a boy that looked to be Rue's age writing his name on a peace of a paper and the lady behind the counter hands him a freshly made name tag. Before I sign my name on the paper I noticed a red-headed girl looking around her with shifty eyes and I recognize her as Foxface, Rue's roommate.
"Hey look who it is" I nudge Rue to look at the girl to our right who was fidgeting in the other line. "Look at her eyes Katniss, she looks crazy I don't want to room with her." cries Rue. "It will be fine at least she's not a killer trained career you have to sleep in the same room with." I say trying to make her feel better. It doesn't work unfortunately and I see tears falling from her eyes. I sign my name on the paper after receiving impatient glares from the name tag lady. I sign my name on line thirty and I quickly scan to see if my own roommate was here yet but the lady was already handing me my name tag and rushing me out of the way.

Waiting for Rue to get signed in I stand by the two Avoxes that had our belongings when I hear snickering from behind me. I see a beautiful blonde-headed girl with blue eyes in a crowd of about five other people laughing and whispering at me and the other tributes. I can safely assume that these were some of the few careers that were hear and despite already having their name tags they seemed to only hang around to make fun of us all.

The blonde-headed girl turns to look at me giving me a sly looking smile, and I hope for her sake she doesn't think I'm one of those easy to pick on types.

I had my bow resting on my shoulder I had refused anyone else to touch it but me, and when I felt hands trying to pry it off me I snapped. Peacekeepers were surrounding me demanding I hand over what they are calling a weapon and to me it was more of a tool than a weapon it helped keep food on my family's table when we needed it most.

The Avoxes took steps back not wanting to get in the Peacekeepers way. I felt all eyes on me as I knew I was starting to make a scene and Rue held onto her name tag tightly looking at me not knowing what to do.

"I don't know how you managed to get this far without one of the other keepers confiscating that bow, but you need to hand it over right now girl." commanded the head Peacekeeper.

I held on tightly to my bow glaring at the white clad men daring them to try and take it. Even if it would kill me I want let them lay a finger on bow again or me. The Peacekeepers unsheathed their stun guns pointing them at me ready to use. "I'm going to count to three and if it is not place within my hands when time is up you will be stunned for failure to follow authorized rules and commands and you will also be placed under arrest possibly facing jurisdiction."

I can hear the hissing sounds coming from the Peacekeeper's gun and feel the many eyes that watched me even the smirk from the blonde-headed girl seemed to tingle on the back of my neck. "One." I hold on tightly to my bow and get into a fighting stance. The Peacekeepers charge up their stun guns still aiming them at me with all their pleasure.

The head Peacekeeper eyes me for a min watching to see if I will surrender. I don't want to with all my heart I don't want to give in to them and hand over my father's bow. "Two." But just this once I stop thinking of what I want and focus on what I need to do and that's to stay here train long enough to have a chance at winning that feast for my district.

I hand the head Peacekeeper my bow before his dry cracked lips could form the words three. I fought back the tears I knew was coming I didn't want to break down in front of everyone and for once I wish Mr. Silverbright was here to tell me everything will still be fine despite having a part of me being taken away. I feel Rue hold my hand and I squeeze it back, but I keep my head down refusing to look anyone in the face.

"Hey head up and look at me girl." commanded the head Peacekeeper. I look at him giving the man the most deadliest look I have ever given anyone. He didn't seemed faced or hindered by it, but I made sure to let him know how anger I am. "We may seem like the bad guys now, but at the end of the day all we are here to do is our jobs and bringing personal weapons here was strictly
prohibited."

Before the Peacekeepers leave I give them my name and information. The head Peacekeeper said they would have my bow locked up and kept safe until it was time for me to go back home in three damn long months!

I turn to the Avoxes behind us. "Can you show us to our rooms now please." I ask. They nod their hands and lead us to the elevators on the other side of the room. We all step onto the platform and I feel it shift as it prepared to carry our weight upwards. I never rode many elevators and I have yet to get used to them. Right as the doors were sliding shut I saw the blonde-headed career girl give me wave before she and everything else from that room was completely shut out of my sight.

"Katniss, you did the right thing giving up your bow I didn't want to see them hurt you." says Rue looking up at me with her large brown doe eyes. I stay quiet not feeling up to speaking again just yet but I smile down at her all the same trying to get passed my anger still being directed at the Peacekeepers who now has my father's bow in their dirty Capitol dog paws of theirs.

The long elevator ride was finally over by the time we made it to the twenty-fifth floor. The Avoxes lead us down a long dark hallway that was not at all as bright and grand like the large room further down. "Are both our rooms on this same floor?" I ask. One of the Avoxes nods their head at us even though she couldn't speak she tried her best to explain with one of her free hands that our rooms were next to each other. I tell her I understand and she takes the lead walking us down the long hallway on the right is a large room where I saw some kids sitting down laughing and eating. I read the sign next to the door of the room and it read Lounge Room. The place where we could lounge around and have fun when we are not training I guess.

Rue was happy that our rooms were right next to each others and I could tell she was starting to feel much better than she did before. "I hope Effie will be alright she said she was going to take me back into the Square later on today." says Rue. I give a snort thinking about the flimsy woman. "I'm sure she'll be fine and maybe next time she will wear smaller wig and lighter clothes." I bet the pure spite she has for me alone will keep her up and well long enough to see me fail during this three month training course. I know it's what she really wants to see more than anything right now.

We finally stop in front of two dark green doors on either side of the hallway one said thirty and the other thirty-two. The Avox with my stuff opened the door with the thirty-two on it before handing me the key. The other Avox did the same with Rue's door only it was already unlocked and I could see Foxface walking around the room. The red-headed girl jumped when she saw us all looking at her eyes wild and restless looking.

The Avox takes Rue things and places them on the free bed next to the window and Rue follows her. "Wait." I grab my Avox's hand before she leaves after placing my own things in my room. "Do you know if the other girl who will share this room with me is here yet?" The Avox shrugs her shoulders and I let her go on her way.

I decided to go in and make sure Rue was alright before I tended to my own needs in my room. Rue was already placing her clothes inside the red mahogany dressers in fact everything in the room was hardwood and filled with the colors of blue and a white cream. I asked Rue if she needed help, but she said she was alright so I left her to her work. I noticed Foxface watching us almost curiously. "Hi Sophie I'm Katniss, and this is Rue your roommate." I say faking smile for Rue's sake.

The girl quickly stands up looking even more crazy and wild. "H-how do you know my name?" she whispers eyeing me. From the way she looked at me I thought she was going to attack or
something she looked like the type of person that was unpredictable. "Um it was on her roommate paper thing you know I'm sure you've gotten one with her name on it right?" I ask Foxface shakes her head quickly at me, but at least she was sitting back down on her bed biting her finger nails a bad habit I seemed to share with her. "No, my escort refused to show me anything saying the less I knew the better it's not a good feeling to be so overwhelmed at once. Did you hear that?" The girl seemed to be listening for something that me and Rue couldn't hear and I'm it wasn't even there to begin with.

Rue gives me a look before folding up her last shirt placing it in the drawer. "I'm gonna go get settled in and then later we can go look around okay?" Rue nods her head at me and mouth to hurry back soon giving Foxface a side glance. I smile at her letting her know I understood what she meant by hurry back.

My room was much like Rue's everything was hardwood the floors the beds and dressers. It was the shiniest I have ever seen wood to be and the colors that decorated everything was lavender and a soft hue of blues. I place my worn bag on the bed with the window view it look unclaimed since it appeared no one else has been here, but I see pictures on the wall of the girl who was suppose to be my roommate. Did she stop by just to hang up this pictures? There were several pictures of her either with I assume to be her friends and family judging from how she smiled in them. Her smile made her look human and I guess careers are still human, but with the heart of a killer monster.

I notice one picture of her with the blonde-headed girl I saw downstairs earlier. They were both hugging and Clove my roommate, was kissing her cheek. I picked up the picture to examine it more feeling something on the back I turn it over to see a piece of folded paper sticking out the back cover. I'm not a nosy person, but I was dying to know more about Clove.

I pulled out the folded paper and was instantly hit with a wave of soft perfume from it. Opening it up I read the words written in cursive hand writing. "Love you always and forever." I read aloud. So...are they dating or something or are they just really close friends?

"And who said you could come in here and touch my shit huh?" I whirl around to see Clove standing in the doorway glaring at me with cold dark eyes. I was about to apologize to her when I see her pull something long and shiny out from underneath her shirt sleeve. When she throws the knife at me I drop the picture of her and the blonde-headed girl on the floor the glass breaking into a hundred pieces, and the swooshing sound of the knife sails over where my head was when I was once standing. I could feel the sharp pieces of glass from the broken picture cut through my flesh and clothes as I laid flat on the floor and I could see my blood starting to seep out all over the mahogany floor.

I look up to see Clove curse for missing and she is charging at me with another knife raised in her hands her eyes filled with the determination to not miss me again.
A Violent Encounter and a Goodbye

Clove has me pinned down in only a matter of seconds. She sits on my back and grasp her hands tightly around my wrists ceases any movement I attempted. The broken glass beneath me pierces my body even more as she puts her full weight on me and I can't help but to cry out from the pain. Clove yanks my head back with a handful of my hair in her fist and she gives a quick jab with her two fingers on my throat.

For a few moments I can't breathe and the soreness of my throat burns as if it were on fire. "I don't really want to here your hideous voice." she says. I try to lift my stomach up some to ease it off the glass but she sits harder on me and soon the glass cuts into again. I feel the stickiness of my blood cling to me and I wonder how much is there but I know I couldn't look even if I wanted to. I hate the sight of blood even if it is my own.

"Oh no, is the little bits of glass hurting you?" She picks up a larger piece of glass beside her shoe and holds it against my cheek. A stream of blood flows from the cut and down the side of my face. "When I'm done with you girl you're gonna have a different face and not even your damn mother will be able to recognize you."

I'm scared. I will gladly admit that and right now I'm feeling completely helpless. The pain from both the pieces of glass in my flesh and cut on my cheek is too much to bear and I feel like blacking out. But she slaps me on the side of my head to keep me conscious.

"W-why are you doing this?" I croak. Talking was hard and my throat was still throbbing with pain.

"You need to learn how to keep your hands to yourself and don't touch what isn't yours." Clove brings the knife she was holding in her right hand into my line of sight. "Do you see this blade? This is gonna to teach you a lesson you want ever forget."

"Are you fucking insane!" She has to be insane if she is willing to go this far only because I was looking at her pictures.

"Am I insane? Hell yeah I am and you're about to be-"

"Hey look those two girls are fighting in there!" I hear the voice of a small boy yelling from the doorway and soon the thunder of footsteps erupt in the hallways. Everybody that was on this floor it seemed had made their way to our room to see us fight. Some fight this is though when I never even had a fair chance of defending myself before I was attacked.

"Fight! Fight! Fight!" Some of the kids had made their way into our room and were now whooping and and yelling.

"Shit I forgot I left the damn door open." cursed Clove.

"Katniss!" Rue's small and scared voice feels my ears. I see her trying to look over a taller boy's shoulder I don't want her to see me like this. Tears are running down my face and all I want is the strength to defend myself but right now...I can't find it.

"Looks like we have an audience now and I guess I shouldn't disappoint them." She raises the knife in the air and I close my eyes expecting more pain to shoot through my body.

"Peacekeepers!" Someone yells that Peacekeepers are coming and everyone scatters in every direction away from the scene. Rue stays standing still in the same spot, she was afraid to stay, but
also afraid to leave me behind. I force my lips to silently form the words run and she gives me a sad look before finally running back into her room and closing the door.

"Forget this I'm out of here." Before Clove runs out the door she turns back to face me. "Unless you want me to finish where I left off you better keep your damn mouth closed."

But her voice and everything else sounds as they're a million miles away. Not a moment later four Peacekeepers are running into the room armed with their electric stun guns already charged and hissing. I see one Peacekeeper quickly approach me just as I finally let go and faded into the unconscious darkness that pulled me in with its tranquil like fingers.

"Will she be alright?" Is the first thing I hear as I start to stir from sleep. I slowly open my eyes to see Mr. Silverbright talking with a nurse and I realize I am in the infirmary. My stomach has been wound with white bandage and I run my fingers over the cloth like material. The cut on my cheek had been taken care of as well, but I feel different and very light, and I wonder if I am on the morphling drug.

I feel like I am floating on clouds and my head is under water drowning out all sound and that my body isn't even apart of the natural world anymore. The feeling seems to numb the pain from my wounds but this foreign feeling is annoying and I can't wait till it wears off.

"Katniss, thank goodness you're awake." Mr. Silverbright rushes over to my bed and instantly takes my hand in his rubbing it softly. I try not to care so much that he is leaving silver dust on my hand since he is truly worried about me so.

"I was truly afraid that you wouldn't wake up early enough for me to talk to you before I leave." I think maybe it's the drug that is making me hear things but judging from the look on his face I knew it wasn't.

"You're leaving? Why?" My voice is hoarse and throat sore but I needed to talk right now despite that.

"Yes I got the message from President Snow himself, you see I am needed back at the Capitol to deal with a special matter that was requested by the President." He says quietly. "But don't you worry as we speak your District Twelve victor Haymitch Abernathy is being transported here to be with you in my absence."

He says this to me in such an encouraging manner that seriously fails to encourage me at all. Haymitch Abernathy the drunk. It was true that he manged to win a Hunger Games but that was a long time ago. Now he seems to take up a permanent residence inside the homely bottle of any liquor he could wrap his lips on.

"Will you come back soon?" I was almost afraid to ask him this question. He shakes his head no just as I had expected him to. I realize that every since this trip started I tired to distance myself from him personally but in these short few days he has still managed to grown on me some.

"I must leave in a few minutes, but when you are feeling better the head Peacekeeper has asked for your statement on what happened to you okay? And I want you to tell him the truth, everything okay because I know someone did this to you and I want them to pay for their actions." Mr. Silverbright leans down to kiss me on my forehead. "I left a note for Effie, it simply tells her of my sudden departure and that I want her to keep an eye out for you in my absence. Just stay strong Katniss, and don't let anyone here douse that burning fire of yours."

He has only been gone a few minutes but I miss his calming presence. I guess the shimmering dust he left behind all over the room help to ease me for a while. I look down at my hand and rub the
soft dust along my fingers wishing he could come back.

I didn't notice at first that Effie was in the bed next to mine still passed out, having fluids being pumped through a tube into her arm. The nurse here even placed several fans around the woman. Though I couldn't believe she still managed to have her wig on, but it was looking pretty worn out now.

A nurse opens the door and motions for someone to come in after her. I first notice the black curls before I completely see Rue peek around the door to see if I was okay. She smiles and runs throwing her arms around me.

"I thought you weren't going to be okay and I saw all that blood around you." she cries into my chest. I immediately feel nauseous at the mention of blood.

"I'm alright now see." I lift up the covers to show her my bandages. Rue calms down when she sees for herself that I am alright. "Oh, Ms. Trinket is still here?" The little girl walks over to Effie's bed looking down at the woman. She adjusts Effie crooked wig and turns it around backwards. "There that's much better." I tried to laugh but I stop the moment pain burst inside my throat.

"That girl was she your roommate?" Rue walks back over to me and sits on my bed.

"Yeah unfortunately she was."

"You need to tell the Peacekeeper it was her so she can get kicked out of here." says Rue.

Unless you want me to finish where I left off you better keep your damn mouth closed. Her voice echoes in my head like a warning. I keep convincing myself that I am not afraid of her, or her threats, but I know she is serious. I'm serious to, that next time I want be the weak one and next time I will fight back.

"Hey Rue can you do me a favor, tell the nurse I am feeling much better and that I'm ready to speak with the Head Peacekeeper."
You Owe Me One

The Head Peacekeeper narrows his dark beady eyes at me. He obviously didn't buy a word of what I just told him, but what proof did he have against me that would say I was lying. A younger Peacekeeper sits next to him writing down everything I had said on a small notepad.

"Please you must believe me it all happened so fast I didn't see a thing. One moment I was unpacking and the next I was push against the wall. A picture fell from the force and onto the ground breaking and I just fell right on top of it." I explained with a smile.

"Ms. Everdeen, you do realize that if we gather witnesses and found out you are lying to cover for the person that assaulted you it will ensure an immediate extraction from this program?" The Head Peacekeeper looks at me intently as if what he said was enough to make me cave. Sorry but it's not.

"Yes I am well aware of that." I knew there wasn't going to be any witnesses if I guessing right I'd imagined Clove would be making sure of that. So what should I worry about I could use this to my advantage, after all she owes me one now.

"Fine then we are done here, but I will be sending my report to headquarters as soon as possible. And perhaps later on you may remember something else and if you do I will be more than happy to hear it." He eyes me one final time as he and his lieutenant leave the room.

Finally. I lay back down on my pillow and close my eyes. I don't know for how long I had my eyes close and maybe I drifted off but when I open them she is there standing over me. I tried to call the nurse but she covers my mouth with her hand and puts her finger over her lips for me to be quiet.

"So, did you rat me out?" asks Clove.

I notice her moving something around with her hand in one of her coat pockets and I figured it was probably a knife. So predictable.

"Well if I did we wouldn't be having this conversation now would we?"

"Yeah, I guess you have a point. Well I was just making sure I didn't have to do drastic to you and I see you're okay so no hard feelings about before?"

I couldn't see for myself but I know the look on my face must have been a comical one. I couldn't believe she was really saying no hard feelings about what she did to me. "You owe me one." Was all I could think to say back to her through clinched teeth.

"I what now?" Clove quirks her eye brow as if daring me to repeat what I said.

"You. Owe. Me." I said pronouncing each word clearly. "For not giving up your name."

"The hell I do and you're the one who needs to owe me because I showed you mercy and decided not to finish you off." she yells.

Effie jerks in her sleep from Clove's loud voice but she never wakes up and her wig is once again threatening to fall off. She want have Mr. Silverbright here this time to catch it for her since he is gone now.

"Well we could ask the Head Peacekeeper here and see what he thinks." I had her backed in a
corner now and she knew it.

"Fuck! Fine yeah I owe you one whatever. Are you happy now?"

"No not yet, but I will be soon once I think of a way for you to repay me." I say with a smile.

I see the door open and a tall girl with blonde hair walks in as if looking for something. "Clove! There you are I knew I saw you walking down this way." She smiles and practically bounces her way towards the other girl and wraps her arms around Clove's shoulder giving her a quick peck on the lips.

"Hey I want be in till late so don't wait up for me roomy." says Clove as she pulls the taller girl against her smiling.

"Clove is this her?" the girl ask.

"Yeah this is my new roommate from District Twelve of all places."

I instantly remember her from earlier. The girl from downstairs in the lobby who was surrounded by all those other Careers that kept making fun of the other tributes.

"Hi my name is Glimmer, Clove has told me so much about you." she says. "So you got a name or what?"

"Katniss." I reply back.

It wasn't hard to miss the little action of Glimmer turning her nose up at my name. Compared to her obnoxious name mine seemed more normal and well fitted. In District One parents name their children after the names of precious items and their attributes. I would imagined that if I were born in District One my name would be Sparkle or even Glitter or something like that.

"Okay Katniss, well we better go if we don't want to be late for that thing," says Glimmer giving Clove a look.

Clove looked back at the girl confused until she realized what she was talking about. "Oh right that thing I almost forgot." The two girls were already at the door leaving. "Hey don't wait up for me roommate I want be back in till late."

"Yeah sure whatever." I say.

I'm finally alone again and back into silence. I guess I know the question to my answer those two have something going on between them.

True to her word when I make it back to the room she isn't there. The Avox had already cleaned up the bloody mess and the room looked exactly like it did before the incident. I wouldn't mind talking to Rue right now but she and her roommate I guess hit it off and were now acting like friends almost. But everyone else was down eating dinner and I didn't feel like being crowded so I went back to my room.

My bags were still on the bed unpacked, I just knock them over and lay down on my back. Moving too much caused pain in my abdomen where most of the glass stuck me at. I just wanted to close my eyes and nap for a bit but the loud slamming of the door startled me from an oncoming dream.

Clove angrily walked into the room throwing herself face first on the bed and yelled into her pillow.
"Is something wrong?" I ask annoyed that she disturbed my rest again.

"Yeah there's something wrong but it's not like you can do anything to help."

I sit up slowly and lean against the headboard. "Is it girl problems?"

"How did you even know that?" she asks.

"It's obvious the pictures the fact that she kissed you in front of me on the lips not long ago."

"Oh yeah I guess it is, well it's nothing I'm not use to but she frustrates me sometimes."

"Like how in what way?" I don't really know why but her love life seems to interest me right now.

Clove lets out a heavy sigh before answering me. "Like how she promises to have sex with but changes her mind when she doesn't feel like it and she always expects me to be okay about it."

I think I'm blushing well I know I am. I never really talked about sex with anyone nor have I heard other people talk about it. When you are the only provider to a starving family things like that don't even matter. At least not to me anyways.

"Sorry can't help you there." I say too quickly.

She gave snort and turned on her side to face me. "I didn't think you could."

After that we fell into a silence. I mostly kept looking at my hands that still had silver dust on it but it was starting to come off.

"Why are you staring at me like that?" For a while I noticed the girl had kept her trained on me and now it was starting to feel uncomfortable.

"I guess I'm just regretting putting the cut on your face." she says with a shrug.

"And why is that?" She gets up off the bed and walks over to mine. Clove reaches out until her hand is softly touching my bandage cheek and rubs gently across the surface of it.

"B-because you're too pretty to be scarred and bruised like this."

Her touch somewhat unnerved me but I brush it off and reach for my bag of clothes to get ready for bed.

"And what would Glimmer think if she knew you were complimenting other girls?" I ask.

"She's use to it by now." she says. "I know owing someone sucks ass and all but I don't mind owing you one."

I guess I could take that as a sort of compliment. Though I don't know if I want to or not.

"You better get some rest because hurt or not we got a big day ahead tomorrow, and the training schedule starts at dawn."

"I can't wait." I say with fake enthusiasm.

I honestly couldn't wait for it to start and for it to end. End being I am back at home and away from this whole place and the girl who will be my roommate for the next three months. Who
keeps staring at me with a strange hunger in her eyes, and who I am almost regretting that I told her she owes me one because I am certain that if asked she would doing anything for me without question. And that is one thing that seem to scare me the most. I just hope this isn't starting to become something I don't want it to be.

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