A prompt I received on tumblr a while ago.

"Prompt: Finnick says 'I love you' to Annie for the first time."

Finnick built up walls. He kept people out. It’s just what he did. It was the only thing he could do. He was used to biting back the sadness inside of him, accepting his fate and just going numb.

He could perform well though. Smile and captivate whoever he had to, but inside he was dead. It took a very special person to see through it all. A person that could break through the barriers and pick up the shattered pieces of his soul.

He always thought his future and any chance at happiness he hoped to have had been sold away just like his body had been those many years ago. He was wrong.

She made him feel anything but numb. Her smooth skin lit his ablaze, the sound of her laugh relaxed every muscle in his body, every smile that brightened her face was mirrored on his. Life burned inside of him when she was around.

Finnick couldn’t help but think of all of this as he stared at her from across the decadent ballroom in President Snow’s mansion. He didn’t even bother to play nice for the ladies who approached him. He just focused on her. Annie wore a beautiful gown of shimmering blue and was moving as fluidly as the ocean. A laugh lit up her features as her stylist spun her in a circle.

The hard expression on his face softened and his eyebrows lifted in pleasure. Her laugh was such a nice thing to see. Surviving the games had been hard. It had taken such a toll on her mentally, but spending time at home, with the waves and her family and him, had helped greatly— he liked
to think that he made the biggest impact, but he was probably just fooling himself.

The victory tour had damaged a lot of the progress they made but she got through it by keeping her eyes on her cards and speaking softly into the microphone. Here they were at the end of it: the Capitol Party. It was hard for her to speak normally with strangers, but Magnus, her faithful stylist, had his arm hooked through hers most of the night. That could have been him, he would have been able to charm people’s attention away from Annie and then twirl her around the dance floor when they were finally left alone. Instead, he sat and watched her from afar with a distraught expression and a glass gripped firmly in his hand.

He felt a presence to his left and turned with a disinterested look. He saw that it was his old mentor and the look quickly disappeared. “Hello Mags.” He pulled out a chair for her which she gratefully took.

“Well?” Was all she said and smiled humorously at him.

“Well, what?”

“Are you going to ask her to dance or are you going to glare at everyone the entire night?” She asked in her quick and quiet voice.

He sighed and the narrowed eyebrows quickly reappeared.

“So you realized that you love her? What’s stopping you from going over there, boy?”

“I think you know what is.” He said, the anger was barely contained in his tone. He swallowed the rest of his drink and motioned for another from a passing waiter. "She doesn’t deserve any more pain in her life.” He gratefully accepted the new glass and looked at Mags in irritation.

"Both of your situations are already painful enough alone. If it’s love, and I know it is, it’ll be worth it.” She slammed a tiny hand down on the table. Now she was the one who was angry. “I’m not going to watch you throw this away.”

He stopped mid-sip. He had never seen her so upset. Before he could do anything, Mags had caught Annie’s attention with wild hand gestures. He set down his drink and watched with wide eyes as she and Magnus approached.

“Yes, Mags?” Annie's question was directed at the older woman but her gaze was on Finnick, whose eyes had lowered back to his glass.

“I think Finnick needs a round on the dance floor to improve his mood.”

“Mags, I don’t think–” he began, but he saw how Annie's hands clasped together eagerly, how the sweetest smile he'd ever seen pulled at her lips. “I guess one dance will be fine.”

Magnus took Annie’s hand and placed it in his when Finnick stood up. He grinned knowingly at him and then winked as he passed him to take his seat. Was it really that obvious to everyone else?

He was very aware of how warm her hand was in his, but he did his best to ignore it as he led her through rows of tables. People eagerly ushered them to the middle of the floor and he returned their smiles with a grin so exaggerated he couldn’t believe that they still smiled happily back.

Finnick turned toward her and slowly placed his free hand on her waist. She moved in closer to him and rested her hand on his arm. He could feel her soft breath on his neck and his heart began to go off inside his chest.
They began to move along with the rest of the dancers. He still hadn’t made eye contact with her, just stared over her head like he was observing the people around them, even though the most important one here was in his arms. “I didn’t realize you were such a poor dancer, Finnick.” She said with faux innocence.

A loud laugh escaped his lips. “I’m just warming up.” He said with a smirk and slowly looked down at her. This was the first close look he got at her tonight. Her green eyes shone brightly from behind her smokey makeup and her hair was pulled back into a chignon, but a few tendrils of brown waves were loose around her face. “You look lovely.”

He watched as her cheeks go red and he wished he could just kiss her right there.

She brushed back a lock of hair before returning the compliment. "You do too.” She used the same hand to brush lightly at the lapel of his suit and he could feel the heat of her fingers through his clothing. "Very dashing."

It was his turn to grin shyly and he ducked his head to try and hide it.

The music began to speed up and he was forced to move faster with her. She giggled as he decided that maybe a twirl was necessary. She couldn’t seem to stop smiling as he got more creative with their movement. Time seemed to slow as he watched her hair bounce around her face and the grin crinkle her eyes. Pure, incandescent happiness filled up inside of him for a few brief moments. Then it was immediately replaced by guilt and fear. It pressed in on him and if he didn’t get away soon he would choke on it. He waited until the song ended and then immediately released her. Without a word he moved away through the crowd.

His eyes searched for the nearest exit. It was across the room and he marched towards it. He passed Mags, who was calling his name, on his way out. He burst through the double doors and took in lungfuls of air.

He avoided the main hall and headed down a smaller one. He stopped once he reached a narrow flight of stairs that led to the first floor. He didn’t descend them but leaned against the wall and took slow and shaky breaths.

"Finnick?” A voice softly asked from behind him. Her voice.

He froze and then closed his eyes tightly. “Yes?”

"Are you alright?"

Silence was her answer,

“I feel like you’ve been ignoring me all night.” She continued timidly. “Mags had to make you talk to me and then when things were finally starting to feel normal, you ran off like a mad man. Have I done something wrong?” Her voice was so unsteady that he thought she might have another breakdown. All because of him.

He couldn’t bear it anymore. His right hand began to shake uncontrollably and then the rest of his body began to follow. With his back still to her, he leaned forward and covered his face with his hands, trying to block everything out.

"Finnick?” She quickly moved to his side and held onto one of his arms. “What’s wrong?” She pulled his hands away from his face and froze. “Finnick, are you…crying?”

”Annie, I love you.” He blurted out as he finally looked at her. “I am so in love with you when I shouldn’t be.”
Her eyes widened and as she began to speak, he cut her off. “I’m broken and I don’t want to hurt you. I don’t ever want to hurt you.”

She shushed him and brushed away his tears with both of her thumbs and then let her hands rest on his lower neck, comforting him like he had done for her countless of times before. “It’s okay. I’m broken too.” She smiled brilliantly. “But I would have been so much worse without you.” Tears began to mix in her eyes and she tried to steady her mouth by biting down on her bottom lip. “I wouldn’t be alive without you. You gave me a reason to fight in the arena. You gave me a reason to fight after. You saved me. So,” She let out a little laugh and slid her hands up higher on his neck, ”What I'm trying to say is that I love you, too.”

He stared at her with wide eyes for a few seconds, trying to process the information. The words connected in his brain and he let his gaze drop from her eyes to her lips. He reached up and framed her face with both of his hands. He stared at her a few moments longer after that, still taking it in. He hesitantly leaned towards her and she quickly closed the few remaining inches and pressed her mouth against his.

Her lips did more to him than he could have ever imagined. All his worries seemed to vanish away as she pressed them against his and twirled her fingers through the bronze hair at the nape of his neck. He deepened the kiss and with one arm swiftly pulled her in tighter, so that every inch of them was touching. A heat spread throughout him and warmed his entire body.

When they pulled away, they were both panting. He kept his hands on her and pressed his forehead against hers as he gasped for breath. “You love me, Annie?” He asked.

"Of course I do, Finnick.” She said in between breaths.

“You really do?” He pressed little butterfly kisses up the side of her face.

“Yes!” She began to laugh and gripped the hand holding her face. “Now can we please go back inside so you can twirl me around again?”

“In a bit.” He said as he smiled against the skin of her cheek and went in for their second kiss. He would never get tired of this.

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