Bears Trap

by chele20035

Summary

Historical everlark au... Katniss finds Peeta in a bear trap in her woods after Gettysburg at the beginning of winter.

Notes

This is a little something that I wrote for a prompt for a secret Santa exchange. Well it seems that I was sent the wrong person to write for. So I decided to post it anyways. I will admit that it was more of a challenge to write historical. This is set during the war if you will, in the fall, beginning of winter in the mountains of North Carolina. All of the men between the Everdeen’s and the Hawthorne’s except for Vick is gone to fight.

In the short time I have been writing for the Hunger Games fandom, I have made some friends. Friends, that if they wasn’t so far away, I would go hang out with them. Or invite them over for dinner. Izzysampson is one of them. I adore her. If you haven’t read any of her stuff, then you are missing out. She is as nice and as sweet as you think she would be after reading one of her fics. Thank you Izzy for helping me with this!!!! I really couldn’t have done this without you!!!!!!

Then I need to thank dianaflynn for beta-ing. She is another one I would love to hang out with. And so hypothetically. Thank you for listening and for being there. I still owe you a beer!
She tightens up Daddy’s quiver that is slung around her shoulders, and continues prowling towards the house. She is deadly silent as she creeps along, the dried yellow and red leaves that litter the floor of the forest, don’t dare to make a sound to interrupt the young huntress. Her gaze never rests as it roams from the top of the pines that still hang on to their evergreen branches, all the way down to forest floor; where she looks for anything she can bring as an offering to her hungry family.

There is a rustle behind her, and she ducks behind a tree. She draws an arrow, and notches it, slowly she looks around the huge pine. There, not even 20 feet from her stands the buck that she has been searching for. Her heart leaps into her throat, but she takes a calming breath so she can focus. Raising the bow up, she takes aim, getting the deer in her sight. Releasing the breath that she is holding, she lets her arrow fly. She watches it with a thankful prayer as it finds it home in the neck of the elusive beast. His heart beats only once more, before he falls with a thud echoing through the silent forest.

A small, grateful smile graces her face. On hunter’s feet, she quickly claims her kill. She stands there for just a moment, watching the buck’s blood turn the yellow leaves red. She shakes her head to snap herself out of the daze she slipped into and looks around for a way to get the two hundred pound deer home.

Just when she reaches for the hatchet so she can make something to get the deer home with, she hears a voice that is trying to be quiet, but the trees that surround them help to echo her voice, “Katniss! Katniss, where are you?”

“Prim, I’m over here,” Katniss replies in her normal volume. She sees her sister come around the trees and into the clearing where she stands. “Look what I got.”

Prim looks at the buck, and a grin splits her face. Throwing her arms around her sister, she squeezes as hard as her hunger ravaged body will allow. “What do you need?”

“I’m going to go chop down those oak saplings. Can you find some vines?” this time, her hatchet leaves her belt. “Don’t go too far.” She says to Prim who is walking back the way she just came.

“There is some honeysuckle over there. I’ll be right back,” Prim answers.

Katniss starts chopping, and soon the trees are cut and striped, with the vines woven together. It takes both of the girls to wrestle the buck, but he is quickly tied and they are dragging him home. Thankfully, they aren’t too far from their farmhouse. Katniss’s old collie, Blue, greets them the moment they are in the yard and Prim’s cat, Buttercup following close behind.

The woods surrounds their big farmhouse. It’s one of the only farmhouses on Pumpkintown, in North Carolina, where everyone else has cabins, Jack Everdeen promised Lily Rose Bishop years ago that if she married him, he would build her the house she always wanted. It was one spring day, when he came by her father’s doctor’s office riding his prized stallion. Lily didn’t even look back when she ran out and climbed up in front of him. They went to, the neighboring town and were married at the courthouse. That night they went back to Amie Everdeen’s cabin. There waiting on her porch was Lily’s hope chest. Inside, were the things that she had made over the years, but not any of the things her mother had made or that her daddy had bought for her. The Bishops never talked or acknowledged their daughter or new husband. It was right after that, Jack cleared the home place he picked out, and started building Lily’s farmhouse. His gift for all she sacrificed.

Lily sits on the porch, with the quilt she had made for her wedding bed wrapped around her shoulders, rocking and looking down their long drive. She glances up when the girls approach the porch, and her eyes light up when she sees the buck behind them. She doesn’t say anything, but
jumps up and runs into the house.

Katniss and Prim set down the travois, and Katniss pulls a rag out of Daddy’s pants that she is wearing and wipes the blood off of her hands. After Daddy left to go fight in the war against the north, because he was convinced that he had to go fight to save the five hundred acres that they are barely holding onto to begin with, Katniss decided that it would be better for her and Prim to do the chores around the house in his old britches. Had he still been at home, he never would have allowed them to do that, but since he has been gone, a lot of things have changed, not just them doing the chores in his pants.

They were able to have a big garden this summer, harvesting enough to get them through the winter and even have seed for the next year. Katniss is just thankful for their mountains that have protected them from the invading armies on either side of the Mason-Dixon Line. There have been a couple of deserters that have come around, but she only hears about them when Vick Hawthorne tells her about them.

Katniss, who just turned eighteen the May before, and Prim who is fourteen, go to school with the Hawthorne kids. Well they did go until the town shut down the school because of the war. And before that, they lost over half of the one room school house when every boy over the age of 16 left to go enlist, and those who didn’t enlist, was drafted into the confederate army. And much to Hazelle Hawthorne’s dismay, eighteen year old Gale signed up the same day Lincoln declared war. Her heart broke when she discovered that fifteen year old Rory ran away that same night.

It has been 3 years since then and as far as they know, both boys, well men now, are at least still alive. Every time Hazelle got a letter from either one of them, she, along with posy and Vick would come over and share it. The neighbors are also help each other when they need each other, since Jack Everdeen is still away at war, and Colton Hawthorne has been dead for several years now.

Mama comes back out of the farmhouse carrying the knives that Daddy always used when he butchered a deer. Daddy had gotten some pulleys one time, and using them, Katniss and Prim are able to pick the buck up off the ground so they can get to work.

With both of the girls working together, soon they have it broken down into useful parts and bits. Keeping everything from the bones that she can trade in town, to the intestines to make sausage. Prim takes the hide into the barn so she can stretch it out to dry. Katniss smiles after her, remembering how she said just yesterday that she was going to make everyone moccasins for Christmas this year.

Lily pats Katniss on the back and praises her, “You did good, baby. Daddy would be proud.”

Katniss only nods because if she says anything, she will probably cry. She doesn’t have time to miss him, so instead she picks up the sharp filet knife so she can start to make jerky and mama can get the sausage started.

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The Everdeen’s leave early the next day. Blue, being the good dog that he is, walks them to the end of the road and then sits. Katniss isn’t sure if he actually stays there all day, but he is always there waiting when they get back.

They walk down the dirt road that winds through the forest leading right to the Hawthorne farm. The Hawthorne’s Shepard mix, Bandit runs out to greet them with a friendly bark followed closely by ten year old posy. Posy runs to Prim first, throwing her arms around her and then gives Katniss a big hug too. Lily returns the hug, too.
“Where is your mother at?” Lily asks.

“She is in the barn with Bessie. She is having her calf today.” Posy says excitedly.

Lily as only a healer of all living things can do, steps into action, and walks quickly to the barn. “I guess mama is staying to help?” Prim says.

They all follow Lily into the barn, and find Hazelle in the stall beside Bessie. The November morning is unusually cold and overcast, but it’s warm and toasty in the barn. Lily takes her coat off, handing it to Katniss, and slides into the stall. Katniss stays back, trying to stay out of the way.

Greasy Sae always told her that if she ever had any bones to trade, that she wanted first dibs on them, as long as it was before eleven o’clock. The walk to town is only a forty minute walk, but it’s almost 9:30 and she didn’t want to waste any time getting there. “Are you staying to help?” Katniss asks Prim.

Prim nods. “Mama has that look. I’ll stay with her in case they need any help.”

“I don’t want Katniss walking all the way to town by herself.” Lily says.

“Mama, I’m eighteen years old. When you were eighteen, you had a baby. I think I can walk to town by myself.” Katniss says.

“When I was eighteen years old, there wasn’t a war going on either. Vick can go with you,” Lily says firmly.

With a huff, Katniss turns away from the barn and starts to walk to the house. She hears posy asking, “Can I go with Katniss, too mama?” she doesn’t hear Hazelle’s reply, but she guesses it must have been yes when she hears both Vick and posy’s footsteps behind her.

She opens the cabin door, and sets the packet of meat down on the table. The fire is roaring in the fireplace, and she pauses a moment to warm her hands. She hears posy and Vick behind her, and she turns to watch them getting their thicker coats on. Her breath catches when she sees that Vick has finally grown into the coat that once belonged to Gale and then Rory. She blinks fast to keep the tears from escaping when she thinks about the easy friendship she had with Gale and Rory. She reminds herself that she doesn’t have time to miss any of them. “Are you two ready?”

Posy slips her hand into Katniss’ hand, and they start walking down the Hawthorne drive, followed by fourteen year old Vick to go to town.

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As they get closer to town, the clouds get darker and darker. “Is it going to snow?” posy can't keep the worry out of her voice.

“It isn’t going to snow,” proclaims Vick, “it’s only the first of November. It never snows this early.”

“It does too. Mama said so the other day that the signs were pointing to an early winter.” Posy argues.

“Just because the signs say so, doesn’t mean that it’s really going to happen,” Vick bites back.

“That is enough you two.” Katniss looks up, trying to figure out what to do. She pulls out her pap-pap’s old pocket watch and sees that they have been walking for about thirty minutes. “We are almost there. I still have time to get these bones to Sae, and I need to at least get some flour and
sugar. If we hurry, we can make it back in time.” She tugs on posy’s hand. “Let’s walk a little faster and we will have plenty of time.” she then begins to sing:

“As the blackbird in the spring
’neath the willow tree
sat and piped I heard him sing
praising Aura Lee.

Aura Lee! Aura Lee! Maid of golden hair
sunshine came along with thee
and swall-ows in the air.

Take my heart and take my ring
I give my all to thee
take me for eternity
dearest Aura Lee!

Aura Lee! Aura Lee! Maid of golden hair
sunshine came along with thee
and swall-ows in the air.

In her blush the rose was born
’twas music when she spoke
In her eyes the light of morn
sparkling seemed to break.

Aura Lee! Aura Lee! Maid of golden hair
sunshine came along with thee
and swall-ows in the air.

Aura Lee the bird may flee
the willow’ golden hair
then the wintry winds may be
blowing ev’rywhere.

Aura Lee! Aura Lee! Maid of golden hair
sunshine came along with thee
and swall-ows in the air.

Yet if thy blue eyes I see
gloom will soon depart
for to me sweet Aura Lee
is sunshine to the heart.

Aura Lee! Aura Lee! Maid of golden hair
sunshine came along with thee
and swall-ows in the air.”

Katniss doesn’t say anything when Vick slides his hand into hers.

“I like it when you sing Katniss,” Posy shyly tells her.

“Daddy would sing that to mama,” Katniss answers back with a sad smile.

They walk around the final curve and from the top of the hill they can see the general store and the shoe makers store fronts. They can also see the smoke rising up from the black smith’s shed. And that is when Katniss feels the first snowflake of the season land on her nose. One must have landed on Posy’s nose too, because she started pulling Katniss back towards where they came from.

“We have to go, Katniss.”

“I have to trade these bones and get supplies. I don’t want to be snowed in without any coffee for mama. Let’s hurry.” Katniss starts walking down the hill, and the younger ones don’t have any other choice but to follow her on into town.

The bell over the door announces their arrival, and Madge Undersee greets them, “Good morning. Come in, and get warm.” She walks around the counter and reaches for the kettle on the stove. “Would ya’ll like some tea? Its weak, but it hot.”

Posy and Vick nod gratefully, and Katniss accepts her cup too. The warmth feels so good going down. “We can't stay long. It just started snowing. I came to see Sae, and to get some flour,” Katniss says.

Sweet, strong Madge who took over running the store when her own Pa went to go fight in the war, says in a sing-song voice, “I have mail for you.”

“You do?” Posy bounces following Madge to the counter in front of the mail slots. “Who is it for?”

Madge smiles at her excitement. She hands the two envelopes to Katniss. One of them is addressed to Lily Everdeen, and the other to Hazelle Hawthorne. “Thank you,” she says as she lets Posy and Vick look at the letters. “Do you have flour?”

“I have some. How much do you need?”

“I need to find Sae first. Do you know where she is?”

“I’m back here, dear.” Sae answers for herself from the back of the store.

Posy and Vick both walk towards the back while Katniss looks at Madge questionably. Madge shrugs and says, “She needed somewhere to go and I needed help with the store when Mama is sick.” Katniss nods in understanding and turns to find Sae.
They find her in the back, stirring one of her pots of stew that sits on top of the stove. Her eyes light up and she says, “There is my huntress. What did ye’ bring me today?”

“What is a huntress?” Posy whispers.

“Shhh.” Vick hushes her wanting to watch the ladies trade.

“That is what I call your Katniss, dearie. She hunts to provide, and she is a huntress.” Sae explains, as Katniss blushes.

Katniss pulls the bones from her bag and lays them on the counter so Sae can see them. Sae picks each one of the up, testing their weight. “How much are you wanting for the whole pile?”

Katniss turns to Madge, who stands there listening to them. “How much are two bags of flour?” Katniss asks.

Madge looks embarrassed when she has to admit, “I don’t have two bags. I have one. Old man Thom at the mill was going to bring me more but then the weather turned nasty. Do you have time to go over there?”

Katniss looks over Madge’s shoulder out the window, at what was light flurries, but now the flakes are getting bigger and bigger. Madge turns to look out the window too, and groans when she sees the weather. “How about I’ll take the last bag of flour, a bag of sugar, and some coffee for Mama.”

Sae nods in agreement, with her and Madge both gathering the supplies and packing them into Katniss’ game bag for her. Katniss, Posy and Vick bid the ladies good bye and start on the cold walk home.

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It snows on them the entire way back to the Hawthorne farm. It’s a nice soft snow that falls, one that leaves the world silent. They don’t say much on the way back, their thoughts on the letters that they are waiting for the rest of their families to open.

Soon they are back at the farm, going straight to the barn. Prim steps out and closes the door softly behind her. “Bessie needs quiet right now.” Prim just now notices the snow. “When did it get this bad out here?”

“It snowed on us all the way back from town.” Vick says. He turns to Katniss. “Can I have our letter?”

“There was a letter?” Prim asks.

“There are two letters!” Posy says trying to be quiet in her excitement.

“Two?” Prim wonders.

Katniss answers, “One of them is for us.”

“Let me get mama and Hazelle.”

Prim disappears and comes back with the mothers. Katniss gives Hazette her letter, and gives theirs to Lily. As always, the families have survived this long together, and together, they receive
news from their loved ones.

Katniss and Prim gather close to Lily, and read the letter over her shoulders.

Dearest Lily,

I can't tell you where we are for I don’t know. I do know that I am alive. I don’t know if our little town has heard of Gettysburg yet since it happened in July. I had the misfortune of being there. The battle was bloody, and we lost many of our regiment. And it seems that the ones we didn’t lose, they were wounded very badly.

I am ready for this war to be over so I can return to you and our girls. Memories of our lives together creep into my mind when I least expect it and it makes my heart long for you.

I must sign off, the post is leaving now. I love you. Never forget that. Kiss our daughters for me.

Love always,

Jack

The three Everdeens sniff at the same time. Katniss doesn’t want anyone to see her tears, so she ducks her head and mutters, “I need to go check on something.” And takes off across the pasture in the direction of home.

She walks into the woods that border the pasture, and keeps going until she reaches the creek where the cows drink. The same fallen tree that she used to play on is still there and that is where she sits. She lets the tears fall unchecked as she lets herself miss Daddy.

The gentle silence that comes when it’s snowing, surrounds her in its easy peace. She isn’t sure how long she sits there, but after a while, she hears a loud snap and then a cry coming from somewhere behind her. She jumps up, and quietly heads in the direction of the cries that continue.

She curses the rules that say a woman can't walk around with a weapon and is ready to go to fetch it, when she sees what, or who is making all the noise. Laying there on the ground, a good ways away from the creek, is someone laying on the ground. She hears a soft moan and quickly goes to them.

Katniss quickly sees what the problem is, they have stepped into a bear trap that someone set. She glances at him, and sees that he has are passed out. So she takes a deep breath and tries not to panic. She isn’t sure how she is going to release the trap and move their leg at the same time. Looking through the woods towards the Hawthorne’s, she can kind of see their cabin. She hears another soft moan when she sees Vick walking across the snow-covered field.

“Vick!” she hollers, waving her arms so he can see her through the trees. He sees her and waves back. “Come over here. I need you.” Hearing the worry in her voice, he hurries over.

“Who is that?” he asks.

“I have no idea. Help me.” She grabs the leg that is stuck in the trap around the knee, and tries to lift it up; she finds that it’s heavier than she thought. She kneels down in the snow and wraps her arms around the leg. She looks up at Vick, and nods when she is ready. He steps on the handle, and the jaws separate. She picks up his left leg, and it comes free.

Vick gets off the trap and moves it out of the way while Katniss sets the leg down. The trap cut through the boot and they can begin to see the damage it did. That is when Katniss notices the gray of the uniform. Her eyes travel up until she sees his face. Even passed out from the pain of his ankle probably breaking, he is beautiful.
When he fell, his hat tumbled off and she can see his short blond hair. She wonders what color his eyes are, that frame a nose that would be perfect but for the slight bump on the bridge of it. She can't help but to notice his perfect cupid’s bow that sits on a plump lower lip. She briefly wonders what it would be like to kiss those lips, when she notices that those very lips are moving and a groan is coming from him. His eyes open and he looks around confused. Then Katniss can see his Carolina blue eyes fill with pain and he reaches for his leg.

She grabs his arms, and even though she can feel how strong his is through his jacket, he stills at her touch. “You stepped in a bear trap. I’m Katniss,” she nods towards Vick, “and that is Vick. We are going to get you to my house and mama will fix your ankle. I can't tell for sure, but I think it might be broken.” his pupils dilate, and he starts breathing heavily. She gives him a little shake. “Don’t you be passing out on me again? Tell me your name.”

“P-p-eeta. Peeta Mellark.” He stutters.

“Do you think you can stand up?” Vick asks.

“I’m not sure?” he replies.

Katniss lets go of his arms, and nods to Vick, who moves to his right side and she is on his left. She grabs his left hand, and something is there that she should notice, but she is too worried about getting him home so Mama can help him. She shimmies underneath, and Vick does the same on his right side. Together they stand up, helping Mr. Mellark up. Slowly, with the snow muffling their footsteps, they go to the Everdeen house.

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In the Everdeen house, there is a bedroom downstairs, and then 2 bedrooms upstairs. When Katniss and Vick pull a quickly fading Mr. Mellark in, Katniss says, “The downstairs bedroom, Vick. Then one of us will go get Mama.”

“I’ll go.” he volunteers. Katniss tries not the let the thought of being alone with Mr. Mellark bother her. After all, they are in a war, and with his ankle hurt, it’s not like he is going to try anything.

They enter the room, and they try to gently set Mr. Mellark down, but it ends up being an awkward drop onto the mattress. “Help him with his boots,” Katniss softly commands as she helps him with his coat. Vick gets the one boot off, but hesitates with the left one. Katniss leaves the room quickly and comes back with a dirty kitchen towel. She spreads it out on the bed, and then they help him to lay down with his boot on the towel. Katniss pats Vick on the back, saying, “Go get Mama.” And Vick takes off running all the way.

Those blue eyes follow her as she hangs up his coat in the wardrobe. “Whose room is this?” he asks through clinched teeth.

She turns to him and sees his pale complexion. “You are in a lot of pain, aren’t you?”

He sighs, “I’ve actually been through worse.” he lifts his left arm, and she just now notices that he is still wearing his glove. He pulls it off with his teeth, revealing that his ring and pinky finger are the only ones left on that hand. He grabs his glove with his other hand, and pulls off the other glove, again with his teeth. She doesn’t say a word, but steps forward, collects his gloves, and returns them to the coat she just hung up. She walks to the kitchen, and instinctively knows that he is watching her. She pours him a mug of water, and wets a rag with the same cool water and returns.

When she comes back in, his eyes never leave her. She tries not to be nervous when she asks,
“Tell me about yourself, Mr. Mellark.”

He sits up and accepts the mug. “Thank you,” he whispers before he drinks it all. “Can I have some more?”

She takes the mug from him and goes back into the kitchen. He waits for her to come back, and this time, he drinks slowly. “Thank you. My name is Peeta Mellark, and you may call me Peeta. I’m a captain in the Confederate Army. I was recently discharged because a Yank shot off my hand. I’m from Macon, Georgia and I was on the way home. I got lost in your woods until your bear trap caught me.”

“Oh no, that isn’t my bear trap. I’m sorry it caught you. I would have picked it up if I had known.” They hear footsteps on the front porch, and Katniss tells him, “That’s Mama. Let me get her.”

Katniss runs to the front door, flinging it open startling Prim. “Where is Mama?”

“The calf is coming. She will be along in a minute.” Prim comes in, and lays her coat down on the chair. “Where is he?”

“I put him in Mama and Daddy’s room.”

“Is his ankle that bad?”

“I think it is. Come on.” Katniss leads her into the room where Peeta lays. “Prim this is Peeta Mellark. Peeta this is my sister Prim. She can doctor your ankle. Mama has been teaching her everything that she knows.”

“Help me get this boot off.” Prim says. The girls work together, and even though they try to be gentle, they still hurt Peeta some. “Mr. Mellark, I think you need to take your pants off.”

Both Katniss and Peeta turn beet red at Prim’s words. “Or I can cut them off, and we can try to mend them.”

“Don’t you think you need to wait for Mama to get here?” Katniss whispers.

“I don’t know how much longer Mama will be. And I need to clean his ankle.” Prim looks back at Peeta. “How about if you do what you are able, and then you can cover up with the quilt. Then I can get it off over your ankle. Holler when you want us to come back.” And Katniss drags Prim out of the room.

Katniss has just gotten the kettle on the stove, when they hear Peeta call. They go back in and Peeta is covered up and the girls can see his pants down around his knees. Prim gently removes his pants while Katniss stands there awkwardly.

“Are you comfortable?” Prim asks.

Peeta shyly nods, and Prim stars to look closer at his ankle. Katniss turns to walk out when Prim stops her. “Can you go get Mama’s bag?”

“That is where I was going, Dr. Everdeen.” And walks on out the door. The bag is just in the kitchen, so she quickly grabs it, and sets me back down beside Prim, where she is still examining his ankle. Katniss goes back and gets the water in the kettle, which is now steaming, and some clean rags that Mama keeps for times like this.

Even though it turns Katniss’ stomach to watch her sister clean out the wound, she stays right by
her side. Prim is getting ready to wrap it, when they hear footsteps on the porch again. Katniss leaves Prim, and meets Mama at the door.

Lily still has that look in her eyes that she gets when there is someone that needs to be taken care of so Katniss just steps out of the way. She does follow her back into the room and watches as they work together fixing his ankle.

When it’s all wrapped, and Peeta is asleep from the willow bark to help with the pain; Lily looks at her girls and says, “Well I guess we are having company for a little while.”

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