Is It Worth It?

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Summary

Effie Trinket hasn't yet graduated from The Escort Academy in the Capitol when several Districts open up and need new Escorts. Effie along with 3 others from her class are selected for the chance to interview for the jobs. Ranked at the top of her class Effie knew she had a shot at the best District, but just how badly does she want it?

Already struggling with her decision to not modify her body to meet Capitol standards, Effie is faced with a chance of a life time... but is it worth the cost? Or will she pass up the chance and be saddled with a District that's less than desirable?
Chapter 1

“There’s only 4 open spots for Escorts this year, as you all are aware.” A tall man spoke to the group. “Due to your success in the academy that trains personnel for the games, you have been selected for the first round of interviews. Chances are you will walk away with a job, we rarely have to send in more than one candidate for each mentor. Any question ladies and gentlemen?”

Effie stood up straighter, “What Districts are interviewing, sir?”

He nodded kindly at her, “Miss Trinket, right?”

Effie nodded, “Yes, sir.”

“Excellent question, today we have Districts 1, 7, 8 and 12.”

Excited murmurs whispered through the potential group of escorts. District 1 was highly desirable.

“You all have 30 minutes to prepare, the mentors are concluding a survey that dictates who we send in first for the interview.”

Effie smoothed out her skirt and approached a lighted vanity. Nerves fluttered through her stomach. She was top of her class at the escort academy. Straight A’s and nothing but high praises from her teachers. There was no reason she wouldn’t get District 1.

Effie fussed over her hair, fixing the large blonde curls into place. A brilliant hair clip encrusted with glittering gems pinned back one side. The other curls swept aside and cascaded over her shoulder.

“You’re still not into modifications?” A purple haired girl sat down next to her. The girl was number 3 in her class. She had black rhinestones set into her skin for eyebrows and tattooed eyeliner that looked like lace.

Effie smiled, “I’ve had a few treatments done.”

“On what… you look so plain, Effie.” She noted.

Effie glanced in the mirror, and sucked in a small breath. “I had my skin bleached, and my eyelashes lengthened.”

The girl chuckled, “You won’t get a Career District if you look so ordinary.”

“Vera, you don’t even know what they’re looking for.” Effie reminded, refusing to be badgered about her appearance. So what if her skin was a splendid rainbow hue or her skin studded with all manners of jewels or hardware. She did fine with her make-up and accessories.

“It won’t be you.” Vera smiled and tossed a wig at Effie. A teal blue thing that looked rather ridiculous. “Blonde was last season, and the whole natural thing.. That stopped years ago. Do yourself a favor and wear that.”

Verna stalked away, and Effie huffed. Bitch… Effie groaned in her head and turned back to the mirror. She remembered her mother and father before she left for the academy. ‘Don’t forget who you are, don’t change so much that you can’t see who you were in the mirror.’

She sat up straighter and traced dark glittery blue eyeliner over her eyelids and painted her lips a
deep pink hue. Silver luster dusted the skin around her eyes and gave her a rather ethereal look.

She tucked her lace blouse into her pleated navy blue skirt. A brilliant blue bejeweled belt clipped around her waist. Underneath the sheer lace blouse you could see pockets of her skin and tank top that was completely made of shimmery blue fabric.

“Gather around, the interviews will start in a moment.” The tall man called. As everyone gathered Effie took in her classmates now turned competitors. Vera was looking haughty and severe. A boy names Wallace was rather sharply dressed in a metallic suit. Louisa was the last to join, and stood out simply because of her lime green hair and patterned tattoo’s that decorated every bit of her skin. Today she looked like a fish, with shimmering scales climbing up her neck toward her face.

“Best of luck to you all.” The man chirped and handed out a folder with each of their names on it. “Open the folder. You will see the District you’ve been matched to for the interview. Head in when you are ready, but it would be best to not keep the mentors waiting.” He motioned to four rooms off to the side with a golden number of the door for what District it belonged to.

Effie glanced at Verna who looked upset at her folder and stalked off toward District 8. She smiled to herself and watched Louisa traiipse off to District 12. 1 or 7… Effie felt her stomach twist. Wallace nodded at her and snapped his folder shut.

“Good job, Effie.” He said curtly and headed for District 7.

Effie smiled and opened her folder and saw a large printed number 1 and basic information about the mentor who would be interviewing her. Gloss, Victor of the 63rd games. Effie knew him well, as she should. They were required to learn all the Victors basic information.

She pressed her hand on the door handle and knocked. She heard a booming “Come in.” and Effie straightened up and pushed open the door. It was now or never, and she held her chin up high and smiled as brightly as she could.
“Well you don’t look like the others.” Gloss commented and motioned for Effie to sit on the couch. The District 1 interview room was decadent by all means of the word. Everything was beautiful in all its extravagance and finery. The whole room seemed to glitter and shine. It was beautiful.

Effie sat up straightly as she could manage on the plush couch. She crossed her leg over the other at the knee and folded her hands in her lap. “Well is that a good or bad thing?” She asked quickly at looked up at him.

“Not sure yet, darling.” He commented and looked over her file. Darling… Effie internally frowned at the use of the word. He barely knew her.

“Top of your class, huh?” He stated.

“Yes, perfect marks in everything. You can see that it's always been that way,” Effie reminded.

“Ah, yes.” He flipped through a few more pages. “You see, Miss Trinket, everyone one of you has perfect scores. You all are the best, so what makes you different?”

Effie nodded, “Well, for one I have not modified my body to the point where my appearance will be limited to a few choice styles. I have a more to work with by having a blank canvas so to speak. I can do more with fashion and style, which if I recall is a big point for District 1.”

“Sure.. Sure.” He noted and looked over at her. Effie got the sense that he was not impressed. She felt sweat prickle at the base of her neck.

He handed her a car and made her read through he reaping speeches. He commended her for her articulation and through a simulation of the chaos that came with the volunteering he noted how well she did under pressure.

He had her sit down again, “So here’s the deal, Miss Trinket. The job is yours, but I’m just not sure how badly you want it.” He smirked at her. His hand trailed across her knee and rested on top of her leg.

Effie stillled and looked over at him, “I’m not sure how that is possible. I very much want this job. Was that not clear?” She asked quietly, her skin tingled and her heart hammered.

“Every year dozens of you want this job in the Career districts. You have to show me how much you want this. How far are you willing to go to make it yours? Those others out there would kill for this spot, what will you do?” He leaned closer, his breath was hot against her neck and his hand pushed up her leg.

“You’re very beautiful…” He noted and his hand pressed against the small of her back pulling her closer.
Effie blinked slowly and clutched his shirt. Neither making a move or stopping him. Her stomach fluttered and her mind couldn’t seem to think properly. At what cost would she stop at for this job. Kill? Sleep with this man? Betray herself? Cave and modify her body? Deep in her mind Effie knew she signed up for this. She applied to a school to be thrown into Capitol glamour and spotlight, now she was learning it all came with awful costs. Capitol politics turned out to be a game of how quickly you could lose yourself and still stand the image in the mirror.

Effie felt him press his lips over her neck, the cushions of the couch pressing in around her as he laid over her. He kept talking, all sorts of things she didn’t listen to. All she could hear was the pounding of her pulse in her ears or the way her heart felt heavy. His hand hooked into the band of her underwear and his lips covered hers in a hard kiss.

Effie felt panic hit her square in the chest. She pushed against him and moved to sit up. Her hand cinched around his wrist and tugged it away.

“C’mon.” He groaned and tugged up her tank top. His lips grazed over her shoulder. “How badly do you want this?”

Effie knew he was asking about sleeping with him, he meant her career. She shut her eyes and knew that she didn’t want the joy of putting District 1 Escort in front of her name if it meant pretending she wanted this.

“Not that badly.” Effie found her voice and pushed his hand away. “Get off me.” She said evenly, despite feeling like she was falling apart.

Gloss sat up and growled, “You’ve forgotten who you are talking to.”

Effie quickly got to her feet and tugged her skirt back and tucked the blouse in. “I haven’t forgotten.” She reminded and watched hip wipe her lipstick off his lips. Her fingers brushed across her lips and felt the lipstick smeared all over.

“I am a Victor and you are nothing. We are done here. Show yourself out before I have you escorted by security. You’ll be hard pressed to get any job if you can even play the role I asked you to.” He waved her off and tucked in his shirt.

Effie turned back to him and scoffed, “What role was that? Last time I checked threatening someone job for sex was against the law.”

He laughed darkly, “Not here, Princess. You’ll be eaten alive. They’ll ask the same thing of you and if you say no or push away, you won’t just lose a job. You’ll lose everyone you love.”

“You’re insane!” Effie stated and stared at him.

“We’re all crazy here. That’s all that’s left after you win the game. Every last one of us, broken, crazy and trying to remember to live in the darkness.” He growled and pushed her against the wall, his hand squeezing her throat. “Watch who you call crazy, you’ll be like us one day too. You want this job so badly they’ll find a way to take everything from you. You’re not better than me.”

“Let go of me!” Effie croaked and struggled to push away.

The look in his eyes was criminal. Effie could tell he wasn’t there in the room anymore. He was off in his mind somewhere. His grip on her neck tightened.

Effie kicked against him but the heels prevented her from gaining any substantial purchase. She felt tears splashing down her cheeks. She let out a terrified scream and clawed at his hands on her
neck. Her long nails raking welts into his skin. She screamed again, someone had to come help her. She heard laughter outside the door. Laughter! Effie felt dizzy and black dots danced in her vision.

The door burst open and chaos seemed to follow. Effie felt like someone had stuffed cotton in her ears. Everything was fuzzy in sight and sound. In what she could see, she saw a Peacekeeper wrestling with Gloss. Wallace and Louisa looked in the door way and cringed, and Verna stood by laughing.

“Let’s get you out of here, sweetheart.” Someone said gruffly and picked her up.

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