we'll show the ocean how to dance

by ginnyweasleys

Summary

Katniss Everdeen, a boy with Finnick’s smile, and a daughter who loves the sea. - FinnickKatniss

Notes

so this started out finnick/katniss post-mockingjay and kind of spiraled and this is what it ended up as. for reference, it's set a few years after the epilogue; katniss' daughter is around 10 and finnick and annie's son is 25, as willow (yeah apparently suzanne collins gave us names for the everlark kids at some point) was born about 15 years after him.

i don't know where the rain's gone
but it's been a while, been a while now.
— the fire, ben howard

There are people you have loved and people you can't love and he has always fallen in the latter category. There's something to being on fire, always caught halfway between sparking and fading, that makes the world think you are owed only a limited amount of love. It's almost a tragedy that you used yours up on boys who taste of sorrow and war and loss, boys with revolution beating in their veins, boys with monsters flickering behind their eyes.
Then again, you don't think he would have tasted much different, anyway.

The war is over, and the world has bent and bowed beneath your will and his sacrifice and the burning of your breath, and still it has not broken. It has only settled into a new shape, bones creaking from the weight of the lost, remolding itself for the dawn. You forged a new world from the ashes of your old, and your only wish is that he had been part of the world, instead of part of the ashes.

He deserved better. You're not sure that you do.

x

Your daughter looks up at you one day, eyes like shipwrecks in the blue blue sea, and you wish you saw more of yourself in her. It's a selfish wish, because she is the best parts of Peeta, his eyes and his smile and the gentleness of his hands, his optimism fluttering in her delicate pulse. She is everything you love him for, and you love her, but you are selfish. You wish she knew the truth. You wish you were brave enough to tell her.

"Can we go visit Annie?" she asks, all loose smiles and sunshine and the happiness of children who have never seen the sky fall in flames around them. She is as young as you remember Prim, golden-hearted and true, and you see lights dancing in her smile. It is astonishing that you made her, carried her, gave her life. She is so much more alive than you ever were.

"Tomorrow," you promise, smoothing down the edges of her braid. It's the only things she inherited from you, a mass of dark hair and wildness in her bones. You're glad, most days, that she has Peeta's eyes. Ocean eyes. Faraway. She is so young.

x

"She loves the sea," Peeta is telling Annie, pride and love and tenderness soaking up his words. You watch his hands curled around a cup of tea, his wedding ring glinting under the sunlight bleeding through Annie's house. The silver is awfully sharp today.

You look away, out the window to the ocean where your daughter plays with Annie's son. Finnick's son. A tall boy, handsome and smart, with strong shoulders and sunkissed curls and Finnick's smile. Finnick's eyes. Finnick's heart.

You suppose, watching him pick up your daughter and spin her around, that he is not a boy anymore. He's twenty-five, he's traveled the districts, he has a job, a girl he loves. But you had held him in your arms the day he was born and watched his eyes turn from grey to deep green and listened to his heart beat. He will always be a boy to you.

He will always be Finnick's boy to you.

x

Annie joins you at the window after tea, when Peeta has left with your son to join them at the seashore. She doesn't say anything, but her presence is light and comforting all the same. She's changed a lot, Annie has, after Finnick. You all have, but her the most. You know what the tabloids say about her, Annie Odair, tragically widowed, tragically pregnant, tragically insane.

Poor mad girl back home, you had thought once, and yet here she is. Alive. Resilient. Kind, even still. A good mother. You wish you had her strength.

"He's good with her," you say for something to say. Annie has never cared about uncomfortable
silences, and in truth, they're not uncomfortable with her, not anymore. You and her, Peeta and Haymitch, all the victors – you all know each other too well now. You're the only ones who remember, anymore.

"He loves her," Annie agrees. "He remembers the day she was born. He says she was so tiny, he was scared he'd drop her. He doesn't know why you trusted her with him, when he was fifteen."

You look at her, and you know she knows the answer that she hasn't told him. Maybe he's figured it out on his own by now. Maybe he hasn't.

He was fifteen and your daughter had barely been breathing a day, but you trusted him. He's Finnick's son, he has Finnick's eyes. Of course you trusted him. Finnick gave his life for you and for him. His son is your only way left to honor his sacrifice.

"She's still tiny," you reply, and Annie laughs, clear like bells. She's so much better these days, so much calmer. You can't tell if it's age or motherhood or both. She still has episodes, you know that because you have them as well, but she pulls herself through. For him. For Finnick, and for her son.

"He won't drop her," Annie says and moves away from the window, leaving you watching her son and your daughter and a lifetime of love that Finnick will never see.

It hurts to look at him. But it hurts more to love him. And Annie Cresta is the bravest woman you know for doing both.

x

There are nights when you wake up shaking and cold and terrified and nights when you wake up feeling like you're on fire and nights that fall somewhere in the middle, when you wake up feeling like you're lost at sea. Those nights, you wake up with an ocean seeping through your veins, Finnick's smile rattling around in your ribcage, his son's laughter ringing in your head.

Those nights, you wake up and all you can think is he died for this he died for us he died so we could be happy and you think about your daughter, her heart encased in seaglass, her smile too bright for your world, and you think about his son, unfailingly kind and honest and everything his father would have wanted him to be. Everything Finnick was and could have been. Should have been. Should have lived.

You close your eyes and war pounds a drumbeat in your head. Those nights, the ocean swallows you whole.

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